2024

Whole Human Pedagogy: A Novel Framework for Education Abroad Praxis

Anna N. Kelly
SIT Graduate Institute, annanicole.kelly@mail.sit.edu

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Anna N. Kelly

Dissertation Committee:

Professor Sora Friedman, Primary Advisor
Professor Melissa Whatley
Professor Deepa Srikantaiah

Approved by the Committee on the Degree of Doctor of Education

Date 17 July 2024

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education at
SIT Graduate Institute

2024

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Student name: Anna N. Kelly
Date: 1 August 2024

Abstract

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This dissertation theoretically derives and qualitatively explores a novel framework called whole human pedagogy for education abroad. Drawing on Thompson (2017) and hooks (1994), as well as decolonial theory and critical pedagogy, this dissertation sets forth whole human pedagogy with four tenets—embodiment, emotions, belonging, and becoming—which collectively provide a framework for designing and analyzing education abroad programs. This qualitative study collected data from seventeen practitioners who work with undergraduate, U.S.-based, outbound education abroad programs via semi-structured interviews about their perspectives on theory and practice regarding whole human pedagogy. Findings offer preliminary confirmation of whole human pedagogy's applicability to education abroad programming. Data gathered from participants informs several subthemes for each tenet—including embodied sensory engagement, emotional reflection, relational reciprocity, and personal transformation—as well as recommendations for application in program design, program leadership training, and institutional administration. Whole human pedagogy contributes to the field by proposing specific targets for improving the quality of learning interventions for education abroad while decentering Euro-US epistemological supremacy, which contributes to the decolonization of U.S.-based education abroad pedagogy.

Key words: education abroad, holistic education, decolonial higher education, critical pedagogy, embodied learning abroad, whole human pedagogy

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I have many thanks to give at the conclusion of this project.

To Sora, for your loud and unwavering belief in me, for your kindness, and for your trust.

To Melissa, for your deliberateness and your thought-partnership.
To Alla, for creating my dream doctoral program and Deepa, for your deep contemplation.

To Joel, who taught me to think like a poet.
To Eric, who taught me the things I will remember 30 years from now.
To Trudy, who taught me to love the world.

To Stephen: my joy is yours.
To all of the others who have supported, guided, held, and seen me over the past three years.

And to Matilda, the greatest accompaniment of my life.

For my mother, Diane Kelly,
the first woman I ever knew with a doctorate,
because the world still needs a Dr. Kelly.

The academy is not paradise, but learning is a place where paradise can be created.

- bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*

Chapter 1: Introduction

With programs that span the Tibetan grasslands to the clear waters of New Zealand to the ruins of Pompeii, education abroad can profoundly affect the lives of its participants. Education abroad class sessions may take place in trains, forests, museums, and archeological sites. Programs may include prostrating at Buddhist dawn ceremonies, hand-pressing empanadas in the yard of a community farm, or trekking along to pack-horse bells. They may include anxious hellos and tearful goodbyes to host families, journaling prompts, and group debriefs; group norm agreements and community affirmation rituals; and deep transformation of one's self and worldview. These programs may change minds; they may change lives; they may change selves. Doing, feeling, relating, and being are the texts of education abroad.

Mary Rose O'Reilley writes, "Some pedagogical practices crush the soul; most of us have suffered their bruising force. Others allow the spirit to come home: to self, to community, and to the revelations of reality" (1998, p. 3). This research is an attempt to bring the spirit home in education abroad.

Poet, activist, and sociology scholar Becky Thompson, in her 2017 book *Teaching with Tenderness*, writes:

> For the most part, it feels like teachers carry our minds to one place (to work, the classroom, our desks), our bodies to another (to the gym, yoga studio, or couch), our spirits to another (to church, synagogue, mosque, mountains), our psychic healing to another (to the couch, the bed, to vacations), and our activism to another (to prisons, borders, the streets). Students sense and feel these splits. They are trying to learn amid these splits. And we are, somehow, trying to teach amid these splits. (p. 17)

Here, Thompson (2017) describes the compartmentalization of humanness that the Euro-U.S. academy so often demands of its participants. This dividing starts with the traditional mind/body duality and continues sectioning off each additional facet of human existence and experience. *These splits,* that Thompson (2017) problematizes, tell us where each part of our humanity belongs; *these splits* tell us that the mind alone belongs in education.

In his iconic work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire wrote, "Liberation, a human phenomenon, cannot be achieved by semihumans" (1970, p. 66). Liberation, in Freire's works, is a radical transformation of reality, achieved through praxis (i.e., reflection and action), that returns the freedom of humanization to the oppressed and the oppressors. Oppression is directly linked to subjection to dehumanization; liberation, conversely, comes from individuals "engaged in the ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human" (Freire, 1970, p. 66). Liberation, as a movement more generally, may conjure a range of visions for different individuals or marginalized groups, but generally centers an element of *freeing.* Liberation constitutes a freeing from persecution, from violence, from fear, from targeted hate, from enslavement, from discrimination. The condition of *being liberative* is a practical way of dreaming this freeing into existence. The following research will continue to dream of that liberation as the ultimate communal and educational goal, particularly through Freire's emphasis on the vocation of becoming *more human.*

Liberation and wellbeing for learning communities cannot be achieved amongst *these splits of semihumans.* Liberative learning processes must instead emphasize wholeness and integration where each facet of humanness is acknowledged, embraced, engaged, and connected. At its core, this study asks: how can educators cultivate facilitation practices that embrace and encourage *whole human beings* specifically within the field of education abroad?

This chapter will outline the research problem, terms, and theoretical perspectives, as well as the research purpose, questions, and methodology. This chapter ends with reflections on the rationale of the research, the positionality of the researcher, and an overview of the rest of the text.

Research Problem

For-credit study abroad programs serve upwards of 340,000 U.S.-based students annually and send participants to all seven continents (Covid-19 pandemic disruptions aside) (IIE, 2023). Education abroad includes a wide variety of institutions, formats, and destinations, which each offer different types of experiences (See Education Abroad in Chapter 2).

The research problem for this study stems from two distinct issues affecting U.S.-based education abroad: Euro-U.S. epistemological dominance and a need for quality improvement in teaching and learning interventions.

Euro-U.S. Epistemological Dominance

Higher education in the United States reflects a historic commitment to Euro-U.S. epistemology, which notably includes the Cartesian notion of the mind/body split, divisions between objective and subjective knowledge, and white supremacist patriarchy. hooks (2010) explains:

> Throughout the history of education in the United States, both in the public school system and in higher education, imperialist capitalist white-supremacist patriarchal politics has shaped learning communities, affecting both the way knowledge has been presented to students and the nature of that information. (p. 29)

While there have been some efforts to create new approaches to education in the United States, it often fails to be truly liberative given its basis in 16th-century European concepts (Fregoso Bailón & De Lissovoy, 2019). Benefiel (2019) writes,

> We live in and move and have our being within a set of assumptions about the superiority of the dominant culture's approach to higher education. Until we are challenged to see with eyes immersed in an entirely different set of assumptions, we remain blind to our own cultural embeddedness. (p. 4)

While higher education on college and university campuses across the United States remains physically embedded within the U.S. cultural context, education abroad seemingly promises exposure to alternate cultural perspectives.

However, study abroad programs for students based in the United States exhibit a strong bias towards European destinations, which have consistently made up over half of study abroad participation annually since data collection began in the 1999-2000 academic year (IIE, 2023). Additionally, Ficarra (2017) argues that the disciplinary disproportionality of program content types offered in different regions reflects a hidden curriculum of global hierarchy. She finds that programs to Africa and Latin America feature a strong bias towards service and development themes while programs in Europe cover diverse topics across language, culture, history, art, social sciences, and the humanities. Ficarra (2017) explains that these biases reflect tired narratives of white saviorism in Africa and Latin America while presenting Europe as the pinnacle of desirable human knowledge.

Further, study abroad programs remain a function of U.S. higher education and still predominantly rely on the Euro-U.S. academic system, which includes historical emphases on objectivity, mind/body duality, notions of universal forward progress, and particular conventions

of evaluation and grading. If practices *within* study abroad programs continue to rely predominantly on Euro-U.S. academic principles, the resulting education will remain a Euro-U.S. cultural product regardless of location. Additionally, if programs aren't problematizing the Euro-U.S. lens—if programs do not raise questions about white supremacy, colonialism, and capitalism—they risk fortifying unjust relations both internationally and within learning communities.

In contrast, this study argues that education abroad offers a unique opportunity for educators to intentionally destabilize Euro-U.S. epistemology in their program design and facilitation, particularly regarding the understanding of participants as integrated human beings. hooks (1994) shares that academia taught her:

> to believe a classroom was diminished if students and professors regarded one another as "whole" human beings, striving not just for knowledge in books, but knowledge about how to live in the world… [but] students want us to see them as whole human beings with complex lives and experiences rather than simply seekers after compartmentalized bits of knowledge. (p. 14-15)

A whole human epistemology draws attention to "how we know what we know at the level of the heart and the body, rather than the merely static, cognitive, mostly cerebral focus of more traditional, Eurocentric, and androcentric knowledge" (Berila, 2016, p. 36). Moreover, a whole human education involves learning that surpasses facts and figures with reflective knowledge about how to live in the world outside of the classroom.

Quality of Learning Interventions in Education Abroad

The second issue that informs this study is the need for improved teaching and learning interventions in education abroad programs. Vande Berg et al. (2012) problematize the notion

that students learn and transform solely by being sent abroad. They reject assessment measures that rely solely on self-reporting and increased numbers of participants as evidence that education abroad practices are impactful; likewise, they reject widespread objectives to simply send more students abroad without further interrogation of pedagogical practices.

Instead, they prioritize improving the quality of teaching and learning interventions. Vande Berg et al. (2012) argue: "evidence tells us that when trained cultural mentors intervene in the education of students throughout the study abroad cycle, they learn and develop more effectively and appropriately—much more than those who either stay at home or enroll in programs abroad that do not provide cultural mentoring" (p. 418). Vande Berg et al. (2012) demonstrate that education abroad can be a highly impactful learning opportunity if educators/cultural mentors *intervene* in learning processes and if they are *trained* to do so.

Vande Berg et al. (2012) define intercultural interventions as "intentional and deliberate pedagogical approaches, activated throughout the study abroad cycle (before, during, and after), that are designed to enhance students' intercultural competence" (p. 29-30). Vande Berg et al. (2012) focus on intercultural development specifically, as measured by the Intercultural Development Inventory (Intercultural Development Inventory, n.d.), while this study's aims are more generally targeted towards teaching and learning in the context of education abroad programs. Regardless, this study similarly centers the need for intervention to enhance students' learning (including intercultural development, personal development, content knowledge, etc.), as well as the need for training and literature about intentional and deliberate pedagogical approaches for education abroad. To that end, this study generates a theory called whole human pedagogy, which delineates four tenets for designing and analyzing programs, as well as training practitioners.

The four tenets of whole human pedagogy are embodiment, emotions, belonging, and becoming. *Embodiment* explores the ways body knowledge has been disallowed by traditional academia and how bringing bodies back into learning spaces may make learning more comprehensive and less oppressive. *Emotions* addresses the importance of personal reflection, subjectivity, and processing in learning, particularly when subject matter includes traumatic or oppressive histories or contexts. *Belonging* considers the advantages of cultivating learning communities informed by mutual knowing and being known for all participants. Lastly, *becoming* encompasses learning for living outside of the classroom in transformative, liberatory ways. All four of these tenets are based on alternative pedagogies, namely those of Becky Thompson (2017) and bell hooks (1994; 2010) and are presented as particularly well-suited to education abroad programming.

Terms

According to The Forum on Education Abroad, international education is "a field involved in facilitating and supporting the migration of students and scholars across geopolitical borders" (The Forum, n.d.). This means that international education practitioners may work with educational institutions, government programs, or independent program providers (organizations that offer programs to students from many institutions) and are involved in both sending students abroad and bringing foreign students to the organization's home country. Education abroad is "education, including, but not limited to, enrollment in courses, experiential learning, internships, service learning, and other learning activities, which occurs outside the participant's home country" or, if the student is already an international student or worker, outside of the country of their student or employee status (The Forum, n.d.). Thus, education abroad includes many facets of international education, but particularly in reference to *outbound* programming.

Narrower still, study abroad specifically refers to an education abroad program that is completed for academic credit (The Forum, n.d.).

Programs can vary in duration and include single semester, full academic year, summer term, January or May term, or spring break programs; programs with a duration of eight weeks or less fall under the category of short-term study abroad programs (The Forum, n.d.). Additionally, education abroad encompasses several types of program models. This project draws predominantly on faculty-led programs, which are programs directed by university professors traveling with students abroad, or programs with assistance from program providers, organizations that either design customized programs for institutions or offer their own programs to students from a variety of institutions (The Forum, n.d.; Punteney, 2019). This project does not cover exchange, direct enrollment, or integrated university study programs wherein students study abroad by enrolling in regular courses at a host university (The Forum, n.d.; Punteney, 2019). Notably, when referencing literature or participant responses, this paper adopts the term usage of the source.

Lastly, this study frequently references the history and dynamics of colonial and imperial hegemony led by European and U.S. powers, particularly in the creation and maintenance of epistemological dominance. Said (1979) argues,

> A powerful series of political and ultimately ideological realities inform scholarship today. No one can escape dealing with, if not the East/West division, then the North/South one, the have/have-not one, the imperialist/anti-imperialist one…modern thought and experience have taught us to be sensitive to what is involved in representation, in studying the Other, in racial thinking, in unthinking and uncritical

> acceptance of authority and authoritative ideas, in the socio-political role of intellectuals, in the great value of a skeptical critical consciousness. (p. 327)

Rather than using the dichotomies of East and West or Global North and Global South, this paper uses the term "Euro-U.S." to most accurately describe the region in question. In this context, the term "Euro-U.S." references not only the geographic region, but the historic privileging of Greek and Roman knowledge creation, British and French colonial rule, and, most recently, the ascension of the United States as a global imperialist force.

Theoretical Perspectives

This study primarily relies on two theoretical lenses: critical theory and decolonial theory. Both critical and decolonial theories question dominant narratives and prioritize social justice, and both have risen in popularity in recent decades in both higher education and international education.

Critical Theory

Critical theory first emerged as the Frankfurt School in Europe in the 1930s and combined philosophy, social theory, psychology, political science, and cultural analysis to interpret social reality with emancipatory intent (Celikates & Flynn, 2023). The adaptation of a general critical theory to the United States was prompted by two crucial social justice movements during the second half of the 20th century: the Civil Rights Movement and the feminist movement, which inform critical race theory and feminist theory, respectively.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s highlighted racial discrimination in the United States as Black Americans pushed for legal equality. After the Civil Rights Movement ended, the U.S. court system, having supposedly dealt with racial discrimination, relied heavily on the false notion of "post-race" or "colorblind" policies, which deem race and

racism invisible, irrelevant, outdated, or negligible factors in legal decisions. In response to continuing problems within the legal systems and social challenges at large, U.S. critical race theory emerged in the 1970s as a movement of scholarship and activism that directly argued against colorblind racism in the U.S. judicial system by centering race and racism as irrefutable influences on the U.S. context (Walker et al., 2021). Critical race theory is a conceptual lens that emphasizes the centrality and permanence of race and racism in U.S. social and institutional systems.

The U.S. feminist movement is commonly described in three waves. The first wave began in the late 19th-century with women's campaigns for property and voting rights. The second wave marked the beginning of the second half of the 20th-century with fights for equality between white men and white women. The third wave of feminism, which began in the 1990s, directly criticized prior feminist movements for their overt privileging of white, straight, cis-gender women, and gave way to 21st-century efforts towards multiracial feminism and gender queer inclusion. Current feminist theory emphasizes situated or contextualized knowledge, embodiment, and lived experiences (Berila, 2016). In the post-structural and post-colonial age of Comparative and International Education (CIE), feminism informs an onto-epistemological lens of research methodology that centers "reflexivity, authority, voice, and the politics and hierarchies of knowledge production and representation" (Willsemsen & Shah, 2021, p. 176).

These two movements, often critiqued for centering the experiences of Black men or white women respectively, were integrated by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1997), who coined the term *intersectionality* in the 1990s. Crenshaw (1997) uses the term intersectionality to describe how different facets of an individual's identity (for example, being Black and being a woman) must be considered together to fully understand one's unique experiences of oppression. Critical

theory has thus grown to include several facets of anti-oppression theory including critical race theory, multiracial feminism, womanism, queer theory, economic justice, Indigenous studies, and disability rights.

In this study, critical theory undergirds the notion that processes within education have consequences for both systems and individuals, and that educators have the ability (some may argue, responsibility) to prioritize social justice goals in praxis. Critical theory informs both *why* change is needed to dismantle systems of oppression that are perpetuated through educational practice and *how* these changes can be made to best support all populations.

Decolonial Theory

Decolonial theory centers persons, cultures, and nations that experience or have experienced colonial or imperial subjugation and presupposes the lasting impact of coloniality. Historically following the use of postcolonial theory, decolonial theory imbued a specific focus on the reclamation, empowerment, and amplification of identities and voices of marginalized people. Decolonial CIE scholars in particular draw connections between colonialism, globalization, modernity, and capitalism (Rizvi, 2007; Stein, 2021). Capitalism, a center of decolonial critiques, refers to the economic and political system wherein private owners profit off labor, which creates unchecked wealth accumulation for those in power and continual exploitation for the working class (Casey, 2016). The poignancy of these problems rests precisely in their interconnection: modernity, characterized by a globalized, capitalist system, emerged because of and in service to legacies of colonial domination and ongoing climates of coloniality. Each element of this system incarnates and fortifies the next, and their symbiotic relationship becomes parasitic to non-dominant populations within the global community.

Coloniality goes further than political or geographic subjugation. Odora Hoppers (2014) faults Westernization, modernization, and globalization as processes that are:

> essentially about affirming the locus of creation and policing of rules by which verbal speech and written statements are made meaningful as being geographically located in the northwest Atlantic. It is also the corpus of geopolitically situated 'reality creation and maintenance' mechanisms that requires for its survival a consistent stifling of debates on alternative models. (p. 102)

In other words, knowledge itself is colonized and colonizing. In regard to education specifically,

> Education is tied in the past and in the present to the project of reproducing the matrix of coloniality. This is not only a matter of reproducing particular orientations, biases, and predilections among students but is also a question of the compulsive repetition of the ethical and epistemological order of Western modernity. (Fregoso Bailón & De Lissovoy, 2018, p. 357)

Thus, decolonial thought directly supports the position that formal education spaces in the United States center the Euro-U.S. dominant—i.e., the colonizer's—definition of knowledge. Chapter 2 will address the application of decolonial theory to Euro-U.S. epistemological dominance in more detail.

Stein (2022) explains that decolonial analyses and practices "(1) critique ways of knowing, being, and relating that are premised on systemic and ongoing colonial violence, and that (2) gesture toward possible futures in which these colonial patterns of knowledge, existence, and relationship are interrupted and redressed" (p. 2). This study embraces Stein's (2022) definition of decolonial praxis as it focuses on critiquing and reimagining ways of knowing,

being, and relating in the context of education abroad. Knowing, being, and relating are the cornerstones of whole human pedagogy, which will be explored in more depth in Chapter 3.

Research Purpose and Questions

Purpose

This research explores the ways that education abroad practitioners employ and experience whole human educational methods in their program pedagogy, design, and facilitation. While whole human pedagogy is not an existing term or normative method in higher education, education abroad, or their relevant literature, education abroad scholarship has recently pointed to an increasing interest in mindfulness practices (Clancy, 2020; Conboy & Clancy, 2022) and case studies centering personal transformation through pedagogical practices (Jarman, 2022; Pipitone & Raghavan, 2017). Thus, this research on whole human pedagogy responds to a gap in literature that is presently gaining interest of the field.

This research rests on the assumption that whole human educational methods are likely already present in some individuals' program practices and specifically recruited participants who indicate their existing interest in whole human methods. This research sought experiential knowledge from those practitioners who utilize whole human methods in order to offer both practical and theoretical guidance to other professionals. As a result, this research is designed to offer a picture of current whole human practices, formalize these practices in field literature, develop a better theoretical understanding of whole human pedagogy in education abroad, and create a new lens for designing programs and training practitioners.

Research Questions

The purpose described above informs two research questions which focus first, on the theoretical understanding and second, on the practical application of a whole human pedagogical approach. The research questions for this study are:

1. How do practitioners understand a whole human pedagogical approach, specifically regarding the four themes of embodiment, emotions, belonging, and becoming?
2. How do practitioners in undergraduate education abroad utilize whole human pedagogy in programming, facilitating, and advising?

Methodological Approach

This study used a qualitative research methodology and relied on semi-structured interviews. Interview participants were recruited with purposive sampling using pre-determined selection criteria that required participants to be a practitioner in the field of education abroad with responsibilities in either program design or facilitation for undergraduate group programs. Practitioners could be professors, administrators, or contractors (practitioners hired on an individual program basis) and could work for universities or provider organizations. Practitioners were required to work with at least some group-based programs wherein a cohort of students studies abroad together (i.e. faculty-led or provider programs), rather than direct-enroll or exchange programs where students study abroad individually.

Participant recruitment was conducted widely through education abroad professional networks and personal contacts. Participants who expressed interest and qualified for the study were contacted to schedule an interview, which was conducted and audio/video recorded virtually. After interviews were transcribed, they were coded using primarily inductive coding. Member-checking, triangulation between different perspectives within the education abroad

field, a thorough audit trail, and ongoing peer review and debrief enhanced the validity of the study.

Rationale and Significance

This study centers needs for improvement of both practice and documentation of education abroad teaching and learning interventions. Taylor and Dechert (2022) explain that:

> although there is a widespread belief that study abroad programs are beneficial to students…there is little guidance on the pedagogical practices that support the achievement of those benefits…While touted as a High Impact Practice, the ways study abroad programs are implemented vary widely which raises the question of how the quality of these programs might also vary. (p. 15)

Likewise, Teague (2014) asks: "How might you be able to strategically intervene to help further the growth and development of your students abroad?" (p. 78). This study practically and theoretically investigates this field-guiding question from the perspective of whole-human pedagogy.

Scholarship from the field of CIE highlights considerations for decolonizing the practical implementation of education abroad, as well as interest in decolonizing knowledge itself (Brissett, 2020; Takayama et al., 2017). Takayama et al. (2017) explain that some contemporary CIE scholars:

> propose knowledge projects that decenter the global North in knowledge production, undermine the uneven power relations that naturalize the intellectual division of labor, provincialize the universalist ontology and epistemology that underpin official knowledge, and revalue knowledges that have been subjugated by global hegemony. (p. S13)

However, existing literature about learning that adopts alternative epistemologies in praxis remains largely limited to a traditional classroom context.

Alternative pedagogical scholars Berila (2016), Thompson (2017), and hooks (1994; 2010), as well as many of the CIE scholars cited in this chapter, emphasize the importance of anti-oppression subject matter. Critical content, spanning topics such as feminism, queer thought, critical race theory, and postcolonialism, deeply informs education's role in dismantling global oppressive systems. This study argues that the pursuit of liberation in teaching and learning is not only a question of what is taught, but how. Integrating critical content into curriculums isn't enough. *Liberatory* teaching requires not only a shift of content, but a commitment from educators to deconstructing learning practices based in a history of Euro-U.S. hegemony.

Inviting students in the wholeness of their humanity is, in itself, a subversive act in the face of dominant epistemological systems that marginalize embodied, emotional, and experiential understanding. Berila (2016) explains that oppression "is held in our bodies, our hearts, our psyches, our spirits, *and* our minds" (p. 34). For anti-oppression educators like Berila (2016), Thompson (2017), and hooks (1994; 2010), reclaiming humanness in education is an integral part of encouraging student well-being and resiliency; helping students understand their experiences, emotions, and reactions; and investigating the ways that oppression manifests cognitively, emotionally, and somatically. The endeavor to actualize a liberative teaching practice, therefore, necessitates alternative approaches to education that reject oppressive systems and incorporate whole humans of all identities into validated constructions of knowing, learning, and being.

These methodological shifts already fit with many of the priorities of education abroad. Education abroad strongly relies on Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning, which

emphasizes four phases of experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting. The Association for Experiential Education (AEE) identifies several principles of practice for experiential education, which notably include:

- Learners are engaged intellectually, emotionally, socially, soulfully and/or physically. This involvement produces a perception that the learning task is authentic...
- The results of the learning are personal and form the basis for future experience and learning…
- The educator's primary roles include setting suitable experiences, posing problems, setting boundaries, supporting learners, insuring physical and emotional safety, and facilitating the learning process (AAE, n.d.)

Additionally, in the *International Education Handbook* (2019), Punteney lists key points for facilitating experiential education programs, which include:

> Teach people, not content. The facilitator should consider learners holistically, not just as brains, but as physical, emotional, and spiritual beings. The facilitator needs to focus more on the learners and learning, and less on getting through a prescribed amount of course content. (p. 171)

Chapter 2 delves more deeply into the concept of experiential learning, but the important introductory takeaway is that experiential learning, and thus education abroad, already depart from traditional, dehumanized learning strategies indicative of the Euro-U.S. educational system. However, practical recommendations from experiential learning are not overtly ideological or anti-oppressive. On the other hand, decolonial theory in CIE isn't necessarily praxis-forward.

Difficulties integrating theory and practice may partly result from the departmentalized nature of the field: faculty, program designers, content experts, and facilitators may occupy several titles and roles for education abroad programs without clear opportunities to communicate with each other. hooks (1994) explains,

> It is crucial that critical thinkers who want to change our teaching practices talk to one another, collaborate in a discussion that crosses boundaries and creates a space for intervention...but we often have no concrete examples of individuals who actually occupy different locations within structures, sharing ideas with one another, mapping out terrains of commonality, connection, and shared concern with teaching practices. (p. 129-130)

The commentary in this paper is significant because it draws on perspectives of administrators, professors, providers, planners, and facilitators to visualize how whole human education may already exist in the imaginations or practices of education abroad professionals, although alternative pedagogies like critical and contemplative pedagogies are just starting to emerge in education abroad literature (Clancy, 2020; Killick & Foster, 2021; Taylor & Dechert, 2022; see Chapter 2). This paper contributes to the field by providing a more formalized perspective specifically focused on program pedagogy and design for decentering Euro-U.S. epistemological dominance, and the resulting dehumanization, in knowing and learning for education abroad.

Researcher Positionality

I first encountered Thompson's (2017) *Teaching with Tenderness* as a first-year divinity school student. In her work, I heard a voice name all the elements of my personhood the academy had "ransomed off" and start to muse about how they may be recovered (p. 36). I began to ask why traditional academic learning necessitates healing.

hooks (1994) writes about "theorizing as a healing place." I have always been a theory-minded scholar and student, and I found my home in theorizing as hooks did—in a search for self-recovery. In my case, this healing seeks to dismantle capitalist productivity narratives, chronic burnout, and strict achievement standards. As a late-diagnosed neurodivergent person, I continue to wrestle with the extent to which a younger me twisted and broke herself to fit cleanly into academia's boxes. Thompson (2017) writes, "Being able to see how bodies go missing in the classroom means facing our own fears" (p. 69). As I write, I am facing my fears.

I began my work in international education with high school exchange programs, where I affectionately earned the nickname "overachiever recovery." Each time I work with high school exchange students, I am intentional to pull them aside one morning or evening—sometimes in a hotel lobby, sometimes on the bank of a river. I say exactly this: "I want you to hear me say this. You are good now. No matter your grades or your test scores or what college you go to. You are loved exactly as you already are. I am so proud of you." Without fail, tears quietly begin. Some have never heard it. It is the one thing I hope they learn with me. In a subsequent exercise, I ask them to introduce themselves to me on a piece of paper: "Hi, I'm ____ and I…". At the end of our session, having had a conversation about mindfulness and valuing *being* as opposed to only *doing*, I ask them to write a new introduction without "achievement" or "doing" words. Tell me who you are instead of what you do. Some struggle, some smile, and some are teary still. They feel it and they understand it as the unraveling begins. I watch and wish we had less to unravel.

I approach this topic as a student and scholar whose previous educational experiences were deeply influenced by normative evaluative mechanisms like standardized testing and "gifted and talented" programs, as well as ongoing global conflict and crises. I care deeply about the ways that disembodiment and dehumanization are destructive to student wellbeing. I care

about creating compassionate policies and practices that eagerly accommodate trauma and hardship, and that see humanness as the centerpiece of learning, rather than a hindrance to it. And, following a background in religion and theology, I care about people and the world and how they are making meaning of each other, as well as the transformative power of education abroad for bringing that meaning into focus.

I also write from the perspective of a white, middle-class American citizen, who has derived significant personal benefit from my abundant access to both higher education and opportunities for international mobility. I care both about how educators can enhance student wellbeing for all students *and* how educators can implement practices to address injustice in educational and wider societal contexts.

The foundation of this project rests on the assumption that alternative pedagogical methods could be both plausible and beneficial for education processes based in the U.S. context. Additionally, as an international education professional, I am convinced study abroad programming is a worthwhile enterprise, notwithstanding the abounding complexity of ethical considerations. I believe it is worth doing, and I believe it is worth allocating the time, resources, and intentionality to do it well.

I hold a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies from Guilford College and a Master of Theological Studies from Vanderbilt Divinity School. My research background primarily revolves around meaning-making and travel, but also includes international fieldwork projects on education in Tibet and Albert Camus' life in Europe, as well as academic projects on Mahayana Buddhism and American cultural religion. I have participated in study abroad programs or research projects in Belgium, China, France, Greece, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand,

and Turkey; I have led education abroad programs to South Korea, Japan, and Argentina and inbound programs with students from Bolivia, Brazil, and Peru.

Chapter Closing

The following chapters describe the novel framework whole human pedagogy and utilize practitioner perspectives to offer practical recommendations for future education abroad praxis. Chapter 2 provides a literature review of education abroad, Euro-U.S. epistemological dominance in higher education, and two examples of alternative pedagogies. Chapter 3 generates and outlines the theory and tenets of whole human pedagogy. Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology for collecting participant perspectives. Chapter 5 engages practitioner voices to illuminate subthemes embodiment and emotions; Chapter 6 focuses on the tenets of belonging and becoming. Chapter 7 describes additional emergent themes from participant interviews, which include reflections on practical limitations of the field, students, and practitioners' hopes for impact. Lastly, Chapter 8 summarizes the research and offers recommendations for future inquiry and ideas for practical application. Chapter 8 ends with a reflection on the value of whole human pedagogy for education abroad.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The issue of pedagogy has concerned scholars and educators since the beginning of education itself. The philosophies and practices of classroom education have evolved significantly since, but most of the pedagogical praxis in the Euro-U.S. realm remains deeply influenced by the mind/body epistemology—the idea that the mind and body are separate entities, with academic privilege given to the mind. Since the 1970s, many scholars have developed alternative pedagogical approaches that seek to prioritize student wellness, decolonize academic systems, and foster social justice. Alternative pedagogical approaches, such as critical and contemplative pedagogies, are by no means the norm in Euro-U.S. higher education, but have been gaining notable momentum throughout the past several decades.

Since the mid-20th century, education abroad has also increased in popularity as an element of U.S. undergraduate education. Study abroad programs may be designed by any combination of faculty, university study abroad staff, and third-party providers with varying levels of knowledge and concern for pedagogy, subject matter, and financial and logistical feasibility. Education abroad notably relies on Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning, emphasizing phases of learning that include experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting. While experiential learning constitutes a deeply influential methodological position, it isn't substantively ideological: Kolb (1984) emphasizes educational quality but does not tie that quality to liberative social transformation or any other ideology.

Education abroad makes departures from "traditional" classroom learning, most obviously by literally departing the classroom. Despite the reimagined physical and geographical learning contexts, U.S.-based study abroad programs remain a product of the Euro-U.S. educational system. While critical, contemplative, and other alternative pedagogies have

emerged in traditional higher education classrooms over the past several decades, education abroad has yet to see a corresponding uptick in alternative pedagogical literature.

This chapter will offer an overview of education abroad, including its history, important terms, and key theory of experiential learning. The chapter will then investigate the dominant Euro-U.S. epistemology and critiques. The final section will explore the emergence of alternative pedagogies for higher education, specifically highlighting critical pedagogy and contemplative pedagogy. The literature described in this chapter will set the stage for the researcher's conception of whole human pedagogy in Chapter 3.

Education Abroad

As of 2018-2019 (the last reported data before the Covid-19 pandemic), nearly 11 percent of all undergraduates study abroad at some point during their degree program, which shows an increase of nearly 400 percent over the past 30 years (IIE, 2023). With rapid rises in both attention and participation (Covid-19 pandemic aside), the field of education abroad is occupied by questions of how to implement programming in the best possible ways.

History

Traveling to accumulate greater knowledge is an ancient practice that extensively effects a wide range of contexts throughout human history, from lectures along the Silk Road to cross-continental pilgrimages. In the case of the United States in the 19th-century, foreign study in Western Europe (in the name of prestige by the few who could afford it), missionary and volunteer service (predominantly from a Christian, white-savior perspective), and tourism and group travel (also focused on Western Europe) informed what eventually would become the beginning of U.S. study abroad (Hoffa, 2007).

The formal notion of taking young people abroad to experience other cultures began during the second half of the 19th century but didn't translate into for-credit abroad programs until the early 1920s, in the wake of responses to World War I. Hoffa (2007) explains that U.S. study abroad emerged in the early 1920s and was:

> an institutional and academic endeavor, taking place in another country and leading to credit toward a student's home institution degree…Unlike other [previous] ways in which young Americans were introduced to the world beyond their national borders, this campus-based undertaking was neither matriculated study for a foreign university degree nor extracurricular enrichment. Rather, it was an innovative and programmatic attempt on the part of a few American colleges to combine academic and experiential learning modes in a foreign setting. As such, it represented a departure from anything that had come before. (p. 69-70)

This period of growth and reinvention gave rise to three lasting program models: junior year abroad, faculty-led study tours, and summer short-term programs. After a widespread pause of travel programming during World War II, U.S. student travel grew again in the 1950s and 1960s, initially driven by volunteer and cross-cultural immersion programs. Throughout its rising popularity, many new types of programs arose, demonstrating that "no single vision of overseas education emerged" until several organizations came together to form an infrastructure for education abroad (Hoffa, 2007, p. 189).

Four main organizations, the Institute of International Education (IIE), the United States National Student Association (USUNA), the Council on Student Travel (CST), and the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (later, *Affairs*; NAFSA), "promoted and responded to the evolution of overseas education for American students and institutions," by collecting and

reporting information, creating trade conferences and publications, and fostering networks of education abroad professionals (Hoffa, 2007, p. 191). Further, this infrastructure "made it possible for campuses to see what they were doing individually *as part of a national activity,* with shared and seasoned wisdom furnishing the basis for the emergence of a new dimension of American higher education" (Hoffa, 2007, p. 191). The 1960s saw increased, and largely unresolved, debates over what constitutes the proper structure and function of a study abroad program. While program goals, models, geographies, and curricula diversified, the collaborative field of education abroad solidified. From this point forward, education abroad became an acknowledged feature of U.S. higher education accompanied by ongoing conversations about best practices amongst professionals.

Study abroad participation rose amongst the waves of college activism during the Vietnam War through 1973 but dropped again by 1979. Through the 1980s, participation waxed and waned through the tumultuous international relations of the Cold War. The notion of "globalization," or connection and competition across a global context, rose through the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s, when it became a focal point of international relations and education abroad both after the Cold War ended. This constituted:

> a shift to an era in which universities and professions increasingly recognized that the development of competitive social capital became a necessity for young Americans. American students needed to learn how to navigate a flat world in which it was no longer a given that the United States was the unquestioned hegemonic world power. Thus, accreditation agencies for students in fields like business and engineering began to emphasize that graduates in these disciplines needed to acknowledge international

> perspectives and standards. Study abroad became important for students in all disciplines. (Hoffa & DePaul, 2010, p. 41)

However, as of 2018-2019, only 11 percent of U.S. undergraduates complete for-credit study abroad programs. Further, the social, racial, and economic disparities that dictate which students do or don't participate have not significantly changed since the 1960s: "the overwhelming majority of education abroad participants are White, female, young, single, financially comfortable, and without disability" (Barclay Hamir & Gozik, 2017; Hoffa & DePaul, 2010, p. 115; IIE, 2023). White students are substantially overrepresented, making up 68 to 84 percent of study abroad participants during each academic year since 2000 (IIE, 2023). Additionally, study abroad draws students predominantly from families with high educational attainment while underrepresenting low-income students, regardless of race (Hoffa & DePaul, 2010). Initiatives to increase diversity in student profiles have been a focus of the field in recent decades and will likely continue to be moving forward (Barclay Hamir & Gozik, 2017).

Moreover, European destinations make up more than half of study abroad program participation. These trends indicate an overrepresentation of white and European histories, cultures, and epistemologies in the contemporary landscape of U.S.-based study abroad programming. Hoffa and DePaul (2010) argue that "it is clear that while the majority of U.S. students continue to study abroad in traditional destinations, a gradually increasing proportion of students are choosing nontraditional ones" (p. 196). This refers to a modest increase in study abroad destinations outside of Western Europe since 1965. The increase itself, while not enough to balance the discrepancy, may be a small win for the field, but the notion of non-European destinations as "nontraditional," as evident in this quote, is an attitude that stands to be corrected.

Paradigms

Vande Berg et al. (2012) explain three master narratives of education abroad that demonstrate the evolving history of education abroad, starting with the positivist approach. The positivist approach sees the external, "objective" world as the source of learning and thus, argues that the purpose of education abroad is to send students to locations with knowledge for them to acquire, which, problematically, were almost always the "civilized societies" of Western Europe. The positivist approach was widely used during the early decades of education abroad, but is still apparent today, particularly in narratives about exposing students to the "Other." The relativist paradigm, on the other hand, posits that all cultures are different but equal and emphasizes common humanity across cultures. In practice, education abroad rooted in relativism emphasizes immersion, placing the greatest value on quantity of time spent with a host community.

In contrast to both of the first two theories, the constructivist paradigm advocates that, in a constantly changing world, learners create and cocreate their reality, world, and knowledge through their perception, experience, and meaning making: "our perspective *constructs* the reality that we describe…the observer interacts with reality via his or her perspective in such a way that reality is organized according to that perspective" (Bennett, 2012, p. 99). Further, "people do not *have* a worldview; rather, they are constantly in the process of interacting with the world in ways that both express the pattern of the history of their interactions and contribute to those patterns" (Bennett, 2012, p. 101). Culture is thus a way of organizing and understanding the world, made up of patterns of behavior or lived experience for a certain group within some boundary condition (often a geographical nation-state). Additionally, culture is dynamic, changing, and self-reflexive—the notion that defining culture is itself a function of culture.

Constructivist intercultural learning requires reflexivity not only conceptually, but personally. Harvey (2021) proposes that "intercultural learning must begin by deepening awareness and understanding of how we each make meaning of and experience the world and helping us see and appreciate that others are having equally complex, valid, yet very different experiences." A constructivist approach emphasizes understanding one's own culture, background, and assumptions, as well as underlying assumptions of the field.

The goal of constructivism is to decrease ethnocentrism (the understanding of "one's own culture as central to reality") in favor of ethnorelativism (the understanding of one's own beliefs as "one organization of reality among many viable possibilities") (Bennett, 2012, p. 103). Constructivism informs intercultural learning that helps individuals engage more effectively with others, imagine alterative realities, "transcend our own limited experience and embody the world as another is experiencing it" (Bennett, 2012, p. 102). This paper strongly aligns itself with the constructivist paradigm.

Experiential Learning

The field of study abroad centers experiential learning and reflection with significant influence from scholars John Dewey and David Kolb. Dewey considers experience a replacement for "dualisms (such as mind/body, reason/emotion, individual/society) with continuities that more closely resemble our actual lives;" he sought to "revise philosophy's way of seeing our relationship to the world" (Hildebrand, 2016, p. 74-77). Dewey understood experiential learning as the link between personal development, education, and work, and advocated for the connection between learning and students' capacity for social service (Kolb, 1984; Punteney, 2019).

Kolb's (1984) explanation of experiential learning constitutes a "holistic theory that defines learning as the major process of human adaptation involving the whole person" in which "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38; Kolb & Kolb, 2017, p. 11). Kolb's (1984) learning theory highlights four phases: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Experiential learning is conceptualized as a cycle, in which one phase leads into the next. In the concrete experience phase, the learner has an experience. In the reflective observation phase, the learner reflects on the experience based on what they already know and compares the experience to preexisting understandings. In abstract conceptualization, the learner transforms their thoughts about their experiences into testable concepts or theories. In active experimentation, the learner takes the new or altered understandings and experiments with action, which leads back into experiences (McLeod, 2017). The experiential learning cycle can start at any phase but must progress through all four stages. It is the transactions and transformations between the phases that matter (Kolb, 1984).

Kolb (1984) differentiates experiential learning from existing rationalist, cognitive, and behavioral educational theories because they emphasize acquisition and recall and/or disregard the subjective experience. Experiential learning, on the other hand, constitutes a more holistic approach that combines experience, perception, cognition, and behavior. Kolb (1984) summarizes experiential learning with four key takeaways:

> First is the emphasis on the process of adaptation and learning as opposed to content or outcomes. Second is that knowledge is a transformation process, being continuously created and recreated, not an independent entity to be acquired or transmitted. Third,

learning transforms experience in both its objective and subjective forms. Finally, to understand learning, we must understand the nature of knowledge, and vice versa. (p. 38)

Kolb (1984) argues that learning and knowing rely on the learner's ability to combine abstract and experiential knowledge through either internal transformation (personal reflection) or external transformation (experimental applied action).

Experiential learning departs from "behavioral theories of learning based on an empirical epistemology or the more implicit theories of learning that underlie traditional educational methods, methods that for the most part are based on a rational, idealist epistemology" (Kolb, 1984, p. 20). The basis of experiential learning, and thus education abroad, is already a rebellion against strict, dehumanized conceptions of classroom learning common in the U.S. educational system. The next section delves further into the Euro-U.S. epistemology that informs much of traditional U.S. classroom education.

Dominant Euro-U.S. Epistemology and Critiques

The European Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries saw the rise of French philosopher René Descartes, who emerged as one of the era's most prominent scholars. Descartes contributed one of the most powerful and influential ideological shifts since education's inception: the Cartesian or mind/body split. Descartes is best known for his signature phrase, "I think, therefore I am," which he clarifies further as he writes, "From that I knew that I was a substance, the whole essence of nature of which is to think…the soul by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from body," (quoted in Damasio, 2005, p. 249). In other words, Descartes argues that the mind and body are distinct, and further, that the mind is the center of thinking, knowing, and being.

Damasio (2005), whose book *Descartes' Error* uses clinical neuroscience to interrogate the relationship between emotions, bodies, and cognition, directly critiques Descartes: "This is Descartes' Error: the abyssal separation between body and mind, between the sizable, dimensioned, mechanically operated, infinitely divisible body stuff, on the one hand, and the unsizable, undimensioned, un-pushpullable, nondivisible mind stuff" (p. 250). Damasio (2005) explains that feelings have been restricted to a cognitive-only process. In response, he argues that feelings are fundamentally bodily processes that "let us *mind the body*" and "offer us a glimpse of what goes on in our flesh" (p. 159). When "thinking" fails to include bodies or emotions, what's left is a falsely detached cognition that European philosophy, emanating from Descartes' influence, deems "the mind."

Descartes' ideology has deeply influenced historically European thinking about intellectualism and reason over the past three centuries, so much so that the epistemology of the Euro-U.S. academy is virtually inseparable from it. The lasting impact of mind/body duality prioritizes mind and intellect over most other qualities of human existence. Moreover, Benefiel (2019) critiques Euro-U.S. epistemology by problematizing the demonization of subjective knowledge: "within the context of scientific materialism, the subjective realm of human perception, reasoning, and language are set in opposition to the objective realm of the physical world, its inexorable laws, and mathematics" and "only universal abstractions (mathematical or scientific) constitute legitimate knowledge or areas of inquiry" (p. 5-6). Euro-U.S. epistemology therefore creates the boundaries of which knowledge is valuable, as well as how that knowledge may be gathered and presented.

The United States possesses a history of education that spans over 300 years, which continues to inform present-day higher education:

> Many of today's college classrooms retain some of the features of the colonial model of education that existed between 1600 and 1800, which was designed for young men from elite family backgrounds. During the colonial period, the purpose of education was to promote the Christian religion, train men for the ministry, infuse moral standards, and discipline mental faculties (Rendón, 2009, p. 13).

Additionally, the role of the professor as an expert in total control of the classroom originated in this context and is still largely observable today. Rendón (2009) explains that some perspectives and practices in education began to shift given the rise of humanist, behavioral, and cognitive perspectives of the 19th century, and further through critical pedagogy in the 20th century and holistic education in the 1990s and 2000s.

However, most higher education in the United States continues to rely on a set of agreements that Rendón (2014) argues dominate the present pedagogical landscape:

1. The agreement to privilege intellectual/rational knowing
2. The agreement of separation [of teacher and student, of student and studied, of disciplines]
3. The agreement of competition
4. The agreement of perfection
5. The agreement of monoculturalism
6. The agreement to privilege outer work
7. The agreement to avoid self-examination (p. 26).

These seven agreements enforce an educational system based in external, objective knowing that prizes the mind and intellectualism, and competition and perfection while excluding interculturalism, relationality, reflexivity, and expansive epistemologies. These agreements

inform and are informed by the historical Euro-U.S. educational context, whose "dominant belief system is powerful, entrenched, validated, and constantly rewarded by the social structure that created it—so much so that even when we begin to see that some of the agreements in the belief systems are flawed and in need of change, we find it very difficult to change them." (Rendón, 2009, p. 24).

Euro-U.S. epistemological dominance is hardly contained within the Euro-U.S. context. Throughout history, education systems based in Europe and later North America have served colonization and assimilation projects, including the violent subjugation of Indigenous communities across the Americas (Stein, 2022). Likewise, white, Euro-American epistemologies continue to be exported through ongoing global educational development projects: as Rizvi (2007) explains that "through the global diffusion of Western ideas, thinking about education has become almost universal" (p. 257). Additionally, Stein (2021) critiques the ways "Western *uni*-versities make claims to *uni*-versal relevance, despite being rooted in the particularities of medieval Christian Europe, and later of European Enlightenment knowledge" (p. 399). The mind/body split thus constitutes a significant component of Euro-U.S. universality, which has the potential to cause "epistemic violence, including epistemicide" for non-Euro-U.S. ways of knowing and being (Stein, 2021, p. 405). Euro-U.S. epistemological dominance fueled by the myth of universality is thus a powerful project of coloniality.

Decolonial theory, introduced in Chapter 1, drives criticism of Euro-U.S. epistemological dominance. Fregoso Bailón and De Lissovoy (2019) describe decolonial theory's contributions to the dismantling of Euro-U.S. epistemological supremacy:

> decolonial theory demonstrates the dominative force and drive that inhabits Western epistemologies and the intellectual projects that these epistemologies have produced, as

> well as the ways that Western modernity has been coextensive with a violence against and refusal of non-Western and indigenous ways of knowing and being…Decolonial theory presents a much more radical challenge within education than multicultural education as we have known it, to the extent that the latter depends to a large degree on a Western epistemological framework even as it contests the limits that determine which cultures are privileged and valorized in schools and universities. (p. 356)

Likewise, in her critique of contemporary higher education, Stein (2021) argues that "decolonial and abolitionist critiques point to the need to support and regenerate forms of knowledge and education that have been suppressed by the hegemony of the modern university" (p. 400). Rejecting oppressive ideologies, embracing non-dominant epistemologies, and interrogating hegemonic control all decenter Euro-U.S. supremacy in curriculum design.

This process of decentering dominant Euro-U.S. academic philosophy, thus, aligns with a decolonial approach to education by expanding definitions of knowing, learning, and being, specifically to embrace and cultivate alternative models. hooks (2010) writes,

> We are bombarded daily by a colonizing mentality…that not only shapes consciousness and actions but also provides material rewards for submission and acquiescence that far exceed any material gains for resistance, so we must be constantly engaging new ways of thinking and being. We must be critically vigilant. (p. 26)

Embracing alternative pedagogies with U.S.-based students constitutes a compelling step towards combating notions of one singular, universal Euro-U.S. epistemology; creating alternative, justice-centered pedagogies is a practice of enacting critical vigilance.

Alternative Pedagogies

While Euro-U.S. education largely relies on a false sense of epistemological universality, in recent decades, resistance to dominant ideologies in academic settings can manifest through the creation of alternative methods of teaching and learning, or alternative pedagogies. Mohanty (1990) explains:

> Resistance lies in self-conscious engagement with dominant, normative discourses and representations and in the active creation of oppositional analytic and cultural spaces…Uncovering and reclaiming subjugated knowledge is one way to lay claims to alternative histories. But these knowledges need to be understood and defined pedagogically, as questions of strategy and practice as well as of scholarship, in order to transform educational institutions radically. (as cited in hooks, 1994, p. 22)

In this excerpt, Mohanty (1990) calls for intentional pedagogical efforts towards decentering oppressive ideologies, such as capitalism, colonialism, and white supremacy, and instead centering alternative epistemologies that have been ostracized by Euro-U.S. universalism.

Over the past several decades, alternative pedagogical design has increased in popularity within traditional higher education settings. The following section focuses on two examples of alternative pedagogy that inform this study's conceptual framework: critical pedagogy and contemplative pedagogy.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical theory, introduced in Chapter 1, informs critical pedagogy, which has gained momentum through the latter half of the 20th and beginning of the 21st-centuries. hooks (2010) explains: "Critical pedagogy encompasses all the areas of study that aim to redress biases that have informed ways of teaching and knowing in our society ever since the first public school

opened" (p. 23). As hooks (2010) describes in this excerpt, critical pedagogy includes all anti-oppressive theoretical standpoints, including queer theory, decolonial theory, and disability rights theory.

Berila (2016) outlines three tenets of critical pedagogy:

> First, critical pedagogy seeks to empower disenfranchised groups to democratically participate in their educational process…
>
> Second, critical pedagogy argues that schools traditionally work against the interests of most students who are hegemonically conditioned to adopt the interests of the elite ruling class…
>
> Finally, though no less importantly, critical pedagogy centers a theory of resistance, to explain why disenfranchised groups often do not succeed in traditional educational systems that marginalize them. (p. 8-9)

The overarching theme of these tenets is that the educational system was built by and for students who are white, wealthy, and male. Critical pedagogy emphasizes empowering students of all identities, while highlighting the contextualized lived experiences of disenfranchised individuals and groups.

Paulo Freire is widely known as a founding scholar of the critical pedagogy movement. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), he discusses the nature of oppression and the need for a pedagogy that is written by and for populations that are systemically marginalized. He describes the existing "banking model of education," wherein teachers, the possessors of knowledge and power, deposit information into their students. This method of education prompts students to unquestioningly accept the reality of oppressive systems, rather than learning to think critically

and problem solve. Instead, Freire (1970) advocates for dialogue between individuals, which requires both trust and hope, and encompasses both reflection and action (praxis).

Freire's (1970) work deeply influenced bell hooks' (1994) *Teaching to Transgress*, which includes several essays about hooks' "engaged pedagogy." hooks (1994) builds on Freire's rejection of the banking system of education and emphasizes both wellbeing and justice in the pursuit of education as a practice of freedom. hooks' (1994; 2010) work will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Importantly, hooks (1994) warns that critical content does not necessarily equate to critical, anti-oppression, or liberative *pedagogy.* She explains that many professors teach diverse authors, but do not talk about race in their literary analysis. Likewise, professors may teach about feminist theory while "sharing that information through body posture, tone, word choice, and so on that perpetuate those very hierarchies and biases they are critiquing" (p. 141). Using subversive content in a non-subversive way does a disservice to the content, the author, and the cause. Critical pedagogy must inform not just *what* professors teach, but also *how.*

Contemplative Pedagogy

Contemplative pedagogy has grown in popularity in the United States since the 1970s, but particularly through the 2000s (Benefiel, 2019; Berila, 2016; Thompson, 2017). The field of contemplative education is guided by the Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (ACMHE), which defines contemplative pedagogy as:

> a method of teaching that intentionally engages an awareness of, and reflection on, one's experiences, identities, thoughts, emotions, and values. This enables students to connect their learning to how they live their lives. Contemplative pedagogies employ a diverse array of *contemplative practices* as means of reflection and introspection. Because

> contemplative methods center students' own experiences in their learning, they can be adapted to any academic discipline or subject. (n.d.)

Contemplative practices can include deep listening, storytelling, dialogues, yoga, dance, meditation, silence, journaling, visualization, and other classroom rituals. While many of these practices stem from traditionally Eastern spiritual contemplative practices, they can and are used in classrooms without a religious creed or ideological undertone (ACMHE, n.d.; Berila, 2016). The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society created a diagram called the "Tree of Contemplative Practices," which includes a more expansive range of contemplative exercises and incorporates traditions of African Americans, Native Americans, and Euro-Americans (ACMHE, n.d.; Thompson, 2017).

Berila (2016) specifically links mindful teaching exercises to anti-oppression pedagogy to help students "cultivate self-awareness, embodiment, balance, clarity, and compassion" (p. 4-5). She argues that contemplative practice offers opportunities to reclaim bodies as sites of knowledge, better understand internal responses, think critically about disembodiment as a tool of disenfranchisement, and investigate the ways that oppression manifests cognitively, emotionally, and somatically.

Alternative Pedagogies in Education Abroad

While global educators may be employing alternative methods already, there exists a marked lack of formalized literature or practical guidelines for applying these methods in education abroad contexts. Only since 2020, and only sparsely, has scholarship begun to emerge specifically about contemplative or critical pedagogical approaches in education abroad.

Regarding contemplative pedagogy, Conboy and Clancy (2022) conducted a case study of ten participants, 18 months after returning from an undergraduate study abroad program in

France that utilized mindfulness practices, including meditation and emphasis on the senses, during both the pre-departure orientation and program. They concluded that the mindfulness practices enhanced students' external awareness, self-awareness, connection, and memory. This study follows Clancy's (2020) dissertation, which addresses the implementation of contemplative pedagogies on short-term study abroad programs, particularly regarding intercultural competence and relational modes of engagement, based on a case study of an undergraduate study abroad program to Singapore in 2019.

In regard to critical pedagogy for study abroad, Taylor and Deschert (2022) assert that generic, one-size-fits-all education favors dominant social identities, which demonstrates a need for critical pedagogies in study abroad programming. They present a case study of an undergraduate short-term study abroad program in engineering that was taught in Germany in 2019. This article links its interpretation of critical pedagogy to increasing inclusion in student development of intercultural competence. Additionally, while Pipitone (2018) does not directly claim a critical pedagogy, she presents her perspective on study abroad for social change, which often fits critical and decolonial priorities. She identifies problematic ways study abroad programs often reproduce colonial and exoticizing power dynamics and uses a place-based learning framework to derive pedagogical practices for social change such as decentering the Euro-U.S. perspective and rethinking the relationship between local and global.

Chapter Closing

Pedagogies that rebel against dominant Euro-U.S. epistemology, like critical and contemplative pedagogies, are becoming more common in classroom-based higher education. Some education abroad practitioners or professors may also choose to adapt and apply elements of these pedagogies to their international programs. However, current literature sparsely

addresses implementation of alternative pedagogies to education abroad and it does not derive alternative pedagogical approaches for education abroad specifically. This study fills that gap by formally investigating whole human pedagogical aims and applications for education abroad programming.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

Education abroad already rebels against strict, dehumanized conceptions of classroom learning common in the U.S. educational system and thus presents a unique opportunity to intentionally emphasize *human* learning in praxis. Walking between a guesthouse and a metro station, breathlessly hiking high-altitude grasslands, sharing the presence of host siblings, or making and eating traditional foods are all examples of *human* learning. These experiences are, perhaps, profoundly meaningful, spiritual, intellectual, or analytic; they have the potential to lead students to live a learning life in ways more expansive than the prescriptive standards of the dominant academic culture. This study argues that education abroad has the potential to epitomize transformative education if the field continues to imagine new ways of being and learning.

Chapter 2 described the history of Euro-U.S. academia's traditional depersonalized and disembodied processes and began to introduce alternatives. This chapter utilizes Thompson's *Teaching with Tenderness* (2017) and hooks' *Teaching to Transgress* (1994) and *Teaching Critical Thinking* (2010) to develop the conceptual framework of whole human pedagogy. This framework revolves around four primary tenets for learning: embodiment, emotions, belonging, and becoming.

A Call for Whole Human Pedagogy: The Crisis of Being

In his 1970 work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire names dehumanization as a primary facet of oppression: "dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it, is a *distortion* of the vocation of becoming more fully human" (p. 44). The pedagogy of the oppressed is a "pedagogy

of humankind" and serves as an instrument for discovering the manifestations of dehumanization (p. 54).

Freire (1970) explains that oppression dehumanizes oppressors and the oppressed simultaneously, but differently. Oppressors identify only themselves as "human beings," while they rank other people as "things." Thus, "the oppressed have been destroyed precisely because their situation has reduced them to things," (Freire, 1970, p. 68). The oppressors, seeking to convert everything into materialistic, measurable, and profitable entities, construct an economy in which "humanity is a 'thing,' and they possess it as an exclusive right, as inherited property" (Freire, 1970, p. 59). In doing so, "they cannot see that, in the egotistic pursuit of *having* as a possessing class, they suffocate in their own possessions and no longer *are*; they merely *have*" (p. 59). Therefore, the effects of dehumanization are namely that "the oppressed feel like 'things' owned by the oppressor. For the latter, *to be* is *to have*" (p. 64). Freire's (1970) work outlines a path to self-actualization through the organized struggle for liberation, driven by and for the oppressed. For this chapter, however, the key remains that dehumanization is the restriction of either party's ability to be. Thus, for both the oppressed and the oppressors, there exists a crisis of being.

When thinking about anti-oppression praxis and education abroad, an obvious question arises: why focus on anti-oppression processes when the majority of participants come from privileged identities? Most U.S. study abroad participants are white, financially comfortable, able-bodied women (Hoffa & DePaul, 2010; IIE, 2023). Between 2016 and 2023, the percentage of study abroad participants who were white remained between 68 and 71 percent (IIE, 2023). Diversifying student participation in study abroad has garnered discussion in the field (McCorristin, 2019), but simply getting underrepresented students signed up for programs

doesn't change the posture of education abroad towards marginalized identities. If Euro-U.S. academic spaces, including education abroad, are inhospitable to "the oppressed,"—if these systems constitute historical and epistemological violence against marginalized communities, as decolonial theory demonstrates (Stein, 2022)—what is the incentive for these students to join those spaces? Is it ethical to recruit students of marginalized identities into places that aren't designed with their recognition and care in mind? A true effort towards diversifying education abroad requires examination of *both* presence and practice. Stein (2022) critiques higher education for maintaining colonized conceptions of *knowing*, *relating,* and *being*. Reimagining epistemological, relational, and ontological learning is one way educators and practitioners can strive for *equity* beyond just inclusion in education abroad.

As it stands, education abroad constitutes an intense point of contact with predominantly privileged student populations. From this lens, education abroad can either be a point of perpetuation or a point of intervention in existing systems of power. Leaving study abroad to serve socially advantaged students with epistemologies that are indicative of privilege and historical violence perpetuates colonial and racial subjugation. However, practitioners can also choose to view programs with high levels of student privilege as opportunities to dive into anti-oppression learning with a population whose voices are more likely to be heard by (or be part of) systems in power. As demonstrated above, Freire (1970) cites *being* as a problem for the oppressors, as well as the oppressed. Interrogating pedagogy and process in education abroad allows the work of inviting greater diversity in study abroad by enacting change in systems that influence how we think about *knowing, relating,* and *being* that will better serve a higher rate of representation *while also* striving for change in wider society by creating intervention for more privileged populations.

The Lineage of Being-Centered Pedagogies

Thich Nhat Hanh (1987) famously illustrates the concept of *being vs. doing* (one might also call this mindfulness) with the image of doing the dishes. In modern society, particularly within the capitalist context, we might think first of washing the dishes for the purpose of having clean dishes. One might imagine those dishes efficiently cleansed, dried, and neatly stacked, already beginning on the utilitarian expectation of food served the next day, so the dish washer might have the energy to get up, go to work, and lend productivity to a larger collective. Alternatively, Thich Nhat Hanh makes a case for washing the dishes instead for the warmth of the water, the slickness of the soap, the feeling on our hands, the time spent at the sink. Mindful being means washing the dishes for the sake of *washing the dishes.* In the same way, whole human education is fundamentally a learning for learning's sake—because we are here with each other and because we hear and see and feel with each other—because being is learning in the simplest and most important sense.

It is no coincidence that the two scholars that most inform this chapter were both inspired by the prolific work of Thich Nhat Hanh. bell hooks prevails as one of the most influential and foundational scholars in critical and alternative pedagogies, particularly given her work *Teaching to Transgress (1994).* hooks (1994) expands on the work of Freire, adding her own experiences as a Black, queer, female teacher from the Southern United States. She builds on her initial conceptions of *engaged* pedagogy in *Teaching Critical Thinking (2010),* a follow-up to her first teaching manifesto. Likewise, Becky Thompson (2017) builds on bell hooks (1994; 2010), as well as the broader fields of multiracial feminism, trauma studies, and contemplative practice in her work *Teaching with Tenderness*. Continuing in this lineage, this study builds on the work of

both hooks (1994; 2010) and Thompson (2017) by creating a model of whole human pedagogy specifically tailored to education abroad.

Thompson (2017) and hooks (1994; 2010) both testify to the harms of academic life—to the point that Thompson suffered chronic, debilitating migraines while teaching and hooks experienced crippling depression *after* being granted tenure. The disembodiment and dehumanization of the academy is not in service of full, human-oriented learning or to participants' wellbeing. The following two sections provide an overview of hooks (1994; 2010) and Thompson's (2017) work on alternative pedagogical practices for student wellbeing and justice in higher education classrooms.

hooks' Engaged Pedagogy

In *Teaching to Transgress* (1994) and *Teaching Critical Thinking* (2010), bell hooks describes her own "engaged pedagogy," a progressive, holistic education that emphasizes student wellbeing and critical thinking as it "aims to restore students' will to think, and their will to be fully self-actualized" (2010, p. 8). hooks (1994) positions the classroom as an interactive, communal learning space that relies on individuals' presence and interest in one another, as well as the excitement of learning and the pleasure of teaching.

The core of hooks' (1994) approach is the notion of education as a "practice of freedom." She repeats this refrain throughout her pedagogical manifesto to contrast the widespread understanding of "the banking system of education (based on the assumption that memorizing information and regurgitating it represented gaining knowledge that could be deposited, stored and used at a later date)" (1994, p. 5). She asserts that the rituals of the classroom are often "rituals of control" that stress domination by professors, privileged classes, and institutions. Alternatively, education as a practice of freedom embraces critical thinking, recognition of each

individual participant, excitement and pleasure, active participation, and community. A core emphasis on the wellbeing of both students and teachers distinguishes hooks' engaged pedagogy from other forms of critical or feminist pedagogies.

The role of the educator constitutes another major theme of hooks' (1994) work. She explains that through the performativity involved in teaching, the educator "serves as a catalyst that calls everyone to become more and more engaged, to become active participants in learning" (p. 11). The *engagement* in engaged pedagogy begins with the call of the teacher, with the educator's ability and willingness to set a tone of excitement, investment, and vulnerability. hooks (1994) writes against the "fear that the conditions of that self would interfere with the teaching process" and holds tightly to the unpopular idea of "the intellectual as someone who sought to be whole" (p. 16-17). She explains that self-actualization, or even simpler, acknowledging feelings at all, has become taboo for university professors. In fact, professors are expected to exemplify nearly the opposite: a profound and performative self-flagellation for the sake of presenting the supposed best of one's disembodied brain carved and composed on the page. hooks (1994), however, argues that if students seek meaningful, personal, emotional learning for a world beyond the classroom, the primary prerequisite for teaching should be one's own quest for self-actualization. hooks (1994) writes, "Professors who embrace the challenge of self-actualization will be better able to create pedagogical practices that engage students, providing them with ways of knowing that enhance their capacity to live fully and deeply" (p. 22). If teachers hope to facilitate teaching and learning about humanness, embracing humanness in themselves must be their first task.

In addition to a performer or engager, hooks (1994) describes the teacher as "healer." She largely credits the mindfulness teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh for inspiring her understanding of

teachers as healers through "pedagogy which emphasized wholeness, a union of mind, body, and spirit" (p. 14). hooks (1994) writes:

> To educate as the practice of freedom…comes easiest to those of us who teach who also believe that there is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred; who believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin. (p. 13)

From this perspective, teaching centers processes of healing through witness and accompaniment. Teachers have an opportunity to offer space for reconnecting and enhancing the growth in humanness that Euro-U.S. epistemology strips away.

Thompson's Tenderness Pedagogy

In her 2017 book *Teaching with Tenderness*, sociology professor Becky Thompson offers a teaching philosophy that leaves space for tenderness to enter the classroom. On the first page, she describes her understanding of the word:

> By tenderness I mean an embodied way of being that allows us to listen deeply to each other, to consider perspectives that we might have thought way outside our own worldviews, to practice a patience and attentiveness that allow people to do their best work, to go beyond the given, the expected, the status quo. Tenderness makes room for emotion; offers a witness for experiences people have buried or left unspoken; welcomes silence, breath, and movement; and sees justice as key to our survival. (p. 1)

Thompson identifies herself as building on the foundation laid by hooks (1994), Freire (1970), multiracial feminism, queer pedagogy, and critical race theory, among others, in pursuit of justice-engaged pedagogy that incorporates bodily awareness and spirituality.

Thompson's (2017) writing illustrates an intersection between contemplative practice, multiracial feminism, and trauma studies. She explains that these three fields all reside largely at the margins of the traditional academic world, rebel against the mind/body split (with priority and privilege given to the mind), and acknowledge that teaching and learning as well as "intellectual, spiritual, and political growth" all start in the body: "the happy body, the brown body, the young body, the worried body, the hurt body, the curious body, the growing body" (Thompson, 2017, p. 12). Inviting bodies to learning, thus, becomes the emphasis of Thompson's approach.

Thompson (2017) writes largely from her personal experience both as a student and a teacher. Her writing includes an homage to Brandeis professor Maury Stein, who modeled classroom tenderness through Thompson's formation. She recounts his classroom rituals, his collaborative and communal teaching, his open-heart encounters with the weight of the world, his balance of the personal and intellectual, and his deep joy in his vocation. She reflects on her hesitation to implement his teaching techniques as a young professor and her fears that as a woman, emphasizing emotion would undermine her credibility in the academy.

Although Thompson (2017) explains that tenderness is a difficult concept to locate in precise language, she specifically illuminates a pedagogy of tenderness in two passages:

> A pedagogy of tenderness: those spontaneous, planned, and found rituals of inclusion that lean us toward justice, that rest on rigorous study, that treat the classroom as sacred

> space, that coach each other into habits of deep listening, that treat 'memory as an antidote to alienation,' that multiply joy. (p. 5)
>
> A pedagogy of tenderness makes room for intimacy and vulnerability alongside deep study of guiding texts...makes room for imagination, for dropping a script and spontaneously trying to teach in a new way. (p. 7)

Thompson (2017) provides an open and active definition that shows what tenderness does rather than what tenderness is. A pedagogy of tenderness springs forth from inviting bodies and emotion (contemporary and historical) into the classroom, from contemplation, from embodied writing, and from collaboration. Tenderness emerges from an alternative communal way of being. Thompson's pedagogy opens the door for students to enter common, hospitable space, interact with other humans, and engage learning holistically.

Key Tenets of Whole Human Pedagogy

Thompson (2017) imagines tenderness into the classroom as she asks, "What is it about the structure of academe that leads us to flee our bodies? How can we find them again? What risks will this take? What truths do we need to tell about our lives and our teaching that we have been hiding from ourselves, or barely whispering?" (p. 13) From a conceptual standpoint, whole human pedagogy muses: Why does education necessitate compartmentalization? How might educators imagine a pedagogy that centers integrated humanness instead? And how might education abroad—a fundamental practice of humans existing in the *world*—be an opportune place to make that shift?

There are several areas where tenderness pedagogy and engaged pedagogy overlap to inform what this paper refers to as "whole human pedagogy." Both Thompson (2017) and hooks (1994; 2010) revere the classroom as communal learning space involving both individual and

shared investment. Each prioritizes social justice in both learning content and process. Both center ritual and community building in classroom contexts. Most importantly, both understand teachers and students as whole human beings and see the necessity of inviting whole humans into communal learning spaces. This section describes four of the most consequential contributions that tenderness pedagogy and engaged pedagogy share: embodiment, emotions, belonging, and becoming. Further, this section demonstrates how and why whole human pedagogy is uniquely suited to education abroad. All four of these tenets are profoundly experiential: the core refrains of experiential learning—experience, reflection, analysis, and action—reverberate throughout (Kolb, 1984).

Embodiment

Chapter 2 delved into the prevalence of the mind/body split myth in Euro-U.S. academia and alluded to embodied epistemology as a decolonial form of knowledge. In that vein, both hooks (1994) and Thompson (2017) embrace embodiment as a powerfully liberatory form of knowledge. As an element of teaching and learning, Thompson (2017) describes embodied classrooms as

> spaces where we take seriously that the mind extends throughout the body and the body throughout the mind; where we attend to individual bodies, the collective body, and our bodies in space; and where we know that it is impossible to completely separate one body from another, both living bodies and those of our ancestors. (p. 113)

Embodiment is at once a way of feeling, being, comprehending, and acting. It is a state of attentiveness and groundedness, attendance and inhabitance; embodiment is the endeavor to stay with wholeness, despite the forces that restrict and renounce it.

Thompson (2017) writes about academics "ransoming off" body parts and her fears that she was passing the same costs she paid to become an academic along to her students (p. 36). In response, she developed a "body-centered approach to teaching, one that keeps intellect in the room while teaching through the body," (p. 38). This included incorporating "embodied writing—prose and poetry that made room for emotion, personal narrative, nonlinear structure, and experimentation" which she hoped might help students avoid the mind/body splitting and ransoming that she experienced (Thompson, 2017, p. 37).

Thompson (2017) explains, "inviting the body into the classroom can't be a one-time thing. It can't be an intellectual exercise" (p. 40). A pedagogy of tenderness demands intentionally inclusive and consistent rituals of inviting bodies. She starts with:

> rituals to invite the body into the classroom because it is no small accomplishment for many students to come to class in their bodies or stay in them while we are together…Students who have had to vacate their bodies—due to the trauma of war, abuse during childhood, or a disability—may come to class not even knowing that they don't live in their bodies. (p. 63)

Students who feel disembodied may feel consistently numb or have a hard time engaging with course content; they may be physically present, but emotionally and intellectually distant. On the other side, reclaiming embodiment can feel foreign or scary for students who have spent long periods of time living outside of their bodies. Thompson (2017) explains:

> For people who have had to leave their bodies, recognizing why and how that happened can feel like losing your life… This is shaky, difficult ground that most of us have been taught to walk away from. But then I wonder, what happens when we don't teach about disembodiment, particularly when there is a deep connection between being in one's

> body and learning, between living in one's body and being able to envision a future? (p. 67)

Highlighting the deep connection between bodies and learning thus becomes cornerstone in Thompson's (2017) actualization of accompaniment in teaching. She explains that incorporating guided meditations, breathing exercises, or yoga practices followed by free writing can energize, deescalate, or bear witness to students' energy: "Yoga (and meditation) can relax people enough to let their guards down a bit, to take in layers of meaning in the books and discussions that may have otherwise been missed… Yoga philosophy helps us understand that being fully in one's body and being fully in one's mind are inseparable" (p. 77-78).

Additionally, it is no coincidence that both of these authors are writing about harm and healing in academia at the same time that they're writing about intersectional feminism and anti-racism. hooks (1994) explains: "to call attention to the body is to betray the legacy of repression and denial that has been handed down to us by our professorial elders, who have been usually white and male" (p. 191). The positionality of the body matters: trans bodies, bodies of color, queer bodies, disabled bodies all hold different levels of "acceptability" within academic space. For many students, the trauma of academic disembodiment is multiplied based on the body they inhabit. Thus, it is not only an issue of wellbeing, but one of liberation—for students who have been systemically marginalized by academic institutions, for all students who learn anti-oppression material, and for educators who endeavor to create communal learning that better reflects the liberatory spaces we imagine.

Embodiment for Education Abroad. Education abroad is a bodily process before it becomes an intellectual one. One surely has intellectual intentions, but the simple act of stepping on a plane is physical before it is anything else. The corporeal discomfort of long hours in airline seats, the shallow breaths of anxiety or excitement, and the moment of realization that one is surrounded by signs in a new language, in an airport surrounded by a new landscape are fundamentally body experiences. Closely following are encounters with unfamiliar foods, different styles of beds or toilets, and local methods of transportation. Education abroad programs may include site visits with walking meditation exercises or religious prostrations, dance or drumming classes, hikes or water sports.

Education abroad programs are commended for being immersive. While advertisements largely focus on language or culture, the process of immersion is also *physical.* Participants' bodies exist in a significantly different context and location, which creates experiences of displacement and spatial learning. Pipitone and Raghavan (2017) offer a case study of a short-term study abroad program to Morocco from a socio-spatial perspective, which "embraces meaning-making as a participatory and collaborative process mediated through the body and embedded within social, spatial, and temporal realities" (p. 265). The researchers note that when given reflective journal prompts about their experience in a space, students relied heavily on descriptions of sensory engagement—i.e., the sights, smells, sounds, *bodily* experiences of the place.

Jarman et al. (2022) provide a case study example of a short-term study abroad program about wartime medical professions in France and England. They identify place-based pedagogies as "embodied learning with physical sites stimulating bodily sensations" (p. 43) and cite embodied learning as a key finding of their research on transformative learning for study abroad.

Their article describes students' reflections on their physical feelings standing on Omaha Beach or walking through military cemeteries as some of their most powerful learning moments.

Further, the way learning space is constructed on education abroad programs differs significantly from traditional classroom learning. Instead of bringing their bodies to a specific place and time for learning (i.e., the classroom) and then leaving that space when the learning time has "finished," for education abroad programs, there is neither a specific learning space nor end time until the program concludes. Students are physically immersed in learning space for extended periods of time, which means that "learning space" cannot exile bodily needs or delay them until after. Participants will need to eat, use the bathroom, stretch, dress, medicate, bathe, rest. When learning space is extensively immersive, physical needs inherently become included in ways they aren't traditionally welcomed in academic contexts that embrace the mind/body split. Bodies and the human needs of bodies are part of the learning experience.

Most education abroad practitioners, and student development professionals more widely, are likely familiar with the phrase "comfort zone." The idea that there are "zones" of student comfort most conducive to learning was popularized by psychologist Lev Vygotsky in his 1970s work on the "zone of proximal development" (McLeod, 2019). Zone of proximal development theory describes three phases of learning wherein a learner cannot do a task, can do the task with assistance, and can do the task without assistance; proximal development happens when leaders are close to mastering a task, but still benefit from guidance from a skilled partner.

In 2000, German pedagogue Senninger created the learning zone model, which describes three zones of learning: the comfort zone, which encompasses familiarity and ease; the learning zone, which includes new experiences and opportunities to expand the comfort zone; and the panic zone, which is characterized by participant fear and overwhelm (Kouvela et al., 2018).

Senninger argues that the learning zone, with the right amount of challenge and exploration, is the optimal condition for student growth (Kouvela et al., 2018). While the learning zone model may often be applied to social, emotional, or intellectual "comfort zones," education abroad has the potential to reimagine the ways practitioners encourage or discourage physical discomfort. While it's happening, students may complain about misunderstood metro schedules that lead to long walks in cold rain, overnight train rides, unfamiliar foods and upset stomachs, but learning is happening there, in bodies, whether it's conscious or not. When they later speak of their programs, the discomfort will likely morph into stories they tell through laughter or wide-eyed fulfillment, complaints omitted.

As students are feeling their way through immersion and discomfort, professors and facilitators are doing the same. Practitioners are inherently part of the exercise; both program structure and physicality mirror this inclusion. hooks (1994) describes how the traditional placement of the professor at the front of the room, behind a podium or a desk, creates an unrealistic sense of the professor as an objective, all-knowing conduit of information. When the professor emerges from behind the podium, the perceived arrangement of power in the classroom changes. In many education abroad programs, there is no podium to begin with. As groups walk down the street or participate in site visits, physical relationality of students and facilitators is more flexible. The facilitator is no longer the center, communally or *physically*.

Lastly, when visiting a new place, the way one's body is perceived by others may shift: students may be asked for photos or experience hostility or stereotyping depending on the color of their skin or hair (Lott & Brundage, 2022; Nyunt et al., 2022; Willis, 2015). Students with disabilities (when they are able to participate at all) may find programs more arduous than their able-bodied peers (Johnstone & Edwards, 2020; Soneson & Cordano, 2015). While their

intersectional identities are present everywhere, participants may have striking experiences of those identities in different cultural contexts. Creating space to process experiences of embodied identities is integral to implementing liberatory learning communities with both content and student care that make students feel seen and supported.

Emotions

Thompson (2016) writes that "crying during class needs to be okay, might, in fact, be inevitable, when dealing with the weight of the world" (p. 32). She argues that it is better for learning to give students space to feel and process the emotional weight associated with anti-oppression content—content that often involves violence, potentially towards marginalized groups that students identify with. Thompson (2016) muses, "It is as if we expect students to hold their bodies in the same way, have the same emotions, whether they are studying tax law or genocide in Rwanda" (p. 2). Learning about war, suffering, and death *shouldn't* exist without emotional reactions; likewise, it shouldn't exist without space for students to process these feelings.

Further, contemporary events like the beginning of a war, an instance of police brutality, an ongoing public health crisis, or an election might deeply influence the emotional state of the class, whether it's related to course content or not. These emotions do not simply disappear when the class bell rings. hooks (1994) explains that for professors, one of the most challenging aspects of liberatory pedagogical praxis is changing the agenda to work with or cope with the mood of the class. To avoid slipping back into the "banking system of education," hooks (1994) stresses that all individuals are responsible for creating the best learning environment for the group and explains that the scheduled material may not be what constitutes learning on a particular day.

While emotions in learning often have to do with caring for the trauma and heartbreak of humanness, all emotions play a role. hooks (1994) writes,

> If we are all emotionally shut down, how can there be any excitement about ideas?…The restrictive, repressive classroom ritual insists that emotional responses have no place…To me this is really a distorted notion of intellectual practice, since the underlying assumption is that to be truly intellectual, we must be cut off from our emotions. (p. 154-155)

Excitement as well as so many other human feelings, are powerful forms of resistance to the apathetic classroom experience, Cartesian intellectualism, and the oppression of humanness more widely. Albert Camus (2000), the mid-20th-century French novelist, writes that love is resistance. Tricia Hersey (2022), founder of the Nap Ministry, writes that restfulness is resistance. adrienne maree brown (2019), of the Emergent Strategy Ideation Institute, writes that pleasure is resistance. The breadth of human experience that constitutes *resisting* capitalist and colonialist power systems is the same breadth (and breath) that has been outlawed within the walls of the academy. Slowness, artfulness, playfulness, joyfulness, gratitude: these facets all matter for learning because they are *human*.

Emotions for Education Abroad. Emotions naturally arise on immersive international programs as participants find themselves experiencing unfamiliar contexts and practices. Students will likely feel some sort of excitement or anxiety as the program begins. They may feel confident, disillusioned, curious, overwhelmed, hopeful, embarrassed, annoyed, homesick, inspired, all feelings in between or many feelings all at once. These emotions may come as a surprise to students—who expect programs to always be "fun," who anticipate they will acclimatize easily, who assume they already know host cultures, who witness global injustice

firsthand, who come to poignant realizations about their homelands. hooks (1994) explains, "If we focus not just on whether the emotions produce pleasure or pain, but on how they keep us aware or alert, we are reminded that they enhance" learning communities (p. 155). Immersive, transformative engagement inevitably provokes emotional response. Learning how to identify and process emotions, without judgment or dismissal, merits learning space. Creating that space is simultaneously an act of both deep intellectual learning and student care.

In the same vein as physical discomfort, emotional discomfort naturally surfaces for participants on education abroad programs and the learning zones apply in this context as well. For example, the field of education abroad often engages with the concept of culture shock or the process of feeling patterns of disorientation, distress, and acclimatization when one adjusts to a new cultural context (Oberg, 1960). Oberg (1960) introduces the theory of culture shock and explains that "culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life," such as how to greet people, express humor, make purchases, etc. (p. 142). Oberg (1960) describes an adjustment curve that moves past a honeymoon period into feelings of frustration and superiority towards the host culture before finally culminating in the acceptance and embrace of local customs. The concept of culture shock or cultural adjustment forecasts a variety of participant emotional experiences, and while these responses are anticipated, they are still deeply personal and individualized.

Vande Berg et al. (2012) argue:

> The data show that students learn and develop considerably more when educators prepare them to become more self-reflective, culturally self-aware, and aware of 'how they know what they know.' In developing a meta-awareness of their own processes of perceiving

> and knowing, students come to understand both how they habitually experience and make meaning of events, and how they can use that newfound understanding to help them engage more effectively and appropriately with culturally different others. (p. 21)

These interventions may include "journaling or other forms of writing to stimulate the reflection process. Thinking through situations with peers and instructors enables students to bounce their ideas off others" (p. 54). This reflection is driven by the combination of cultural content and cultural mentoring.

As discussed in Chapter 2, personal reflection constitutes a key phase of Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning. Personal reflection, or "reflective observation," naturally involves personal reactions to program stimulus. Reflecting on one's inner response to experiences leads to the stage of abstract conceptualization, wherein students connect experiential and theoretical knowledge.

Belonging

Belonging in whole human learning constitutes a multi-faceted approach to relationality. The previous discussions about embodiment and emotions primarily center structured student experiences. Belonging, however, addresses both structured student experiences and practitioner self-reflexivity about their fulfillment of their own role. Belonging addresses how facilitators can deliberately cultivate learning communities and build relationships amongst students; additionally, belonging includes how practitioners understand their relationships with students, how they cultivate those relationships, and the impact those relationships might have.

Thompson (2016) describes two "rituals of inclusion" she practices to bring students into communal learning space. The first is the "Naming Ritual," which she learned from Dr. Reverend Katie Geneva Canon. In this ritual, each student says their whole name and describes

the history and meaning as well as any other stories that might explain their name. Then each person in the circle recites the names of students who have already shared. Thompson (2016) explains that taking away one's name is often the first step of dehumanization, so knowing each other's names and the significance they hold matters. Additionally, this ritual moves from English-domination to multilingualism, highlights multicultural backgrounds, and brings students into intense presence with each other.

In the "Who am I?" ritual, students sit knee to knee in pairs and each speak for five uninterrupted minutes on the question "Who am I?" While the first student is talking, the other is prompted to "shower them with loving kindness," without speaking (p. 43). In this ritual, students know each other, and they also know what it feels like to be deeply listened to. Over the course of the semester, the explanations of self become more intimate, more emotional, more present. Thompson (2016) quotes O'Reilley, who explains the importance of true, deep listening: "You are listening people into existence" (quoted in Thompson, 2016, p. 44). hooks (1994) explains that "we must intervene to alter the existing pedagogical structure and to teach students *how to listen, how to hear one another"* (p. 150). In both of these rituals, the importance of intentional relationality is evident: these learning spaces function because they are communities that hold the trust and investment of participants. Such buy-in requires vulnerability.

hooks (1994) offers her perspective on the teacher's role in creating learning communities: first, "the professor must genuinely *value* everyone's presence" (p. 8). Beyond valuing presence, the teacher must embrace vulnerability and growth for themselves as much as students:

> In my classrooms, I do not expect students to take any risks that I would not take, to share in any way that I would not share. When professors bring narratives of their experiences

> into classroom discussions it eliminates the possibility that we can function as all-knowing, silent interrogators…professors must practice being vulnerable in the classroom, being wholly present in mind, body, and spirit. (p. 21)

The teacher, while facilitating the learning community, is also fundamentally a participating member. Leaning into the growth that comes from learning programs shows students that they are valued and respected on a level playing field. This signals to students that, rather than a graded confessional, community building constitutes an integral learning process of knowing and being known. Simultaneously, facilitators gain the space to receive fulfillment and liberation through learning communities.

While the teacher/student power dynamic inevitably exists (particularly on the issue of grading), hooks (1994) strives to create "a community of learners *together*. It positions me as a learner…I'm trying to say that we are all equal here to the extent that we are equally committed to creating a learning context" (p. 153). She explains that respecting the classroom as a communal space increases the collective effort participants contribute to creating and sustaining that community. Freire (1970) describes a similar phenomenon he names *co-intentional* education, wherein "Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge" (p. 69). Co-creation of a learning community, and thus the learning process and the knowledge itself, rejects the banking system of education in favor of a liberatory approach.

Additionally, communal co-creation shifts the learning community from a top-down leadership model to a model "more like a cooperative where everyone contributes to make sure all resources are being used, to ensure the optimal learning well-being of everyone" (hooks,

2010, p. 22). hooks (1994) credits mutual interest in each other as the basis of excitement in educational contexts and asserts that "any radical pedagogy must insist that everyone's presence is acknowledged. That insistence cannot be simply stated. It has to be demonstrated through pedagogical practices" (p. 8). Thus, engagement or involvement in the community by individuals must be implemented through structural and philosophical approaches to learning design.

Belonging for Education Abroad. Community-based learning naturally fits with many self-evident elements of education abroad programs. In group-based education abroad programs, the notion of a community is built in from the beginning, given that a particular group of people is intended to learn, live, and travel together for a set period. Group dynamics management constitutes a common concern of student support for education abroad administrators and facilitators (Punteney, 2019). While quarrels between classmates may be ignored or dismissed in limited classroom hours, strained relationships between program participants have greater potential to escalate, given the amount of time spent in close proximity. In this context, creating intentional opportunities to know and recognize each other may be particularly powerful.

Passarelli and Kolb (2012) provide several recommendations for "becoming an experiential educator" in education abroad (p. 149). They note that educating and teaching are fundamentally relational. They advocate for empathy as a core value for educators, which they believe is more likely when educators form individualized relationships with students. These relationships may be authentic in ways on-campus relationships may not be: "In those relatively small communities abroad, many [students] learned for the first time what intellectual fellowship is and how rewarding a teacher can be when he is encouraged to reveal himself as a person" (Sanford, 1968, p. 172 quoted in Passarelli & Kolb, 2012, p. 158). They cite Palmer's (1997)

assertion that great courage is necessary for a teacher to show up fully and authentically, respect students as relational beings, and integrate these relationships with course content.

In addition to relationships with faculty, students experience diverse relationships with other program participants, staff, or hosts. These interactions, particularly when characterized by compassion, contribute to learning. Building these relationships constitutes an important way students can take ownership of the learning process. Student ownership of learning can also be enhanced by utilizing diverse methods of instruction and "learning to learn" interventions wherein students engage in transparent conversations about the process of learning (in this case, the experiential learning cycle) (Passarelli & Kolb, 2012, p. 155).

Pipitone (2018) advocates creating opportunities for students to find shared meaning about the study abroad experience, particularly through pre-trip classes or meetings, as these "may be a way to foster relationality, especially with students who have not traveled abroad previously…[which] may be a particularly powerful strategy to introduce students to a novel cultural environment and make space to discuss preconceived notions of difference within host countries" (p. 70).

Further, experiential education with its emphasis on individual experience and reflection, tends to decenter the teacher, at least to some extent (Punteney, 2019). In traditional classrooms, students may be experiencing an environment designed and maintained by the professor. On education abroad programs, neither the professor nor the students control the environment. If the professor isn't deeply connected to the program location, they will likely be having a simultaneous intercultural, displaced experience and engaging in reflection on that experience. The positionality of the professor vis-à-vis the host context exaggerates hooks' (1994; 2010) idea of the professor as an equal member amongst a learning community. This dynamic offers a

unique opportunity for transparency on the part of the facilitator to emphasize one's position as a learner, rather than an all-knowing authority. Alternatively, students may be invited into a place that the program leader knows intimately and reveres with great attachment, such as their country of origin. In this case, bringing students into that space can constitute a deep act of vulnerability and sharing on the part of the facilitator.

Although these two elements of belonging tend to occur naturally on education abroad programs, intentional design and implementation is key for truly transformative experiential education. Community-building rituals cultivate a different depth of mutual knowing and appreciation than more common, casual icebreakers. Similarly, deliberately deconstructing the notion of professor as top-down commander in favor of a teacher-learner approach creates an alternative economy of knowledge where students share ownership of their individual and collective learning. Rather than considering these components unconsciously accomplished by the format of education abroad programs, practitioners can consider the format of education abroad programming to be complementary to pedagogical choices that prioritize belonging.

Becoming

The culminating area of whole human pedagogy is *becoming*, after hooks' (1994) description of a "vision of liberatory education that connects the will to know with the will to become" (p. 18-19). Becoming, in this context, is not so much about *what* exactly humans become; instead, it is becoming in the sense of *beginning to be*. Becoming is the idea that learning isn't a compartmentalized collection of facts, but a process that can and should deeply inform the ways that learners as humans exist in the world. Education is not solely for what humans do inside of the classroom, but who they are outside of it. hooks (1994) argues this is precisely what students want: students "want an education that is healing to the uninformed,

unknowing spirit. They do want knowledge that is meaningful" (p. 19). While this theme may seem to be an abstract recommendation, an emphasis on learning for becoming constitutes a deep reverence of the learning process and a profound philosophical shift in the relationality between facilitator, student, knowledge, and the world. This shift changes how practitioners see what education is and what it is for, which creates a ripple effect through each practice they facilitate. In turn, this style of learning gives way for compassionate, curious, empathetic critical thinkers.

Learning is destined to affect us. Designing education that is *affective*—actively bringing whole humans, with bodies, emotions, lives, experiences, and connections into learning—only makes that effect deeper and more intentional. Instead of a disembodied learning, educators can strive for the kind of education that is:

> …part mindfulness, part playfulness, part intuition, part analysis; a pedagogy that works inside and outside of the classroom; can climb prison walls; leans toward the poetic word; makes intimacy a safe and generative resource of power; can hold us together during social upheavals, natural disasters, and disasters of our own making...invites everyone to talk; isn't afraid of silence…grows with the times; returns us to joy. (Thompson, 2017, p. 18-19)

This type of education is truly transformative of people, communities, and societies. Learning for becoming is engaging with learners in their ventures toward becoming free, becoming seen, becoming well, becoming meaning-*full*, becoming *wholly*.

Becoming for Education Abroad. Education abroad inherently centers being in the world. The simple fact that humans have spent hundreds of years traveling to learn is a testament to the idea that there is knowledge to be found outside of the classroom that matters profoundly. If that is the founding assumption of education abroad, then it is counterintuitive to try to fit its learning processes in the constrictive box of traditional Euro-U.S. classrooms. The meaningful learning that education abroad is about isn't found in the box—whether that's the literal box of the four-walled classroom or the figurative box of dominant Euro-U.S. epistemology. Perhaps ironically, much of the knowledge found outside of the classroom is about the self: Pipitone and Raghavan (2017) describe students' experiences of study abroad programs as "the ongoing and collaborative process of making sense of themselves, the world, and the places within it" (p. 265).

Reflecting on her career in higher education, hooks (1994) writes, "Nothing about the way I was trained as a teacher really prepared me to witness my students transforming themselves" (p. 195). The word "transformative" is commonly associated with education abroad: any search engine or library catalog can bring you a plentiful list of results painted with phrases like "transformative learning," "transformative impact," or "transformative power" referencing practices and studies in education abroad. In education abroad literature, "transformative learning" may be a reference to Mezirow's transformative learning theory of adult education, which describes the process by which adults interpret and reinterpret meaning, eventually with the motivation of social change (Jarman et al., 2022; Mezirow, 1997). Core elements of transformative learning include disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection, and changed meaning perspectives (Jarman et al., 2022). Jarman et al.'s (2022) case study, which has been described

throughout this chapter, overtly applied transformative learning theory in the design of their course.

Alternatively, "transformative" may simply refer to the word's definition: "causing or able to cause an important and lasting change in someone or something" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Education abroad institutions often advertise or define their mission in reference to the term (CIEE, n.d.; CIS, n.d.; IES, 2019; ISA, n.d.; SIT, n.d.). The common association with the word "transformative" indicates that education abroad is already a field that expects participants will experience significant change. If transformation is a selling point, a defining feature, or a goal, designing for transformation, in the many facets that entails, should be the norm.

Chapter Closing

After a terrorist massacre of Muslims in New Zealand Nakita Valerio (2019), a Canadian, Muslim writer, academic, and organizer, shared a single-sentence Facebook status that quickly went viral: "Shouting 'self-care' at people who actually need 'community care' is how we fail people." Expecting individuals to compartmentalize themselves into thoughts in one room, emotions in another, bodies in another, whilst demanding they find healing and integration outside of the structure is a profound failure of care that falsely blames all the selves that were barred from the room in the first place. Whole human pedagogy embodies a radical movement of community care in education. Whole human education seeks learning that doesn't demand individual recovery; it may even aid in the recovering.

Education abroad, as a field, has the ability to do much better for the individuals in its care. The capitalist system, which relies on productivity, burnout, and the denial of humanity, is designed to ensure practitioners are too tired to reinvent the wheel—to see there is another way and imagine it into existence. Education abroad, however, has been reinventing itself for the

duration of its existence—from no-credit study tours to junior year abroad to short-term programs (Hoffa, 2007) to alternative virtual exchange programs during the Covid-19 era. A whole human approach to pedagogy in education abroad is a fitting next reimagination.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This study was designed to enhance understanding of the experiences and perspectives of education abroad professionals who employ whole human teaching and learning strategies in undergraduate programming and advising. This research observes and documents the current existence of whole human teaching and learning in individual educators' praxis to generate field knowledge for creating and analyzing whole human education abroad programs.

To that end, this study's two research questions are:

1. How do practitioners understand a whole human pedagogical approach, specifically regarding the four themes of embodiment, emotions, belonging, and becoming?
2. How do practitioners in undergraduate education abroad utilize whole human pedagogy in programming, facilitating, and advising?

Research Methodology

This study utilized qualitative research methodology, which aims to understand individuals' lived experiences, beliefs, and behaviors. More specifically, this study relied on in-depth qualitative interviewing, which is comprised of an extended conversation between the researcher and an individual participant. Seidman (2021) explains,

> I interview because I am interested in other people's stories. Most simply put, stories are a way of knowing…Telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process… At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (p. 7-9).

This project was fundamentally concerned with exactly that: stories, knowing, experience, and meaning. This study investigated education abroad practitioners' experiences implementing whole human educational methods, their understandings and attitudes about these methods, and

the meaning they make out of their experiences of implementation. This project is pragmatic (concerned with practical application), interpretative (concerned with meaning-making), and critical (concerned with systems of power, oppression, and liberation) (Cohen, 2018).

Participant Sampling

This dissertation sought to foster understanding of the experiences and perspectives of education abroad professionals who employ whole human teaching and learning strategies. This study utilized purposive sampling, in which seventeen participants were selected based on their satisfaction of several attributes that make up the participant selection criteria, explained below (Cohen, 2018). Recruitment strategies also included some snowball sampling: in three cases, participants who had completed interviews recommended colleagues as potential participants. Given this approach, including both my contacts and snowball sampling, at least nine participants were acquainted with at least one other participant. Additionally, I had existing relationships with four participants. Despite my connections with those participants, interview protocols matched those of other participants and only data acquired through interviews has been included in the study.

Participant Selection Criteria

The selection criteria for this study were intentionally broad to capture several different roles, contexts, and perspectives within the field of education abroad and allow for triangulation across practitioner types. To qualify for the study, participants must have worked as a practitioner supporting education abroad programming through responsibilities in teaching, facilitating, leading, planning, designing, administering, or advising. Those with primary responsibilities in teaching and facilitating included roles such as university faculty and program leaders, while those who primarily designed and administrated programs included roles such as

university education abroad office advisors or provider staff. Given the diverse range of job descriptions in education abroad, some individuals held responsibilities that included both planning and leading programs. For example, a study abroad office staff member may spend the majority of their working time planning programs while also occasionally leading them.

Qualifying practitioners worked with education abroad programs for undergraduate students whose primary educational institution was based in the United States. In other words, programs were outbound from the United States, and made up of students who live and/or study in the United States. Programs could be of any length, format, or subject, and could be implemented by any type of educational organization (university, provider, etc.). Practitioners did need to have experience with at least some cohort-based programs (namely faculty-led or provider programs), wherein students enroll with a group of students who are studying abroad together as opposed to direct-enroll or exchange programs where students study abroad individually.

Participant Recruitment Methods

The Invitation to Participate (See Appendix A) was posted on several professional listservs and online member interest or affinity groups, including:

- University of Buffalo SECUSS-L Listserv
- NAFSA Summer and Customized Programs Member Interest Group
- NAFSA Education Abroad Knowledge Community
- NAFSA HBCUs Interest Group
- NAFSA Community Colleges Interest Group
- SIT Graduate Institute Students and Alumni LinkedIn Group
- SIT Alumni Facebook Group
- SIT International Education Facebook Group
- SIT EdD Cohorts 2021and 2023 Listservs

To supplement public posts, I distributed the invitation for participation through my own professional contacts, largely related to Guilford College, SIT Graduate Institute, and NAFSA. Public posts generated few responses and thus, most participants were recruited through secondary sharing or referral by my contacts.

The terminology used in the Invitation to Participate may have created some confusion about qualifications. While I endeavored to make clear that "whole human pedagogy" was a novel term, many potential participants explained that they did not qualify for the study because they weren't familiar with the term, even though they identified with the values and practices described. While I was able to clarify qualifications with some participants, I anticipate that many potential participants disqualified themselves from the study based on unfamiliarity with the term "whole human pedagogy." At the time of distribution, I was hesitant to recruit for the study under the umbrella term of "holistic pedagogy," but in retrospect think that this alteration may have yielded a larger participant pool.

The Invitation to Participate directed potential participants to an online interest indication survey, which collected contact and eligibility information. After eligibility was confirmed, participants received an email confirmation with a link to schedule their interview, as well as informed consent information. Participants were required to complete an electronic consent form before their interview.

Study Participants

The seventeen participants of this study represented varying job titles and institution types, as demonstrated in Table 4.1. Their names have been shared or changed based on participant preference. Participants held various titles and educational levels, ranging from instructor to full professor; contractor or coordinator to director, founder, or vice president,

bachelors degrees to doctorates. Faculty areas of professional interest included communications, religious studies, public health, art, and academic affairs. Participants were affiliated with public, private, small, large, and partner organizations.

In Table 4.1, practitioners are grouped according to the role they discussed during their interview. All faculty spoke about leading programs, the details of which are listed under the "Responsibility Discussed" column. Administration participants fell into one of three administration categories: leading, receiving, and administration only. Program leading administrators spoke about leading programs. Receiving administrators spoke about their direction of a partner site in Italy; in both cases, these participants had direct involvement with students on-site by leading some cultural activities and providing advising, but do not implement academics. The remaining administrators who did not speak about being on-site with students throughout their education abroad program are listed under Administration Only. In addition to addressing participants in groups of faculty and administrators, the term "program leaders" is used throughout to denote participants who are with students in-country during the program, which includes all faculty, as well as leading and receiving administration.

Table 4.1
Participant Profiles

Name	Position/Institution Type	Responsibility Discussed
Leading Faculty		
Alice Davidson, MPH	Instructor of Public Health and Nutrition at a large, public university	Two-week program in the United Kingdom on social determinants of health with 19 students
Stephanie Grutzmacher, PhD	Associate Professor of Nutrition and Global Health at a large, public university	Two-week trip to the United Kingdom on social determinants of health with 19 students
Catalina Ocampo Londoño, PhD	Member of the faculty at a small, public college	10-week program in Mexico, on Latin American history and Spanish language, which was embedded in a year-long course, with 10-15 students

Name	Position/Institution Type	Responsibility Discussed
Eric Mortensen, PhD	Professor of Religious Studies at a small, private college	One-week program to Japan embedded in a semester-long course on mindfulness and social action; three-week program to China with accompanying one-semester course on the Silk Road; three-week course on Asian religions in Myanmar; semester program to Southwest China; all with 15-20 students
Ann Salzarulo, M.A.	Professor of Communication Studies at a large, public university	Nine-day program to Peru on indigenous knowledge, sustainability, and agriculture with 13 students
Ginger Sheridan, MS, MA, MFA	Professor in Academic Affairs for an education abroad provider with prior experience as a professor of photography and art history at a private, medium-sized university	Art history programs in Western Europe of varying lengths with about 30 students
Administration: Program Leading		
Tasha Cary-Waselk, M.S.	Coordinator in the office of international student and study abroad services at a large, public university	10-day program in Finland focused on sustainability and wellbeing with 12 students
Olivia DiNucci, B.S.	Educator at an education abroad provider	Multi-continental comparative, thematic, semester-long provider programs in Asia, South America, and Africa with 10-22 students
Administration: Receiving		
Martina Rosa, B.A.	Assistant Site Director at an education abroad provider site in Italy	Planning and leading cultural activities and providing student support for students participating in a study abroad program at a university for semester or summer programs in Florence, Italy for 30-135 students
Elizabeth Tyrie, M.A.	On-site Director at an education abroad provider site in Italy	Planning and leading cultural activities and providing student support for students participating in a study abroad program at a university for semester or summer programs in Rome, Italy for 5-25 students
Administration Only		

Name	Position/Institution Type	Responsibility Discussed
Bethany Allen, M.A.	Director of the international programs office at a small, public college	Advising study abroad students, running pre-departure orientations, and supporting the development and implementation of faculty-led programs
Andrea Custodi, PhD	Vice President of Academics for an education abroad provider organization	Overseeing teaching and learning, including faculty training and development in pedagogy, evaluation, and assessment and serving in field leadership capacities
Daniel F. Diaz, M.A.	Director of the international studies office at small, private college	Serving administration of international studies office and developing international experiences with faculty and academic departments. (Daniel does occasionally lead programs but spoke about his administration role in this interview, rather than a specific program).
Heather Freeman, M.A.	Director of the global education office at a small, private university	Managing faculty-led programs, overseeing office administration, advising students, and creating virtual programming
Tara Harvey, PhD	Founder and Chief Intercultural Educator at an intercultural professional development organization with prior experience as an international student advisor, provider academic director, and adjunct faculty member	Previous administering of study abroad programs and current leading of an independent intercultural professional development organization
Rachel Kerr, M.A.	Associate Director of the global engagement office at a small, private college	Advising study abroad and international students and administering faculty-led courses and pre-departure programming
Lindsay Parise, M.A.	Regional Manager of student health, safety, and wellbeing for an education abroad provider	Managing student health, safety, and wellbeing from pre-departure through program, creating pre-departure content, and mediating program challenges for a portfolio of programs, mostly in Latin America

Note. Institution size according to The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, n.d.

Of the seventeen participants, thirteen identified as white, two identified as Hispanic or Latino, and two identified as multiracial. Two participants identified with he/him pronouns while the rest identified with she/her pronouns. According to the 2022 Survey of Diversity and Inclusion Among International Educators, 64 percent of international educators identify as white while 33.2 percent identify as being from historically underrepresented racial/ethnic populations. Women make up 73.5 percent of international educators, while men constitute 23.8 percent and non-binary individuals represent 1.2 percent of participants (Diversity Abroad, 2022). While unequal demographic distribution in the field may account for some unequal sampling, compared to national data, white racial identities and women are overrepresented in this study. No additional demographic data was collected from participants.

Methods of Data Collection: Interview Procedures

Each participant completed one semi-structured, 60- to 90-minute qualitative interview over the video conferencing platform Zoom (See Appendix B). Because the research questions were heavily dependent on the conceptual framework introduced in Chapter 3, the interview protocols were also derived based on the theoretical grounding of whole human pedagogy. This theoretical background largely relied on the four tenets: embodiment, emotions, belonging, and becoming. I began with the assumptions that each of the four tenets may hold equal weight and that each participant may or may not have considered each tenet. The earliest interviews in this study included a slightly more structured outline of each of the four tenets separately, but I quickly realized that a more open-ended and fluid approach seemed to yield more poignant and expansive answers from participants. At this point, I shifted my interviewing approach to focus primarily on follow-up prompting guided by my interest in the four tenets, rather than overtly guiding participants through a pre-determined structure of tenet-based questions.

After summarizing consent procedures and gathering information about the participants' role in education abroad, I provided a descriptive overview of the project's focus—the notion of approaching students as whole human beings—and asked for initial thoughts. Based on these responses, I then prompted participants to reflect further with follow-up questions guided by the four themes of whole human pedagogy. For example, I asked: "I hear you talking about bodies. Could you say more about how those bodily experiences are contributing to student learning?" or "It sounds like students may be experiencing big emotional responses during that program element. Could you tell me more about how you approach facilitating those moments?"

I then asked questions about any themes participants hadn't addressed, which included questions like: "How do you see your relationship with your students?" or "I haven't heard you talk about bodily processes in learning. Is this something you think about in your work?" Finally, I posed some meta-level questions about whole human pedagogy, including questions about liberation, wellbeing, the field, and/or the ultimate significance of this approach. Most participants answered the question: "Why does approaching students as whole human beings matter?" The interviews concluded with a discussion of deidentification and transcript review options.

Data Management and Analysis

Management

Interviews were recorded using Zoom's in-application meeting recording feature and a back-up voice recording. Both were stored in a Dropbox file housed on my personal computer and a cloud system. I transcribed interviews using the Trint transcription software. Transcripts were edited to remove hesitations and vocal disfluencies. If participants elected for deidentification, identifying information was removed from the interview at the time of

transcription and replaced with an assigned pseudonym. Transcriptions and research memos were stored in Microsoft Word documents in a file on the project's Dropbox server.

Additionally, a central catalog of interview information, as well as a paper trail of research communications, was stored in a spreadsheet in a separate Google Drive cloud file. This catalog included information such as the participant's name, pseudonym (if chosen), the date of interview, participant contact information, as well as any status notes. All storage and processing programs listed were password protected with only the researcher possessing the password.

Analysis

Interview transcripts were imported into the coding software NVivo. In data coding, the researcher applies codes, which are "most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute" to an excerpt of data; codes constitute "researcher-generated interpretation that symbolizes or 'translates' data" (Saldaña, 2021, p. 5-6). This study relied on a combination of deductive and inductive coding. I approached the data with deductive codes related to the four tenets of whole human pedagogy (embodiment, emotions, belonging, and becoming), as well as some background information about participants' experiences in the field and some meta-themes of interest like "wellbeing" and "liberation." I utilized inductive coding for all emergent sub-themes within the four tenets (See Chapters 5 and 6) as well as all patterns beyond the four tenets (See Chapter 7). A final codebook can be found in Appendix C.

Ethics of Research

Participants in this study received a request for informed consent prior to the interview that outlined procedures, expectations, and possible risks. Participants also received an oral explanation of consent procedures at the beginning of the interview and were advised that they

could revoke their consent at any time during the research until publication. There are not any known power imbalances between the participants and myself as the researcher based on context outside of the interview. As stated above, some participants were familiar with each other and some participants had existing relationships with me. The resulting effect on the data is unknown, but I expect that my own existing rapport with participants may have increased the ease and openness of the conversation. The integrity of research procedures was maintained across all interviews, regardless of existing relationships.

This project did not engage with vulnerable populations and did not collect any sensitive information. Participants were offered confidentiality through the option of a pseudonym. Given that participants may offer significant contributions to the field through interview responses, participants could also elect to use their own name to maintain ownership of their comments. Participants had the opportunity to review their interview transcript before data analysis began to check for accuracy, clarity, and comfortability with shared information. Some participants made slight additions at this stage, mostly concerning citations of sources they referenced.

Validity and Reliability of Findings

To ensure validity of findings, this study utilized triangulation by sampling a range of education abroad practitioners, including both faculty and administration. In doing so, this project collected varying perspectives within the larger field that corroborated or nuanced each other. Because this is a qualitative study, the research methods presented in this chapter were designed to enhance understanding of a particular experience in education abroad and are not generalizable to the the field in its entirety.

To ensure reliability, the interview guide was thoroughly vetted for leading questions. Additionally, the wording in descriptions of whole human education concepts remained

consistent across interviews. This research also included a member checking process, wherein participants could review and amend their interview transcript before data analysis began. Additionally, I kept a comprehensive audit trail, along with detailed memos that included reflections on my own interpretations and possible biases. Lastly, I engaged in ongoing processes of peer review, feedback, and debriefing with her doctoral cohort and advisors.

Feasibility

The greatest challenge of this study was participant recruitment. The participant selection criteria were intentionally broad to facilitate greater potential for participant recruitment, but given the current climate of professional overwhelm in education abroad, particularly in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, I initially experienced significant difficulty recruiting participants. This difficulty was resolved by increasing reliance on my personal contacts for participant referrals.

Delimitations and Limitations

The delimitations of this study are most evident in the participant selection criteria. This study only addresses education abroad at the *undergraduate* level, although education abroad does take place at educational stages prior to and following this level. Additionally, this project focuses on cohort-based programs, and so it does not address several other types of education abroad including exchange, direct enrollment, or integrated university study programs.

The biggest limitation of this study is that it drew solely on the faculty or administration member's description of facilitation and design choices. Because this project focuses on practitioners' lived experiences and perspectives, the project did not directly observe program activities, analyze program documents, or include student reflections. Because this research was made up of qualitative interviews, the findings only represent the practitioners' reflections on

their lived experiences, not any evaluation of the practice's effectiveness or the students' experiences of the practice. Additionally, this study is limited in that it offers a picture of the field specifically created by practitioners who already expressed interest in whole human learning; it does not take into consideration practitioners who are interested in maintaining dominant or existing pedagogical practices. This study does not attempt to quantify what percentage of education abroad practitioners are currently employing whole human pedagogical techniques.

Additionally, this study is limited because it exists only in the English language, which is the language of colonization for many populations across the world. Some participants, who have different native languages, expressed their thoughts in English, in which case nuance of meaning may have been lost. Similarly, participants referenced concepts and practices from either host communities or historically non-English sources, such as historically Asian contemplative practices. The use of English-only interviewing and interpretation has the potential to decontextualize these concepts and practices. As an English-speaking scholar based in the United States with experience with U.S.-based education abroad programs, my positionality informs the constraints of this study. The choice of language in this study is a result of my own circumstances and not a value-judgment regarding scholarship or education abroad programs in other languages or contexts.

Researcher Positionality

As a former study abroad participant, a contemplative religion scholar, and an education abroad practitioner, I see myself as closely related to the community and topic represented in this study. As an undergraduate, I participated in four study abroad programs, two of which included an explicit focus on contemplative pedagogy. Because of those experiences, I focused my

Masters-level work on contemplative practices and study abroad. At the same time, I was learning more about transformative, personal, and very *human* forms of learning as a divinity school student and I realized how much I wish all forms of education included such an emphasis on the wholeness of students' humanity. As I began leading international education programs for high school students, I quickly recognized how deeply contemplative methods, as well as my experiences of humanizing education, inform my facilitation practices. I frequently use breathing exercises, guided meditations, reflective writing, group rituals, and participatory leadership. I have a high level of investment in this topic because it informs who I am as both a human and a practitioner, as well as the dreams I have for this field.

Thus, I approach this inquiry with the perspective that whole human education can be applicable and beneficial for U.S.-based education abroad programming. I believe these potential commonalities positioned me well to build rapport with participants based on mutual interest and understanding. I was particularly careful to not rely on my background assumptions or interpretation by utilizing methods such as personal reflection, member-checking, and peer review.

Throughout this project, I was cognizant that my identity as a white woman is already plentifully represented in both education abroad and higher education administration more generally. Likewise, I understand that transformative, liberative, critical scholarship does not come from white women's isolated voices. This study's roots are firmly planted in the perspectives and work of critical race, feminist, and decolonial perspectives, that represent the histories and work of an intersectional array of marginalized groups.

Chapter 5: Participant Perspectives on Embodiment and Emotions

To capture her initial response to the Invitation to Participate (See Appendix A), Dr. Catalina Ocampo Londoño shared: "This is the first time I've seen myself and the pedagogy I aspire to represented." Catalina was one of seventeen participants who shared their perspectives on whole human teaching and learning in light of their differing backgrounds, roles, institutions, and experiences. Many expressed similar enthusiasm for increased research and representation about holistic approaches to education abroad. The overall takeaway is this: approaching students as whole humans matters profoundly to these participants, and their perspectives have the potential to affect the future of education abroad.

The next three chapters focus on the results of seventeen qualitative, semi-structured interviews conducted during the last quarter of 2023. This chapter focuses on the first two tenets, embodiment and emotions, while Chapter 6 focuses on the second two, belonging and becoming. Each section offers a description of the tenet, augmented by participants' perspectives, and introduces several subthemes, which offer additional insight in both theory and practice. Chapter 7 describes additional themes outside of the four tenets that emerged in participant commentary, including observations about students, the profession, practical limitations of contemporary education abroad settings, reflections on liberation and wellbeing, and notions of whole human pedagogy's reach beyond education abroad.

Embodiment

Embodiment is an attentiveness and groundedness, particularly to one's body and bodily sensations, which includes feeling, being, acting, and understanding. The tenet of embodiment relies on the ideas that the mind and body are not separate entities and that embracing bodies in academic spaces can make learning more integrated and less oppressive (Thompson, 2017).

Embodiment embraces the corporeal and the somatic as *knowledge*, rather than obstacle or accessory.

Embodiment was often the first theme that participants addressed. They cited physical elements of study abroad – changes in food or environment, physical activity of traveling, sensory processing – as bodily engagements. They referenced experiential anecdotes, conceptual observations, and feedback from students to describe how bodies can be integral sites of learning in education abroad programs. Additionally, participants demonstrated ways they center bodily knowledge in practical application through design, facilitation, and advising. The subthemes of embodiment include senses, ecosystem, activity, space and mannerisms, mindfulness, and identity.

Dr. Andrea Custodi (Vice President of Academics, provider organization) explained, "Education abroad is par excellence – a physical, embodied, embedded experience." She continued to say that the many levels of education abroad – physical, emotional, cognitive – create a different way of learning:

> We can deliver the academic content in a US classroom or in a classroom in Barcelona, and we can certainly design learning experiences in Barcelona that enrich the academic content using the local context. But I think that by foregrounding the embodied elements, that's where we open students up to completely different ways of living and being, and ultimately, give that cultural flexibility and…appreciation of how radically different and radically similar human experiences can be.

Centering the embodied aspects of education abroad has the potential to transform education from simply learning in a different location to understanding and embracing alternative ways of

living and being. The physicality of travel and place-immersion also distinguishes traditional education abroad from at-home and virtual approaches to internationalization.

Both Daniel F. Diaz (Director of the international studies office, small private college) and Dr. Tara Harvey (Founder and Chief Intercultural Educator, professional development organization) referenced neuroscience perspectives to explain why bodies are so important in education abroad. Daniel referenced Daniel Kahneman's book *Thinking Fast and Slow* to describe how knowledge, behavior, and even culture can be bodily rather than cognitively determined. Daniel explained:

> Body reactions to physical space and cultural spaces are happening perhaps to you in a way that you are not controlling. And so that can add complexity to your cross-cultural experience…Your body, quite literally under this kind of context, is a cultural body.

Culture ingrained in bodies can be expressed through unconscious or automatic reactions, which necessitate careful investigation and awareness throughout intercultural engagement.

Tara also discussed information that bodies know before brains do. She cited neuroscientist Lisa Feldman Barrett and explained that brains function to regulate the body's needs, which means that bodies know and respond to stimulus before the brain: "Oftentimes, we're not even ever going to be consciously aware of something that our body might know. Starting to better understand and tune in to those bodily responses is a very important part of the learning process." Both Tara and Daniel emphasize asking reflective questions about why the body might be responding in a certain way and what about one's background informs this bodily response. Learning through the body has the potential to replace quick reactions with introspection and intentionality.

The context of Euro-U.S. education informs whether students are taught to embrace bodily knowledge. Tara explained, “In the Western world in particular, I don’t think we’re taught to tune into our body. It’s like education at some point just happens in our heads.” Dr. Eric Mortensen (Professor of Religious Studies, small private college) also commented on Euro-U.S. educational norms:

> That is a very Western worldview. It assumes very deeply that there’s a mind-body dichotomy in the first place, which is not necessarily real. That’s just what we’ve been taught because of the cultural worldview that grew up following the trajectory of people like René Descartes. Plato up through Euro-American civilization, you have this whole notion that the mind and the body are separable objects. There are worldviews that never ever considered that as a possibility.

Through intercultural engagement, students may encounter cultures that don’t maintain the same mind-body split that historical Euro-U.S. norms do. Thus, understanding bodies as epistemological sources may enhance understandings of other cultures, while also augmenting learning experiences by including students’ bodily knowledge.

Beyond assertions as to why bodily knowledge matters in learning, participant observations about embodiment revolved around several themes. These themes include senses, ecosystem, physical activity, space and mannerisms, mindfulness, experiences, and identity. The rest of this section offers additional information about each theme.

Senses

During education abroad programs, students engage with the world through their senses and thus, senses can be an impactful learning tool in education abroad programming. Lindsay Parise (Regional Manager of student health, safety, and wellbeing, provider organization)

references senses when she talks with students about memory-making. She encourages students to put down their cameras and instead: “Try and really be in your body and make that memory. What are you feeling? What are you smelling? What’s the sensation on your skin? Are you eating something?” Thus, senses can help students both process their experiences in the moment and remember them more deeply.

Several participants described the importance of food in education abroad programs. The two participants based at partner sites in Italy both explained that food is one of the primary motivators and priorities for students who enter their programs. Elizabeth Tyrie (Site Director, provider organization) explained that when she takes students wine tasting, with alternative pairings for students who do not drink alcohol, they are guided through an experience that includes smelling and tasting both wine and aperitifs. The woman who guides the wine tasting demonstrates how to experience the wine through sight and smell, by swirling and comparing to color wheels. Elizabeth discusses the differences between U.S. and Italian drinking culture with her students, including the ways that Italians often see alcohol as intimately intertwined with both food and socializing: “You’re not going drinking just to drink. There’s always this food element, and it’s a full experience and very social. There’s a lot of talking and talking about the food and talking about the wine.” She invites students to reflect on their own relationship with alcohol, which may be informed by U.S. college binge-drinking culture. She also talks to students about coffee shop culture in Italy, which is highly social, and recommends that students find a coffee shop to frequent during their stay. Elizabeth says the students who embrace this recommendation often have meaningful experiences in their neighborhood. One student even got a tattoo of the coffee to commemorate her semester abroad. In both examples, senses are involved *and* deeper understandings of host cultures are cultivated.

Martina Rosa (Assistant Site Director, provider organization), who is also based in Italy, explained that she purposefully tries to engage student senses beyond food, since students are typically so focused on the *taste* of Italy. She created an excursion specifically to focus on the *sound* of Italy with a visit to the opera. She also extends this lesson to people speaking Italian, different types of music, and the sounds of crowded city life. Involving all the senses, especially expanding beyond Italian food stereotypes, serves a specific purpose: "We want to teach them new ways to get to know our culture… We try to pass the value that we give to our culture and we try to teach them how to be curious, not just for our culture, but for everything that surrounds us." Sensory engagement offers a window into introductory cultural understanding and appreciation.

Olivia DiNucci (Educator, provider organization) connected senses and embodiment with an anecdote about her experience in a market in Delhi:

> You're going through a really amazing market in Delhi and you have the bull horns going on from the cars, you have the smells of the spices, you're tasting something new. You're listening to a lot of different languages. You're touching a lot of fabrics. I've never been more overstimulated and my senses have been activated ever since. That's happening all at once – you can't take a photo of it. You can't write it down. It's a really embodied experience.

She continued to explain that because of these overstimulating experiences, individuals can truly feel the stark contrast when they are sitting among trees in a rural area. These experiences are immersive, and they contribute to each other. Through embodiment, through sensory activation, and through contrast, Olivia sees powerful learning opportunities that can't easily be summed up in words but stay with students in the long term.

Ecosystem

In addition to immersion into a new cultural landscape, education abroad offers immersion into a new biological ecosystem, which may greatly affect student experiences and perceptions. Experiencing different contexts heightens students' awareness of their surroundings; an awareness of different ecosystems can provide an even deeper experience of place.

Martina, who lives in Florence, Italy, described how differences in temperature, weather, and pollution all influence one's understanding of place:

> This can change everything – how you perceive your reality…when I think about my experiences, the first thing that comes to my mind is my feeling of my body – what was I feeling when I was in that place that was different from when I was in Italy. Sometimes we underestimate the feeling of your body in a different context.

She said students are often surprised by how hot the weather is in summer or how loud crowds of people speaking can be, and that students rarely notice these elements when they are in their home context.

Tasha Cary-Waselk (Coordinator in the office of international student and study abroad services, large public university) specifically utilized the ecosystem of Finland with its sprawling forests as the backdrop for her program on sustainability and wellbeing. She credited immersion in this atmosphere and the Finnish emphasis on being in the natural world as profoundly calming and informative elements of the program. Students participated in activities like forest bathing, foraging, and visiting national parks. In turn, this contributed to their understanding and valuing of sustainable practices for both themselves and the natural world.

Catalina (Member of the faculty, small public college) also named the change in ecosystem as a noticeable shift for students: struggling with heat, bugs, humidity, or altitude can

contribute significantly to discomfort felt on program. While Catalina tries to warn students about the change in atmosphere (particularly the heat – which she jokingly compared to hot yoga, but "hot study abroad"), students don't seem to truly understand until they are in the Yucatán Peninsula and feel it for themselves. Catalina explained:

> It is somebody else's space and we often enter as guests in that space. It's a process of figuring out who we are as guests. But we don't think about it so much as entering into a different ecosystem. So one of the things that the heat does is that it intensifies the awareness and the knowledge that we are in a space that is not the one we usually move in…There's a very intense awareness of place and landscape, and how it is that human and non-human beings have been working together for a really long time.

She continued to describe an excursion to caverns called *cenotes* that are sacred spaces for Maya communities:

> I tell students that we're going to go and bathe in the water with stars. I really do believe that there's something in the water. You drink the water and things happen to you. So, there's a real physical engagement at the very basic level of us as biological creatures, understanding this ecosystem and the space and all the secret ways that it's been understood.

Humanness and embodiment reverberate throughout this excursion, in the biological encounter between bodies and the natural world. Understanding the ecosystem forms an additional level of understanding place and culture, from the streets of Italy to the forests of Finland to the waters of Mexico.

Activity

Physical activity contributes to the bodily experience of a program, whether it is a byproduct of program logistics or an intentional activity. Walking through a city center to a site visit and hiking a pilgrimage trail in the Himalayas both bring about bodily experiences and reflections.

Several participants mentioned significantly more daily walking during program than their normal routines. Dr. Stephanie Grutzmacher (Associate Professor of Nutrition and Global Health, large public university) remarked that students were often surprised they walked up to twelve miles per day during the program. Ginger Sheridan (Professor in Academic Affairs, provider organization; Professor of Photography and Art, private medium-sized university) noted the increased physical activity as a struggle for some students that aren't used to walking and standing as much. She explained that, over the course of several weeks, students often adapt and grow to like the change of activity and return home thinking about their health and sustainability in connection with their daily movement.

While many programs include increased physical activity as a byproduct of programming, others specifically utilize physical activity as the programming itself. Eric's programs sometimes include pilgrimages through Tibetan mountains. He remarked: "We all become very mortal and very animal and it's visceral. It's learning." He continued, "They've studied a place and then they go to the place and they study it while they're there and then they reflect on it afterwards and they know it way, way, way more deeply and real-ly [sic] by having gone there and you can't get there unless you walk." These treks can be very difficult for students, given the long, steep climbs and difficulty breathing in high altitudes. The learning that takes place once they arrive is worth it, but students are also learning throughout the journey.

Pilgrimages have been important human practices for centuries, centering physical exertion and community. The act of walking is part of the cultural engagement.

Physical activity during programs may be an intended focal point or an unintended accompaniment to daily activities. Regardless, physical activity can bring challenge, reflection, and learning throughout education abroad programs.

Space and Mannerisms

Mannerisms and constructions of space vary widely across cultures. How one acts in public space and interacts with other people with one's body can send poignant, and sometimes unintended, cultural messages. Continuing on his explication of neuroscience evidence, Daniel added that up to 70% of human communication may be done through body language (and, that that body language is largely both culturally determined and unconsciously automatic). He explained that it's: "Not until you get into a cultural space where that body component might be out of whack with that other culture that you would start feeling a physical disconnect or dissonance with that experience."

Thus, consciously reflecting on and learning culturally appropriate physical behaviors is important for education abroad participants. In his pre-departure orientations, Daniel preps students with lessons on how to bow in Japan or which hand to pay with in Ghana. Additionally, he illustrates this point with an activity. Students stand in pairs, far enough apart to stretch out their arms and just miss each other's fingertips. The pairs are then given a question to discuss at this distance. Each question thereafter, students take one step toward each other until their feet are almost touching. After the exercise, Daniel leads a reflection, pointing out that at a certain point as their feet get closer, students start leaning back away from their partner. Daniel described:

> You can see people start to physically remove themselves from the space. You can find what step was comfortable versus the step that became 'Oh no, this is too close now.' … In taxonomies, they will talk about proximity in terms of cultural connections… For example, in parts of Spain or France, close talking is considered normal…the proximity distance is shorter than in the United States, where your safety bubble is much bigger.

He continued to describe a personal experience speaking with a man from Spain at an international education conference. By adapting his way of engaging with the man to fit the man's home culture, Daniel turned a challenging conversational dynamic into a lively and mutually satisfying one. Cultivating this type of cultural flexibility takes practice and reflection, and can lead to more meaningful interactions.

Participants explained several examples of student interactions with people and space that demonstrate the power of cultural bodily knowledge. Olivia mentioned the embodiment of greetings – how many kisses on which cheek(s) or what a hug embrace is like. Ginger recounted student resistance to not being able to sit on public stairs. Eric asks students to notice "when laughter is okay, when volume is okay, when man-spreading is okay," when public displays of affection are okay, when loud chewing and slurping is okay. Andrea explained that "learning how to squat, how to present your body, how to move your body, where you put your feet, how you use your eyes" are ways of using the body that educators should be engaging with their students.

Olivia described experiences in Turkish baths or *hammams* where some students may feel very uncomfortable with nakedness: "Your body is reacting and responding to things like 'Whoa, I did feel really uncomfortable in that hammam when everyone was naked. I'm not comfortable in my body in a way like they were' and that's embodied." Likewise, Elizabeth described her

excursions to Italian bath houses called *terme* where people often walk around the locker rooms naked. Students often express their discomfort, self-consciousness, or confusion in the face of communal nakedness, and Elizabeth sees this as an opportunity to talk about different ways of embracing body image culturally. Both bath house examples reflect cultural notions of the acceptability of nudity in certain spaces as well as the acceptance of bodies more generally.

Mindfulness

While this theme isn't inherently part of all education abroad practice, seven participants utilize mindfulness practices to enhance learning on education abroad programs. Mindfulness emphasizes being present and paying attention; mindfulness practices often include activities like meditation or yoga. Contemplative pedagogy, by extension, integrates contemplative practices into learning to encourage introspection, self-awareness, and embodied presence.

Tasha, whose program to Finland specifically centered contemplative practices, explained that she integrated meditation and mindfulness practices into each weekly pre-departure session and throughout her program in Finland. She intentionally offered a variety of mindfulness activities—from guided meditations to drawing activities to mindful eating—in an effort to engage different learning styles. She recounted one exercise related to mindful eating using popcorn:

> We looked at the popcorn from all of the senses. So I would tell them to look at the popcorn, look at the different crevices, the colors, the shapes, the textures and then smell and then obviously we ended at taste and everyone got to taste it. And so we walked our way through all of the senses just by using food.

Many students continued mindful eating practices throughout the program. She also used practices like guided meditations or mindful walking. She credited her continued emphasis on

reflective practices, as well as the extended time in nature, as core contributors to student wellbeing.

Ann Salzarulo (Professor of Communication Studies, large public university) explained that she offered students optional opportunities for yoga and meditation practices during her program in Peru and found that most were not just interested but asking for more: "I make it available and they say yes, let's do that. Let's do it more often. Let's do more of that. I feel like they're ready for it for sure." During her program, she facilitated group reflections each morning and a yoga or meditation practice each evening.

Mindfulness practices aren't only used by program leaders. Lindsay described mindfulness as a key skill she teaches students in pre-departure orientations. When it comes to proactively managing student mental health, she explained, "Breathing is one of the most accessible ways, not only for your body, because it really spans a spectrum of helping to observe thoughts, helping to observe feelings and emotions." She said that slowing down can be difficult because U.S. students are chemically and culturally trained to seek rapid successions of stimuli. However, if students can cultivate these skills, mindful breathing can help them calm their bodies and cope with challenges during their program.

In her office on campus where she advises study abroad students, Rachel Kerr (Associate Director of the global engagement office, small private college) lies flat on the floor with students. During this practice, she offers a grounding exercise that she adapts to each student's needs:

> When we're thinking about body—and I'm not just thinking about being prepared with medications or how does jetlag affect your body or how does changing diet affect your body—it's activities like that that I think of. We're not just breathing, which I feel like

> most people think about, but laying on the ground. We usually do back on the ground, eyes closed, arms out, sort of like the end of yoga during savasana…I'll lay on the floor with them and say like, 'okay, we're going to take a couple of deep breaths. I want you to hold the stress of your visa process in your mind and as you breathe out, I want you to take a piece of that and I want you to let it go.' And we'll sort of do that a couple times and then we'll just lay and breathe for a bit.

These floor meditations help reduce student stress through the bureaucratic pieces of study abroad preparation:

> Whatever it is that's going on, we're going to sort of detach our bodies from that for a second so that we can release all of that tension that you feel in your shoulders or your hands, wherever your body is holding onto that tension. For me personally and for the students who have talked about it in more detail, it seems like it allows us to come back to whatever the issue is, whether we're talking about visas or helping the student be in touch with their prescribing doctor to make sure their birth control prescription can be filled abroad. We can just come back to that, but sort of separate the stress piece of whatever that thing is away from the practical piece. We're just going to do the thing and we're going to find and answer and it's going to be okay.

She explained that this practice is very well-received among the students willing to try it, as well as her office staff, who practice it with their students as well as in their staff meetings. Processing bodily stress through mindfulness practices allows Rachel and her staff to work more effectively while taking care of their students and their own wellbeing.

Participants offered other perspectives on the value of embodied mindfulness practices. Daniel recommends using breathing or mindfulness exercises as part of structured reflection

exercises to promote deeper introspective learning. Andrea explained that mindfulness cultivates "the ability to perceive carefully…How to look, how to see, how to observe. So many of the techniques of mindfulness teach you how to heighten your sense of perception and awareness." Improved perception can help students be more attuned to intercultural experiences.

As a professor of religious studies, Eric uses meditation practices in his courses on Buddhism. When asked what students learn from meditation and mindfulness, Eric responded:

> That they're in control of their own minds, or they can be. That silence has value. Realizing the interplay and the relationalism between themselves and the environments in which they find themselves. They're not autonomous beings floating through the world…they are actually agents in a world full of other agents. Study abroad is not voyeurism. It can be. It shouldn't be. So we studied meditation to get perspective, to recognize what our minds are doing, to calm down, to query the concept and the notion of who we are in relationship to what we're experiencing, not just take it for granted… It's awareness of what's happening to you physiologically and how that affects you psychologically and mentally, if those are different things…It queries fundamentally the notion that the mind and the body are separable things.

For Eric, mindfulness practices are Religious Studies content exercises as well as impactful opportunities to integrate student development and wellbeing into education abroad practice.

Whether it is a highlighted element of course content or a method of cultivating student wellbeing, mindfulness offers opportunities to connect and integrate bodies, selves, and cultural learning and is thus an impactful tool for education abroad participants.

Experiences

Experiential learning is a cornerstone of education abroad (Passarelli & Kolb, 2012). As introduced in Chapter 2, experiential learning theory argues that the cyclical progression of experiencing, reflecting, conceptualizing, and experimenting constitute the most impactful learning process (Kolb, 1984). Experience is thus a key and a catalyst of learning. Throughout the interviews, participants reiterated the importance of the experiential learning theory and drew connections to embodiment: physically *being* somewhere for *experiences* is important for whole human learning in education abroad.

Daniel explained that when he's planning programs with faculty, he thinks about the "pedagogical profile" and asks, "where in the world is an exciting laboratory to do a topic?" Understanding the world as a laboratory constitutes a powerful metaphor for the world as a hands-on learning space. Several participants alluded to the idea that students learn from education abroad in ways they cannot learn from books. Bethany Allen (Director of international programs office, small public college) said, "I think when you can witness or be a part of the thing you are learning about and then you have the proper time to reflect and process, it becomes rooted in who you are rather than something you learned in a book or took a test on."

Likewise, Olivia explained, "It's just so active and interactive. And that activates different parts of your body that you remember. You can read something and still forget. But when I talk to folks about where I was in Brazil, I have all these memories that flood over me. You can't read about that." Olivia continued to describe the experience of her students from the United States struggling with their presence in Vietnam:

> Taking up space in this country was really hard for them. They could read it in the United States, they could hear the documentaries, but for their body to coexist next to people

> whose families are still paying for the aftermath of the war, being in a boat that was made from the airplanes that dropped bombs. That's the boat that's under us—what we're sitting in. You feel that in your body.

Students may feel horrified, guilty, or full of grief—and the weight of those feelings stem from both knowledge and presence, not simply the former. Those embodied feelings matter immensely in the development of intercultural awareness, empathy, and dedication to justice.

Eric said, "For a lot of study abroad, I think the goal is to move, to be outside, to be engaging with people in ways that are not purely reading, talking, and absorbing passively but actively exploring a Shinto shrine as we are reading and talking about Shinto." All three of these participants argued that what a student can experience is fundamentally different than what a student can read in a textbook.

Identity

Bodies affect the ways that humans engage with their environment; moreover, the identities connected to bodies, such as ability, race, or heritage, deeply inform the ways people engage with the world. The same education abroad programming may be experienced very differently depending on students' experience of identity.

People with disabilities may find education abroad programs more challenging, if not inaccessible. However, Lindsay has witnessed an increase in students participating with disabilities like autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). She explained that some people learn kinesthetically or need to be moving: "That's another way that you can use your body and these different ways to access how learning happens." Eric described that holding classes outside may be particularly beneficial with students with ADHD: "There's pretty clear evidence and for me, that's anecdotally supported…that being in a holistically distracting place

brings more focus." Thus, education abroad settings may actually be well-suited to some students with ADHD. On the other hand, education abroad programs may need to do more to accommodate neurodiverse students who struggle with social dynamics, sensory overstimulation, or withstanding uncertainty and lack of routine. Regardless, neurodiversity, which is a function of one's body, can deeply affect one's experience of education abroad.

Racial identity can also have a dramatic effect on an education abroad experience, as the way that race is perceived and responded to varies widely across international contexts. For example, being a Black body can be particularly difficult in certain contexts. Eric shared:

> I think identity matters abroad, and that's physical. It's hard to be Black in China. You get a lot of different attention and that's embodied learning as part of identity politics, part of racism, and part of cultural confusion and cross-cultural interplay. It's embodied. That's real people's identities, people's clothes, the way people are reacted to and the way people react to others.

Discrimination against one's body can also be an embodied experience, as well as an incredibly uncomfortable (and potentially unsafe) one.

During their pre-departure preparation, Alice Davidson (Instructor of Public Health and Nutrition, large public university) engaged her students with learning exercises about personal and social identities:

> They first think about: what is their personal identity like? What songs do they like? What books do they like to read? What's their favorite color? What do they like to do in their free time? Thinking about who you are as a person and then separating that from our social identities. What do people perceive me to be like? Does that align with who I believe myself to be? Where do those social constructions come from? Do I agree with

> the social constructions that the world puts on me? And then giving the students space to think about: how do I think back to those personal and social identities when I'm doing my work?... and being really mindful that that's a personal experience…We didn't ask students to share…And then we had a conversation in general terms about personal and social identities in the United States and what might be the same or different depending on what country we're traveling to and how that informs our understanding of what's possible.

These conversations give students the opportunity to reflect on their own positionality and how their identity might inform their experiences abroad.

While some identities may feel particularly disconnected from host communities, the opposite is also true. Catalina and Ann, who both lead programs in Latin America, described their experiences with heritage-seeking students—students with an existing connection to a destination through family or cultural background (The Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.). Ann recounted a moment when a Guatemalan student felt at home on a farm in Peru:

> She was just so at home there, digging up the potatoes, speaking beautiful Spanish…We all sat back and said, 'We could leave you here!' and she said 'Oh, please do, please.' She wanted to ride on the burros. She was asking about the goats. It was just a beautiful thing to see—a student totally in the soil, like in a very figurative and literal way.

Although some students participate in education abroad programs to experience completely unfamiliar destinations, heritage students may participate to (re)connect with a part of their family history or culture.

Catalina mentors heritage students during her quarter-long excursion to Mexico. She explained that these students choose that program as: "a way of connecting with their home

communities…doing what I like to call reconnection work and recuperation work. It's reconnection and recuperation that is linguistic, but also cultural." Many of those students aren't from Mexico, but from other parts of Spanish-speaking Latin America. She explained:

> That's often a really joyful process and it has some painful pieces to it…It's like living a life in Latin America and being like, 'What would this have been like?' It's a process of grieving that other self that never was, but also really joyful reconnecting with roots…There's a real process of being like, 'Oh, yes, this is part of me. This is who I am. I'm going to own it. I'm going to be it.'

Heritage experiences can be particularly powerful, as disconnected or buried knowledge may emerge. Catalina highlighted the connection between her own experiences, disconnected knowledge, and embodiment:

> I think some of the pedagogy is also informed by my own experience, my own identity, my own history. I grew up in Colombia then came to the United States when I was 18, and grew up in a pretty violent moment in the history of Colombia. So I'm aware of ways that global inequities that cause and are the root of processes like migration, violence, racial inequality. All of those processes have the effect of severing ties and severing linkages. They disconnect us from knowledge. They disconnect us from past. They disconnect us from place. They disconnected us from communities. Our bodies are really wise and sometimes they carry histories or they carry knowledges that we, on a conscious level, don't realize. And sometimes it's really hard to reconnect with those things and to surface them as knowledge. Because of that, I've got a lot of faith in the body as a carrier of knowledge, especially lost or disconnected knowledge.

Bodies carry knowledge, including knowledge that isn't consciously felt on the surface. Centering embodiment in experiences may offer access to disconnected knowledge, which can connect to other areas of learning, like reflection and identity development.

Both identity and experiences of identity are embodied. In education abroad, identity can contribute to exceptionally challenging or affirming encounters. In either case, bodies deeply inform interactions and understandings between the individual and the world.

Emotions

The second tenet of whole human pedagogy emphasizes emotions as both natural and important for learning and exploring. Feelings constitute an important type of knowledge that can be included, rather than excluded, from rigorous learning. These emotions can be difficult—and include anger, frustration, grief, and longing—and they might also be gratifying—participants may be joyful, playful, hopeful, or excited. Emotions can be significant obstacles for students, but they can also be important motivators, powerful knowledge bases, and impactful reflection opportunities.

Eric has one key question he asks students when interviewing them for his programs: "What are you like when you are really genuinely pissed off?" He says he gets a variety of answers, from quiet retreat to angry outbursts to tears. There's only one answer he's weary of:

> There's always a few who say, 'Oh, I don't get pissed off.' And that's what I'm asking to hear because if someone says that, that's the red flag. I'm not particularly interested in going abroad with that person because that scares me that people are so self-unaware that they don't ever think that they get pissed off.

Eric knows that difficult emotions inevitably arise during deep intercultural exchanges and he hopes students will be able to sit with and cope with those emotions, with help from the reflective structure of his courses.

In programs that involve content about violence, oppression, or inequity, students may have significant emotional reactions to injustice. Alice, who teaches a course on health disparities in London, shared that students experience frustration at ongoing inequities when they witness both historical and contemporary examples, like exhibits at the Museum of Science and Medicine on relationships between race, gender, and health outcomes. She described: "Students would see something that happened in the past and then see a very similar example of something that's happening today. Science evolves, our understanding of health evolves. Why can't suffering also evolve to be different?" While students process challenging emotions, Alice asks follow-up questions and explains that it's okay to not be okay and to not have an answer. Attending to students' reactions is an important part of student care and creating reflection opportunities surrounding these emotions can incorporate impactful lenses for deeper learning.

Olivia offered another example of student reactions to injustice. She recounted more about her U.S.-based students in Vietnam: "Floods of tears came to my students' eyes when we were in Vietnam." She shared that students felt that they shouldn't be present in a country in which their own country had enacted so much violence, and they wrestled with being welcomed so hospitably. She explained, "Vulnerability is hard, so creating spaces for vulnerability on these programs is radical. That is radical education. The fact that people can feel and go through these things is so important because when you think back to an experience…what transcends into other aspects is how you are feeling." Olivia hopes programs can plant the seeds for students to

understand and dismantle oppressive systems. The process of witnessing firsthand and feeling an emotional reaction can be a powerful motivator for social action.

Educators like Alice, Olivia, and Catalina sit with students through challenging emotions. Catalina considers this just a part of teaching, and being able to sit with students in their emotions is a capacity she's proud to have. She shared:

> It's a really important piece of teaching. If we're not connecting emotionally to the material, we're less rigorous. If we're not connecting personally to the material, it passes through us. There's a thread that passes through us and if we can connect emotionally to it, that's what ties the knot.

Connecting emotionally to the content, the context, or the experience matters in the depth, impact, and longevity of learning.

Emotions, even (or especially) those that challenge participants, constitute an important element of learning, particularly for education abroad programs. Fifteen participants discussed emotions in the context of whole human learning for education abroad. Across their perspective, two themes emerged: setting expectations and normalizing emotions as well as the importance of reflection. Additionally, some participants noticed increasing levels of student stress and anxiety that may detract from learning; these observations about 2020s-era students are included in Chapter 7.

Setting Expectations and Normalizing Emotions

Many participants emphasized setting realistic expectations as a core method of managing student emotions during education abroad programs. By naming emotions and decreasing stigmas around some of the difficulties that often happen during education abroad programs, students may react with greater patience when those issues and feelings arise. This is

largely done in either pre-departure orientations or initial in-country orientations and might include themes like culture shock and the challenges of intercultural adjustment. Several participants also mentioned the comfort zone model (Kouvela et al., 2018) and/or models of intercultural engagement, like the Intercultural Development Continuum (Intercultural Development Inventory, n.d.).

Bethany, an international programs office director, uses Milton Bennett's Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) during pre-departure orientations (Bennett, 1986). She gives students hypothetical written quotes and asks them to discuss which stage that student might be in and how they might encourage themselves to move to the next stage. This exercise empowers students to take ownership in their intercultural development and be reflective about potential sticking points.

Similarly, Heather Freeman (Director of global education office, small private university) talks with students about cultural adjustment to set expectations for students about the highs and lows of a study abroad experience. She also talks with students as they return to their home context and potentially experience reverse culture shock. Heather noted that she's seeing more students who have never left the United States or even been on a plane signing up for education abroad programs. Students may struggle being the first in their family to study abroad and students with children may struggle being away for an extended time. As she coaches students through their nerves, she normalizes their feelings: "If you're not scared, that might not be normal. Most people would be scared to go abroad and do this." Heather said she tries to be an ally to their experience and offers support throughout their pre-departure season.

Ginger emphasized the preparation work she does with students before they travel, specifically around the theme of culture shock: "When you get to a new place, no matter who

you are and how self-confident, you're going to experience culture shock…I find by really preparing people and emphasizing it very strongly, they always go, 'Oh, it wasn't that bad' because they were prepared." She is honest with her students about her own experiences of culture shock, despite being a seasoned traveler, and normalizes these types of challenges. By preparing students beforehand, obstacles become more anticipated and less destabilizing.

Like Ginger, Martina explained that her initial orientation sessions focus on culture shock, and her hopes to destigmatize those feelings: "It's normal to feel sad. It's normal to feel lonely sometimes. It's normal to feel confused or overwhelmed. And we are also there to assist them with that." Overtly naming these feelings can show students they're not wrong for feeling them or alone in processing them. Martina responds to student requests for support throughout the program and tries to translate student emotions into a framework of personal development:

> Everyone feels emotion, especially when you are abroad…You're in a totally different world and so the emotions you are used to feeling, maybe you feel them harder because you are in a different context. And so you realize them more, first of all. But then the emotions could be good or bad depending on how the student is going to translate these emotions. Are they good for me, for my transformation, or are they bad for me? This is the little step they need to take…This is where we can actually help them.

She sees emotions as important to student development and reframes "good" and "bad" emotions into "Are they good or bad for my transformation?" Instead of casting off difficult or "bad" feelings, students learn to embrace challenge as a part of their own growth.

Rachel also focuses on normalizing feelings of culture shock. She shares a personal perspective with students to destigmatize frustration:

> I think we spend so much time being sort of ethereal international educators. We want a great theory and we want to talk about the big stuff and the intercultural competencies that you're going to learn and the language piece and all of that is always going to be the part that's hardest. But for me, the hardest piece always is that there just aren't huge hot water heaters anywhere else but in the US and I love a really long, hot shower. And so I tell my students that it's going to be something different for them, but it's okay if it's something that feels dumb. It's okay if you have a low day and the thing that you feel irrationally angry about or deeply sad about is the lack of a massive hot water heater or a dryer or brushing your teeth with the tap water. It's okay to feel really upset or uncomfortable because of this thing. It doesn't have to be this big intellectual venture of discomfort. It can be something small. And for most of us, I think it actually is the small stuff.

From another perspective, Rachel leads a pre-departure orientation session that involves goal setting and visualization. In an activity called Best Possible Self, students journal about what they imagine their best possible self looks like midway through their abroad experience. "What is your best possible self doing? How do you feel? Who are you talking to? Who are your friends? What have you explored so far? What have you done?" These exercises demonstrate two different modes of working with expectations: normalizing challenging emotions and working with students' hopes.

In Daniel's pre-departure orientations, he facilitates a game called Barnga (Thiagarajan & Thiagarajan, 2006). In this game, students are grouped at different tables and receive a pack of cards and a set of confusing rules. Shortly after beginning to play, while students are still struggling to figure out the rules of their table, Daniel announces that there won't be any more

talking among the players. Players are then shuffled across different tables. What students don't know is that each table has been given a different set of rules. Daniel described takeaways of the experience:

> What you find through that simulation is that people become varied. Some people can become extremely agitated and frustrated with the experience…What becomes clear to some is 'I can now see how even in the space where I know these people, I'm in my own cultural element and when I am challenged with this task, my emotions do become a part of the experience very quickly…You are an emotional creature. That's just part of what it means to be human, and you don't want to dismiss or avoid those emotions. What you do want to do is you want to recognize, affirm, and then hope to distill or work through them so that you can get back to your homeostasis.

This exercise simulates the emotions students may feel during intercultural misunderstandings and allows students to recognize and reflect on those emotions before they happen on the ground. After feeling the emotions of Barnga, they have a better insight into what they can expect during the program.

Daniel also talks about neuroscience with his pre-departure students, namely about the frontal lobe, how it creates emotions, and how the brains of most of his students (who are 17-23 years old) are still growing; he describes how one's emotional and physical responses might not match one's logic about the situation. He also shows students emotion wheels to expand their vocabulary beyond the simplistic descriptors of sad, happy, or angry. He explains, "The more nuanced I can be in my journaling, my reflection, my understanding of my own emotion…I can navigate those difficulties…with better aplomb, become more agile in being my emotional self." He intends to "create some scaffolding and context" for students to be able to reflect individually

and collectively about their emotions and the ways they're learning. He hopes that these conversations might help students to recognize their own cultural backgrounds and respond better when their unfamiliarity or anxiety might cause them to make sweeping judgments about another culture.

Early preparation and expectation setting is important for helping students manage and learn from their emotions during their program. The emotions of culture shock, frustration, or homesickness aren't framed as negative but are instead normalized and positioned as powerful learning and growth opportunities.

Reflection

The process of reflecting on one's experiences and reactions came up in nearly every interview, transcending participant roles. This isn't particularly surprising given that reflection constitutes a core component of the experiential learning theory, which deeply informs education abroad (Kolb, 1984). The experiential learning theory emphasizes four phases of learning: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. According to this framework, experience necessitates reflection. The process of converting experience to knowledge through reflection is the key to experiential learning, and thus, key to education abroad.

Structured or unstructured, group or individual, verbal or written, there is a common understanding that reflection matters in education abroad programs. The variance comes in participant methods for facilitating reflection, and much of the time, participants rely on several methods throughout their engagement with students. Most program leaders who talked about reflection included some combination of individual and full group reflection. Individual reflections often took the form of journaling. Stephanie, who leads a program in London, even

provided students with a pre-made journal with individual daily prompts, organized around purposeful daily themes that connected to the scheduled experiential activities. She also included additional opportunities for reflection. She explained:

> They're getting inundated with new feelings, new experiences. Everything is new. As one strategy to help folks process those things, we made them a structured journal. There are pages for every day that had our key questions [about course content] and it had space for them to think, write, and reflect. But the journal also had other stuff that was a bit peripheral to the curricular aspects – there was a section where they would write down: What are three things you want to remember from today?

She said that students enjoyed using the journal as much as she enjoyed making it. Months after the program, one student told Stephanie that she still carries her journal around with her. Stephanie explained that the journal was an effort to give students outlets to process and digest the experience of the program, which help decreased stress levels for individuals and the community.

Tasha provided journal prompts through both the pre-departure orientation and the program itself. Leading up to the program, students provided weekly answers to this prompt: "Describe your perceptions, insights, feelings or learning about each of the following areas: yourself, others, and *the course content*." Each day during the program, students responded to this prompt: "Describe your perceptions, insights, feelings, or learnings about each of the following areas: yourself, others, and *the experiences*." She shared that students seemed to enjoy the reflective practices more during the abroad segment when they weren't struggling with other external time pressures. During the program, students were able to step away from homework and other responsibilities and focus on being present in Finland, which Tasha thinks led to a

greater embrace of reflective practices. She considers reflection a "non-negotiable" for education abroad programs.

Ginger described a reflective art project she assigned during her course "Displacement and Discovery," which centered students' experiences of education abroad:

> The first week they dealt with culture shock, displacement, so they had to define who they were and how that interacted with the new culture. Then they would learn about some of the history and then starting to embrace something from the new culture, really liking it – so it's the culture rubbing off on them, then them embracing it, and then it's the synthesis at the end of their culture with the new culture. So each week, we learned a process photographically that mirrored that. So for the displacement, they had to bring photographs from home and use that to make a collage about themselves, then they would start taking pictures of the things they were interested in and we would do Xerox transfers…you take a color Xerox and you lay it down and you put oil on it and rub it and it becomes like watercolor – so that would be what culture was rubbing off on them and then you would integrate them together. Then you would make one final piece that had your culture and their culture becoming a solid piece.

Through this project, Ginger integrated course content with deep, personal and cultural reflection.

Individual reflection was often complemented by group reflection. Stephanie adds that talking about the experiences, as well as the course content, in a learning space helps students make sense of more difficult topics. Across the board, group discussions were mostly discussion-based, with questions posed to the whole group with some facilitation from the program leader. In this approach, students have the opportunity to process, as well as to hear and be heard by

classmates. Students may empathize with the reflections of others, find support, have their own emotions validated, and/or have additional realizations about their experiences that didn't occur individually.

Alice, whose program focused on health disparities, shared that her group held reflections at the end of most program days. The reflections started with any observations about the day that students wanted to share, and then were rooted into two or three key questions. For the first day of the program, the key questions were:

> How does looking at the world historically open us up to new understandings of the present? What are social constructs? What is the role that history has played in shaping those perceptions? Are the social constructs of the past still influential today? Are there any connections you can make between current health inequities and historical events?

In the reflection, Alice asked:

> In some of our activities today, it's been clear that our histories have been shaped by moments when ordinary people came together to push for change. Did anyone have any throughlines or stories that resonated with them for actions that we can take for addressing health inequities today?

Alice believed having an "anchor" for these conversations created greater student takeaways. She said that these reflective spaces allowed students to communally grapple with questions about health disparities like:

> What does it mean to be somebody who's living and building in a society that's allowing things that we're experiencing to happen? How do I show up and use my knowledge and what I've gained to build a career that is working towards something different?...What

does it mean that we're seeing disparities and how can we, as public health folks, give space to learn and grow from that?

Through these exercises, students have the opportunity to reflect both about the course content and themselves.

Both Eric and Daniel referenced the notion that education abroad research has shown that reflection, even more than the experience, is where learning takes place. Daniel said: "It's almost as everything else you did that day is just the reason to get to the reflection. The reflection is the more important part here. If you're not doing that, then it almost doesn't matter what you did today." He stresses to faculty that reflective space is the most important element to incorporate into education abroad programs. He hopes faculty will use both group and individual reflection and he explained that structured reflection is proven to be more effective for cross-cultural learning. He also drew strong connections between the ideas of reflection and embodiment by connecting mindfulness practices to reflective exercises and encouraging body awareness in journaling: "How am I physically feeling? I'm journaling and thinking about the food I ate or didn't eat or the walk I took or the walk I didn't take. How is that adding or taking away to this overall holistic whole being experience that I'm going through?" Thus, reflection can be a space of overlap and integration between embodiment and emotions.

Elizabeth and Martina, as administrators who lead some programming and provide student support, both conduct mid-term reflections with their students. Elizabeth has created group reflections in the past, but most recently utilized individual reflections. She always uses a combination of written and oral reflection, to account for different student preferences and learning styles. She asks questions about their goals coming to Rome and gives them the opportunity to recognize and change any behavior that may not be serving those goals. She

emphasizes that this experience is temporary and urges students to make the most of their time abroad.

Martina also conducts individual midpoint check-ins with students. She asks similar questions, probing about students' experiences, struggles, and transformations. She challenges students by giving them a small quote she has chosen for them to focus on for the rest of the program; for example, "Not everything in life is going to be fine all the time, so just breathe, live in the moment, and try to get the most out of your day every day." She hopes that reflection will help students embrace their experience and focus on personal development but says that while this works for many, students who aren't interested in personal or intercultural development may not see the benefits.

Heather meets with students when they arrive back on campus after an abroad experience. She also combines writing and discussion by sending a survey ahead of the meeting that asks questions about challenges, highlights, and overall experiences. While she's talking with students, she looks for "transformative changes" in student perspective and awareness, and counsels them through the transition back to their home context.

Both faculty and administrators emphasize the importance of reflection throughout the process of intercultural engagement. In addition to the content, students reflect on themselves, their experiences, and their reactions, which cultivates deeper learning of self, content, and context. Participants use diverse methods of engaging students—in written and discussion formats, with more or less structure, in groups or individually, before, during, and after an experience—to cater to a variety of learning styles and objectives. In both content and process, emotions, including setting expectations and guiding reflection, constitute a significant whole human learning priority for participants.

Chapter Closing

Participants' responses about their use and understanding of whole human pedagogy informed several subthemes to each tenet. In reference to embodiment, participants described senses, ecosystems, physical activity, space and mannerisms, mindfulness, experiences, and identity. For emotions, participants highlighted setting expectations and normalizing emotions, as well as intentional opportunities for reflection. For both embodiment and emotions, participants emphasized practical approaches to implementing teaching and learning that incorporate bodies and emotions, and at points, these two areas even seemed to be interrelated. The next chapter will explore participant' responses in light of the latter two tenets: belonging and becoming.

Chapter 6: Participant Perspectives on Belonging and Becoming

The latter two tenets of whole human pedagogy are belonging and becoming, which address relationality and learning for being in the world, respectively. Similarly to Chapter 5, this chapter reintroduces each tenet and offers subthemes based on participant responses. The tenet of belonging includes reflections on the relationship between practitioner and student, including the subthemes of individualized knowing and reciprocity, as well as the relationship among the group members, which includes the subthemes of community, cocreation, and vulnerability. Data on becoming informed two subthemes: transformation and self-knowing. Each of these sections offer both theoretical and practical insight to nuance whole human pedagogy.

Belonging

The tenet belonging relies on the premise that relationships within co-created learning communities contribute to teaching and learning. For hooks (1994) and Thompson (2016), this includes cultivating a collective commitment to each other, as well as de-centering the facilitator as a top-down, all-knowing leader. Freire (1970) likewise emphasizes collective cocreation of knowledge and community by teachers and students, which rejects the traditional banking system of education. Decentering leaders, cocreating reality, and revering communal space all contribute to liberatory approaches to belonging. Thus, this tenet accounts for the relationality within a learning community and encompasses the ways students and facilitators relate and connect to one another.

Notably, this project focused on relationality specifically within the U.S.-based learning community, rather than a students' sense of belonging in a host community. Five participants also mentioned relationships with host communities and emphasized reciprocity, community-based learning activities, interconnectivity, mutual knowing, and acknowledging U.S. power and

privilege. The tenet belonging, specifically in reference to host communities, is further explored in the Recommendations for Future Inquiry section of Chapter 7.

Given that the participants of this study are education abroad practitioners, this section focuses on how these participants understand their relationships with their students as well as the relationships they endeavor to foster within a learning community.

The Relationship Between Participant and Student(s)

In the context of education abroad, where participants may be traveling and living with students full time, relationships between participant and student can be multifaceted. O'Reilley writes, "Whether we are aware of it or not, professional life tends to be dominated by one or another set of metaphors. We have to be conscious about the metaphors we choose to describe our relationship to students, and resist those thrust upon us by the marketplace" (1998, p. 23). Participants understand their relationships with students in a variety of ways, spanning different metaphors and levels of social distance.

Catalina offered her perspective on participant/student relationships by emphasizing her role as a teacher, but also the metaphor of extended family:

> I'm very clear that my role with them is as a teacher. I stay in that role pretty firmly because it's part of what allows me to do the work with them. But also what a teacher is, I see pretty broadly. We use a lot of metaphors of family and acquired family often, especially because we have a lot of Latinx students. There's sense of extended family is all over the place and there's a need often for mentors, tías, people who are not in your immediate family…Whatever I'm doing needs to contribute to their growth as people and needs to come from a place of what I'm doing is teaching.

Catalina understands the importance of her role as a teacher, and also understands "teacher" as a role that involves knowing, caring about, and mentoring students as they learn and grow.

Eric adamantly insists that his students are his friends, and that their learning is better for it. They call each other by their first names, talk about life outside the classroom, and know each other well. He laments the hierarchy and authority traditionally ingrained in the student-teacher relationship, and sees friendship as an avenue to breaking down divisions:

> I spend more time with them than I do anyone else. I like them. They know me. I know them… I think that's where better learning happens, frankly, because it keeps me honest. Students don't hesitate to challenge the arbitrary bad authority stuff when they're your friends… I'm more a coequal decider. I just have more experience with it…It keeps me open-minded and keeps me less authoritarian by being friends.

In reference to breaking down authority in teaching, he added: "It needs to be [broken down] for effective learning to take place. Otherwise you become a symphony conductor rather than a member of a jazz ensemble. And I'd much rather be a member of a jazz ensemble than the conductor of a symphony where I'm in charge." His understanding of himself as both a professor and a friend allows him to be a contributor to a learning community, rather than a participant in a hierarchal content transfer.

Olivia, a multicontinental program leader, explained that her undergraduate students often come into her programs with a strong notion of a teacher/student divide, which develops in the tracks of the parent/student divide of pre-college childhood. She encourages students to develop more self-sufficiency and strives to show herself as a whole human being. She hopes that, instead of seeing her simply as a service provider, students will see her as a colearner and cofacilitator with experience that can help aid students through their time abroad. Olivia takes

the role of mentor seriously and embraces that role during and beyond the program. She sees her own intercultural engagement with host colleagues and responding to group conflict as powerful moments of modeling for her students. She shows students effective professional relationships, as well as friendships, moments of joy and laughter, and the ability to constructively work through conflict. She models appreciation for all people who contribute to the experience and muses aloud about the farmers who grew their food, the drivers who transported the crops, the staff that maintains their workspaces. From her role modeling, students can learn about thoughtful engagement with the world around them both inside and outside of their program group.

Stephanie also mentioned role modeling as a key part of her relationship with her students. During her education abroad program, she said she modeled being engaged in the host context, thinking deeply about difficult topics, having a sense of adventure, trying new things, and planning for fun. She commented that program leaders are there to "set the tone, set the expectation, set the priorities." She reflected on her and her fellow program leader's ambitions:

> I felt like the whole time we were role modeling to them how to extract the most out of all aspects of the experience. We sat there and cried with them sometimes and we had a great time with them. When you're on an experience like that, I think students are often confused – is this person responsible for me? Can they tell me what to do? Am I on my own?...Us being ready to model to them how we thought they could best learn from and grow from the experience is what we set out to do.

Additionally, Stephanie modeled being oneself in a work context:

> I think predominant work culture in the US is you're a worker at work and you're someone else at home or in your community. That doesn't foster just and fair

> workplaces….That seems odd and not particularly productive. In that sense, we want to model that you should be yourself. You can have feelings at work and you can have challenges that you share with people and you can build community at work…You can be tired, you can be sad, you can be enthusiastic, you can be too busy, you can be burned out, you can be overwhelmed. All of those things are acceptable to be in your workplace…That's being a real person to someone, which is a way to be trustworthy. It's a way to build long term relationships. It's how you become effective. It's how you don't engage in oppressive practices.

Instead of telling students how to engage interculturally or how to show up authentically in their work environment, she shows them. She lives into the values she hopes her students will learn and allows them to learn through her example.

Alice sees herself as a mentor and thinks about training students into potential future colleagues that she would enjoy working with. Martina, a student activity and support provider, joked that her role spans several different relations: mom, counselor, teacher, and emphasizes her professionalism across all forms to maintain student safety. Rachel hopes she can build relationships so that students always feel comfortable calling her for support during their experience. Ginger has maintained contact with several of her students in the long term, cultivating friendships that have lasted years into the future. Ann said simply: "I care about them and they know it."

Regardless of the classification or metaphor one uses, these participants agree about the importance of building relationships with students. Within the relationship between participant and their students, two subthemes emerged: individualized relationships and knowing and reciprocity.

Individualized Relationships and Knowing. Many participants explained that knowing their students well on an individual level is a key to teaching/advising them well. Tasha shared that the reflective practices she integrated into her course partially addressed her desire to get to know her students:

> All of those things are building towards me wanting to learn about the students that I'm going to be taking and really form a meaningful connection with them. That one core thing impacted a lot of the things I did. All the journaling. It was more collecting of who these people are so I can understand them better.

Tasha overtly prioritized getting to know and understand her students from the very beginning.

As an art professor, Ginger largely revolves around knowing her students' capacities and adapting to each person: "There is no way you can teach a student super effectively unless you know how they learn best and also if students have other things going on, if they have hindrances to learning." She explained that knowing what a student is dealing with outside of class makes a big difference. Whether a student is a 19-year-old new college student who needs structure or a 36-year-old parent who needs an extension matters in how Ginger approaches teaching. Alice likewise mentioned that her approach varies based on her knowledge of students' lives. She explained, "Equitable approaches to my classroom does not mean the same thing for everybody." Approaches that are centered on student growth and equity come from knowing students individually.

Eric also uses different approaches for different students:

> You teach students slightly differently. Some students need extensions. Some need clear recapitulation of the main points of the text. Some students need scolding when they are avoiding rigor. And if you don't deal with them all differently, you're going to lose some,

> and the priority is to not lose anybody. It takes more time, more effort, but it's utterly worth it for what it collectively happens to everyone's learning.

Likewise, he explained:

> To teach the whole person, you have to care about who you're teaching. You have to know who you're teaching and be flexible. It can't be a fixed thing that you can walk in and teach the whole person. It's ridiculous to think that you can teach a whole person without valuing what they have to say.

This means that, even though he may teach the same courses repeatedly, the way he teaches them changes every time based on the students who are enrolled.

Eric's perspective mirrors that of O'Reilley—an informant of Thompson's (2016)—who advises teachers to "let methodology flow from the particular (this student, this hour, this blue spruce)" (1998). Knowing students individually informs participants' abilities to interact with students in a whole human way, which hooks (1994) argues relies on genuinely valuing everyone's presence. Knowing students includes knowing their needs, their personalities, and their lives beyond the classroom. A posture of wanting to know students can invite them to show up more completely; engaging them based on their own growth can help them learn better.

Reciprocity. The last subtheme demonstrated the ways that participants knowing students contribute to learning communities; this subtheme shows that participants being known by students also affects these communities. Alice referenced hooks (1994) as she explained, "I don't expect anything of my students that I don't expect of myself. I'm never going to ask my students to share something that I also wouldn't be willing to share."

Cultivating relationships based on reciprocity was a focus for many participants, including Rachel, who shared:

> I feel strongly that supporting students through international education, through anything, relies on some vulnerability of self. If I can't be real with my students about what I would need in that moment, then how are they going to be able to feel like they can be honest with me about what they need?

To cultivate relationships with students, she shares stories and struggles of her own abroad experiences. She also shares that she went to the college that she works at, asks students which dorm they live in, and bonds through those common experiences. Olivia also strives to build relationships on commonalities and trust. She exhibits vulnerability to create a space that welcomes students to be vulnerable too.

Showing vulnerability constitutes a core method for participants demonstrating reciprocity. Eric said, "I'm a human being. And we are vulnerable. Aren't we? We are. I get sick too. I am wrong. I don't know. I get frightened. And I have biases. If I want my students to learn…I can't pretend these things don't happen to me." Being fully human means being vulnerable, and this vulnerability helps his students learn. Additionally, vulnerability can help participants build strong learning communities. Ginger explained, "I'm very vulnerable. But at the same time, I really do demand respect and I demand that people work very hard…I give them everything. I'm willing to give them as much as they give me. It's like, I will do all this for you, but you have to do all this for us."

Participants can ask for vulnerable, whole human engagement from students when they are also willing to show up and do the work they're asking for. By asking only for what they're also willing to give, participants establish themselves as members, rather than extractors, of a learning community. The next section describes the relationship about group members, which includes both participants and students, and in which vulnerability will return as a theme.

The Relationship Among Group Members

All of the program leaders sampled have worked with cohort-based programs and thus, have experience in managing a cohesive group while traveling. The programs discussed had a group size of between 12 and 30 students and several participants mentioned that the relatively small group size was important to their group management strategy.

Many participants also mentioned that they had good "buy-in" from students. In other words, students were committed and engaged in the program, which was consequential in the success of the group. In addition to buy-in, building a learning community, cocreating learning, and engaging with vulnerability and trust were core elements of group relationality.

Community. Group relationality was often conceptualized through the idea of a learning community. Participants had different ways of approaching community building: Tasha incorporates discussion-based class sessions and small group projects; Martina plans a special arrival lunch where students all sit at one table like a family; and Ginger creates student pairs for work or discussions. Ginger shared that she likes to pair them using arbitrary icebreaker questions: "What was your favorite toy as a child? You write it on the board alphabetically and that's how you pair them up." She said that not letting them self-select their pairs and using an icebreaker question both help students to get to know each other better.

Stephanie emphasized to students that everyone in the group was worthy of time and attention. Additionally, she emphasized the students' responsibilities for themselves and each other, which limited issues with cliques and disciplinary violations and cultivated an environment of mutual trust and investment. She described the importance of relationships on program: students understand "I can digest these experiences with somebody. I can rely on somebody. I can ask for help with somebody. I can tell somebody how I reacted to something."

Eric commented that a true whole human learning experience has to be communal: "Community is a vital way of understanding how learning happens. It's not just an individual person…It's more a whole community practice. We learn in constellations of practice. We learn in relational webs with other humans and other beings." He operates under the assumption that any successful project, course, or program requires a healthy learning community. He cultivates community by prioritizing diverse voices in discussions and engaging with students individually when their voice is missing from the group. He explained, "Voices matter. It has be everybody's voices, not 75% or 50%. It has to be everybody. Literally everybody." He explained that this is easier in experiential education because while everyone may not have done the reading, everyone experienced something together, so everyone has something to say.

Both Stephanie and Ann described end-of-program affirmation activities as important community-building initiatives on their programs. Stephanie led an activity called "Kudos." At the beginning of the program students received enough cardstock to leave each other person a small note, quotation, drawing, etc. Students were told that these notes would be exchanged at the end of the program. Stephanie thinks that this helped set an intention to build relationships amongst the group with the expectation that students would know each other well enough to write a note by the end: "That represented to them the importance to us of investing in each other and building those relationships."

Ann remembered an evening at the end of the program when she led a guided meditation and a short yoga practice, which involved a trust exercise where students stood in tree pose and placed their palms together to help each person in the circle balance on one leg. Afterwards, one person stood in the middle while each person in the circle stated something "they were amazed and so grateful for about that person." Ann shared: "I was amazed at the things they came up

with. And they would take turns. Someone else would go to the center and everyone would say something beautiful and unique about that person. We laughed and we cried together during that session and they were so contemplative afterwards."

The most common community-building activity, mentioned by five participants, was the creation of a community agreements document. Three program leaders described facilitating this exercise with students while two administrators reported that they urge faculty to implement this practice. Participants described the community agreement activity as a collective creation of a set of agreements, at the beginning of a program, that represents the values of the group and expectations for how the group is going to interact. Alice described this activity:

> How are we going to use our time together and how do we treat each other? Everybody in the room contributes to that list, and rather than a democratic choice, it has to be a collective vote…Everyone in the room has to agree…When we're in our community…how do we spend our time and how do we treat each other? And that's a living document that we can return to and add to and change as we get to know each other more.

Alice thinks this exercise helps cultivate trust amongst the group and mutual understandings about showing up for each other. Stephanie commented that this exercise demonstrates the relational opportunities of the program, in addition to the curricular learning opportunities of the program. Catalina specifically includes "the value that we are whole human beings and we don't just learn with our brains."

Cocreation, Cofacilitation, Colearning. Eight participants described cocreation, cofacilitation, or colearning strategies with their students, which involved decentering themselves as the hierarchical head of the class and increasing student responsibility for the

group's learning. Eric explained, "It's a collective experience. The student is a teacher. The teacher is a student. The boundaries have to break down to teach the whole person."

Tasha also wanted to decenter herself as an instructor. She explained that her group sat in a circle during every class session to encourage everyone's engagement. At the beginning of her course, she was transparent about her role: "I'm not going to pretend that I know everything about every single topic from every single angle and from every single perception. I made it very clear up front that it was going to be a very open place for students. I'm not going to claim I know more." She doesn't subscribe to the hierarchical idea of teaching and instead leaned into her role as a facilitator, rather than a traditional lecturer.

Alice rejected the idea of faculty being all-knowing "sages on the stage" and instead said, "We're building this boat as we're going together. We're building something as a community rather than 'You're here just to learn from me in this moment." When instructors don't acknowledge that they're bringing themselves to their work, Alice said, "We miss out on the opportunity for how students could contribute to us as well as what we can contribute to them. I think that is important for education abroad to think about. We're not just designing these experiences for students to learn from us. It can also be an opportunity for us to create something new together in general." Alice also explained that, after getting to know each other, students felt accountable to one another: "They're responsible for not just their own learning, but for the learning of the people around them." This led to higher engagement from students because they realized their lack of participation in homework or discussions would detrimentally affect the learning of others.

Olivia delegates leadership to students to encourage their cocreation of the program. She invites students to co-lead educational sessions with her and uses an activity called "leader of the

day." In this exercise, each student is assigned a particular day of the program and on their day, is responsible for the leader's duties. The leader of the day would hold a morning icebreaker, prepare other students for the day's activities, answer questions, help with cleaning and promptness, and express gratitude to hosts. Olivia explained that this helped shift understandings from a service-customer mindset to a colearning and cofacilitating mindset.

Implementing a cocreation, cofacilitation, and colearning mindset can empower students to take greater ownership of their learning, improve group dynamics, embrace the knowledge students bring with them, and decenter participants as hierarchal, all-knowing leaders.

Vulnerability and Trust. Cultivating vulnerability and trust is an integral practice in engaging groups, particularly around challenging experiences or content. Ginger sees the personal vulnerability present in education abroad as an advantage: "We need to pay attention to our whole being and study abroad is a great opportunity because people are more vulnerable, they're more broken down by jetlag and culture shock. That is a perfect opportunity."

Eric creates deep sharing and deep listening practices where students speak without other students responding:

> Students learn how to listen without arrogating, without sitting and thinking 'What am I going to say? Do I agree with this person or not? What's my response going to be? And how does what they're saying affect me?' They can stop all that and just listen. And not have that be the norm because it has to be a distinct type of space and set aside with an almost ritualistic kind of moment in the class to distinguish from normal banter, conversation, discourse. It also sets aside that there's a time and a place for talking about deeper things and one can be disagreeable sometimes, and that's okay.

He says that cultivating mutual knowing in a group contributes to a feeling of safety that allows community members to be more vulnerable. He thinks that mutual knowing and deep listening can foster spaces of multifaceted understanding of both each other and the course content.

Catalina draws on her experience as a creative writer to create writing workshops that serve as community building events. She described these events:

> One of the things that allows me to do this is to contain the space and that containment is important for students to be able to feel like, 'Okay, I can share this thing. It's contained. It's held. It's not going to go all over the place.'…What we often do is we start with a text or a theme or something to get the juices flowing. I do an interactive process of what I call seeding stories, so getting students to think about stories that they have. What do they bring with them? And then give them very defined spaces for how they share those stories and how others respond to them… They're held there. They're treated with care because some of those are big stories….Then we do some sort of ritual closing and give students prompts for writing that story. So it is followed up by some writing and then often the process of sharing that writing.

In both of these exercises, students get to know themselves and each other with a structured ritual of vulnerability and sharing.

Olivia described the importance of vulnerability:

> If we don't build things for vulnerability, what are we doing? We are perpetuating that everything should be figured out or that there's an end goal or that we are capitalist and pumping out a product. If we're going to encourage process in that deeper intensity and depth of experience, then we have to create space for vulnerability.

Vulnerability brings whole humans into spaces and enhances the ability for humans to create learning opportunities together with trust and mutual knowing.

Becoming

The tenet of becoming encompasses the notions that learning deeply affects the way humans exist in the world, that learning is meaningful and transformative, that learning can "connect the will to know with the will to become" (hooks, 1994, p. 18-19). For participants, this may be a process of becoming more integrated, more self-actualized, more empathetic, more curious, more interested in activism or intercultural engagement; it may be a process of becoming free, mindful, well, seen, or whole. Becoming, as a tenet, does not rely so much on *what* students become, but instead on learning as a process of evolution that connects to *being in the world.*

Transformation

Transformation comprised the key subtheme of the tenet becoming. In many interviews, the word "transform" emerged naturally in reference to participants' goals for students. In others, interview participants were asked about the word "transformative" in relation to education abroad. Twelve interviews included a discussion of transformation; life-changing and self-changing experiences were deeply important to participants. Many even referenced their own transformative abroad experiences, both as evidence of transformation and as inspiration for the work they do.

Ann sees herself as: "someone opening doors for the full body experience of transformation through interconnectivity with people outside of your familiar group, outside of your comfort zone, outside of your home country, outside of your assumptions." She hopes that

students experience transformation that leads them to "become closer and closer to who they really are, their best and highest self."

Catalina sees transformation happen in a variety of ways. She notes that some students transform through strong relationships with each other, some go through a process of political awakening, some discover their vocational passions, some have even come out as transgender after the deep reflection of the program. Catalina says they are "finding calling, recognizing their own gifts and being able to connect to them and see how those gifts function in the world." She reflected: "When we think of changing the world, we don't always remember that we have to change ourselves first…I really want to send off my students to do good work in the world but with the knowledge that it's going to take some work on ourselves." She hopes her students begin to understand the need to work on themselves and to continue the process of transformation as they move forward.

Tara sees transformation as the development of a more complex mindset. Her work in intercultural education was inspired by her understanding that opportunities for personal development arise when people go abroad and reach outside of their comfort zone. However, for these experiences to be positively transformative, they need to be carefully facilitated. She remarked:

> I don't think we should assume education abroad will automatically be transformative or that it will be transformative in a positive way. If we want the experience to be transformative in a positive way for students, we have to be very intentional in how we design and facilitate programs. We have to be clear about our learning objectives and backward design the program to achieve those objectives.

Tara explained that learning opportunities are transformative when educators can help students be the right amount of uncomfortable, with the right amount of support, and with empowering reflection tools that help make meaning of the experience.

While the idea of life-affecting experiences remained valuable, two participants problematized the use of the word "transformative" in education abroad rhetoric. Alice and Olivia both emphasized that transformation doesn't only happen in the grand experiences like education abroad programs: it happens at home, on the local level, and in the everyday. While Alice saw many of her education abroad students transform, specifically in their confidence, she explained that giving students opportunities to think about their values, reflect, and set goals can be transformational in the everyday lives of undergraduates and can include students for whom education abroad experiences aren't accessible. Olivia warned that specifically seeking to be transformed by an education abroad experience can be exotifying or extractivist—othering or unfairly taking—particularly if transformation is seen as something that one gets from the "other." Transformation, she argued, is not something that we go to another place to take. She sees transformation taking place in the aftermath of real engagement, in the thoughtful introspective and reflection that follows experiences. She would rather instill in students that transformative experiences can happen anywhere and aren't something to be sold through a study abroad pamphlet.

Self-Knowing and Self-Sufficiency

While education abroad comes with a strong focus on learning about contexts beyond one's home culture, one of the core elements of becoming is learning about oneself. Opportunities to explore, reflect, experiment, socialize, make mistakes, and spend time alone all offer students chances to get to know themselves better. Ten participants referenced self-

knowing as an important part of becoming. Tara noted that understanding one's own culture, experiences, and meaning-making is the first step to intercultural engagement. Both Tara and Daniel pointed out that students may not even know they *have* culture if they haven't engaged in intercultural discussions before. Tara uses a constructivist lens, reflection questions about one's relationship to culture, and the intercultural development continuum (Intercultural Development Inventory, n.d.) to encourage deeper and more complex mindsets about cultural difference and similarity.

Several participants mentioned the personal development stage of undergraduates (commonly understood as a 18-24 age range). Alice loves working with undergraduates because they're asking questions about themselves and the world to figure out who they are. She aims to provide space for students to think about selfhood, values, and identity development. Likewise, Rachel explained that she is most excited about getting students to think about the:

> exploration of identity and self in the world that happens in college. I think sort of by chance, the average age of folks who are in college, that is developmentally a huge piece of what's happening…this transformative stage where you figure out who you are and what you want to do and go outside of your comfort zone as you can possibly do. Becoming to me – I see those things as the same thing: self-exploration, self-identity, and becoming happen simultaneously.

She continued to share that the new opportunities of college, and the becoming that follows, are essential to student experiences abroad and to creating a sense of self.

Ginger recounted her own experience traveling as a young person and the freedom from norms and expectations that accompanied it. She commented that being physically immersed in another place alleviates some of the expectations of home. Being a good guest is required, but

upholding the cultural norms or demands of your home country isn't. When this happens, students are free to be how and who they want to be.

Stepping outside of their comfort zone in new environments can also help students build confidence in self-sufficiency. Three participants named self-sufficiency in terms of taking care of oneself during the program, while four also mentioned elements like navigation and budgeting. Some participants also noted that they have seen students grow more comfortable spending time alone. Bethany recounted the story of a student who was afraid of traveling by herself, including taking the bus across her college town to get groceries. After completing two education abroad programs, she built the self-confidence to travel alone and now takes the bus to the grocery store by herself regularly.

Stephanie shared that she believes "there's so much opportunity there besides the content…I think people often undersell the opportunity to build students competence and confidence—and help them navigate a new place or navigate anywhere." She helped students think through personal budgeting and taking responsibility for themselves. After the first few days of the program, Stephanie increased the amount of student free time, as well as student responsibilities in navigating to the day's activities. Overall, she "tried to encourage them to be open to new experiences and courageous…I think that's all contributing to a mindset for their adulthood that's like, 'I can do these things. I have competence to learn new things and be in new places and with new people."

Knowing oneself and caring for oneself are major factors in the development of young people. Intentionally incorporating these elements into education abroad programs provides spaces for students to learn for the world beyond the classroom.

Values. Part of knowing oneself is knowing one's values—one's principles or ethics, what holds importance in life. Eight participants mentioned student exploration of cultural values, largely related to reassessing and reprioritizing their own.

Tara offered a few intercultural engagement exercises centering cultural values. She recommended identity mapping exercises, where students think through their identity, their values, and where those values might have come from. She uses the depiction of culture as an iceberg, where some elements of culture, such as food, music, and language, are visible. Most of culture, however, is made up of unobservable elements, like values. Tara explained that those unobservable elements tend to be where conflict, judgment, or struggle happens. She recommended an exercise with proverbs to help students prepare for intercultural learning, starting with student-generated memories of proverbs they grew up with. She uses the example "The early bird gets the worm":

> What does that mean? What did you learn about time from your family? What are the values around time that you grew up with? How might that differ from somebody else? If students are going to a certain place, you might introduce them to some proverbs from that place and say: how does this differ from what you're used to? What do you think are the values being communicated here?

Lastly, she recounted an activity where she shows international students' comments to education abroad pre-departure students. In these comments, international students describe things they've noticed about the United States, such as: "Every time I go into a home, they give me a tour of their house, including the bathroom. Why are they showing me all around their house? In my country, we don't even go into someone's house." Tara then asks students what values might be observable in these comments: "Do you agree or disagree with this being a value in your culture?

What do you think it says about the culture that this person comes from?" These exercises cultivate reflection on oneself, which can also help students understand different perspectives.

As students experience another culture's values, they may reflect on and re-evaluate their own. Participants specifically mentioned the values of relationships, wellbeing, sustainability, food, time, and success.

Elizabeth described one student who learned to value his communication with his family, which he had often found tiresome at home: "He said that he learned from the Italians the importance of family ties and the importance of maintaining those ties." Additionally, he learned through the experience of education abroad that he did need to reach out for help or participate in a group in many situations, which made him more comfortable interacting with others more frequently and deeply. By the end of the program, he had engaged thoughtfully with his peers *and* began calling his family every day. Elizabeth called this a transformative learning experience that wasn't in the curriculum.

In terms of food, Martina explained that students often show interest in how Italians shop for groceries: "They're learning new ways of giving value to the products we eat…we give a lot of value to the food we eat. We appreciate good food because it's what mother earth gives us and we want to respect it and eat it in all of its different shapes and forms." Heather also described the value of food as a change for students, particularly in terms of scheduling. In post-program debriefs, many students were thinking about slowing down and making time to sit down with others for meals. These comments reflect student reconsideration of the value of meals and quality time, but also time in larger sense. She said that students realize they are too focused on tight schedules in the United States and a focus on slower mealtimes allows them to reassess their busy days.

Ginger echoed these reflections as she described students learning to take breaks and work in moderation, given that many European countries she visited with students don't have the same emphasis on rushing through the day as the United States. She also shared that her students struggle with achievement pressure may find some relief in witnessing different cultural values: "They want to be an A student. They want to present well. They want to be friendly. They want to be attractive. They want to be smart… All the things they feel pressured about or keep them up at night…they won't ever shed them 100%, but they'll be able to do better." Seeing alternative value systems firsthand can help students be more aware of their own values and be more active in choosing what to value going forward.

Chapter Closing

This chapter nuanced the third and fourth tenets of whole human pedagogy. Within the tenet of belonging, participants explored the relationship between themselves and their students and the relationships amongst group members. Finally, participants addressed becoming by emphasizing transformation and self-knowing.

Chapter 3 put forth the four tenets of whole human pedagogy for education abroad theoretically; Chapters 5 and 6 offered the four tenets of whole human pedagogy based on participants' perspectives. Participants collectively demonstrated a deep respect for whole human approaches to teaching and learning, as well as enthusiasm for increased research and representation for holistic pedagogies in education abroad. Chapters 5 and 6 have focused on how data informs the framework whole human pedagogy. Chapter 7 will describe several themes that emerged through participant responses that address the field more broadly, including practical limitations of education abroad administration and students in the 2020s, as well as themes that address whole human pedagogy on a broader level, such as wellbeing and liberation.

Chapter 7: Beyond the Four Tenets

Whole human pedagogy reaches beyond the four tenets of embodiment, emotions, belonging, and becoming. While interviews focused on the tenets of whole human pedagogy, many additional themes emerged throughout participant responses. The notion of discomfort appeared as a theme in most interviews and across all four tenets. Additionally, participants included observations about their work contexts, illuminating some current limitations and areas for growth for the field of education abroad in U.S. higher education. Participants also offered observations about the current generation of students, including ways their behavior and needs have shifted in the 2020s. Additionally, participants offered perspectives on wellbeing, liberation, their own roles, and the ability of whole human pedagogy to reach beyond the boundaries of education abroad.

Discomfort

One of the most notable collective takeaways from interview participants was the role of discomfort in education abroad learning. While individual participants described discomfort in relation to individual tenets, the theme of discomfort is described here because, across the seventeen interviews, it came up in *all four* tenets. Thirteen participants brought up discomfort without specific prompting, which indicates that discomfort is a far-reaching cornerstone of these participants' understanding of whole human learning in education abroad.

Martina explained that, "Everyone can go abroad, but not everyone can get the most out of an experience." She attributes this difference to students' willingness to engage with discomfort, challenge, and personal development during the program. Stephanie described students being "off-kilter" away from their routine, food, and homes, which she thinks makes people more sensitive and aware of their environment. Ann prepares students for "challenging

moments which might include not seeing your favorite thing on a menu or no bathroom for a while—a hole in the ground with no toilet paper." She tries to help students learn to be prepared and to develop centered responses to challenging moments, which she ultimately hopes cultivates resilience, character, and humility.

Six participants specifically referenced the notion of a "comfort zone" or the comfort zone model (Kouvela et al., 2018). Some even directly engaged students using the model as lesson content. The model includes three concentric circles, which constitute the comfort zone, characterized by familiarity and ease; learning zone, which challenges learners with new experiences and opportunities for growth; and panic zone, which is marked by learner overwhelm, fear, and paralysis (Kouvela et al., 2018). Tara explained that the key to learning is for students to be uncomfortable enough to be in the learning zone without crossing over the panic zone and/or finding ways to recenter and return to the learning zone if panic occurs. She shows a visual of the comfort zone model and asks students to brainstorm what kinds of experiences might put them in each zone and then how they might maximize their time in the learning zone. She explained that this looks different for different students: simply stepping on a plane may be outside the comfort zone of some students while others may be experienced travelers. Some may be more reliant on their routines, some may be more challenged intellectually, some may struggle socially. Thus, understanding a student's comfort zone is difficult without knowing them individually; there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

Tara hopes that empowering students with knowledge about the comfort zone will help them take ownership of their own learning and see discomfort as a positive opportunity. Daniel and Bethany shared similar experiences of facilitating discussions of the comfort zone model with students. Thus, the comfort zone model constitutes a popular and useful tool for participants

by informing their understandings of student learning processes and helping them prepare students for challenging experiences.

Alice referenced another tool for thinking about discomfort: Mezirow's model of critical reflection and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997). She said she tries to create "disorienting dilemmas," something that creates discomfort or interrupts one's understanding of the world. She then uses daily group reflections to work through and create meaningful learning from those moments of discomfort.

Participants hope students will learn many lessons from discomfort. Lindsay remarked: "Our culture is so based on finding comfort always. It is important for learning to be comfortably uncomfortable, and it spans, how can I sit with uncomfortable emotions? How can I sit with uncomfortable thoughts or contemplations or not have a clear answer?" Lindsay hopes that from the discomfort, students will gain, "resilience, contemplation, inquiry, more questions, knowing that they don't have to avoid uncomfortable situations, feelings, emotions, thoughts, bodily feelings, that it's okay to try things, a growth mindset with intrinsic motivation rather than always staying in a safe box." These qualities represent the types of learning that education abroad offers students beyond just content.

Daniel mused that the phrase "Get used to being uncomfortable" is common in education abroad spaces, which he sees as a nod to a deeper inquiry: "What are your head, heart, hands doing right now that make you uncomfortable? What is it about your background, your upbringing, your personal self, all of the things you've created over how long of a time you've been alive?" He understands discomfort as an opportunity to cultivate a growth mindset and work on one's mental flexibility and neuroplasticity to overcome challenges.

Tara explained that intercultural competency depends on a balance of self-awareness and other-awareness, and that realistic assessments of each may only be apparent when someone is frustrated, upset, or uncomfortable. She described the value of emotional and bodily sensations to prompt reflection during moments of discomfort:

> Stuff is happening in my head or in my heart or in my body. Why is that happening? Where is it coming from? It's a window into exploring. How am I making meaning of this? Are others making meaning of it differently? Why might they be making meaning of it differently? Now that I have that better understanding, how do I want to choose to proceed or engage?

These internal questions can guide students towards understanding themselves and increasing their intercultural competency in the long term.

In addition to intercultural competency, discomfort might contribute to understandings of international mobility and justice. Elizabeth explained that students may see that living in another country isn't easy, which may give them new perspectives on immigration and empathy for immigrants and refugees.

Additionally, Olivia explained that not all students get to choose when to embrace discomfort:

> Discomfort looks very different for different people. As an educator with students from predominantly white suburbs who go to private schools that very much fit the narrative that media has put on a "true American" versus a Black queer woman in a place where same sex marriage is illegal and Black people are dehumanized… Discomfort can come in a lot of different ways and choosing to lean into discomfort – not everyone can choose that.

Choosing to lean into discomfort is a privilege. In many circumstances, racism, sexism, or homophobia mean discomfort is inherent and ever-present for some individuals. Education abroad practitioners need to recognize that discomfort depends on identity and intersectionality.

For all of her students, Olivia hopes that discomfort will contribute to students' reflection on U.S. hegemonic systems. Olivia sees valuable discomfort in feeling humbled in non-U.S. and non-English-centric spaces. She hopes students can embrace an opportunity to be introspective as learned behaviors, including oppressive behaviors, are challenged and disrupted. She explained, "We might feel the discomfort personally, but that's all ruptures of the system that created the comforts for us." Awakening to and actively dismantling systems of oppression comes through and with discomfort.

Overall, participants identified discomfort as a core component of learning in education abroad. Many listed learning objectives that can be gained from discomfort—from resilience, introspection, and the ability to withstand uncertainty to deeper learning, intercultural competence, and empathy for diverse lived experiences. Whether it originates in bodies, emotions, relationships, or meaning-making, discomfort offers immense learning opportunities for education abroad participants when it is thoughtfully incorporated and processed.

Practical Limitations of Education Abroad Administration

Participants face challenges and limitations within the field of education abroad, as well as institutions of higher education more broadly. These obstacles include large class sizes, the commodification of higher education and education abroad, limitations for pre-departure and post-program activities, and lack of specialized training for program leaders. These areas might each be seen as potential areas of growth and change for the field.

Class size

Most interview participants work with small programs. This may not be a sampling coincidence: many expressed that the intentionality of their engagement with students wouldn't be possible with larger groups. Tasha, Ginger, and Eric all shared their preference for small groups, each limiting programs somewhere between 12 and 30 students. Eric and Ginger both said this was one of the reasons they chose to teach at their specific institutions and discussed difficulties fostering belonging in their experiences with larger groups. Rachel expressed that with a larger pool of students, she "would need a whole new set of tools to take a whole human approach…Because my whole human ethos is so individualized." These participants wondered if they could be as effective if they were working with larger groups.

Commodification and Marketing

Six participants identified increased commodification of education abroad as a difficulty in their practice. Commodification of education abroad, and higher education more broadly, is marked by a neoliberal notion of education as a commodity to be bought and sold, rather than a common good or an individual right. There is a danger that, through a commodification lens, education abroad may look more like the tourism sector than the education sector. Zemach-Bersin (2009) explains that study abroad advertising often "undermines many of the goals that international educators endeavor to achieve…endorse[s] attitudes of consumerism, entitlement, privilege, narcissism, and global and cultural ignorance" (p. 303). Participants listed specific issues, including lack of student economic status diversity, disrespect of program leaders as "service industry" professionals, and organizations prioritizing program marketability over program quality.

Martina, who also works with a provider organization, explained that because students are paying for services, she isn't able to make the pre-departure live online webinar mandatory. This means that many students arrive to the program without preparation. The on-site orientation covers basic survival information but is already long enough that adding more content about intercultural learning isn't realistic. She endeavors to have these conversations with individual students but thinks the power of pre-departure preparation is underestimated.

Elizabeth finds education abroad marketing that claims programs will be "the best times of students' lives" problematic: "To get students on board, that's the message we're sending. 'You're going to love it so much. You're going to want to move to Barcelona and live there forever.'" While many people do have amazing experiences, this marketing positions student discomfort as a problem or as entirely avoidable. If marketing promises experiences that look like vacations, both students and practitioners are bound to be frustrated when programs begin.

Elizabeth and Lindsay both think that program recruitment should engage students with more transparency about the experience, which they believe would increase student success and satisfaction in the long run, while decreasing the number of students who aren't interested in being uncomfortable. Lindsay thinks that selling education abroad to students as a job qualification or a box to check ultimately disadvantages programs and students. She shared, "It's a bigger societal issue that if you can't assign credits, if you don't have a major for it, if you don't make money from it, it's not important." She thinks that higher education overemphasizes hard skills over abilities to communicate, to know what you need, to know what makes you happy and healthy. While she believes that study abroad is a great learning opportunity, she thinks that students trying to "check a box" for a credential or job qualification may actually be more traumatized than transformed by the experience: "There needs to be deeper conversations

with students and parents about how hard it is in relation to their needs." As described previously, discomfort is common experience in the education abroad learning process and students who are drawn to education abroad by marketing materials that promise vacation-like comfort may be surprised when those expectaions aren't met.

Lack of Resources for Pre-Departure and Post-Program Activities

Several participants cited pre-departure programming as important to their programs, but many lamented how limited that time is. Many pre-departure orientations led by college administration met for two to three hours, three to six times. In these cases, students may be so stressed with their other work that they don't engage as deeply with the orientation sessions. Tasha shared that students seemed to see the reflective exercises as "just another assignment" during orientation but leaned into them fully while abroad.

Partner programs were more likely to hold one or two virtual orientation sessions, which are often optional, and thus students may receive inconsistent amounts of information. As an administrator at a partner program, Lindsay holds an optional pre-departure orientation about identity and mental health. She says that this orientation is optional on purpose because it is a long session and because students may be angered by the session if they aren't ready for or aren't interested in personal development or identity-based content.

Embedded programs seemed to have a better experience with pre-departure orientation content because participants could use their normal class time to provide orientation sessions. Additionally, participants could front-load coursework during the on-campus portion to allow students to lean more deeply into the experiential components of learning. Some participants, like Alice and Ginger, had students complete most of the work ahead of time anyway, even

though their program wasn't part of a larger course, to place more emphasis on experience and reflection while abroad.

Despite the experiential learning theory's assertion that post-experience engagement is critical for learning and integration (Kolb, 1984), post-program engagement was not a reality for many programs that weren't embedded in on-campus courses. On-campus administrators are often not afforded the time or workload capacity to create post-program engagements, may be unable to reach students during school breaks, and may have difficulty getting students to engage in post-program materials if it isn't required or offered for credit. As administrators, Heather, Bethany, and Rachel are independently trying to imagine and create programming to fill that need.

Heather oversees a "global club" on campus, where international students and prior education abroad students can continue to meet and talk about their programs. They hold monthly events like global cooking lessons, photo exhibition contests, and celebrations of International Education Week. She also recruits student ambassadors to help at study abroad fairs by talking to other students about their experiences.

At a previous institution, Bethany ran a "returner reflection" series of four discussions with students; now, she runs one workshop with students about personal meaning-making and career competencies. She shared that administrators and institutions are so busy processing paperwork and "checking the boxes" that additional programming often goes by the wayside. In her ideal work, she would be able to run both pre-departure and post-program for-credit classes that prioritize reflection and processing.

Rachel also hopes to eventually implement a one-credit course for returner reflection. For now, her student workers are assembling an asynchronous online workshop of reflection

materials for students finishing study abroad experiences. This program will be accessible to students individually, which means that students who study abroad in the spring will be able to complete the reflection over the summer instead of waiting until they return to campus in the fall.

Overall, participants placed a high value on both pre-departure and post-program activities and reflections and many, particularly administrators, saw this as a potential future growth area for their institutions. To make these improvements, participants would need their institutions to dedicate additional time and support to pre-departure and post-program activities and courses.

Lack of Training

Despite ongoing growth in the field of education abroad, there is a marked lack of training for program leadership positions. While some administrators, like Tasha, offer workshops for faculty to increase their program design and leadership skills, professional development for program leaders is largely up to the leaders themselves.

Vande Berg et al. (2012) argue that "the preparation of cultural mentors, whether they are faculty, in-country professional staff, or others, is an essential part of student success in study abroad" (p. 53). Further, "cultural mentors need to be trained in order to become skillful in providing support and knowledgeable about culture, the process of intercultural adjustment, and the ways in which learners characteristically react to cultural differences" (Vande Berg et al., 2012, p.53).

After years of working with education abroad organizations, Tara began an independent educational firm with the specific goal of helping faculty understand and facilitate intercultural understanding. She explained that professors are trained in their specialty area, but not necessarily in teaching; in the same vein, most aren't trained in intercultural learning or student

development. She emphasized that teaching, particularly in education abroad, is more than just transferring content. Daniel, a college administrator, echoed these sentiments.

As a faculty program leader, Stephanie explained:

> It takes a special subset of people to do these things in a way that engages students in these different ways outside of the academic content. Somebody who can spark their curiosity and help them develop a sense of adventure and be nonjudgmental and open to whatever might happen that's challenging. I think that it's hard to boil down what some of those qualities and skills might be and we don't have that captured anywhere.

She thinks it matters that these qualities are front and center, even though it may be more difficult to recruit faculty with these skills (amidst current difficulties recruiting faculty at all). As she mentions, there's a lack of content about faculty program-leading capacities, on top of the lack of widespread professional development opportunities. While discourse about program design may be abundant in specific international education associations, faculty often aren't members. Additionally, international education professional organizations predominantly focus on program design, development, and administration, rather than program leadership itself. Thus, increasing training of program leaders, as well as increasing accessibility of professional development for faculty interested in leading programs, constitutes a compelling area of improvement in U.S. education abroad practice.

Stress, Anxiety, and Students in the 2020s

Students that endured the Covid-19 pandemic through their high school and undergraduate years have faced unique social and mental health challenges that likely affect if and how they show up in education abroad programming. Consequently, some participants noted

that students in the 2020s seem to have experienced significant changes from earlier generations, particularly concerning mental health, uncertainty, and discomfort.

When students started journaling during her pre-departure orientation, Tasha immediately noticed a pattern: "There was a clear, clear theme that everyone was super stressed. They didn't know how to deal with stress and finals and projects and all of the stuff that was going on during the spring semester leading up to the program. That was like the main thing: 'I'm stressed.'" She attributed these feelings partially to the timing of her course – at the end of the spring semester, which was filled with final exams and assignments; she also pointed to both external and internal pressures that students face in academic settings.

While participants, including Lindsay, often frame challenging emotional experiences as positive learning opportunities, over the past few years, she has seen some instances of student anxiety that detract from student experiences instead. Lindsay commented that achievement stress is a common factor she sees in students' emotional struggles during programs. She explained,

> They have this very specific idea of accomplishment or success or achievement and it's a very tiny box, like a 4.0. And they also have impact bias…It does matter, but it doesn't matter as much as you think it matters. The benefit of letting go of that is way more than what it's worth to stress over it, but to them it's a very specific hardline thinking about 'I need this to succeed.'…It creates so much emotional, mental stress for them and can impede their whole experience.

Lindsay elaborated that cultural differences in academic processes or standards can exacerbate this stress. She explained that these emotions – irate, sad, conflicted, stressed – bleed into the rest of an abroad experience, impacting relationships, homestays, and understandings of culture.

Lindsay worries that students are controlled by their emotions and watches students extrapolate small problems into all-encompassing ones. In practice, Lindsay emphasizes emotional regulation and discerning between reactions and responses: “How do we get to a place where you can be angry, but you can also step back before you maybe make any dumb choices and see ‘I am having an angry experience’ versus being the anger.” She believes that wellbeing is a skill that can be cultivated with practice and inquiry, but also does not think that skill can be forced on people. She offers an optional pre-departure session on mental health but has found that trying to have conversations about emotional regulations with students who aren’t ready or don’t want it may cause defensiveness and anger, which makes the situation worse.

Lindsay shared that the percentage of students who leave programs early has increased significantly since programming resumed after Covid-19 isolation protocols were lifted. She largely attributes this to students struggling to cope with the uncertainty and discomfort of new experiences. As discussed above, participants widely understand discomfort as a positive learning opportunity, which may fuel disconnects between program leaders and students. Additionally, Lindsay has observed more students struggling with developmental social, emotional, and communication skills, which make group dynamics more challenging for both students and facilitators.

The percentage of students on Lindsay’s programs who disclose ongoing mental health problems has also grown. Programs are struggling to adapt to changing student needs, including increased one-on-one counseling and support, as well as heightened group dynamics problems. Navigating these challenges is even more complex cross-culturally given that other cultures may value different responses to emotional challenges. While Lindsay isn’t sure of the answer, she is

sure that student needs are changing quickly and higher education will need to adapt as it encounters Gen-Z students and students who experienced Covid-19-era schooling.

Rachel has also observed a notable change in student needs and behavior through the transition from millennials to Gen-Z. She also thinks the reality of the Covid-19 pandemic significantly impacted students' experiences of school, life, and age-appropriate development. She sees Gen-Z students as being more vocal about their needs as they carry the collective trauma of global issues into their classes. Rachel thinks that institutions will need to make quick changes to keep up, which may be more difficult for larger institutions with less system flexibility. Like Lindsay, Rachel isn't sure what the future looks like, but knows that higher education is going to have to change as students do.

Wellbeing

Given the rise in student mental health challenges and the collective trauma of global crises, conversations about student wellbeing have naturally been on the rise. Nine participants talked about student wellbeing in connection to whole human teaching and learning. Daniel and Andrea both cited increasing mental health challenges for young people as an important reason to focus on student wellbeing.

Additionally, Daniel and Alice see connections between equity, wholeness, and student wellbeing. Alice shared that recognizing each student's individual circumstances and needs contributes to wellbeing in her classes: "I think it definitely helps with mental health and wellbeing of students and asking for what they need…because I recognize that they were a whole person with a whole thing outside of this." In her teaching, equity relies on situational and individualized knowing of students, which in turn contributes to their wellbeing.

Daniel asked, “How do we create learning and living environments that take in the whole person? And how do we make sure if we can help mitigate your concerns around food insecurity and around addition and drug abuse or behavioral abuse, whatever it might be that’s in the background of your whole being…we know that if we take care of that better, if we give that more attention, the dividend is that you become a better student.” Here, he draws a direct connection between students’ circumstances, wellbeing, and ability to learn.

Tasha’s program to Finland specifically centered content related to wellbeing and sustainability. She noticed that students’ separation from external stressors, like regular schoolwork loads, helped them prioritize both the content and themselves. She saw the time and intentionality for emotional reflection, the physical immersion in a calming natural space, and a host context that was more culturally focused on wellbeing as a highly impactful combination. From Tasha’s reflection, the distance education abroad creates between students and external stressors may be both a high impact learning opportunity and a positive influence on students’ personal wellbeing.

Ann emphasized that focusing on wellbeing helps students be their best selves: “You could reach your fullest potential if everyone is at their most fit body, mind, and spirit…Being caring and focused on wellness I find works really well because then they’re at their best.” An interconnected community of best selves provides the greatest potential for impactful learning experiences.

Liberation

Is whole human pedagogy anti-oppressive? Several participants spoke about teaching anti-oppression content using these methods, but seven participants specifically drew connections between whole human approaches and liberation. Most of their comments revolved

around two liberatory factors: (1) the inclusion of all parts of the whole including diverse types of knowledge and (2) the understanding and inclusion of difference, diversity, and multiplicity of humans and worldviews. Liberatory whole human pedagogy integrates both of those points.

To the first point, Rachel summarized: "Oppression is born out of misunderstanding and lack of willingness to see a whole. And so, a whole human approach is inherently anti-oppressive." Catalina described the connection between whole human teaching and learning and decolonial epistemological values, which "point to the need to support and regenerate forms of knowledge and education that have been suppressed by the hegemony of the modern university (Stein, 2021, p. 400). Catalina shared:

> We learn with our bodies that there are spiritual dimensions to our learning, that the heart is involved and the brain too. And that the integration of all these dimensions of who we are is really important in the classroom. For me, it's especially important on a level of equity and what educational institutions have historically done for and to communities of color, where one of the things the institution of education has done is to help determine the value of whose knowledge is valued and whose knowledge is not. So education institutions can become arbiters of a value of knowledge, of what counts as knowledge, of whose knowledge is counted, whose bodies are welcome into educational processes. And so part of the notion of engaging students as whole human beings involves welcoming dimensions that are not often seen as knowledge.

She enacts this ethic in her approach to education abroad learning, which centers Indigenous knowledge and all the types of knowledge that the local context brings. She helps students frame this as *knowledge*, not just as culture: "Opening students to that recognition requires that before

we even get there, we bring modes of ourselves that have not been welcome in educational spaces."

Valuing all people and all types of knowledge can be healing, individually and communally. Tara sees a connection between liberation and whole human teaching and learning in the need for and process of healing: "What all of this anti-oppression social justice work needs to get at is healing. We can't work effectively with other people if we are not whole, healed human beings…That's transformational. That's development." This sentiment echoes scholars like Berila (2016), Thompson (2017), and hooks (1994; 2010) who see holistic education as tied to healing, wellbeing, resiliency, as well as the investigation of how oppression manifests cognitively and somatically. These authors argue that holistic approaches can help students understand their own experiences, emotions, and reactions. Tara continues, "That's a more complex mindset. All of it is moving towards places where we are more complex human beings who have the capacity to engage effectively, appropriately, and authentically with people who are different from us, not just above the surface, but below the surface." Wholeness allows individuals to have more complex understandings of self. Having a more complex understanding of self helps individuals cultivate more complex understandings of others. Understanding the complexity and depth of humanness in both self and others is the pinnacle of intercultural engagement.

Intercultural engagement can help cultivate respect and inclusion of diverse people and worldviews. Eric explained, "A multiplicity of views is liberating and a multiplicity of views is inevitable when you're dealing with a multiplicity of full-bodied subjects." He continued to share his hopes for whole human teaching and learning:

> What I hope is people will be gentle. What I hope is people will recognize oppressive systems and stop perpetuating them and start undermining them and start helping with collective liberative strategies that are themselves intersectional…For that, we need a multiplicity of perspectives. And for that you need to study abroad. For that you need to understand different cultures and different peoples in different languages and different religions and different foods and different music and different jokes and different landscapes and different spiritual beings and trickster spirits. But without that, it's not going to work.

For Eric, multiplicity is key to liberation; for Tara, complexity and healing are key to multiplicity; for Catalina, wholeness and diverse types of knowledge are complex and healing. By including all pieces of the whole individual, individuals are more able to understand and include others.

Potential Impact of Education Abroad

Participants reflected on their own understandings, experiences, and values related to education abroad. Eight participants mentioned their own education abroad experiences, particularly in reference to their vocational inspiration and/or their understanding of transformative experiences. Several participants expressed their enthusiasm for their vocational path and the field of education abroad. Rachel explained, "It's good for my soul to care about others. I would not have picked this career path if I didn't want to be holistically involved with students." Stephanie shared: "This is a really fulfilling activity for us too because we can see the difference it makes. We can see the enthusiasm. We can see the changes that are happening."

Participants shared many hopes for what difference their programs might make. Ginger's hope for students is that they find the freedom to choose who they want to be and how they want

to live, like she did during her experiences abroad. Tasha hoped to help students find ways to take care of themselves and understand how wellbeing and sustainability complement each other. She hoped they might continue using newfound wellbeing practices into the future to cope with stressful situations. Beyond that, her "ultimate hope is that they take something away that helps them but also helps the planet."

While education abroad students are most-often financially-stable, able-bodied, white women, many participants alluded to aspirations that would impact students' understandings and responses to diversity and justice after they return home. Alice shared: "If students remember anything about the course, I hope they remember that history impacts the present." Bethany hoped students learned that diversity of people and perspectives leads to positive outcomes on micro and macro levels. Tara hopes people develop more complex mindsets for engaging with the world, particularly around cultural difference.

Eric spoke about designing courses based on his goals for students. He asks: "What do I hope students will remember three months from now, three years from now, and thirty years from now?" These questions helps him thoughtfully craft the emphasis of the course. What does make a successful student? Eric's goals for his students are many:

> For people to learn how to be respectful and open-hearted and curious and proactively creative and imaginative and friendly and wanting to explore and adventurous and curious to then do more of that on their own when the school experience is done so that they can feel confident and travel.

He hopes this is how his students will live in the world after their education abroad experiences. He's careful to say he doesn't think *he* can teach these qualities; students learn from the experience, from each other, and from their own reflections.

Olivia shared: “My ultimate hope is that whatever they learned while they were there, they take that and apply it when they go back home and to how they continue to travel and navigate the world…I want students to critique and be curious and hold the beauty of the world in that as well.” She named embracing collectivity and solidarity as potential takeaways to be implemented at home. She said, “Once you have the knowledge, then comes the responsibility.”

Beyond Education Abroad

While all participants spoke about whole human approaches in education abroad, nine participants explored the idea of applying whole human teaching and learning in other contexts. Faculty members Ginger, Alice, and Eric shared that their approach to students as whole human beings doesn’t change between on-campus courses and education abroad programs. Alice immediately connected whole human approaches to her teaching on-campus, as well as her previous experience teaching high school students. She emphasized the need to ask: “how can we contribute, when things aren’t special or unique, to those transformations and use those in our daily practices also?” For her, this is an issue of equitable access to transformative education, given inequitable accessibility of education abroad programs.

Some participants saw education abroad as an inspiration to change classroom learning. Eric shared that since 2020, he has chosen to leave the classroom setting all together and teaches all his on-campus courses outside. He says this is based on the “fundamental pedagogical assumption that learning is also tactile and kinesthetic and relational and human.” Through this relocation, he can use class time for walking and exploration, which has made his on-campus classes more similar to education abroad learning.

Musing on the value of research on whole human ways of teaching and learning, Andrea said: “I keep trying to think about what education abroad’s value-add is to the academy, to

higher education in the U.S. and maybe we are the ones who are pioneering pedagogies…that we can then say…let's bring it back to campuses in the U.S. and apply it here too."

Two participants explained that a whole human learning approach goes far beyond the bounds of higher education. Olivia emphasized that learning isn't only for global programs or even for formal education: "It's hard for me to be like, it's *for education.* It's how we respond to everything. I am very convinced that we all should be learning all the time. We are students of life constantly." Ginger shared: "It's the way I approach everything. Not just teaching, but everything."

Chapter Closing

By elaborating on several themes that cut across participant perspectives, this chapter demonstrated the need to situate whole human pedagogical practices within the wider landscape of education abroad. Participants emphasized whole human approaches as central to their work, but, in practice, were met with challenges from practical limitations related to the administration of education abroad programs. Additionally, some participants wrestled with the changing needs, desires, and feelings of students entering higher education, including in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, participants shared their beliefs in the connections between whole human pedagogy and wellbeing as well as their hopes for the impact of education abroad. Lastly, participants shared the ways that whole human pedagogy exemplifies an ethic that extends beyond education abroad, and for some, beyond the classroom with significant potential for liberation. In Chapter 8, the findings discussed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 will be used to address the aforementioned research questions, advocate recommendations for the field, and provide a closing reflection on whole human pedagogy and the future of education abroad.

Chapter 8: Hope for the Future of Education Abroad

For-credit study abroad programs engage upwards of 340,000 U.S.-based students annually, involving nearly 11 percent of undergraduates (outside of the Covid-19 pandemic; IIE, 2023). While some practitioners aim to increase this number, others advocate for increased quality of teaching and learning interventions (Vande Berg et al., 2012). Thus, this study's research problem stems from two issues: a call to improve the quality of teaching and learning interventions for education abroad programs and a need to counter Euro-U.S. epistemological dominance based in imperial subjugation. In response, this study proposes a novel framework called whole human pedagogy, which includes four tenets: embodiment, emotions, belonging, and becoming. Embodiment is the notion that bodily knowledge is valuable. The tenet of emotions recognizes that feelings and reflections inform deep learning. Belonging encapsulates relationality within a learning community. The tenet of becoming centers learning for being in the world—learning that is meaningful and transformative. The processes of doing, being, feeling, and experiencing constitute the texts of education abroad pedagogy. Those processes are what makes whole human education abroad so impactful.

The basis of whole human pedagogy is strongly theoretical. hooks writes, "Theory is not inherently healing, liberatory, or revolutionary. It fulfills this function only when we ask that it do so and direct our theorizing towards this end" (1994, p. 61). This study directs theory towards liberation by aligning with the priorities of both critical pedagogy and decolonial thought. Whole human pedagogy centers critical pedagogy's rejection of dehumanization, particularly within educational contexts. Freire (1970) directly attributes oppression to the process of dehumanization and stresses that liberation lies in the "vocation of becoming more fully human"

(p. 66). The aim of whole human pedagogy is to increase and normalize *humanization* through teaching and learning.

This chapter will offer succinct answers to the two research questions, as well as recommendations for future practice and future inquiry. The chapter will conclude with a reflection on why whole human pedagogy matters and what role hopefulness might play as we look to the future of education abroad.

Research Questions

This qualitative study collected data via seventeen semi-structured virtual interviews lasting 60 to 75 minutes each. Participants were recruited through public invitations, referral, and snowball sampling, which resulted in a sample of participants from various institution types, professional roles, and levels of experience within education abroad. Participants shared several commonalities: they were all education abroad practitioners that work(ed) with U.S.-based undergraduates and demonstrated existing interest in holistic teaching and learning strategies. While this study isn't generalizable, these results bode promisingly for whole human pedagogy as a compelling and functional model of education abroad theory and practice. The rest of this section will answer the two research questions.

1. *How do practitioners understand a whole human pedagogical approach, specifically regarding the four themes of embodiment, emotions, belonging, and becoming?*

Participants understood approaching students as whole human beings as deeply important to their work. Rachel explained, "The reason that you study abroad is not to take classes abroad. The reason that you study abroad is to integrate and learn." Stephanie shared the effect of whole human approaches on learning communities: "I think having students show up with their whole selves to these learning environments, it means that people see you, people value you, people can

share in the experience of what you're working on." Daniel connected whole human education with societal and intercultural improvement: "I think that the more nuanced we can be around these cultural discussions, especially in the whole being context, the better we can become as a society. I really believe that."

Most practitioners walked through two or three of the tenets without prompting; most participant responses fit into one of the four tenets; and all four tenets were explored at various points in the data. This offers preliminary confirmation of the applicability of whole human pedagogy for education abroad practice. Catalina described her reaction to the description of whole human pedagogy in the participant invitation: "It was a moment of recognition and real delight to see it being named in the world."

Participants saw embodiment as foregrounding the education abroad experience. Many participants mentioned that the physical conditions of education abroad made students more vulnerable and/or more aware of their surroundings. Participants saw experiences of embodiment as a jumping off point for generating intentional intervention activities and reflection prompts. Additionally, through their cross-cultural understandings of intersectional identities, embodiment informed how participants approach working with diverse student groups. Lastly, participants saw embodiment as intimately intertwined with the concept of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). Eric described, "There's nothing like standing inside of the Notre Dame when the organs play. It's not describable in words…Or being in a Kali temple when a sacrificer cuts off the head of a goat. You can read about that, but if you're there, it's different."

Emotions seemed to be the tenet that participants had previously thought about the most, given the field's reliance on discourse about culture shock and reflection—the latter often connected to the experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984). Many noted that emotional

discomfort was key to student growth and development. Additionally, some participants described student changes in the 2020s, which largely pertained to emotional processing, development, and comfort. Lindsay explained, “Trying something new has always been scary, but now it’s way more severe.”

Conversations about belonging often centered the relationship between participant and students, how participants understand that relationship, and that relationship’s perceived impact. This makes sense given how belonging was defined for this study and given that the sample population was made up of practitioners speaking about their own experiences. Many participants emphasized that having small groups allowed them to form individualized relationships with students. Additionally, participants emphasized themselves as learners and reciprocal contributors to the learning community. Participants generally rejected the notion of enforced hierarchy between themselves and students and understood relationships within learning communities with a greater degree of nuance. Participants emphasized maintaining professionalism while also allowing students to know them more personally and engage in knowledge and process co-creation.

Many participants understood the tenet of becoming as the core of their mission in education abroad. Several immediately gravitated towards the words “transformation” or “transformative,” despite some reservations about it being a buzzword in education abroad discourse and marketing. Martina shared, “On an abroad experience, it’s valuable only if the person that arrives onsite is different from the person that leaves.” Participants hope students will be profoundly affected by their education abroad experiences and see their roles as contributing to the process of student development. Participants linked this core value to their own education abroad experiences, their belief in the field, and/or their hopes for the field moving forward.

Participants understood the notion of approaching students as whole human beings as central to their vocational praxis. In addition to informing their practices, whole human pedagogy comprises a general posture towards students and the processes of teaching and learning. That approach centers collaboration, presence, mutuality, creativity, and wellbeing. Whole human pedagogy thus informs educational philosophies, motivations, and goals, as well as the self-reflexivity for educators.

2. *How do practitioners in undergraduate education abroad utilize whole human pedagogy in programming, facilitating, and advising?*

Participants saw embodied experiences as an ingrained component of education abroad, citing elements like sensory engagement with food or sounds; change in weather, ecosystems, and metropolitan size; and physical activity. Many participants utilized these intrinsic qualities to create intentional programming and reflection opportunities, which center the experience of physical discomfort, considerations of cultural differences, and reflections on embodied experiences. In some cases, conversations about embodiment were impromptu as program facilitators casually prompted students to investigate what they hear, smell, taste; in others, activities, like wine tasting or visits to the opera, were planned to specifically engage embodiment. These elements informed how participants guide students both during and after experiences: embodiment may be incorporated into reflections through questions about somatic experiences, which connect the tenets of embodiment and emotions. For example, Daniel described his thinking about embodied reflections: “Let’s do a breathing exercise. Let’s do a mindfulness exercise. We’re going to physically do something. The better we can connect those dots, the better the reflection can be.”

Some embodiment practices were less inherently linked to education abroad but were employed as learning tools. Participants utilized embodiment to incorporate mindfulness practices, like meditation, yoga, or breathing exercises, which participants saw as contributing to student awareness, presence, reflection, and wellbeing. Ann reflected on optional meditation and yoga sessions on her program: "[Students] ask for them. I make them available, and they say yes, let's do that. Let's do it more often." Additionally, when considering intersectionality, some participants incorporate activities that prompt students to reflect on their own identities and the accompanying privilege or lack thereof, as well as their own cultural background and assumptions. Alice, Olivia, and Catalina structure specific discussions about race and heritage; Eric and Lindsay think about creating interactive activities that accommodate neurodivergence.

Participants engaged the tenet of emotions largely through reflection exercises. Most reflection was structured to some degree by the facilitator. Reflection exercises were sometimes individual, which most often centered individual journaling based on facilitator-given prompts. Reflection exercises were also commonly conducted through group discussions that involved a balance of facilitation and student-generation. Participants highlighted reflection throughout the education abroad experience: administrators, like Daniel and Heather, often commented on reflection during advising as well as pre- and post-program activities while program leaders, like Alice and Tasha, highlighted daily or activity-specific debriefs. Additionally, practitioners intentionally set expectations and normalize emotions through orientation sessions and lessons on culture shock.

Belonging, in this study, largely revolved around the relationship between the participant and their students. Participants prioritize cultivating individualized relationships with students, which allows them to understand and respond to students' personalities, needs, and interests. Eric

explained, “Who you’re teaching matters. How you teach is largely dependent on who you’re teaching.” Participants used individual advising sessions as well as intentional exercises focused on getting to know each other. Participants also emphasized reciprocity in their relationships; in practice, this means participants partook in activities along with students and were willing to share about themselves in the same ways they were asking their students to.

In building relationships among the group, participants prioritized building a learning community, which they actualized through community-building activities, like deep listening and affirmations. Alice, Stephanie, Lindsay, Catalina, and Bethany all emphasized creating group norms or agreements at the onset of programs. Additionally, participants emphasized opportunities for cocreation, cofacilitation, and colearning, which included student-generated discussions and shared responsibility for lesson planning and program logistics. Participants also actualized learning communities by decentering themselves as hierarchical leaders and were transparent about the limits of their knowledge as well as their own discomfort, processing, and learning throughout the experiential program.

Becoming is the most difficult tenet to locate in specific practices and largely emerges from the combination of the other three tenets. Becoming constitutes a particular respect for the learning process, a vocational posture towards transformation, and a desire for educational experiences that are life-giving. Much of the practical nature of becoming involves self-reflexivity on the part of the educator, and observations about becoming were integrally linked to participants’ hopes for their students and the field. Participants did cite practical exercises that include reflecting one’s own cultural values, coaxing students to be open to new experiences, and having conversations about self-care, but, overall, student transformation is not so much programmed as attended, engaged, and encouraged.

Theoretical Implications of Data

The basis of this study is driven by theory; the results are driven by participant insight, which in turn, nuance the theory. The data helped to locate both specific themes and methods to clarify the proposed four tenets. While this study doesn't attempt to emphasize any one tenet over others, the quanitity of data collected under the tenet of embodiment was noticably higher than the other three. One possible reason is that embodiment may be the theme most traditionally discluded by the traditional Euro-U.S. higher education system, and thus came to participants' minds most often. Another reason may be that education abroad practitioners are literally in the practice of *moving bodies*, a condition that distinguishes education abroad from other forms of higher education. Whether or not embodiment is an overt theoretical consideration for education abroad practitioners, bodies have always been a practical one. However, given the breadth and abundance of responses, it does seem that many participants (though not all) had previously engaged embodiment as a theoretical underpinning of their practices.

The tenet of emotions had a smaller breadth of subthemes, but a high consistency across participants. This indicates that, for these participants, emotions consistuted a well-established element of education abroad pedagogy. Discussions of emotions were often largely connected to the existing Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984). The foundational understanding of the importance of reflection in education abroad underpinned much of this tenet.

Belonging, as originally conceptualized in Chapter 3, focused specifically on the relationality within the U.S.-based group, rather than on the relationship between the group and the host community. Some participants did offer brief comments relating to the host, but interview questions and analysis did not prioritize further exploration of that theme. In the future,

the relationality between the traveling group and the host community should be seen as an additional subtheme of belonging; this consistutes a needed revision for whole human pedagogy.

Becoming was often the first or second tenet that participants addressed in their opening comments. The tenet of becoming often appeared repeatedly throughout interviews, connecting to different subtopics, and was strongly tied to the motivations for participants' vocational interests. Becoming was the most difficult for most participants to explain practically, but the most easily incorporated theoretically; in other words, participants saw becoming as core to education abroad on a purpose-based or meta-level, but were not always sure how exactly these results come to fruitition or what practices to use to intentionally implement this tenet.

At the conclusion of Chapter 3, whole human pedagogy seemed to be a promising, albeit hypothetical approach. The data from this study, however, demonstrate that whole human pedagogy is indeed plausible and worthwhile, *and* that whole human pedagogy already lives in the practices of individuals across the United States. The proposed theory of whole human pedagogy matched the data well and thus, this study concludes that this novel framework has positive impact potential for the field of education abroad.

Implications for Decolonial Praxis

This dissertation began by problematizing Euro-U.S. epistemological dominance from the decolonial theoretical perspective. Decolonial CIE scholar Stein (2022) explains that decolonial analysis and praxis aims to "(1) critique ways of knowing, being, and relating that are premised on systemic and ongoing colonial violence, and (2) gesture toward possible futures in which these colonial patterns of knowledge, existence, and relationship are interrupted and redressed" (p. 2). The creation of whole human pedagogy rests on the first point, emerging from a need to dismantle epistemological supremacy. The participant perspectives included in this

study contribute to the second point: they gesture toward possible futures where these systems are rejected and rewritten. Participants attested that whole human pedagogy reclaims suppressed forms of knowledge, interrogates systems of relationality rooted in power structures, and encourages integration, healing, and wholeness for students and educators. A decolonial interpretation of this data demonstrates that bringing whole selves to education rejects the historic, hegemonic epistemological value system that begs participants to check their wholeness at the door. The data clearly aligns with a decolonial theoretical perspective.

Actualizing decolonial praxis is rarely as clear. For example, this study was entirely conducted and written in English, the dominant language of many colonial projects across the world. Additionally, this study's main sources draw heavily on literature about contemplative practices, namely those that originated in Asia. The translation of these concepts and practices into English decontextualizes them. Decolonial approaches endeavor to highlight and amplify indigenous knowledge; attempting to do so across languages—particularly languages that represent opposing sides of imperial domination—remains complicated.

As a second example, this study's participants widely suggested limiting programs to small groups, which serves the goal of belonging and aligns with decolonial values by emphasizing relationality. However, restricting program participation could adversely affect program accessibility. Limiting the number of students may cause programs to turn away potential participants if they cannot implement enough programs to satisfy student demand. In this case, application processes may become more selective, which may unintentionally discourage students from historically underserved populations from applying. Additionally, smaller programs may have higher tuition costs, which could amplify obstacles for low-income students.

This dissertation utilizes a decolonial theoretical perspective to advocate for increased quality in education abroad programming. An integral part of implementing quality programming is ensuring inclusive representation of diverse populations. Practitioners and institutions will face complex decisions while implementing a whole human pedagogical approach but should always prioritize the inclusion of minoritized and racialized students. Following the example above, if small programs necessitate higher tuition fees, institutions should prioritize increasing financial aid resources for low-income students. If program applications become increasingly selective, institutions should monitor selection criteria for potential bias and devote resources to the creation of additional programs so that all students can access the opportunity to study abroad.

"Perfection" constitutes one of Rendón's (2014) seven agreements of U.S. higher education. Part of rejecting colonial, capitalist, white supremacist, patriarchal systems (particularly in U.S. higher education) is rejecting the agreement of perfection. In the above example, the most straightforward solutions come from access to financial resources, which many practitioners and institutions simply do not have. They will have to creatively seek alternatives that continue to prioritize both decolonial and diversity, equity, and inclusion values. Imagination will be the antidote to perfection. There will be no perfect choices. Practitioners must make them anyway.

Change-makers in education abroad must navigate the nuances of attempting to do liberation work in a context that is fundamentally rooted in the oppression of marginalized voices. In the bridge between theory and practice, in lieu of perfection, whole human pedagogy offers a value system for decision-making rooted in community, wellbeing, dignity, and diversity. The application of whole human pedagogy will move beyond individual practices to

inform an all-encompassing ethic of inclusion, integration, and imagination. Whole human practitioners will build a new world from the inside out, where they are, with what they have.

Contribution to the Future of the Field

This study proposed the novel theoretical framework whole human pedagogy for education abroad based on in-depth conceptual mapping of previous higher education resources, namely Thompson's (2017) *Teaching with Tenderness* and hooks' (1994) *Teaching to Transgress*. This dissertation, thus, writes into a multi-decade-long lineage of educators and scholars imaginging into existence more holistic, liberatory, life-giving approaches to teaching and learning. The primary distinguishing factor is that this dissertation tailors a holistic approach specifically to the field of education abroad. Given the relative newness of specialization and recent turbulence through world crises, education abroad is already in an era of revision and renewal. At this juncture, educators have a powerful opportunity to pursue transformation of systems and approaches for the betterment of education and the global community. Whole human pedagogy provides a theoretical basis for decentering Euro-US epistemological supremacy, combats oppression through dehumanization, and conceptualizes teaching and learning on the basis of integration.

Additionally, the creation of whole human pedagogy will contribute to the field of education abroad because it offers concrete actions and applications that engage the purpose of education, and by extension, education abroad, in the lives of students and educators. Approaching education as a whole human endeavor allows educators to imagine new worlds of educational praxis that are liberating, sustaining, expressive, and meaningful. This section offers recommendations for practical application for practitioners, in both program design and program

leadership training, provides numerous recommendations for institutions, and alludes to several areas for future study.

Recommendations For Practitioners: Program Design and Analysis

Once program locations and learning outcomes are established, practitioners can design activities, assignments, and assessments to incorporate the themes of whole human pedagogy. What types of site visits will help students understand the course content? How will practitioners frame site visits with explanations of embodied engagement? What will reflections about those site visits look like? How can the group build trust to enhance these reflections? What might students learn about the world and themselves through this process? Practitioners should aim to incorporate all four tenets and in turn, the four tenets can guide practitioners as they engineer specific goals and practices for programs.

For example, to incorporate embodiment, practitioners might design activities around different types of sensory engagement, highlighting hearing at musical performances, like Martina, or smell and taste during wine tasting, like Elizabeth. Program designers should think about the physical activity involved in programs and how that activity might enhance learning opportunities. Practitioners might consider how the amount of daily walking influences students' understandings of place, like Ginger's and Stephanie's students have experienced. Physical activity might be a core element of the program, like Eric's programs that include pilgrimage treks, or a helpful facilitation tool, like Anne's use of yoga before reflection sessions.

Reflection will constitute a cornerstone for any education abroad program. Program designers should consider the structure of reflections and possible questions to help students consider what they're learning and processing throughout the program. Practitioners might consider providing students with a pre-made journal with daily questions, like Stephanie,

creating daily activity-specific reflection questions like Alice, or emphasizing a selection of core questions throughout the program, like Tasha.

Whole human pedagogy can be used to assess and amend existing programs. Practitioners can use syllabi, itineraries, and experiential knowledge to generate data about the activities and assignments of a particular program. To analyze this data, practitioners can label each activity with the corresponding tenet. Sometimes activities may fit more than one category. After creating and sorting this inventory, practitioners will be able to see which areas of whole human pedagogy are being addressed by the existing program and which areas may need additional development.

While the four tenets may not be equally represented, practitioners should strive to include a mix of elements to address varied aspects of the human experience. In many cases, one tenet will inform the next: for example, embodied journaling can aid emotional reflection which may contribute to student transformation or becoming. Creating a mix of experiences will also meet students where they are. Students carrying bodily trauma may find embodiment challenging but belonging comforting. Students with ADHD may find embodied kinesthetic learning beneficial, but embodied sensory learning overstimulating. Incorporating a range of opportunities can help account for differences in learning styles and needs while simultaneously prioritizing holistic development.

A program is the sum of all its elements, and each planned piece should be consciously designed, including practices that are ungraded or that seem casual. Practitioners should pay particular attention to creating intentional program rituals, which may include reflection and community building. This could amount to brief morning meditations before group debriefs or exercises in individual sharing and deep listening; Anne and Eric use both. Additionally,

practitioners should take care to integrate time for experiential engagement, which may include free time for groups or individuals. Practitioners can also consider how to increase student responsibility for learning and group management by creating methods of delegating program functions—like navigation or session facilitation—to students. Olivia, for instance, does this by designating a "leader of the day."

For the elements that can't be intentionally planned—for the spontaneous needs and nuances of each individual student, group, or situation—practitioners might develop a toolkit of facilitation exercises. What care do you need to exhibit when the world feels heavy? What response might you need if you, as leader, make a mistake? What rituals could you lean on for celebration? Ultimately, the particularities of a situation will guide practitioner responses, but a mindful understanding of whole human approaches, as well as a toolkit of possible methods, can be cultivated and relied upon.

Recommendations For Practitioners: Program Leadership Training

In addition to guiding the creation and evaluation of education abroad programs, whole human pedagogy can provide a map for enhanced program leadership training. As described in Chapter 6, many program leaders have specialized in a particular academic content area, but many program leaders do not receive training on education abroad program leadership specifically, even though education abroad program leadership demands a different skillset than content or classroom teaching expertise. By offering a concrete structure for program leadership training, whole human pedagogy adds to the landscape of professional development that can help increase program leadership specialization.

If practitioners are creating new training programs, training can progress through the four tenets, which each include theoretical and practical knowledge. For example, trainers can start

with the tenet of embodiment, offer theoretical background on why embodiment constitutes an important knowledge base for education abroad, and provide practical methods to engage embodiment with students. This method draws inspiration from Daniel's pre-program orientation framework, which organizes content into three portions: the head, the heart, and the hands.

Through each section on application, program leaders will add practical strategies to their program toolkit, which can help them both proactively design program elements and respond more thoughtfully to calls for spontaneous facilitation. In the case of embodiment, program leaders might learn about prompting for sensory engagement, techniques for facilitating breathing exercises or guided meditations, and specific activities that help students reflect on their intersectional identity.

This structure can also provide opportunities for trainers to address more procedural or logistical elements of program leadership. In the case of embodiment, this might include student medication protocols, first aid and emergency medical care, and accommodation for physical disabilities. In the emotions section, trainers may include lessons about student mental health; a session on belonging may include disciplinary procedures or conflict meditation strategies.

In many cases, redesigning an existing training may not be realistic. In this case, practitioners can integrate themes of whole human pedagogy into existing training curriculum. An overview of whole human pedagogy may be incorporated early in a training course and referenced throughout with prompting questions: How might you prompt students to think about embodiment through this activity? What emotions might you need to attend to after this visit? Alternatively, trainers may focus on one tenet as a session theme. For example, on Monday, practitioners will focus on their training content through the lens of embodiment. Through

facilitator questions and, if possible, group reflection with other practitioners, training participants can build their toolbox of program leadership skills.

Recommendations For Institutions

Many recommendations for institutions surfaced particularly from the Chapter 6 section on the limitations of education abroad administration. Institutions can take several practical lessons from the reflections of participants.

1. Keep student to faculty/administrator ratios low so that practitioners and students can form meaningful, individualized relationships. Consider capping programs between 12 and 20 students if it is possible without creating unnecessary burdens on program access, particularly for underrepresented student populations. Create opportunities for open dialogue around how practitioners understand their relationships with students and intentionally destabilize hierarchies within educational settings.
2. Dedicate sufficient resources to pre-departure orientations and post-program reflections. Make these activities required and consider offering them for academic credit. Create adequate space in practitioners' job descriptions to account for the creation and implementation of these programs.
3. Examine marketing materials to ensure education abroad is being represented accurately. Include mention of discomfort, uncertainty, interpersonal/intercultural engagement, and social-emotional development. Focus recruitment on overall student success.
4. Prioritize time and energy for improving program quality over efforts that simply increase student quantity. Continue to be mindful of issues of access for education abroad participants, specifically those of underrepresented identities.

5. Offer professional development opportunities for program leaders specifically in program instruction and intercultural engagement.
6. Encourage senior leaders and tenure review committees to consider faculty program leadership as a valuable contribution towards teaching loads and tenure review.
7. Consider how whole human pedagogical advances may contribute to on-campus learning in addition to education abroad programs. Create professional development opportunities around holistic teaching and learning. Dedicate resources to innovative teaching strategies, such as holding classes outside or incorporating contemplative practices. Cultivate inter-departmental collaboration, for example, with the campus counseling center.
8. Create timely and well-informed response plans to students' changing needs and desires in 2020s-era higher education.

Recommendations for Future Inquiry

This introductory study of whole human pedagogy leaves many avenues of inquiry open, many of which are listed below.

1. Continue inquiry into whole human pedagogy using additional perspectives (e.g. students experiencing whole human teaching and learning), methodologies (e.g. document analysis or participatory action research), or cases (e.g. specific programs or portions of programs, like pre-departure orientations).
2. Compare whole human pedagogy recommendations to accepted "best practices" in the field of education abroad.
3. Investigate how practitioners might apply whole human pedagogy with large student groups (suggested by Rachel).

4. Explore assessment strategies for courses that emphasize whole human practices (suggested by Stephanie).
5. Revise the concept of "belonging" to include relationships with host communities (suggested by Anne and Catalina).
6. Conduct additional research on whole human pedagogy and the experiences of students in the 2020s.
7. Assess whole human pedagogy's potential to increase accessibility in education abroad programs, particularly for neurodiverse students.
8. Evaluate how whole human pedagogy may or may not be applicable to virtual exchange programming. Explore the implications of the increasing presence of artificial intelligence in educational spaces.
9. Utilize whole human pedagogy has a conceptual framework for analysis in future research.

Conclusion

Why Whole Human Learning Matters

All seventeen participants unanimously agreed that whole human approaches to education abroad matter; thirteen of them directly answered the question: "Why does approaching students as whole human beings matter for education abroad?" Their responses are summarized in their own voices here:

Ginger responded: “Because they are whole human beings…You can’t be really self-actualized unless you know your whole being…You can’t have a fruitful life unless you consider your whole self.”

Lindsay explained: “Because they have dynamic changing experiences related to all those levels of what it means to be a human being…If one aspect of being a human being is on fire…it severely impacts their ability to learn, and not just in an academic sense.”

Elizabeth said: “If we don’t start somewhere, then maybe we won’t approach people as whole human beings in other places.”

Martina answered: “Because they are…In my kind of work, what I do every day, I need to empathize and how can you empathize if you don’t empathize with the whole human being?”

Tara answered: “Because they are whole human beings. We are all whole human beings. And if we don’t engage with one another that way, we’re going to feel more and more separated, more and more lonely.”

Olivia replied: “Because they are human beings… Until we address mental and emotional wellbeing that is not separate from the physical, we are going to continue to devastate total generations…I see that in my students and I see that in myself.”

Rachel responded: “It matters because it matters that we as educators educate our students to become educators in the world too…We are a better society of humans when we all see ourselves as educators to each other.”

Daniel shared: “I don’t think we can become a peaceful, awesome human planet unless we understand these whole-being concepts.”

Stephanie replied: “Because it reflects a more comprehensive approach in how we treat each other…You don’t have to split yourself or bury certain parts of yourselves in all these different contexts.”

Alice explained: “Because they’re humans and their experiences matter and the way they show up in the world matters and the way they show up in our communities matters…When we treat students like they’re whole people, we’re showing them that something else is possible.”

Eric said: “Ultimately, it only matters if the goal of education is for open-minded, open-hearted, truly creative learning in a community where the values that you’re placing on it are ones of celebration and affirmation of difference and kindness.”

Andrea said: “Because if we approach them as such, they begin to understand themselves as such and that opens up whole new possibilities of being in the world…It’s right and it’s true…It is how we do our best work.”

Catalina replied:

> How does it not matter?...One of the things that violence does is that it strips your humanity…It strips your humanity when you are the object of violence but it also strips your humanity when you are the perpetrator of violence…Our lives are at stake…There is something that has been taken away from us and if we can return it, there really is literally life and death at stake in that process. We have an amazing opportunity as educators. Why wouldn’t you do it?

Whole human education matters. One reason that reverberates throughout is the simple reality that students *are* whole human beings—as are classmates, as are practitioners, as are hosts. Education—learning for *learning’s* sake—is a deeply human process. The bodies we inhabit, the emotions we feel, the relationships we build, and the ways we transform are *human*. Yes, they

are also intellectual, liberatory, creative, communal, exciting, and interdisciplinary. But above all else, when we revere learning as an expansive process of being, relating, knowing, and growing, we come to an understanding that learning, particularly when it's done out in the world, in collaboration with others, is inherently human.

Whole Human Hopefulness

Alice, who teaches in public health, faces healthcare problems and deficits daily; likewise, in education, she sees an abundance of ways our system is failing students. To keep her going, Alice explained that, to her, Mariame Kaba's line, "hope is a discipline" translates to the question: "our actions today contribute to an uncertain future…so what are we doing today with the knowledge that we have to start to build something different?" Rather than focusing on the deficits, Alice strives to build something new and to inspire her students to do the same: "Everyone knows things are bad and they're bad unequally…How do we not get stuck in that area of despair?...Hope requires action and that we do something. Because if people don't do anything, then nothing changes." She continued, "There are so many examples of people throughout history and today that consistently show up for each other and create something different and survive and keep moving forward…If we think that things are hopeless, then what are we even doing here?" Again, quoting Mariame Kaba, Alice said: "Despair's a thief."

Stephanie also teaches about social disparities in public health and commented that the content can often seem dire. When she plans programming, she intentionally shows examples of community-based organizations so students can see projects that are connecting people, building community, and making change, so they don't feel discouraged while studying or when entering their vocation. Stephanie explained that hope is something individuals must continually center in their work: "It's not something that randomly happens to you. It's not something that you should

allow to escape…You have to practice hope. You have to make it a part of your approach to what you do."

While speaking about hope in her work, Catalina showed a postcard hanging above her desk that read, "Things can change." She explained,

> We have to see that things can change in order to keep faith that we can be agents of change…You've got to be able to see it in the world…We always talk about structures of power, but we always, always also include how communities have continued to resist, be resilient, effect change. Because if we don't believe that it's possible, then we're wasting our time. Students have to know that it's possible, that it's possible in themselves and that it's possible in the world.

All three of these practitioners referenced hope in connection with challenging, justice-oriented content *and* in connection with whole human teaching and learning. In these stories, including the whole human in learning also includes a human need for hope. In a global climate of dehumanization and devastation, these stories point to a human desire to know that the work we're doing matters, and that change is possible.

Hope is not only a discipline; it is interdisciplinary. hooks (1994) writes, "the academy is not paradise, but learning is a place where paradise can be created" (p. 207). This research takes a hopeful stance that paradise can be created here if we dare to imagine it so richly and concretely that it calls us to create better for our students, our peers, and ourselves.

Closing

In May 2020, after effectively losing my last two months of divinity school due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I significantly altered the trajectory of my culminating thesis project. I wrote:

> In the midst of school closures, my social network feeds filled with academics claiming a "bright side" in finally having time catch up on their work. When a peer asked how students were keeping up their thesis writing, in the space between comments about the Pomodoro method and several favorite types of coffee, I wrote that I had spent several days holding space for my emotions. I wrote to another that I am more afraid of not feeling sad at the *sad things* than I am of not meeting my deadlines.

I wrote then that I am no longer interested in heartless work. Less than one year later, I lost my mother to a traumatic stage 4 cancer decline, after serving as her round-the-clock caretaker for seven months. I learned more then about heartful work than I ever have.

My mother knew the heart of my work better than anyone. She was the first woman I ever knew to get a doctorate. While she ended her career as a healthcare management consultant, at the end of her life, she constantly shared that her real vocation was the time she had spent as a NICU nurse. In 1995, she published an article problematizing the ways nurses are trained to keep personal distance from their patients. She wrote:

> Even though I still feel strongly that a good nurse must constantly develop and refine her clinical skills, I realize that's not enough. How my patients perceive me is an important component of their hospital stay, and I want them to view me as a person—the same way I view them. (Kelly, 1995, p. 72)

She knew in 1995 what I know now.

I often wondered aloud to her why she spent her life trying to fix a field—healthcare—that was full of so many problems. In 2021, I made my full professional conversion to education. I know now what she always did: that we do it because our *whole* lives depend on it. brown (2017) writes:

> I think it is healing behavior, to look at something so broken and see the possibility and wholeness in it. That's how I work as a healer: when a body is between my hands, I let wholeness pour through. We are all healers too—we are creating possibilities, because we are seeing a future full of wholeness. (p. 19)

I wrote this dissertation in the three years following my mother's death and on each of those days, with my body in my own hands, my life depended on it.

Despite my divinity school background, I have never been one for the concept of "hope," perhaps because I often see it so platitudinously linked to expressions of toxic positivity—what doesn't kill you makes you stronger; everything happens for a reason. I think instead, in this world that is so often mercilessly violent, reasonlessness is more hopeful: to know that this reality of widespread dehumanization isn't ultimately designed, destined, or inevitable is the scope of emergent hope. As I listened to my participants describe hope as their deepest vocational motivation, it slowly became mine.

brown (2017) writes, "I think facilitation is rooted in a grand love for life" (p. 31). I can tell you that I feel fuller of life and love with my students, in the magic of creating the world together, than I do anywhere else. It is the work I do most wholly—and like many of my participants, most hopefully. In many ways, those words mean the same thing. Our hope is what's wholly. New worlds are on their way.

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Appendix A: Invitation to Participate

Dear Education Abroad Colleagues,

I am a doctoral candidate in Global Education at SIT Graduate Institute and I am currently looking for interview participants for my dissertation research: Whole Human Pedagogy for Education Abroad.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the experiences and perspectives of education abroad professionals who employ whole human teaching and learning strategies in the design or facilitation of cohort-based education abroad programs serving undergraduate-level students studying at US-based institutions. The primary research question is: How do educators in undergraduate education abroad utilize whole human pedagogy in group program design and facilitation?

Derived from works in contemplative, critical, and engaged pedagogies, the new framework "whole human pedagogy" centers four themes that focus on inviting students to learning in the wholeness of their humanity. The four themes include *embodiment* (bodily experiences, mind/body integration, movement, breath), *emotions* (feelings, personal reflection, trauma, coping, joy, excitement), *belonging* (relationality, learning communities, knowing and being known, inclusion, engagement, co-creation), and *becoming* (learning that informs how learners are humans in the world, learning that is meaningful and transformative).

I am seeking education abroad practitioners (faculty or administration) to participate in an interview about their experiences and perspectives in designing or leading education abroad programs using *whole human* approaches. Research participants must work with cohort-based education abroad programs (faculty-led, provider, custom, etc.), may work with any type of institution (university, provider, partner, etc.), and must have responsibilities in planning, designing, and administering or teaching, leading, and facilitating education abroad programs for undergraduate-level students from institutions based in the United States.

Informed Consent: Interview participation is voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks of participation, and no discussion of sensitive information is anticipated. Participants have the option to decline questions or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Participants will be given the option for their answers to be de-identified. With consent, the interview will be recorded, and responses will be stored, may be quoted, and may be used in future research. Interest form responses that do not result in an interview will be deleted.

Participation includes one interview via Zoom lasting approximately 60 minutes.

Please complete the following form to indicate your interest in participation: (link to interest indication)

For any questions, contact:
Anna Kelly annanicole.kelly@mail.sit.edu

Supervising faculty:
Dr. Sora Friedman, sora.friedman@sit.edu

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Anna Kelly

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Hello and Informed consent:

Thank you so much for meeting with me! I'm Anna and I am currently working on my EdD dissertation at SIT Graduate Institute and this interview will be a part of that research.

I have your electronic consent on file, but before we start, I'm going to go through the highlights one more time.

Your participation is voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks and I don't anticipate that we'll be talking about anything particularly sensitive, but if at any point you would like to skip a question or end our conversation, that is completely okay.

You will have options to have your name removed from your answers and to review your transcript before it's used. We'll talk more about those two options at the end.

Your consent is ongoing and changeable until the dissertation is published, which will hopefully be this upcoming summer. After that point, you are always welcome to come to me with any concerns, but it may be difficult for me to make changes.

Do you have any questions about the consent procedures?

Our interview today should take about an hour. Do you have a hard stop time of ___?

(Given prior electronic consent has been obtained) Can I begin recording now?

Background:

I have that you are the (position) at (organization). Is that still correct?

Can you tell me a bit more about what your role with education abroad programming looks like?

Introduction to Study:

In this dissertation, I'm writing a new theory that called "whole human pedagogy." I am interested in how education abroad can approach students as whole human beings with bodies, feelings, relationships, and existence and meaning-making beyond the classroom.

In most of my own education, these elements – bodies, emotions, meaning-making – weren't really considered a part of what "valuable" learning was. I think that a lot of the time US education culture relies on things like "objective" knowledge, memorizing facts and figures, showing up in very specific, regulated ways that look more like being a "student" than being a "whole human."

My hunch is that some practitioners in education abroad are already trying to incorporate these different types of knowing and learning. My hope is to hear a bit about what that looks like to you and why you think that matters in the context of education abroad.

At its core, I'm curious about this idea of approaching participants as whole beings, above and beyond a one-dimensional view of students who take tests and write papers.

Does this idea resonate with you? What comes to mind when you think about this idea?

Follow-Up:

Prompt here with questions, especially keeping in mind the four themes. Relate back to the "so what?" regarding education abroad.

Potential Follow-Up Questions:

a. I hear you talking about (theme). How do you approach that idea with students?
b. Are there any exercises that you use to engage this idea?
a. How do students receive this?
c. What do you hope students take away from this idea?
d. I hear you making this connection between (theme) and (theme). Why is this type of knowledge important in education abroad?
e. You mentioned _____. Can you say more about that perspective/practice?
f. Do you see a connection between ____ and _____?
g. It sounds like _____ is really important to you. (restate to check and solicit elaboration)
h. Another area that I'm interested in is (theme). I hear you touching on that when you say _____. Can you say more about that?

Other Themes:

Ask participants about additional themes they may not have covered. If helpful, use the information below to guide participant understanding of theme:

Theme 1: Embodiment

When I say embodiment, what I mean at the most basic level is that bodies exist in learning and that bodies matter in learning. That's not necessarily the norm in Western education, so this theme is generally thinking about how do we bring bodies back? How can we value bodies as a form of knowing? Examples of exercises that might fit this are breathing exercises or embodied writing.

Theme 2: Emotions

Emotions are another element of learning that often gets systematically excluded, when really, having big feelings in response to course content – especially if it includes content about war, genocide, oppression, etc. – makes sense. Emotions in education means including,

acknowledging, and embracing emotions as a valuable part of learning. Practices for this might include reflective writing or group debriefs.

Theme 3: Belonging

When I say "belonging," I'm talking about relationality within the group. Belonging is about creating learning communities, giving participants opportunities to know and be known, and rethinking the role of the professor. Learning in this way is shaped more like a circle and less like pyramid.

Theme 4: Becoming

Becoming is the idea that learning isn't a compartmentalized collection of facts, but a process that can and should deeply inform the ways that learners as humans exist in the world. This is education for the world beyond the classroom. Becoming creates learning that is transformative, healing, and meaningful. This is a question about what learning is for and how it should affect us as humans.

Meta-Level Questions

(All questions in this section are optional).

Now I'd like to zoom out. Thinking about the notion of approaching students as whole human beings…

1. Do you think approaching students as whole human beings is anti-oppressive?
2. Do you think approaching students as whole human beings has an effect on wellbeing? (student or practitioner)
3. Why does approaching students as whole human beings matter?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add about this topic that we haven't discussed?

Conclusion:

Lastly, I have two procedural points to go over.

I'm offering participants the option to have their name removed from their comments. This would also apply to any future projects. Alternatively, since you do work in the field, if you would like to maintain ownership of your comments, I am also happy to use your real name. Would you like to be referred to with a pseudonym?

After your interview is transcribed, you will receive a copy of the transcription for review. You will have an opportunity to add, change, or omit any of your comments for two weeks following the receipt of the transcript. If I don't hear anything from you by the end of that two-week period, I will move forward with the interview as transcribed. Of course, changes to your consent

or additional questions are welcome at any time, but that will serve as our formal checking procedure.

Do you have any questions on that or anything else we've covered today?

Thank you so much for your participation today.

Appendix C: Final Codebook

Code	Subcode	Third Level	Description
Embodiment			Fitting embodiment tenet but none of the subthemes
	Ecosystem		Experience of ecosystem differences of host context
	Experiences		Memories, kinesthetic learning, etc. (I know this isn't clear yet)
	Mindfulness		Mention of mindfulness attitudes or activities connected to embodiment
	Activity		Physical activities abroad including hiking, walking, etc.; intentional or byproduct of program
	Positionality		Experience of intersectional identity abroad or in learning community
		Heritage	Heritage students on programs to home country or region
	Senses		Engagement of senses as learning tools or opportunities
	Space		Cultural constructions of space as well as engagement with/through space
Emotions			Fitting emotions tenet but none of the subthemes
	Anxiety		Anxiety and stress felt by students at home and abroad
	Expectations		Setting and managing student expectations
	Reflection		Reflection concepts and activities
Belonging			Fitting belonging tenet but none of the subthemes
	BEL Activities		Activities addressing the belonging tenet
		Norms	Activities involving discussion of group norms or creating a "norms" document
	R-Group		Relationship amongst the group
		Cocreation	Cocreation, cofacilitation, and mutual responsibility for learning amongst group, including facilitator
		Community	Formation or operation of a learning community
		Vulnerability	Emotional vulnerability; knowing and being known by group

Code	Subcode	Third Level	Description
	R-pt-student		Relationship between participant and student(s)
		Individualized	Individualized knowing and treatment of students
		Reciprocity	Embracing a dynamic of reciprocity between participant and students; participants giving what they ask for
Becoming			Fitting becoming tenet but not any subthemes
	BEC activities		Activities addressing the becoming tenet
	Self-knowing		Getting to know oneself better, includes identity development, self-care, and self-sufficiency
		Self-care	Learning how and why to care for oneself
		Sufficiency	Learning how to and gaining confidence in managing oneself
	Transformation		Referencing large changes in participants or the words transformation or transformative
	Values		Referencing reflection or changes in personal values
Liberation			Engaging social justice or anti-oppression lenses; connections between WHP and liberation
Wellbeing			Connections between WHP and wellbeing for students and participants
WHP Other			Other comments related to WHP
	Beyond EA		WHP beyond education abroad
		On-campus	Participants' use or disuse of WHP in traditional on-campus courses
Why it matters			Why WHP matters; largely in response to direct question "Why does it matter?"
	"Because they are"		Some versions of of "Because students are whole human beings" as response to above question
Discomfort			Discomfort as a theme in education abroad learning
	Comfort zone		Discussions of a comfort zone or comfort zone learning models
Meta			Large themes in broader field and beyond

Code	Subcode	Third Level	Description
	Hope		Engaging the theme of hope or hopefulness
Practical Realities			Practical realities, challenges, and limitations for participants within organizations or the field
	Class size		How many students are on one program or in one class; how many students one participant advises
	Commodification		Commodification of study abroad, including marketing
	PDO-return		Programming before and after programs, including pre-departure orientation and return processing
	Specialization		Lack of specialization within the field, specifically for program leaders
Practitioners			Subthemes focusing on participants' reflections on the field/profession
	Design process		Particpants' experiences of and advice for designing programs
	Educational values/goals		Participants' educational values and/or goals for their students
	Own EA experience		Participants' own education abroad experiences as vocational inspiration
	Sources mentioned		Sources mentioned by participants relating to topics covered
Prog descriptors			Characteristics of particular programs described by participants
	Embedded		Whether programs were embedded in longer on-campus courses
	Group size		How many students were in the program group
	Length		The length of the program in terms, weeks, or days
	Location		Primary location of program abroad
	Theme		Content or course theme for program
Students			Observations about contemporary students, particularly in the 2020s, and changes from previous generations