Intercultural Competency Development: A Case Study with SIT Study Abroad in Morocco, From a Trainers Lens

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INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT:
A CASE STUDY WITH SIT STUDY ABROAD IN MOROCCO,
FROM A TRAINERS LENS

Amy Leap Miller
PIM 76
A Course-Linked Capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a
Master of Arts in Intercultural Service, Leadership & Management
at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA
May 7, 2018
Advisor: Ryland White
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Student Name: Amy Leap Miller

Date: May 7, 2018
Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover. ~ Mark Twain
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ABSTRACT

This Course-Linked Capstone in Training focuses on intercultural competency development, both of the practitioner’s own life journey and through the lens of study abroad, highlighting a Case Study with SIT Study Abroad in Morocco. This Capstone weaves together theory and practice of intercultural competence, experiential learning, social justice training, and study abroad. The practitioner’s self-analysis includes reflection of her Practicum time, as well as a timeline of her intercultural competency development, including growth areas in five categories: knowledge, skills, attitudes, awareness and language. This Capstone also reflects the journey of the practitioner’s growth as a social justice trainer and experiential educator throughout her time at SIT Graduate Institute. The Case Study offers data from a needs assessment of intercultural competency development from the perspective of all stakeholders involved in the study abroad process: students, program staff and host families. This analysis offers program suggestions and training ideas for SIT Study Abroad to be implemented in Morocco. The core research question was: how can SIT Study Abroad in Morocco & the Center for Cross Cultural Learning (CCCL) connect the three major stakeholders of the study abroad experience to co-create increased intentional intercultural competency development for study abroad students, faculty and host families? Enjoy learning about the personal and organizational developmental stories of intercultural competency development of Study Abroad, through the eyes of a social justice trainer!

Key Terms

Culture includes social behavior, norms, characteristics and knowledge learned from birth. Multicultural means that two or more cultures are interacting. Intercultural competency means that a person is able to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from other cultures. I like how Mamman (2013) defines working effectively together as the “ability and competence to succeed in achieving desirable ends, meeting the needs and goals of the message initiator and the recipient and getting the desired response” (p. 43).
Introduction: My Journey to SIT, ISLM, Training & Practicums

During my educational journey at SIT Graduate Institute, I connected International Education, Sustainable Development, Conflict & Peace building, Social Justice Training and Leadership & Management through pursuing a self-designed Masters of Arts in Intercultural Service, Leadership and Management. Completing my practicum phase at Massanetta Springs Camp & Conference Center and with SIT Study Abroad in Morocco afforded me ample opportunities to connect my on-campus classroom learning with fieldwork. I chose to complete a Course-Linked Capstone in Training because this is the area I felt most deeply inspired by while on campus and I desired to continue growing in areas introduced through training.

I have three clear passions: a love of people, learning and fostering community around the world. I also have many interests, all grounded in curiosity. I do not fear trying something new. This creates an aura of indecision but thanks to my ongoing liberal arts education, I have been able to merge my many interests in and out of the classroom. After graduating from the University of Mary Washington as a double major of Geography and Spanish, I quickly learned through professional experiences that communication challenges between departments and organizations existed in each workplace. In my mind, it is only sensible to minimize these gaps and merge workplaces together through improved communication and education. I have always had a knack for bringing different people together and bridging connections, thanks to my strong intuition and observations skills. These intrinsic skills and prior education proved useful during my first three years as a young professional, but I soon came to realize that if I wanted to obtain jobs that most greatly interested me and would allow me to effect change, I needed to pursue a Master’s Degree. I desired a more practical and hands on classroom experience that would be quickly transferrable to the workplace. When I first learned about SIT Graduate Institute’s
Intercultural Service, Leadership & Management (ISLM) degree, it was a no-brainer that this was the program for me as I foresaw a spectrum of vocations that I could thrive in. These included nonprofit work, higher education, youth programming, intercultural communications, and study abroad. Piecing together classes useful to these dreams was the hallmark of the flexible ISLM degree at SIT. Today, these interests still exist and I am confident that I want to work with people, towards bettering the world and creating connections within and between communities.

To accomplish these goals, I want to educate in non-traditional ways\(^1\), which is where training comes into the picture. Before coming to SIT, I had never heard of ‘training’ beyond preparing for running a race, to improve dog behavior or to educate emergency personnel. After the first day of Training & Design for Experiential Learning (TDEL), I realized that I was familiar with the concept of training but that I used different phrases, like ‘facilitation’ or ‘workshops’. Indeed, I had been a participant in trainings and I actually led trainings. I now know that training is synonymous to educating. I define training, at least as I am interested in pursuing as a practitioner, as a co-created learning experience of deep empowerment, reflection, intercultural communications, personal and group growth, challenging oneself and pushing learning boundaries with a goal of creating transformational change. I believe this is a lifelong process that occurs in both formally structured settings and informal day-to-day life. According to this definition of training, I was a trainer before coming to SIT. One example that I am proud of was when I created curriculum for a TED-Ed Club and mentored middle school students through the process of creating their own mini-TedTalk. The students and I co-created a learning environment to produce tangible speeches rooted in issues close to their hearts that they wanted

\(^1\) Non-traditional education generally takes place outside of a traditional classroom and focuses more on self-directed learning through interactions and experiences.
to instigate transformational change in our community through. Now that I have been educated with training principles and techniques, I would do this program differently in the future.

During my training courses, I learned that it is only through another that I can come to know myself. Through this Practicum journey, this idea became more foundational to me as I engaged in dialogue and researched to help create a model of change for others. This work is both a process and a goal. I am still getting to know myself but I recognize that training, learning and relationships go beyond my experience and biases. I am continually challenged to consider training through an ethical lens, something that became clearly important during my time as a student in TDEL and Training of Trainers (TOT). I now better understand the importance of the words I choose to use when interacting with others but I am still left with the question of, “am I helping or am I perpetuating the situation?” This is just one example of the great responsibility that rests on a trainer’s back that I constantly grapple with. While at SIT, these were some of my most impactful learnings, hence why I chose to complete a Training CLC for Capstone!

When searching for practicums, I kept these diverse interests in mind. I chose my two practicums to equip me with a continued broad spectrum of experiences and skills. Working at Massanetta Springs Camp & Conference Center as Program Intern allowed me to return to the camp and conference environment in a role with more leadership and behind the scenes administrative responsibilities. This opportunity also required that I develop and help implement curriculum, granted this was not a significant portion of the position. I am passionate about the role of faith based summer camps and youth conferences in the life of youth and communities and have interest in pursuing year-round professional opportunities there in the future. This practicum provided me insight and experience in that realm and helped me realize that this was
not a professional direction that I wanted to immediately pursue. I was, though, greatly challenged to consider more deeply the intersection of the Christian faith and social justice.

My second and primary\(^2\) practicum was with SIT Study Abroad, as their first Student Affairs Fellow. This opportunity provided me international experience in study abroad and university settings. I facilitated dialogue between students and Moroccan staff, listened to student concerns and found solutions, and began discussions with Moroccan staff about intercultural differences and challenges students face. It was rewarding to build my own practicum and structure a position for SIT to employ in the future. I am anxious to see what opportunities will exist within the future model of SIT; perhaps this practicum really was the start of something new. Although my two practicums were very different, they provided unique insights, skills, personal connections and valuable experience to round out my experience at SIT.

\(^2\) Primary because it was the longer of the two and most directly connected to this Capstone and my future interests.
Learning Objectives for Capstone

A big draw to choosing a Training CLC was the reflection component because I believe this goes above and beyond traditional research projects. I knew that I would grow and better define knowledge, skills, attitudes, awareness’s and language that I encountered in my training classes at SIT. By selecting a CLC Capstone, I engaged in worthwhile personal analysis to better ground me as a trainer, while completing an important analysis to enhance the study abroad experience for students, program staff and host families working with SIT Study Abroad in Morocco and the Center for Cross Cultural Learning (CCCL). Thanks to a strong peer cohort and advisor, I was pushed to create excellence through accomplishing these learning objectives.

○ Personal Learning Objectives
  ○ To create a timeline of my intercultural competency development and to recognize key experiences and people that helped me arrive where I am today
  ○ To intentionally name and reflect on my biggest areas of growth (‘movement’)
  ○ To become more confident in knowing how my social identities and language (word choice and tone) impact others
  ○ To create a post-graduate school personal and professional learning plan that will establish competency areas I will strive to focus on during my next steps in life

○ Professional Learning Objectives
  ○ To articulate the depth and importance of intercultural competencies (knowledge, skills, awareness, attitudes and language) in co-created learning environments
  ○ To map out the existing trainings and resources provided to SIT Study Abroad faculty and CCCL host families to develop intercultural competencies for personal gain and to most effectively work with students from the U.S.
  ○ To improve my skills in creating needs assessments and the analysis of those results
  ○ To provide feedback and suggestions to SIT Study Abroad to enhance future experiences for students, faculty and host families
  ○ To create new knowledge through research to contribute to the fields of training, study abroad, experiential learning and intercultural competency development
Foundation in Theory

The theories in this Capstone are foundational to the outcomes I produced, including a needs assessment of intercultural competency development of students, faculty and host families associated with SIT Study Abroad in Morocco and my trainer self-analysis and intercultural competency development timeline. The theory is divided into three sections: Intercultural Competence Development, Experiential Learning/Social Justice Theory/Engaged Pedagogy, and Study Abroad. Theory is bridged with my RPP experience and trainer lens.

Theory of Intercultural Competence

No matter how hard we try to understand each other, communication is HARD, yet also necessary. DuPraw & Axner (1997) take this further saying “‘culture’ is often at the root of communication challenges. Our culture influences how we approach problems and participate in groups.” To more deeply understand the nuances of intercultural communication, I will introduce several different models that I believe are foundational to this work.

First is Darla Deardorff’s (2006) Framework of Intercultural Competence3, which is comprised of attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal outcomes and external outcomes. Beginning with attitudes, individuals will recognize respect, openness and curiosity as foundations to intercultural competence. She then suggests moving towards gaining knowledge, which means coming to understand the world from another’s cultural perspective. Deardorff then introduces skills to develop once knowledge has been acquired and processed. Deardorff (2006) envisions internal outcomes to include, “flexibility, adaptability, an ethnorelative perspective and empathy”. She perceives external outcomes to be “demonstrated through the behavior and communication of the individual….effective and appropriate behavior” (2006). This framework

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3 See Appendix A, Image 1.
is a lifelong process that those pursuing intercultural relations are involved with. I would add awareness and language to her framework, as I believe these are just as important.

The second model I will introduce is Milton Bennett’s Model of Intercultural Sensitivity\(^4\) (2011). The stages start out ethnocentrically and end entheoretically as one develops improved intercultural competencies. This model begins with Denial of Difference meaning that an ‘outsider’ cannot or refuses to see cultural difference. Additionally, denial can be due to chosen or not chosen separation; for example, some indigenous peoples that are physically isolated might not know of any cultures beyond their own. The second phase is Defense against Difference defined by recognizing cultural difference by embodying negative views of the other. Next, is Minimization of Difference or when people choose to relate based on similarities, while avoiding differences. The fourth phase is true Acceptance of Difference. This means that cultural differences are appreciated as another cultures reality. Next, is Adaptation to Difference explained as gaining skills to successfully communicate across cultural boundaries with a tone of empathy underlying all interactions. The final stage in this model is Integration of Difference. This means that another culture has been internalized and a person has realized that they embody more than one culture. A person that achieves this final phase can intuitively integrate aspects from other cultures into their own lives.

A third model is Edward Hall’s High/Low Context Theory\(^5\) (1976). I am most comfortable understanding this theory as it is simplistic and was introduced to me during Foundations. Interestingly, this was also the model that was taught to students studying abroad with SIT in Morocco. The United States is an example of a low-context culture because overall we rely heavily on verbal communication that is individualized. Morocco is a high-context

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\(^4\) See Appendix A, Image 2.

\(^5\) See Appendix A, Image 3.
culture because they communicate with many nonverbal cues and society is very communal. Of course these differences run along a spectrum and individuals, families, communities might challenge this theory. Every country is culturally diverse, therefore having a mix of low and high context cultures converging. Generally speaking though, it is possible to differentiate between the United States as a low-context culture and Morocco as a high-context culture.

Another model is one that a SIT committee developed in the early 1990’s to demonstrate levels of intercultural competencies for expatriates. They divided competency levels into four categories: educational traveler (tourist), sojourner (study abroad), professional and intercultural specialist. A tourist is curious and observant, a sojourner adapts to the culture in certain roles, a professional begins to intrinsically adapt and change, and a specialist is able to express themselves fully and appropriately in the host culture. Holliday (1992) writes that, “as an outsider, the expatriate is always bound to have difficulty understanding protocols of the very unfamiliar situation presented by the foreign host institution” (p. 227). Brabant (2010) found in peace building that “outsiders depend on insider partners to gain access both in order to understand communities and to conduct programs with them.” (p. 5). This is not always easy. Holliday (1992) believes that “it is the expatriates responsibility because theirs is the culture of change which carries potential situations of confusion and conflict” (p. 231). This suggests that it is up to expats to enter an international environment ready to establish ‘power with’ their local counterparts, not ‘power over’6. This requires expats to make an effort to fit in with local protocols, stay up to date with local realities and political nuances, not to impose ‘western’ values, or undermine existing structures. Bergdall (2003) admits, “playing the role of the external is an art and not a science. There is no one ‘right’ way to do it” (p. 9). There is a way to create

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6 **Power With:** A *more collaborative relationship when people work together to achieve a goal.*

**Power Over:** A *more dominating relationship when one person has power over another person.*
positive relationships by building on diversity of experience and perspective through mutual learning, empowerment and capitalizing on these combined knowledge and skills.

By learning about others, it becomes easier to find commonalities. This will avoid what Bennett (2011) calls, “defense against difference”, which is a toxic dualistic, us/them, thinking and overt negative stereotyping. On the flip side, it is crucial for anyone to know themselves, their place in society and to be comfortable with their identity to truly learn about the other. Methods of gaining this knowledge include reading, multi-media, conversation and experience. Knowledge is the building block of awareness. Once something is known, it is an individual’s responsibility to be aware of how that knowledge helps or hinders their interactions. Likewise, being aware of surroundings and how the local or expatriate culture functions will educate on appropriate ways to interact to best immerse into a foreign culture. Beyond knowledge and awareness’s, Mammam (2013) suggests flexibility, self-confidence, openness, motivation and cultural empathy as skills important to effectively coexist in multicultural communities. I would add patience, transparency, consistency, teambuilding activities and perhaps most importantly, listening. Most of these are soft skills that develop over time so the ability to bounce back from failure to try again is another helpful skill in multicultural situations. Language is also foundational: native versus foreign language and word choice. Marshall (1991) encourages that, “when we try to speak the other’s language, however imperfectly, we communicate powerfully that we accept the other” (p. 66). When it comes to word choice, bell hooks warns of how powerfully manipulating words can be and how easily they can be misunderstood. “Sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me” is not accurate, especially in multicultural settings where misunderstandings are commonplace.
In Appendix A: Image 4, a colorful wheel of ten culture identifiers is displayed. These ten cultural elements are environment, time, action, communication, space, power, individualism, competitiveness, structure and thinking. From my experience, I would also add knowing about the history and religion of a culture. I appreciate this holistic detailed breakdown of what makes up one’s culture. DuPraw & Axner (1997) add to these by suggesting six patterns of cultural differences that lead to challenges in communication: communication styles, attitudes towards conflict, approaches to completing tasks, decision-making styles, attitudes toward disclosure and approaches to knowing. Clearly, there are many dimensions to culture; it is no surprise that intercultural miscommunications are a reality in any multicultural settings. A lack of understanding can lead to failure in the classroom, home or work environment, as well as hurt feelings. So what are we supposed to do with our differences? This is where the next section in theory complements this section because it provides learning and educating/training theories that complement intercultural competency development and study abroad very well.

**Theory of Experiential Learning, Social Justice Training & Engaged Pedagogy**

Based on my knowledge, experience and goals as a trainer, experiential learning, engaged pedagogy and training are all rooted in social justice. Being a social justice trainer requires intentionality, hard work and a blend of theory and practice. While social justice means many things to different people, these are key concepts that associate with social justice including, examining structures, recognizing human dignity, seeing my own privilege and assuming responsibility, understanding self and the environment, having mutual understanding, being interconnected, fully and equally participating, having an inclusive vision of society, enjoying mutual understanding and living out shared responsibility. I chose to introduce social justice into this study because my education at SIT used that framework and I have since come to embody it
to the best of my ability by aspiring to be a social justice educator. Likewise, to truly grow in intercultural competence, implementing an engaged pedagogy for experiential learning through a social justice lens will maximize learning opportunities. Bell (2007) writes that,

“Social justice is both a process and a goal. With a goal of full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others, their society, and the broader world in which they live (pp. 2).

Marshall (1991) challenges social justice educators to “acknowledge our own positions in society and the ways that existing social arrangements limit our achievements and aspirations” (p. 61). Knowing one’s identity and how others might view or interpret it is important to succeed in intercultural settings. Freire (1998) emphasizes that we must see ourselves as unfinished beings and be critically aware of our conditioning. In other words, one must be aware of their blind spots, inherent bias and privilege. One way of getting to know oneself throughout life is through engaging in experiential learning, both as a learner and as a teacher/trainer. bell hooks determined that this mutual approach of holistic learning should be called engaged pedagogy.

“Engaged pedagogy does not simply seek to empower students. Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow and are empowered by the process. The empowerment cannot happen if we refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks” (hooks, 1994, pp. 21). This model encourages individualized but communal learning where each person brings in their unique identity with a goal that everyone will respect what everyone else knows and is bringing into the learning environment with them. When educators and learners are co-creating learning spaces, theorist Paulo Freire believes that this equalizes power imbalances by encouraging everyone’s voice to be heard. When mutual
understanding of learning between a trainer/educator and participants exists, experiential learning can really begin to succeed through a supportive learning environment.

David Kolb published his Experiential Learning Model\(^7\) in 1984 to demonstrate a life long, alternative, hands on way to learn beyond the traditional lecture style classroom. Experiential learning is defined as learning through life experience (Kolb, 2015, pp. xvii.) The cycle has four phases where learning happens throughout beginning with concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and finally active experimentation. You begin by having an experience, reflecting on the experience, learning from the experience and finally trying out what you learned. For learnings to be most effective, it is important for a learner to fully complete this cycle. Paulo Freire’s work supports this theory through his model of praxis that is defined as people coming together to critically reflect and then act for transformation. As a researcher, this entire Capstone is rooted in Experiential Learning, and therefore praxis, as I experienced for myself and guiding others to develop intercultural competence through my practicum, then critically reflected during and after, completed research and am now compiling my findings with a hope for eventual implementation of what I am learning!

I am approaching the presentation of my research through a trainer’s lens, a lens that is based in all of the above theory. The five main areas that I am most directly studying are change through growth in knowledge, skills, attitudes, awareness’s and language. Note that these have significant overlap with Deardorff’s Intercultural Competence Model. Knowledge is learning the facts, skills are practical hands-on learning and language can be either a dialect or word choice. Awareness is consciously acknowledging something while attitude is how one approaches and reacts to situations. In my training courses at SIT, Ryland White focused on growing our abilities

\(^7\) See Appendix A, Image 5.
in these areas and having me as a student measure my growth in these areas. We began the semester by completing a needs assessment. From there, Ryland White was able to create a training class that best suited the needs of the class participants. My research done for SIT Study Abroad in Morocco provides a Needs Assessment for what is needed to enhance intercultural competence development for future students, faculty and host families. This is the first step for change and growth to more intentionally happen for these stakeholders.

To measure growth in training classes and what I would love to see in Study Abroad, is Kurt Lewin’s model of change involving three steps: unfreezing, moving and refreezing. This model assumes that change is desired. Unfreezing is when one comes to understand that change is needed and one is open to this change. Movement is when one experiments with the change, this step is frequently uncomfortable and can be a quick or lengthy process. Refreezing is when these changes are embraced and implemented in a comfortable and confident manner. To foster these change processes in learning environments, it is crucial for educators to encourage safe and/or brave learning spaces. Safe space is when a person can feel confident that they will not experience discrimination, criticism or emotional upset while learning or working as a group. Brave space is when people can have a conversation that allows everyone to be heard and respected, even if there are disagreements. Brave space is a more empowering concept because hearing everyone’s voice and respecting their opinions is at the core. Safe space does not intentionally encourage all voices to be heard. Of course no teacher or trainer can guarantee this but they can foster it by developing group norms, being aware of triggers for participants by knowing who is in the room and by watching how interpersonal dynamics are playing out.

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As previously mentioned, the context of this Capstone research is study abroad. Vande Berg, Paige and Lou (2012) connect study abroad to the aforementioned theories by writing that, “Most students do not meaningfully develop through simple exposure to the environment or through having educators take steps to increase the amount of that exposure through ‘immersing’ them – students learn and develop effectively when educators intervene more intentionally through well-designed training programs that continue throughout the study abroad experience – self-reflective, culturally self-aware, aware of ‘how they know what they know” (pp. 21)

Of course this is true for study abroad students as well as students at their home institutions, hence why I believe these to be foundational theories to develop training programs with.

**Role of Study Abroad**

I am a strong believer in Study Abroad and the lifelong learnings one can glean from this experiential learning experience. According to a 2016 study by NAFSA “1.6 percent of all U.S. students enrolled at institutions of higher education in the United States and about 10 percent of U.S. graduates study abroad” and these numbers are only rising. Having been a study abroad student and now staff member, I would encourage increased intentionality throughout the entire study abroad process (from pre-departure to orientation to mid-semester to reentry) of fostering student intercultural competence development. Not every student is able to guide themselves through that process, meaning that faculty play a key role in positive outcomes. Vande Berg, Paige and Lou (2012) believe that, “immersion only works if students have developed interculturally” (pp. 20). When students live with host families, they are likely to gain significantly more intercultural competence learnings from having to speak the host language and engage in a family and neighborhood, meaning that host families are equally as important in this process to helping students learn. I am of the opinion that if each study abroad stakeholder group: students, faculty/staff and host families, worked together to develop interculturally, the
most success in intercultural competence growth would occur. Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart (2010) believe that, “programs abroad can help students achieve their goals, but to do so may require a tripod foundation – the student, the family, and the school” (pp. 76).

Unlike most studies that focus just on the student, faculty/staff or host family, I want to bring all three-stakeholder groups together. This was inspired by learning the importance of including all voices as learned in my training classes at SIT. Ogden, Stretwieser & Crawford (2013) pose an excellent question, “how does education abroad programming determine who in the host culture is able to interact with students, to what extent, and how?” (pp. 244). Primarily this will be the host family. Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) believe that “all must make an overt effort to bring the homestay component into their academic program and recognize its potential as a resource to students linguistic development and cultural adaptation”, as well as “if there is going to be a homestay advantage, the voices of the families must be heard and their potential must be more fully recognized” (pp. 198). These ideas are foundational to studying intercultural competence development from each stakeholder perspective, as each will have unique perspectives but very similar challenges on communicating successfully. None can be completely separated from the other’s experience either since they are co-creating learning environments. Ogden, Stretwieser & Crawford (2013) wrote, “for education abroad programs to be truly effective and sustainable, genuine reciprocity is essential” (pp. 248). Yes, students are the ‘customers’ and teachers and host families are ‘paid’ to provide a service, but I believe they can intentionally learn and grow alongside the students, providing a better overall experience.

Taking this a step further, Zull (2012) questions the value of study abroad in relation to participant’s perception of change, especially when powerful words like transformation are used (pp. 179). He goes on to write that, “study abroad is probably the START of a transformation”
(pp. 180) but in all reality, transformation might not be apparent for years. This is where training elements of knowledge, skills, awareness’s, attitudes and language can offer effective change measurements and concepts of how long change processes realistically take. Stakeholders must also realize that there is a study abroad cycle of highs and lows. Host families and faculty/staff experience this alongside students as they are living and working with them. Ward provides the ABC’s of acculturation, a more detailed demonstration of the process of getting to know a new culture and how you fit into it. For students this is learning about the host culture but for faculty/staff and host families it is learning about the student’s culture; again, mutual learning. The three stages are Affect (stress and coping), Behavior (culturally learning) and Cognition (seeing one’s personal identity in relation to another’s identity) (Savicki, 2012, pp. 219-221).

Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) explain how this acculturation is mutual; “students should know that the host family experience is a two way street. We tell students not to worry and to rely on their new families. Students must realize too, that the family is taking a risk” (pp. 194).

**Background on Morocco & a Third Cultural Space**

Cultural geography, my undergraduate focus, is a fascinating field that connects place, space, culture, history and identity. Individual and collective action shapes the social landscape. These interactions create a third cultural space\(^9\) created by and to be navigated by locals and foreigners. For study abroad students, space is at the core of many problematic issues, both with host families and on the streets. When abroad, I strive to exist harmoniously and to learn through listening and respecting another perspective and reality. The best place to begin this journey is to research historical developments that shape norms in Morocco. The major focus of difference is

\(^9\) See Appendix A, Image 6 for model and definition.
in space and gender relations. This section is rooted in literature-based research, observations, lectures, informal conversations and time spent with a host family during my time in Morocco.

Post-colonialism is an everyday reality in Morocco; wherever you look, you see a fragmented existence—modern versus traditional. France colonized Morocco in 1912 and held power until 1956. According to Newcomb (2012), this division of tradition and modernity “implies something imposed from above, usually from the West” (p. 5). The biggest divide seen in Moroccan cities is life between the medina (traditional) and the ville nouvelle (modern). For those living outside the medina, typically wealthier Moroccans, the medina is seen as an object of nostalgia that is only to be enjoyed in passing because it does not offer modern conveniences or lifestyle. On the other hand, tourists flock to the medina, fascinated to take pictures and ‘experience’ the foreign. Newcomb (2012) writes that Moroccans living outside the medina are, “bewildered by the tourists’ preference for what they see as a dirty, overcrowded space overrun with rural migrants” (p. 7). To me, life in the medina is dirty and overcrowded but it also feels like going back in time and I am fascinated by the close-knit communities and the much more conservative lifestyle. As a reflective practitioner, I must remember that I was a foreigner in a space that is post-colonial and Muslim. Through trying to learn about the history, culture and customs of Morocco, I hope not to demonstrate ‘Western’ power through this research. Integrating ideas from each of the aforementioned intercultural theories help me ensure this.

Islam is a religion just as much as it is culture, meaning you do not have to be a practicing Muslim to live a life of Islamic norms. Muslim society fosters ‘homosocial’ friendships with the exception of marriage because Islam restricts heterosexual interactions, outside of immediate family. Islamic culture is shaped for women to be hidden, something that

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10 “Traditional” and “modern” are used by locals and visitors alike, referring to the lingering effects of colonialism.

11 ‘Homosocial’ means social interactions, which are not romantic, between members of the same sex.
Mernissi (1975) explains as, “the seclusion of women, which to Western eyes is a source of oppression, is seen by many Muslim women as a source of pride” (p. 141). As a non-Muslim woman in Morocco, this is intimidating. Traditionally, “the public world of men is associated with power, status, control of information and decision making, and the private world of women is associated with relative powerlessness and domestic life – women are portrayed as passive victims, whose very identity and status are dependent on their male kin” (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2001, p. 303). Mazumdar & Mazumdar (2001) are optimistic that these traditions are “not self contained, watertight compartments, but open to negotiation and re-definition” (p. 303). While this is exciting to think about, in my experience, men still predominantly rule public spaces. For women, there are “complex ‘rules’ for occupying the mixed spaces of cafes and streets involving successfully balancing appearances with actions with the threat of being perceived as sexually promiscuous as the punishment for transgressions” (Newcomb, 2012, p. 13). Mernissi (1975) confirms, “space in Morocco has a primarily social, not physical quality” (p. 143) while Tait (2014) agrees that “public space is abstract and not clearly defined, it is more symbolic” (p. 1). For outsiders, like myself and study abroad students, entering these cultural spaces, it is easy to see how confusion and discomfort are common.

In the streets, patriarchy is inescapable, for both Moroccan and visiting women. Men act like they own the street; they do not move out of your way, they stare, catcall and follow. Newcomb (2012) writes that “street harassment is an issue, and the severity of harassment varies with tightness of clothes, facial expressions and time of day; all potential indicators of sexual availability” (p. 15). Female students change their walking routes, listen to music and ask for male accompaniment to diminish harassment, in addition to wearing more conservative clothing.

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12 Mazumdar & Mazumdar (2001) explain that women are beginning to conduct economic enterprises from home to supplement family income obtain some autonomy. A prime example is hosting study abroad students; the women are in charge of this endeavor!
Accepting this as the cultural reality in public spaces was a frustrating adjustment. Through conversation with Moroccan women, I learned that they too experience similar treatment on the streets and that it also angers them but on the whole, Moroccan women accept this as the reality of the country they live in whereas many students from the U.S. choose to challenge the men. This is one example of a third cultural space being created. I am still not sure what created these cultural norms and when I asked Moroccans, they just say that is how it is or refer to the Quran.

Again, homes are traditionally where women dominate the space. Each family has a different set of ‘house rules’ set by females. Sometimes, women and men eat apart. Some men must ask women before going into a different room. Typically, women are in charge of the TV remote. Women frequently invite female friends to visit. For students, friends of the opposite sex should not visit them at home. Essentially, women (host moms) are the bosses at home, which can feel restrictive to U.S. students, whom are used to having control over personal space and free time. This is another example of when a conversation is needed to create a third cultural space of compromises where students do not feel smothered but host moms still feel in control.

Learning historical and cultural background is so important to better understand cultural spaces. Students most successfully thrive when they can affirm difference while simultaneously gaining acceptance. In host families, a third cultural space is created where students and families must agree on give and take. The challenge I see is how to preserve the host culture while accepting a student’s identity and values when one is not more important than the other. I believe that when I am abroad, I need to accept those cultural norms over my own, but at the same time, some values I have are so important to me that they are hard to let go. Hopefully the collaborative training ideas between students, staff and host communities provided in this study, would help students interact more comfortably with their Moroccan host communities.
Case Study

Introduction

My Capstone Research was conducted in Morocco during my Fall 2017 practicum as the SIT Study Abroad in Morocco Student Affairs Fellow. There were three programs offered during the semester: Multiculturalism & Human Rights, Migration & Transnational Identity, and Field Studies in Journalism & New Media. Experiential learning, immersion, field studies, reciprocity, social justice, diversity and a critical eye are all central to these programs. Of 67 students, 85% were female. Most students were between the ages of 19-22. Roughly 95% of students were from the U.S. with the remainder being international study abroad students. Approximately 35% of students identify as a person of color. More than half of the students had never studied French or Arabic, the dominant languages of Morocco. These programs are hosted by the Center for Cross Cultural Learning (CCCL), a private cultural institution specializing in cross-cultural education and Fus’ha (Standard Arabic) and Darija (Moroccan Arabic). They lead educational seminars on Moroccan society and history, and Arab and Islamic cultures. Since a goal is cultural integration, they utilize 100 host families. CCCL staff support SIT Study Abroad programs as a host institution and many employees work for both CCCL and SIT Study Abroad.

My role was not completely defined before I arrived in Morocco but a perk was co-creating my job. I received minimal training from SIT in regards to study abroad policies, major issues students in Morocco face and how to handle ‘tricky’ situations\textsuperscript{13}, so most of my learning about my position occurred after I arrived in Morocco. Having two supervisors in different locations around the world was challenging but an excellent learning opportunity for me. My responsibilities included providing student affairs support and intercultural guidance to the 67

\textsuperscript{13} This begs the question of which competencies are important to this work – see RPQ #2!
university students. Student affairs support included: street harassment, group dynamics, mental health, medical issues, diet, homesickness, homestay issues, academic concerns and intercultural differences. I was the liaison between the SIT Student Affairs Staff in the U.S. and in-country staff in Morocco. I kept lists of recommendations for the programs, organization and this position. I travelled on excursions with students to provide ongoing support, like going police stations and hospitals, helping students navigate intercultural miscommunications, and talking through many issues. I was supposed to lead trainings but this proved to be an impossible challenge due to space limitations, legalities and interesting dynamics of conflict between SIT and CCCL. I developed training ideas, incorporating the Experiential Learning Cycle, tourism & representation, social identities (specifically gender and race), overcoming difference and professionally marketing study abroad, for future implementation or at least to be worked into orientation upon arrival and the pre-departure orientation. I had informal round table discussions about these topics during lunch and student initiated conversations with students from those interested in my expertise and experience. I created a job description for future fellows and encouraged SIT Study Abroad to continue this position and expand it to other locations. I also left an In-Country Student Handbook and created materials for students about the Independent Study Period (ISP) regulations/timelines. Additionally, and most importantly was the (hopefully) positive impact that I had on the 67 students that studied abroad in Morocco last Fall. I helped them navigate challenges and offered life advice about their time abroad and for once they returned home. I was excited to gain experience working with university students, study abroad programs and internationally. I had hoped to gain more language skills but that was not realistic. I gained courage in living and working abroad. Seeing the positive personal growth results this
program had on the 67 students is encouraging for our world but I seek to learn more about how these programs impact the educators and host community as well.

**Situating Within the Research**

Through this study, I weave together multiple ideas of intercultural competency specialists and theorists highlighted in the above theory section of this paper. I believe that this research is important because I see a gap in the current research of study abroad regarding intercultural competency development of all study abroad program stakeholders: students, host families and program faculty. The focus is normally on student development. Now having been on the ‘other side’ in a staff position, I wish I had more training and resources specifically about how to relate with my Moroccan co-workers. I could have shared those intercultural communication strategies with the students I was supporting. Also, renting from a host family but not technically living with them, I remember interesting conversations with them that show the family wants to learn more and develop more intercultural competencies. By breaking down cultural and communicative barriers and further developing intercultural competencies, the study abroad experience will be enriched for all stakeholders involved. Therefore, I believe it is important for educators and host families to also share their strengths and weaknesses with students to better allow for holistic growth.

The potential students have when studying abroad to gain a wealth of knowledge and skills, to be transferred back to their personal and professional lives, is great. A focus on intercultural competencies is a popular topic amongst researchers and practitioners in the study abroad field, especially about the impact these have on a student’s future professional success. According to my SIT Student Affairs supervisors, the need for student affairs or student support positions abroad for students is a growing trend. I loved getting to be a pioneer by being the face
of Student Affairs for SIT Study Abroad in Morocco but at the same time, I wonder if my position would still be necessary if in-country support systems, faculty and host families received additional intercultural training to better support study abroad students? I see an opportunity to give co-creating interculturally competent support systems in country a chance and to empower a more authentic ‘abroad’ experience for students with the already existing stakeholders.

**Research Questions**

Rooted in training principles, I wanted to include all stakeholders in this research so that ideas for future improvements were co-created. In study abroad, the three main stakeholders are students, faculty/staff and host families. I was curious to see how each stakeholder individually and collectively strengthened intercultural competency development.

- How can SIT Study Abroad in Morocco & the Center for Cross Cultural Learning (CCCL) connect the three major stakeholders of the study abroad experience to co-create increased intentional intercultural competency development for study abroad students, faculty and host families?
  - What intercultural competencies are students developing the most and the least? What gaps do they see in the current study abroad model?
  - What intercultural competencies are host families gaining from this experience and what competencies do they want to further develop to improve their hosting abilities, understandings and communications?
  - What intercultural competencies are faculty gaining from working with study abroad students and what are they most challenged by? How can faculty better support each other both in-country and from the U.S.?
  - In what ways can study abroad students, faculty and host families work together to diminish intercultural barriers and what trainings could be implemented to guide these stakeholders through this process together?
Methods

• Overview

Outcomes include a needs assessment of intercultural competency development of students, faculty and host families associated with SIT Study Abroad in Morocco, constructive feedback and training suggestions for co-created learning between three stakeholder groups. My trainer self-analysis and creation of my intercultural competency development timeline further bridges theory and practice to see areas of personal growth. I used a trainer lens to analyze what I learned and how I learned it. This better grounds me as a social justice trainer, comfortable with my strengths and weaknesses and provides me with an intentional path to continue growing in the future.

• Sample selection & Data collection\(^\text{14}\)

Surveys were used for students and faculty/staff. Focus groups were conducted for all stakeholders, including host families. Interviews were implemented for leadership staff.

• Data analysis methods

I read and quantified the surveys to determine themes, trends and patterns. I transcribed and categorized themes and patterns emerging from focus groups and interviews. I reported trends, strengths, challenges and gaps found within the data. Data results were generalized to reveal overlap between the three stakeholder groups. I brought in my own experience and reflections to offer feedback and create recommendations.

• Limitations & practical challenges inherent in the research design

First, data was limited to the 67 students in the Fall 2017 SIT Morocco Study Abroad cohort so findings are not representative of the study abroad field at large. Second,  

\(^{14}\) To see sample selection methods and data collection tools, refer to Appendix B
participation by stakeholders was voluntary. I got supporters of the SIT experience and people who had an awful experience – both brought bias. I used a critical lens to recognize outliers from survey data. I fostered constructive conversation during focus groups. Third, the research topic was a foreign concept for host families not privy to SIT’s experiential education goals. My own friends and family do not necessarily know what intercultural competencies are or the importance of reflecting on experience. Fourth, with only four months of experience with SIT Study Abroad in Morocco, I did not glean accurate conclusions based on my observations. Fifth, due to a long IRB approval process, I had extremely limited time to conduct my research, therefore producing less data than originally anticipated. Lastly, I worked for SIT; so, I might not have gotten true responses from staff, host families, or my supervisors about challenges and weaknesses.

Discussion of Data Results

Due to the rushed nature of this data collection, I am very satisfied with the information generated by this small sample size. Students, host families and CCCL/SIT staff were all exited to share their ideas and talk about what the study abroad experience meant.

Interviews

The three interviews that I conducted were to get the behind the scenes approach of providing a successful study abroad program. These conversations were an excellent venue to float ideas for enhancing overall intercultural competence development for all study abroad stakeholders because I could hear what had previously been tried and failed, as well as what was already in the long term goal planning. The Founder of the CCCL expressed a common theme across these interviews, “I think that most important is for the participant to consider that he or she is not at the center of the world and to recognize that there are others who are as important as
he or she in terms of culture, ideas and intelligence.” Similarly, both the Founder of the CCCL and the SIT Regional Academic Dean spoke about customer service as a competency. From our conversations, it appears that the CCCL does an excellent job of preparing staff for providing excellent customer service. The CCCL Founder said that, “as long as student demands are part of the services we provide, then they must be met with as much perfection as possible. I think this is the overall frame for staff – they are a provider.” A huge growth area for staff is learning how to interact with students from different backgrounds. According to the CCCL Founder,

“Some of our staff, predominantly Muslim, have never talked to someone who is not a Muslim because they had never had the opportunity to meet with a Christian or a Jew or a Buddhist, or even if they did, they did not realize it. So one of our challenges is how to introduce this diversity to the people who are new to working here. Because those who have been working with us longer have already dealt with this. It is very important; an important part of the training is how to deal with these differences and how to recognize and accept them and how to respect them. So we do specific trainings in this.”

This is fantastic and adds to the strength of the CCCL staff in their abilities to successfully work with study abroad students while also sharing about their home, Moroccan culture, while learning about students from the United States and across the world.

On the SIT side of it, staff seem to be confident in intercultural competencies but according to the SIT Regional Director “lack a confidence and knowledge for issues that students expect them to be taking care of that go above and beyond the traditional role and level of involvement of study abroad staff.” This includes classroom dynamic expectations, entitlement and mental health; “services that students expect to be the same as they would be offered at their home university.” The CCCL Founder took this a step further saying that,

“Economics are at play. American students come from the richest country in the world and the resources they are exposed to, even if they don’t have them, are so much greater in volume than they are in the host country. I think this requires some kind of adjustment
for the student because they are in a host country which has much less resources, when
the students adapt to the scarcity of resources – it becomes not a scarcity but adaptable.”
Frequently, students best come to understand these differences by staying with host families and
getting a more personal glimpse into the host culture.

Interviewing the CCCL Homestay Coordinator was a pleasure as she built the homestay
program in Rabat in the 1990s and was one of the first host families for SIT programs. She
shared that families are so excited to host students that she does not have to do formal
recruitment. Information is spread by word of mouth between families. Host moms love to host
students because they “feel they can do something. Most of them are illiterate, they feel they
cannot communicate but they can prepare things. To make the moms feel like they can do
something for the family, they can work in their houses.” She encourages families to include
students as family, not a guest. This enables students to most greatly learn the host culture. She
said that a families greatest intercultural growth is because, “most of them inside the medina
cannot travel outside the medina. They do not have opportunities like this, so they make America
come into their houses.” Host family children grow up and learn English from living with
students. Other opportunities include an additional income that can “help us (families) pay the
school for the children and to change things in the house to make it more comfortable,” like a
western toilet and Internet. The CCCL recognizes host families with awards, special dinners and
occasional scholarships to children for continuing educational opportunities. The overarching
goal is for families to stay connected to students to continue the intercultural competency
development at a distance – with everyone learning from each other and sharing life.

Student Perspective

The student focus group defined intercultural competence as skills to communicate with
someone from a different culture and having respect and being cognizant of what is going on
where you are interacting in an intercultural setting. Student data reported that 75% greatly improved their ability to successfully and appropriately interact with people from other cultures while studying abroad. This growth comes from the classroom, living with host families, going on excursions and living independently the last month. Intercultural competency areas most developed included attitude and awareness of intercultural communications, while the least developed competencies were language and knowledge of Morocco. Students highlighted classroom intercultural competency development through meeting with Moroccan university students, learning Darija on Friday’s and talking through cultural norm differences as a group. With host families, students noted the most intercultural competency growth when eating, shopping and figuring out how to communicate non-verbally. Students agreed that the most challenging aspects of communicating with program staff was not being able to translate certain cultural norms, reconciling with different teaching methods and communicating in Arabic. With host families, the largest hurdles were the language barrier and simply trying to connect as a family member (some families were more inviting than others). During the independent study time, students said that they gained a plethora of intercultural communication skills like breaking down American privilege, learning that Moroccan’s do not respond to e-mail well, ex-patriot’s all seem to know each other, friendships can be formed even if you do not speak the same language, the income gap is huge and that language is more important than they thought to true intercultural learning. This time allowed students to firm up intercultural skills that could be transferred back to their schools in the United States, like listening to others, patience while learning, open-mindedness and mindfulness, cultural sensitivity, self-awareness, independence and problem-solving abilities. On the next page is a list of important intercultural communication lessons gained from the semester studying abroad as shared through the student survey.
• “Always assume you know nothing. Listen to others before speaking”
• “Always be aware of your reactions to things, reflect on why you feel a certain way and how that colors your perception of the host culture, practice and place.”
• “Intercultural communication goes both ways.”
• “In some ways, I am going home with a more nuanced view of my own country.”
• “Language is a barrier but not an excuse. There are other routes to connection.”

Through my focus group, I gained many other insights. This group spoke for some time about their host family experiences and how they compared to each other. They agreed that having Doha come into their classrooms occasionally to do check-ins about their host family experience was helpful because she could validate your story and you could see that other people were experiencing the same challenges. One student said that, “the host family experience was an exercise in breaking down my preconceptions about Moroccan households…all families are different, just like we are in the States.” This statement referred specifically to the host family orientation by Doha. This student said that their host family was not like Doha described host families to be. This is a huge lesson to learn – preconceptions and stereotypes are very influential and need to be learned from. Another student shared that her family did not ask her many questions about herself and so she never felt like she developed a close relationship. Her thought on this was that, “maybe Moroccans just get to know each other in different ways that Americans do. Or maybe because I am not the first student or maybe it is the language barrier.”

Students agreed that there were some definite communication challenges regardless of the use of hand motions. For instance, Moroccan’s tend to use more aggressive phrasing than we do in the United States. One example is a student’s host family told her that she had gotten fat and she just responded with thank you, knowing that they did not mean to be offensive. Another student said she experienced the same kind of comments about pimples. The students agreed that Moroccan’s state factual things about your body, not to tease, but to alert you of a reality.
Another challenge was tone of voice. All students said that they experienced yelling in the home and streets. No one ever determined if they were fighting or just having a heated conversation.

In the classroom, there were other challenges. The focus group expected classes to be seminar style, like they are at their home universities. They wished that they had been prepared for this difference. One student in the MOM program described the classroom dynamics as, “not having full class discussions. It was more back and forth between one student and the professor. There was no student to student discussion with the professor guiding things.” MOM student was appreciative though of the diversity in the classroom and said that being in a classroom with people from all over the United States was an unexpected benefit from this experience. The MOR student said that she appreciated having weekly fieldwork assignments and different lectures every week to hear different perspectives of Morocco. She also said that through the fieldwork “we got self-directed experience to practice the knowledge I was gaining.” All in all, what this one student said sums it up, “I gained confidence in my ability to navigate a foreign country and to travel myself more in the future.” This is what it is all about!

Faculty/Staff Perspective

Results from the CCCL and SIT staff were not surprising once I considered that it requires a person with a specific academic and professional background and personal interest to apply for these positions. 84% of the participating staff in this study was familiar with intercultural competencies before beginning work with the CCCL or SIT. 67% agreed that attitude is the most important intercultural competency area and 84% said that language is the least important intercultural competency area. In the focus group, the faculty and staff said that it is important to remember that study abroad students are still young and they are growing but at the same time it is important for them to not underestimate students because, “we must
appreciate when students come and learn.” In the focus group, participants were adamant that regardless of maturity, students must take responsibility for their own learning and how it impacts others, as well as reminding students that being open minded does not mean you are respectful. Students must “be aware of their privilege, even just to come here to Morocco.” In the classroom, students are encouraged to examine their lens by asking people what their actions or words mean and to couple this with researching to better understand cultural contexts. An academic director stated, “you (students) are here to interact with people, not to put yourself in the position of the more knowledgeable, arrogant person.” Critical awareness of perception, identity and background is so important, both for faculty/staff and students.

Faculty/staff reported that their favorite part of interacting with students was hearing their insightful reflections about their experience, curiosity about the world, better understanding gender dynamics in a non-Muslim country and conversations about religion and human rights (topics that are taboo in Morocco). Several impactful lessons from students include:

- “having learned from the importance of debriefing after difficult cultural interactions, such as problematic conversations on race and sexuality, and how to discuss these issues within various cultural contexts,”
- “learning to accept the differences,”
- “the courage students have to live with people that they do not know,” and
- “I used to not care much about cats on the streets. With the students love for cats, I learned how to give more importance to them.”

The faculty and staff reported that the most challenging parts of interacting with students from the United States are the generation gap, shifting moods during the different phases of the study abroad experience, and managing their professional, personal, academic, mental health and cultural needs. Through the thick and the thin, staff said that by working with study abroad students they, “learn about another culture but also about your own (Moroccan) culture” and
“being a native Moroccan, you learn about things you didn’t know before as a local from these students.” In the focus group, faculty/staff discussed about how they are aware that Morocco is a challenging country to live in for students because it can be mentally draining, even if you are in good health, dealing with gender and racial cultural differences. Working with students only educates them more about these challenges, perceptions and cultural stereotypes and values.

Through the survey and focus group, I did not generate much data about interactions between faculty/staff and host families but what I did learn was that the CCCL staff is much more connected with host families than the SIT staff. At minimum, someone from each program tries to visit the families’ homes once a semester just so that students know they are aware of their living situations, but there are no requirements of this. For some students, this is reassuring to have this level of accountability. Some families feel like they are being inspected, so finding a balance to suit all stakeholders is important. It was surprising to me though that this is the extent of the interactions between faculty/staff and the host families.

Host Family Perspective

The four host moms I spoke with were passionate about the added identity that being a host family means for them and their families. For these families, working with the CCCL provided them their first interactions with Americans. For two of the families, inviting in a host student was the first time that a non-Moroccan ever entered their homes. They were so happy to talk about their experiences over the years and to tell me ideas they have to be more involved with the entire study abroad experience. One of the women had hosted more than 40 students since 2005. She decided to begin hosting students because, “I lived with just daughter and I wanted more daughters in my house. My daughter was studying English and I wanted to practice English with students. After the first time, I want my family to become bigger and I wanted more
students and more daughters.” Another woman decided to host students because her, “husband died so the money is good. Also my daughter studies English so it is good for her. It is not easy because my friends think that when I host students that it’s weird but I actually help myself and get to know an international country and another life. Students become part of my family.” The other women had similar stories as to why they began hosting students and they explained the recruitment process. Typically, after someone has a good experience hosting students, they will recommend hosting to their neighbors and friends who, “you know will treat the student good and have a good house. Tell them you have a good experience and have learned a lot and that they will love to share the same experience.” This means that families and students are part of a community, which strengthens the experience for everyone through strong support networks. These families reported that they mostly only talk to the Host Family Coordinator at CCCL when there is a problem, like if a student is sick or they experience harassment.

The four women shared similar responses of their biggest learnings from hosting students, including: religion, culture, English and cooking. One woman shared that, “I have learned your (American) culture. Before when I didn’t have students I didn’t know anything about your culture but now I know so much about American culture and that is good for me.” A host sister who sat in on one conversation states that her favorite part of hosting students is, “getting to know the world more closely without the Internet and social media.” She has been hosting students since she was 10 years old and is now 17 and says that she has “learned so much and appreciates every minute.” Another host mom shared that, “hosting students pays for extra classes for my children – like music classes. And my children learned English too. The whole family learns so much. The family is growing.” Consistently, these host moms were so proud of their growing families and the relationships that they maintain even after a student lives with
them during study abroad. They wish that, “more programs come to Morocco. I want people to know my family. I wish to have in all America people from all over. I want to know more about different places in America.” On the home front, each of these families have gotten to upgrade their homes since beginning to host students with Wi-Fi, western toilets and/or air conditioning. All in all, these are major highlights for most host families that host students through CCCL.

Yes, there are challenges associated with hosting students. These women agreed that language is the hardest but were happy to say that their English and French is improving. They said this challenge varied student to student based on what language skills they came to Morocco with. Additional challenges include hosting students that do not eat meat or gluten but as one host mom said, “those are really hard at first but it becomes a new routine.” Other rare issues that one host mom mentioned was disrespect of her home with bringing in alcohol and coming home drunk. She said that she told her student that if, “she lives with me and is in Morocco and that she must live Moroccan culture – not her culture – if that’s what she wants then she should go back to her country.” This is tough love but apparently the student heard her and had a great rest of the semester. The other host moms did not talk about challenges of this severe a nature.

**Ethical Dilemmas**

I tried to minimize any ethical dilemmas by ensuring that I spoke to a similar number of all stakeholders. It was helpful that the research participants had a favorable opinion of the study abroad experience. I struggled ethically with the fact that I was a staff, so a superior to students, a co-worker to faculty/staff, and someone that was at the time living with a host family. The participants of the focus groups were individuals that I had best gotten to know. This likely skewed the data results but I will try to not let that skew my data analysis. Regardless, responses to the survey and focus group discussions seemed authentic, passionate and inspired.
Case Study Lessons/Reflections from a Trainer’s Lens

The following data provides a needs assessment of intercultural competency development of all stakeholders involved with SIT Study Abroad in Morocco. My approach is that it is a student-centered process but faculty/staff and host families can intentionally be supported to develop. Having lived and worked in Morocco and from my understandings from discussions with students, faculty and host families, I think it would be beneficial if students, staff and host families were better prepared for challenges that Americans face with navigating private and public spaces in Morocco. Savicki (2012) writes, “students seem to feel that if they just knew the ‘rules’ of a host culture they would be able to function nicely without having to understand the host culture itself” (p. 218). While this might sound nice, an important component of study abroad is learning about the culture to better understand norms and values. This will limit what Engle & Engle (2012) caution about, “the all too common scenario of student demands imposing change on the host environment” (p. 288). This aligns with Rawlins (2012) insistence on helping students learn to differentiate between what is and is not culturally appropriate.

Another recommended way to learn to accept differences is to be integrated into the host culture through personal connections. Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) believe that “schools must involve the families in ongoing discussions regarding their roles and they must give students specific suggestions for how to meaningfully interact with the family” (pp. 198). For host families and Moroccan students to be successful in these interactions requires study abroad students to also put in effort. Students frequently do not acculturate to host norms because they spend most of their days with other study abroad students who share their lifestyle from back in the U.S. Citron (1996) explains that “when students are asked to discuss highlights of their experiences, students frequently talked about contact with symbols of U.S. culture” (p. 17).
Globalization makes it easy to leave home without immersing into another culture. Encouraging students to explore their identity, as well as getting to know core elements of Moroccan identity, is crucial to engage in outside of the classroom and orientation week. These intercultural interactions are where third cultural spaces will begin to be created. Learning how to navigate space takes time and undoing assumptions is hard. For students to become more tolerant, they need to be able to voice what their norms are and what Moroccan norms are. Seeing overlap will help them find a balance of appreciation so that transformational change can take place. The same goes for host families and staff. Communication is central to understanding difference. Intercultural communication training and dialogue would be valuable for all stakeholders.

**Program Suggestions & Training Ideas for SIT Study Abroad**

These are suggestions to strengthen intercultural competencies and enjoyment of the study abroad experience for all stakeholders, based off my observations and research in Morocco. These recommendations are organized by theme: needed training, pre-departure and re-entry information for students, programmatic enhancements, curriculum enhancements, bringing together all three stakeholders, language learning and counseling services for students.

**Needed Training**

**For Faculty/Staff**

- Faculty/Staff and their supervisors want trainings on gender norms, racism and classroom dynamic management, as students increasingly need support with these.
- Ensure that all SIT faculty receives sufficient training before they start, as well as on going throughout the semester. Since they have no in-country supervision, this is all the more important. They need to be supported, as their role is challenging and exhausting.
• Provide faculty with classroom tools to teach beyond lectures because they will likely be more successful engaging with students in more interactive ways.

• Faculty could benefit from remote ongoing training and coaching, once a month, to guide them through the process of helping students, as well as anything they are challenged by from learning from their students. This shows students that intentionality in personal growth is important not just for them, but also for their teachers.

For Host Families

• Provide formal orientation to families, like students receive, so they are not so confused like one student said, “the way that I understand that we are all going to eat out of the same bowl, just like they need to understand that I need to go buy toilet paper.”

  ▪ Families must know that each student they host is experiencing Morocco for the first time and comes from a unique background. Therefore it is best to not make assumptions based on previous hosting experiences.

• Host families have an important role of orienting students to social spaces. Ossman (2007) ensures that the greatest way to acculturate is for “locals to take incoming residents under their wing to explain the whys and wherefores of managing their relationship with the new human environment (p. 132). Families could be intentional by offering students a walking tour with recommendations of who to ignore, how to acknowledge strangers, who will keep an eye out for them, etc. Involving locals is important because they can shape the impact study abroad has on their community.

• It would be helpful for families to be told about personal freedom that is ‘normal’ in the United States, especially since this lack of freedom is hard for American students in Morocco. Students could sit down with their host family and the homestay coordinator
to determine a contract of norms for their stay, to keep everyone on the same page and to mediate misunderstandings or disagreements proactively.

**For Students**

- I would love to see students participate in a round of Barnga\(^\text{15}\) and group discussion one of the first weeks of the semester. Playing this game would allow students to understand and feel cultural differences in rules. This could be very eye opening, especially as Westerners are studying abroad in an Arab country.
- Emphasize more strongly to students the need to read the study abroad manual and history of Morocco before arriving at the start of their semester.

**Pre-departure & Reentry Information for Students**

- I want to see “intervention prior to and after study abroad because it is just as critical to student’s intercultural learning as the study abroad experience itself” (Bathurst & La Brack, 2012 pp. 262). This was a major gap as students reported only experiencing intentional communication, learning and reflection while studying in Morocco.
- In pre-departure materials, make sure students know that classes are structured differently in Morocco than at their home institutions. Classes are lecture style, not seminar style. Professors are Moroccan, not American.
  - This would also help instructors because one faculty member said that, “students come expecting to be treated and taught the same exact way they are exposed to in the United States but students need to be prepared for a difference – fully disclosed – this is a different region that has different teaching methods and different academic approaches.”

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\(^\text{15}\) This source explains how to facilitate Barnga: http://www.acphd.org/media/271383/barnga_instructions.pdf
• Bathurst & La Brack (2012) say that, “Reentry is as crucial as pre-departure – students need help integrating their experience to gain the most from the experience” (pp. 270).

• Have an end of the semester re-orientation for students to discuss transitioning home, and how to market their study abroad experience. One source refers to this as “articulating the value of your experience to future employees/schools, demonstrating intercultural development and skills for a portfolio” (Paige, Harvey & McCleary, 2012 pp. 328).

**Programmatic Enhancements**

• Provide the In-Country Handbook\(^{16}\) co-written from the perspective of students and educators from the United States, who have lived in Morocco, at the beginning of the semester so students have in written format all the information from orientation to refer to. This is an effort to provide what the typical study abroad student needs and wants.

• Students want more interactions with Moroccan university students, including a language partner to help both with learning the language and with making Moroccan friends.
  - One MOR student said, “that’s what I feel like is missing with SIT, especially form my first three months here in Rabat, was interacting with Moroccan peers”.
  - Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight (2004) suggest a three-pronged approach “to help students with the initial adjustment to their new surroundings. Enlist the aid of the school and homestay but also hire local students for the first couple of weeks to be the contact person for new students” (pp. 257).

• Explicitly tell students about the study abroad cycle so they know what they will be experiencing is normal. The ups and downs are hard but if normalized through discussion upfront, then students can more easily open up to others about how they are feeling.

\(^{16}\) See Appendix C
Bringing Together ALL Three Stakeholders

Include all stakeholders in the classroom and on excursions to improve cross-communication.

• Involve language teachers more with the core program experience since language is such an important intercultural competency area. They could come to debriefing sessions or go on an excursion. This would make sure that language teachers are not feeling left out of the overall study abroad experience. This also broadens a student’s support system while in country. Likewise, Academic Directors could also sit in on an Arabic class.

• Include one or two host family members in each program for a semester so that they can also learn and get a better understanding of what study abroad is all about. All stakeholders mentioned this when asked about how to better involve host families.

▪ Ogden, Streitwieser & Crawford (2013) find that adding initiatives to “motivate students to spend more of their free time with host family members is critical” (pp. 237) to learning the most they can about the culture and language. Host families wish students spent more time with them for their own growth, as well as to teach their students.

• Have additional social events for study abroad students, their host families and faculty/staff at the CCCL. The one at the end of the semester is a highlight but students and families want more interaction. Two host mothers said that they would not mind if there were weekly events for everyone to get together to socialize.

• Have round table discussions once a week where faculty/staff and students dine with host families interested in learning about race, sexuality, harassment, mental health, and norms or values from a United States perspective. This intentionally allows students to educate their host families in a more comfortable setting.
Curriculum Enhancements

- Faculty has an interest in adding a component of intercultural competency to their SIT curriculum. This could include reflexivity exercises, Moroccan Culture 101 (baptism, funeral, a widows way of life, how to deal with guests, marriage, religion, superstitions, etc.) and respecting the differences in culture. Additionally, educate students on the experiential learning cycle so that they could “take ownership of their learning preferences and discover their learning identity” (Passarelli & Kolb, 2012 pp. 155). The cycle is a good guide for students to refer back to when they get down.

- Add more reflection to the curriculum. It is important for students to debrief weekly. This is not something to be skipped, as it is a crucial element to the experiential learning cycle.

Language Learning

- Consider stricter language requirements for admission since host families do not speak English. This was very difficult for several students, especially since they got minimal Darija lessons, which is the spoke language of most host families.
  - Try to house Journalism students with French speaking families so they get practical experience because they do not take Arabic classes.

- There could be a more formalized language exchange. For example, host families would have to help students with Darija once a week and study abroad students would have to help host families with English once a week.

- Host families are interested in taking classes to learn English. One suggested a CCCL English class for families. Families, too, want to better be able to communicate with students. Students could even help ‘teach’ these classes!
Counseling Services for Students

- Faculty/staff believe that mental health education is most urgent, as they do not feel prepared with guidelines of how to handle it.
  - One asked for tips on how to have a conversation with students about how to go home if psychologically the experience was too much.
  - There are limited English speaking counselors; the best ones are 45 minutes away.
  - Another suggestion was to better screen students before allowing them to come to Morocco. Students need to know what resources are and are not available to them.

- I recommend that self-care strategies need to be shared and resources and space provided for students to better cope with their day-to-day challenges living in a Moroccan medina, such as group dialogue, a quiet space for meditation at school, access to a counselor, etc.

These recommendations are a starting place and any of these changes will have to take place over time and I can only hope that someone will continue in the role that I was in to help see those changes come to fruition. As the Founder of the CCCL said,

“now I realize there is a gap that your position is filling, which is that we as providers are providing our service to the academic directors but we are also responsible to SIT for the smooth running of the program and the budget. If there are issues that take place during the program, we cannot report it to SIT because we are the providers to the ADs. It is the AD’s choice if they report to SIT or not. It is not our business to do it. So a position like yours is very important in filling this gap between the overall performance of the program and overall running of the program.”

This position is important to implement really any of the aforementioned suggestions for training, programmatic enhancements and hopefully counseling for students.
Reflections & Conclusions to the Case Study

Marshall (1991) writes, “there are benefits to having educators who share the same identity and experiences as the learner” (p. 67). In this sense, perhaps feeling completely unprepared for my position was a good thing because my students and I worked together to find solutions to our intercultural miscommunications. Since I was there primarily for the students, having shared values, attitudes and aspirations allowed us to quickly connect and confide in each other in ways that were more difficult to do with our Moroccan counterparts. Overcoming cultural barriers are a never-ending challenge because in multicultural environments, two or more people must work through their differences together. I am glad I got to live with a host family because I experienced ups and downs alongside my students. These opportunities afforded me learning opportunities, from learning how to draw lines in being a supervisor and friend to study abroad students, how to make living compromises with a host family and that as an ‘outsider’ I needed to quickly learn how to act and when to speak in a Moroccan workplace.

I want to continue this research by studying the weight of intentionality of becoming interculturally competent. This study was more of a needs assessment than training development, which was not my original goal, but as I learned in my training classes at SIT, you must know your learners needs before you can best co-create new knowledge together. I hope this needs assessment will allow for intentional competency development for SIT programs in Morocco and that all stakeholders will be valued more in the entire study abroad cycle. As Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart (2010) wrote, “host families as well as instructors need to take ownership and be committed to helping students with their cultural acquisition.” (pp. 76). In closing, one of my students said it best, “I think all students or anyone no matter your age should participate in intercultural activities because it’s the growth that you don’t expect where you really grow.”
My Lifelong & Practicum Journey

One of my goals for this Capstone was to create a timeline of my own intercultural competency development over the course of my life and to recognize key experiences and people that helped me arrive where I am today. Creating this was important to me for two reasons. The first is for me to reflect on my life and put together pieces of my puzzle to understand how I got where I am today. The second is for me to share this journey with others with the hope that lessons learned from this reflection can be lessons for others. Additionally, as an aspiring social justice trainer, I must know myself well before I can truly empower others to more fully get to know themselves. This self-analysis includes growth areas in five categories: knowledge, skills, attitudes, awareness and language. This timeline highlights my biggest areas of growth during my Practicum phase. Refer to Appendix D to see my journey.

Most Impactful Practicum Lessons

- Massanetta Springs Camp & Conference Center | Program Intern | Summer 2017

  During my practicum at Massanetta Springs, I was able to grow in my faith journey through conferences and discussions about dismantling racism, gender identities, mission discrepancies, intergenerational communications and the Church and politics. The main difference between conversations at SIT on these topics and at Massanetta was that each topic was grounded in faith this summer. I felt comfortable asking questions and sharing my opinion within these retreat communities. I think my ability to comfortably discuss how faith intersects with social justice with other Christians is important to be aware of. I want to understand better why it is easier to have these discussions with other Christians than with non-believers. I want to get to a place where I do not fear outside judgment and can bring my Christian identity into discussions with
people of similar and different faith identities. Bringing this “invisible” identity into conversations will allow me to grow personally while also helping others learn more about how I see faith and social justice intertwining. Through exposure to what I consider to be “Bible-believing” Christian liberals during my summer practicum, I have a renewed hope for the future of the Church in today’s world and more confidence in publicly sharing my Christian identity. If non-believers learn about the heart of religion, perhaps they will be more open to collaborating to resolve social issues. Beauchamp (2011) wrote about a student who took a global religions class and said that they can, “now safely enter dialogue with someone from different religions to further advance our opinions. A global citizen appreciates everyone’s differences” (pp. 26). This is a goal I want to get to. My time in Morocco assisted me in reaching this goal because I spent significant time learning about Muslim faith and culture, while sharing my own Christian background. While drawn to similarities, embracing and nurturing an understanding of difference is important to push beyond tolerance to truly respecting those differences.

- **SIT Study Abroad in Morocco | Student Affairs Fellow | Fall 2017**

  Many of my reflections of growth in Morocco were organically shared throughout this paper. A highlight was experiencing the third stakeholder perspective of study abroad. Having studied abroad several times and hosting international students, I was able to get a more full picture of the behind the scenes of making these programs function. I still love study abroad and believe in its value deeply. I have a new appreciation for the work required of program staff, importance of crisis management, limited training staff receive and the difficulties host country staff have with handling students from the United States who to them are often entitled, riddled with mental health
issues and have unrealistic expectations. Likewise, I gained invaluable Student Affairs experience, which allowed me to be a competitive candidate for the current job I have in University Residence Life. In the workplace, I specifically learned that to achieve truly effective and successful communications interculturally in the workplace takes patience and time. Referring back to the SIT model of intercultural competencies for expatriates, I aspired to become an intercultural expert but with only four months, the sojourner or study abroad level was the best I could do. I needed more time to learn how my actions and attitudes affected Moroccans and to learn the language to more meaningfully engage to even begin to reach the professional level.

**My Philosophical Approach to Training**

I became more grounded in certain things I deem important to my personal and professional mission of life throughout my Practicum and Capstone writing phase. Growing from the guiding principles I determined for myself as a Trainer during TOT are my evolving ideas on how I approach training. I see these principles as goals to work towards, to discuss with others and to continue learning about through research and experience. It is through the action of pursuing these that I will ensure that I am not perpetuating problems but rather helping. As Freire wrote, “we can only be ethical if we are able to be unethical” (1998, pp. 100). I must continue to hold up a mirror to myself to explore what I know, why I know it, where my bias is and lastly to know what my work as a trainer is truly grounded in. Freire (1998) agrees that we must see ourselves as unfinished beings and be critically aware of our conditioning. It is through this critical consciousness that I will improve my connection of theory and practice as a trainer. Understanding my philosophical approach and my guiding principles as a trainer is a first step towards critical consciousness. These principles are expressed in no particular order.
1) **Never stop learning.** This means continuing my education, both formally and informally, in training, areas of passion and world issues. To me, learning also includes learning from my students and having relationships with mentors and collaborators. I learn best by asking questions and believe that there are no silly questions. I experienced a rejuvenation of growth in faith during my summer practicum at Massanetta and I am excited to find a Church home where I can have tough faith discussions, get involved in community social justice efforts and be an open face of Christianity to the world. This is an informal learning that I hope to pursue after completing my Graduate degree.

2) **Listen and give voice to all participants, and co-trainers, in trainings.** This is crucial in co-creating learning spaces for everyone in the room. Creating norms and introducing safe and/or brave spaces are great starting points to allow all voices to enter a space. This also includes involving all stakeholders in the learning processes. This philosophical approach is what this Capstone research is grounded in. I have learned that this requires a lot of work and generates a lot of data but I believe that in the end it is all worth it.

3) **Constructive feedback is something to open-mindedly seek and graciously offer.** This will require more practice but I can already see great personal improvement in offering feedback from February to now. I also hope to improve in more genuinely receiving, reflecting upon and implementing feedback given to me. The entire Capstone writing and peer editing journey was an excellent example of my growth in this area.

4) **Seek to balance challenge and support for trainees.** As I begin my training journey as a professional, I see co-training as desirable to best accomplish challenging and supporting trainees because I can only see and interpret so much. I am grappling with these ideas in my current job as I seek to compromise with co-workers on how to pose
questions to both challenge and support students throughout a learning process. This is my first opportunity outside of the SIT world to truly put my learnings into action. I am finding that many co-workers agree with my frameworks of choice but some do not.

5) **Create learner-focused trainings.** This means implementing Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model to include techniques catering to all four learning styles. Also, knowing the training cycle from needs assessments, PGO’s, pre-planning, implementation and evaluation is crucial to help participants get the most out of a training. I was reminded of the importance of this because I really regret not having the opportunity for a cultural pre-departure training and think this is crucial for this type of role in the future. Working with students, I was keenly aware of gaps I had that students noticed, such as my lack of knowledge when they asked questions about Moroccan history or culture and how the CCCL and SIT work together. This makes me consider how I will prepare for positions in the future. I hope that the Student Handbook that I created for future study abroad students will help deepen their learning.

6) **Keep getting to know myself.** To me, it is important to continue chasing passions. Knowing myself also includes processing to learn from my past, including triggers. Being the best me will only benefit participants in trainings. As can be seen in Appendix D, I spent considerable time during this Capstone Phase getting to know myself up to now and naming areas of growth and intercultural development.

7) **Continue learning about social justice theories and critiques, as well as other lenses to view the world.** SIT first introduced me to social justice theory so I am still learning to embody this but I would love to approach training and teaching from this perspective. I used to say that I was open to anyone and would not give preference to participants but I
have learned that saying that goes much deeper than I used to think. To truly train from a social justice lens will require me to study, converse and practice more. I lost an opportunity to really see through another lens to view the world by not spending sufficient time trying to get to know my Moroccan professional peers. This would have enriched my learnings and understandings of cultural nuances that were challenging for me (and my students) to understand or live out. I to prioritize interactions, in future workplaces, where I am learning about and educating anyone who might feel out of place to a work environment that I am confidence and comfortable in.

8) **Be increasingly mindful of the language I choose to use.** Through my time at SIT and study of bell hooks work, I learned the importance of clarifying the terminology I use because it is too easy to misspeak and use words in unintended ways. An example of growth I experienced in Morocco was the importance of setting boundaries on social media. I learned the hard way that I should not let my students ‘friend’ me on Facebook. I kept a personal blog and one posts tone and word choice offended a handful of students. This was eye opening because as a staff member, the students were my customers and letting them into my personal life through social media was not a wise decision. I wrote a follow-up blog post, thanking students for calling me out on my ‘one-sided’ cultural description and this resolved the issue. This was a reminder to always share both sides of a story! I will no longer allow students to friend me on social media until after a program to minimize similar issues. I will also more carefully let someone else know when they have said or written something to offend me.
Conclusion

Completing my time as a graduate student is bittersweet. The past two years have afforded me countless learning opportunities. I will continue learning as I reflect about the overall experience, hearing my cohort peers capstones and continuing to reflect, learn and grow in my new position at Randolph-Macon College. I am excited to be working in Higher Education as I will get to work with a population that is grappling with becoming who they are in the world and where they can best make a difference. I am also selfishly excited for the ongoing learning opportunities for myself. I hire, train and supervise 42 student Resident Assistants (RAs). I guide them in conflict resolution, community building, enforcement of college policy, and program development. The opportunities for me to train them to be a positive social justice presence on campus is endless! I am also tasked with creating Living and Learning Communities, beginning with the International House, Honors Program, Pre-Health House and Freshman THRIVE Program, which works with diverse incoming freshmen to mentor them peer-to-peer. In the future I would love to see a service community and a multicultural/social justice house!

Additionally, I want to hear from student stakeholders what living and learning communities they would be most interested in helping me implement. I am confident that with intentionality, I can take my education and experience, coupled with a better-defined trainer lens and inspire students and co-workers to create a community of change. Who knows where life will lead me but I have a toolbox of skills, knowledge, language, attitudes and awareness’s to take me far! And as Freire (1998) cautions, I must always see myself as an unfinished being and be critically aware of my conditioning; and if I stumble I know I have a supportive community to pick me back up and encourage me to keep going towards my goals!
REFERENCES


Appendix A: Images

Image 1: Darla Deardorff’s Model of Intercultural Competence

Image 2: Milton Bennett’s Model of Development of Intercultural Sensitivity
### Image 3: Edward Hall’s High/Low Context Cultures Concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low-Context</th>
<th>High-Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example Countries</td>
<td>US, UK, Canada, Germany, Denmark, Norway</td>
<td>Japan, China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, France, Italy, Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Outlook</td>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Cooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Ethic</td>
<td>Task-oriented</td>
<td>Relationship-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Style</td>
<td>Individualistic</td>
<td>Team-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Desires</td>
<td>Individual achievement</td>
<td>Team achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Many, looser, short-term</td>
<td>Fewer, tighter, long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Process</td>
<td>Logical, linear, rule-oriented</td>
<td>Intuitive, relational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Verbal over Non-verbal</td>
<td>Non-verbal over Verbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Horizons</td>
<td>More explicit, written, formal</td>
<td>More implicit, oral, informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Time</td>
<td>Present/Future-oriented</td>
<td>Deep respect for the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View of Change</td>
<td>Change over tradition</td>
<td>Tradition over change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Explicit, conscious</td>
<td>Implicit, not fully conscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Knowledge is transferable (above the waterline)</td>
<td>Knowledge is situational (below the waterline)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Image 4: Culture Wheel

https://www.quotemaster.org/cross+cultural
In this model the black oval represents Moroccan ways of knowing, being and doing and the red oval represents U.S. Students ways of knowing, being and doing. The yellow center represents the third cultural space. This is where Moroccan and U.S. ways of knowing, being and doing overlap to work harmoniously or clash. The idea is to work together to create an effective space to know, be and do alongside each other and together.
Appendix B: Sample Selection Methods & Data Collection Instruments

Sample Selection Methods

○ Surveys\textsuperscript{17} - These were created on Google Forms and distributed via e-mail to students and faculty/staff.
  - **Fall 2017 SIT Morocco Students:** Surveys were distributed to 67 students. 11 participated in the survey, including eight females and three males, 10 students from the USA and one from Japan. Of these, four were in the Migration program (MOM), four in the Journalism program (MOJ) and three in the Human Rights program (MOR). Six students identified as Caucasian, one as Black, one as Buddhist, two as Hispanic and one as Hawaiian.
  - **SIT Academic Directors/CCCL Program Staff /Language Instructors:** Surveys were distributed to 14 staff and only six participated in the survey, four women and two men. Five of these identified as Moroccan and one as from the United States. Two held Bachelors Degrees, three Masters Degrees and one Doctorate. Two were Academic Directors, two were program assistants, one was a language instructor and one was a CCCL program support personnel. Three had worked with these programs for fewer than five years, two between five to fifteen years and one more than twenty years.

○ Focus Groups
  - **SIT Morocco Students - Fall 2017:** This opportunity was shared via e-mail. Follow up recruitment was done on group Facebook pages. The focus group was held in my office in the CCCL Lagza building and lasted about one hour. Four students participated in this discussion: three women and one man, two MOM and two MOR students.
  - **SIT Academic Directors/CCCL Program Staff:** This opportunity was shared via e-mail. Follow up recruitment was done face-to-face. Focus group was held in my office, CCCL Lagza building and lasted about an hour. Four faculty members participated in this discussion: two men and two women, two Academic Directors and two Program Assistants.

\textsuperscript{17} Due to high illiteracy rates, it is not possible to have host families do a survey. To compensate, I will do additional focus groups with families to gather a broader spectrum of data.
**Host Families Fall 2017:** The opportunity for these was shared by word of mouth. Focus groups were held in participant’s homes, as that was more comfortable. Each conversation lasted about an hour, including socializing with tea. I conducted two focus groups – each had two host mothers participating with host children adding ideas here and there. Conversation was in Darija (Moroccan Arabic). My host mom translated my questions for the host families and then translated the host family responses for me.

- Interviews – These were all audio-recorded and then transcribed. Each took place in the interviewee’s office. Each lasted about an hour. I interviewed the SIT Study Abroad Middle East/North Africa/Europe Region Dean, the CCCL Homestay Coordinator and the CCCL Co-Founder.

**Interview Questions**

1. **SIT Regional Dean of Academics**  
   a. What do you think are the most important intercultural competencies for students to develop when studying abroad?  
      i. Where do you see the largest gaps?  
   b. What do you think are the most important intercultural competencies for staff to have when working with U.S. students?  
      i. Where do you see the largest gaps?  
   c. What kind of training does SIT staff receive upon hire and throughout their tenure?  
      i. How is this monitored and evaluated?  
   d. What areas of intercultural competency do you hear your Morocco staff wish they were stronger in?  
      i. Is this different for U.S. versus Moroccan staff? If so, how is it different?  
   e. What areas of intercultural competency do you hear your Morocco staff feel they are best equipped in?  
      i. Is this different for U.S. versus Moroccan staff? If so, how is it different?  
   f. How could you see partnerships between students, faculty and host families being developed and strengthened in order to maximize learning opportunities and intercultural competency development for everyone?
2. **CCCL Homestay Coordinator**
   a. How are host families selected?
   b. What are the primary reasons that families are interested in hosting students?
   c. What trainings and/or resources are families provided?
   d. What kind of interactions do host families most commonly have with SIT/CCCL staff, outside of you?
   e. What are some of the most common difficulties Moroccan families face when hosting students from the United States?
   f. What are some of the most common highlights for Moroccan families when hosting students from the United States?
   g. What are the most common questions you get from families about hosting students?
   h. How could you see partnerships between students, faculty and host families being strengthened in order to maximize learning opportunities and intercultural competency development for everyone?

3. **CCCL Co-Founder**
   a. What do you think are the most important intercultural competencies for students to develop when studying abroad?
      i. Where do you see the largest gaps?
   b. What do you think are the most important intercultural competencies for staff to have when working with U.S. students?
      i. Where do you see the largest gaps?
   c. What training does CCCL staff receive upon hire and throughout their tenure?
   d. What are common areas of intercultural competency your staff wish they were more adept in?
   e. What areas of intercultural competency do you hear staff feel they are best equipped in?
   f. How could you see partnerships between students, faculty and host families being strengthened so to maximize learning opportunities and intercultural competency development for everyone?
Focus Group Questions

1. Students
   a. Let’s talk about what intercultural competency means…
      i. How do you define intercultural competency?
   b. In what ways did you build intercultural competencies during your time studying abroad here in Morocco? Can you remember specific instances?
      i. i.e. What intercultural competencies are you now most confident in?
   c. What were some of the most challenging intercultural situations you found yourself in while studying abroad here in Morocco?
   d. What competencies do you wish you had developed more during your time studying abroad in Morocco?
   e. What were the most challenging interactions with your teachers?
   f. What were the most challenging interactions with your host families?
   g. What recommendations do you have on how study abroad students, faculty and host families could work together to diminish intercultural barriers by learning together and teaching each other – intentionally dismantling intercultural communication barriers?
      i. What workshops/trainings would have been helpful to build competencies to improve intercultural communication with your teachers?
      ii. What workshops/trainings would have been helpful to build competencies to improve intercultural communication with your host families?
   h. Is there anything else you’d like to discuss about this topic before we part ways?

2. SIT/CCCL Staff
   a. Let’s talk about what intercultural competency means…
      i. How do you define intercultural competencies?
      ii. What do you think are key competencies are for successful intercultural communications?
      iii. How familiar were you with these ideas before coming to work with SIT/CCCL?
   b. What trainings have you received on intercultural communications?
      i. What resources/contacts would you turn to for additional information?
   c. What trainings would you like to receive on intercultural communications – specifically that would be helpful to work with students from the U.S.?
   d. What structured workshops or trainings would help you build intercultural competencies when communicating with your students?
      i. What are the most challenging interactions with your students?
   e. What interaction do you have with host families, if any?
      i. What are the most challenging interactions with host families?
      ii. What benefits could you see from interacting with host families?
f. What recommendations do you have on how study abroad students, faculty and host families could work together to diminish intercultural barriers by learning together and teaching each other - intentionally?
   i. How could you as a teacher/staff help implement these ideas?

3. Host Families
   a. Intercultural Competency – the ability to communicate effectively with people of other cultures by developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, awarenesses and language that lead to appropriate behavior and communication.
      i. Were you familiar with these ideas before working with study abroad students?
   b. How many students have you hosted? What year did you start hosting?
   c. Why did you decide to start hosting students?
   d. As host families, what training did you have before getting your first students?
      i. What was most helpful and least helpful?
   e. Who do you interact with at the CCCL? Doha and any other staff?
      i. Do you wish you had more contact with CCCL staff?
      ii. How could CCCL staff better support you as a host family?
   f. What are the most challenging things about having students from the U.S.?
      i. What types of things are commonly misunderstood?
   g. What is your favorite part about having students from the U.S.?
      i. What have you learned from students you have hosted?
   h. What is something about life in Morocco that you wish students had learned before coming to live with you?
      i. What is something that you wish you knew about students from the US before their arrival to Morocco?
   i. What recommendations do you have on how study abroad students, faculty and host families could work together to diminish intercultural barriers by learning together and teaching each other - intentionally?
      i. How could you as a host parent help implement this?
Survey Questions

Definitions to include at the top of each Survey

- Intercultural: Something occurring between people of different cultures - this can include people from different countries or different religious groups.
- Competencies: The ability to do something successfully/proficiently
- Culture: a way of life shared by members of a society – behaviors, values, languages, etc.
- Intercultural Competency: The ability to communicate effectively with people of other cultures by developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, awarenesses and language that lead to appropriate behavior and communication.

1. **Students**
   a. **Past Experience**
      i. Have you had formal training or education to develop intercultural competencies?
         1. Yes | No
      ii. Rank these intercultural competency development categories in terms of 1 being most important and 5 being less important for study abroad students.
         1. Knowledge (ex. history)
         2. Skills (ex. appropriate non-verbal communication)
         3. Attitudes (ex. open-minded)
         4. Awarenesses (ex. how you react)
         5. Language (ex. Arabic)
      iii. Before coming to Morocco, how confident were you in your intercultural competencies? (1 – Not at all confident | 6 – Extremely confident)
         1. Scale of 1-6
   b. **Time in Morocco**
      i. What opportunities in the classroom did you have to intentionally develop intercultural competencies?
         1. Open Ended
      ii. What opportunities did you have for intercultural competency development at your host family stay?
         1. Open Ended
      iii. What was the most challenging aspect of communicating with your program/language specific SIT/CCCL staff?
         1. Open Ended
      iv. What was the most challenging aspect of communicating with your host family?
         1. Open Ended
      v. What language did you most commonly use when communicating with your host family?
         1. English
         2. French
         3. Standard Arabic
         4. Moroccan Arabic
      vi. What was the biggest intercultural lesson learned during ISP?
         1. Open Ended

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vii. Which area did you feel you most developed during your time in Morocco?
   1. Knowledge (ex. history)
   2. Skills (ex. appropriate non-verbal communication)
   3. Attitudes (ex. open-minded)
   4. Awarenesses (ex. how you react)
   5. Language (ex. Arabic)

viii. Which area did you feel you least developed during your time in Morocco?
   1. Knowledge (ex. history)
   2. Skills (ex. appropriate non-verbal communication)
   3. Attitudes (ex. open-minded)
   4. Awarenesses (ex. how you react)
   5. Language (ex. Arabic)

ix. What topics within intercultural development would you suggest focusing on if students, staff, host families partnered to mutually learn and teach each other?
   1. Open Ended

c. Looking Ahead
   i. On a scale of 1-6, how much more confident are you now in your ability to successfully and appropriately interact with people from other cultures? (1 – Not at all more confident | 6 – Extremely more confident)
      1. Scale 1-6
   ii. Do you think that the intercultural communication skills you gained while in Morocco are transferable back to your home community and university?
      1. Yes | No
   iii. Which skills do you think are transferrable?
      1. Open Ended
   iv. What was the biggest intercultural communication lesson you are taking back with you from your semester abroad with SIT in Morocco?
      1. Open Ended

d. Demographics (optional)
   i. Gender
   ii. Age
      18-21 | 22-24 | 25-30 | 30+
   iii. Ethnicity
   iv. Nationality
   v. SIT Program (MOR/MOM/MOJ)

2. Faculty/Staff/Teachers
   a. Previous Education, Training & Experience
      i. Prior to working with SIT/CCCL, were you familiar with the term “intercultural competency”?
         1. Yes | No
      ii. Are you now comfortable with the concept of intercultural competency both personally and as an educator?
         1. Yes | No
iii. Before working with SIT/CCCL, how confident were you in your intercultural competency abilities? (1 – Not at all confident | 6 – Extremely confident)
   1. Scale of 1-6

iv. How long have you worked with SIT/CCCL?
   1. Open Ended

v. How much previous education/training/experience have you had in intercultural competency development? (1 – None | 6 – A lot)
   1. Scale 1-6

vi. What has been the most impactful way to learn about intercultural competency development (books, movies, experience, conversations, etc.)?
   1. Open Ended

vii. Rank these intercultural competency development categories in terms of 1 being most important and 5 being less important, in your opinion.
   1. Knowledge (ex. history)
   2. Skills (ex. appropriate non-verbal communication)
   3. Attitudes (ex. open-minded)
   4. Awarenesses (ex. how you react)
   5. Language (ex. Arabic)

b. Intercultural Competencies in the Classroom with SIT Study Abroad

i. How confident are you in your ability to communicate specifically with students from the United States (US)? (1 – Not at all confident | 6 – Extremely confident)
   1. Scale 1-6

ii. What do you find most challenging about interacting with students from the US?
   1. Open Ended

iii. What do you enjoy most about interacting with students from the US?
   1. Open Ended

iv. Which area would be most helpful to receive additional training and/or resources, to assist you in communicating with students from the U.S?
   1. Knowledge (ex. history)
   2. Skills (ex. appropriate non-verbal communication)
   3. Attitudes (ex. open-minded)
   4. Awarenesses (ex. how you react)
   5. Language (ex. Arabic)

v. What specific trainings would be most useful as you seek to grow in your intercultural competency development?
   1. Open Ended

vi. What is one of my most impactful lessons that you have ever learned from a student?
   1. Open Ended

vii. Do you ever interact with student host families?
   1. Yes | No
viii. Would you ever see a reason to interact with student host families?
   1. Yes | No
ix. Why or why not?
   1. Open Ended
c. Looking Ahead
   i. If you could add something to the SIT Study Abroad orientation or
      curriculum to help students gain an intercultural competency what would
      that be?
      1. Open Ended
   ii. What topics within intercultural development would you suggest focusing
       on if students, staff, host families partnered to mutually learn and teach
       each other?
      1. Open Ended
d. Demographics (optional)
   i. Gender
   ii. Age
      1. 20-30
      2. 30-40
      3. 40-50
      4. 50-60
      5. 60-70
   iii. Ethnicity
   iv. Nationality
   v. Level of Education
      1. High School
      2. Associates Degree
      3. Bachelors Degree
      4. Masters Degree
      5. PhD
   vi. Position with SIT/CCCL
Appendix C: SIT Study Abroad In-Country Handbook

SIT Study Abroad in Morocco
In-Country Student Handbook

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**SIT Policies**
Please refer to the SIT Student Handbook you were provided via e-mail and Moodle for FAQs about (but not limited to) the following:

- Class/Program Attendance & Participation
- Withdrawal Procedures
- Request for Accommodation
- Alcohol and Drug Policies
- Restricted Activities (ex. Surfing)
- Cell Phone Requirements
- Independent Travel
- Harassment
- Physical & Mental Health

**CCCL Regulations**
Please refer to the posted CCCL Regulations posted in each of the CCCL buildings. As our host institution, you must also abide by these rules. These regulations are in place to ensure mutual respect and a successful experience among participants and CCCL staff members. Categories include: logistical rules, relationships’ rules and human rights respect and cross-cultural understanding guidelines.

**CCCL Working Hours**
- Monday to Thursday 8:30am – 6:30pm
- Friday’s 8:30am – 12:30pm + 2:30pm – 6:30pm

**Program & Cultural Intro**

**MOR/MOM/MOJ Programs**
- MOR: Multiculturalism & Human Rights
- MOM: Migration & Transnational Identity
- MOJ: Field Studies in Journalism & New Media

**SIT/CCCL Partnership History**
Center for Cross Cultural Learning (CCCL) is the host institution for SIT Study Abroad Programs but you are a student with SIT Study Abroad. This partnership means that CCCL is the provider organization of language classes, homestays, travel logistics and program support while SIT organizes program specific academics, communication with SIT Student Affairs, guest lecturers, excursion components and student support.

**General Program Tips**
- Follow the advice of locals (especially your host family and program staff)
- Do not carry large amounts of cash in your pockets or purses – use a money belt
- Dress conservatively – try not to draw attention to yourself by dress or behavior.
- Stay in groups, particularly at night
- Do not visibly display material possessions like iPads, laptops, and smart phones
- Avoid public displays of drunkenness; drink in moderation and respect your homestay and Morocco’s conservative culture
- Be extremely discreet in engaging in intimate behavior with others

**Tourism & Representation**
While you are a student, at times you also fit the role of a tourist. Be mindful of pictures you are taking/sharing and stories you share back home. Both what is seen and written and what is not portray certain representations of a culture, place and people.

Morocco has been hosting 10 million tourists for the last several years. The government hopes to increase this number to 20 million by 2020. Consider how this will affect the environment, culture, people and daily lives. How is Morocco preparing for this?

**Time**
You will quickly find that time in Morocco is a bit more fluid than one from the United States is accustomed to. Class will frequently begin late and/or go over. Be patient!

**Religion**
- Islam: Approximately 98% of Moroccans identify as Muslim.
  - Mosques are abundantly found in each Rabat neighborhood.
- Christianity: Approximately 1% of the Moroccan population identify as Christian.
  - French speaking Catholic church - St. Peter’s Cathedral
  - English speaking non-denominational church - Rabat International Church
- Judaism: Fewer than 1% of the Moroccan population identify as Jewish.
  - Synagogue in the Rabat Mellah neighborhood.

**Gender & Space**
Traditionally, genders divide public and private spaces in Morocco. Men dominated public spaces like streets and cafes, while women were in charge in homes, private space. Today, specifically in the medina, these space traditions remain visible. It is important to understand this is part of Moroccan and Islamic culture. While you might not agree, you are a visitor in this space. Try to understand why these space divisions are as they are. This is a fascinating discussion to have with your host families.

**Tips for street harassment**
Harassment can and does happen to anyone – women and men, Moroccan and foreigners. For the most part, harassment in Morocco includes sexist comments, racial slurs, being followed, stared at; touching is much less prevalent. The Moroccan government is currently discussing a draft law on sexual harassment.
- Always be aware of your surroundings and use your common sense
- Wear sunglasses, avoid eye contact in the street, wear headphones
- Ignore and don’t engage with those harassing you – engaging will likely make it worse; especially if you are alone, walking at night, etc.
  - BUT – this depends on the situation – use your best judgement**
- If being followed, enter a café or shop and wait until they leave
- Ask someone for help (woman, police officer, storeowner, waiter in a café, etc.)
• Every time you take a taxi – try to sit in the backseat and be sure to look at the taxi number on top (in case you forget something or want to report someone)
• You typically experience less harassment if men are with you, but not always.
• Conservative clothing may help…but not necessarily
• Reach out to who you feel comfortable with for support, it is your choice to file a police report and if you want to see a doctor/counselor, we have a list of those.

**LGBTQ Issues**
Sexual orientation and identity are viewed differently in Morocco than in the US. Article 489 criminalizes homosexuality in Morocco but there are debates about its enforcement because it is tolerated to a certain extent. There are efforts underway to raise awareness and support of LGBTQ issues in Morocco. We ask all program participants to respect the context, customs and attitudes in Morocco. While on the program, you may be challenged by vastly different beliefs and boundaries than those back home.

- Talk with your Academic Director about concerns or to understand the context
- SIT Office of Student Affairs (studentaffairs@sit.edu)
- Association of International Educations GLBT Special Interest Group’s Website- www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay.
- Morocco LGBTQ Activist Organizations: Kif Kif & MALI

**Racism**
With the rising number of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, racism has increased in the last 10-15 years in Morocco. Challenges that students tend to encounter include: that Moroccans tend to deny that they are racist and that thanks to stereotypes created largely by the media, Moroccans think that American’s are Caucasian, therefore not understanding diverse racially and ethnically the US is, including study abroad students. It is best to remember that it is a privilege to have an education that teaches about racism and that many Moroccan’s do not have that privilege. SIT & CCCL staffs are here to support you through encounters of racism.

**Money**

**Banks/ATMs**
- Major Banks: BMCE | Banque Populaire | Credit du Maroc
  - Typically open Monday-Friday | 8:30am – 5:30pm
- ATM Locations: Medina: Laalou | Hassan: Mohamed V
- Most banks should be able to change USD for MAD
  - Bring a copy of your passport to do this and clean bills
  - DO NOT change money with men standing outside of the bank
- It is common for ATMs to not work (ex. not enough money to do a transaction)
- You can normally withdraw 2000 MAD at one time

**Western Union ($ transfer)**
- If you find yourself in a bind and need money – someone back home can send money to you here in Morocco | The fee to send money this way is ~$10
Mail

Post offices
- Locations Closest to Medina
  - Avenue Mohammed V (Hassan) | Open 8:30am-4:30pm | Mon-Fri
  - Avenue Al Mouqaouama (L'Ocean) | Open 8am – 3:30pm | Mon-Fri
- To send a Post Card to the U.S. you need 2 stamps, 9 MAD each (as of 11/17)
- You can ship packages up to 30 pounds through the postal service

How to get mail while in Morocco
- Use the CCCL Address | PO Box 6291 Rabat Instituts, Rabat 10101, Morocco

Transportation

In Rabat
- Taxis
  - Blue (Rabat)
    - These taxis can ONLY take you places in Rabat
    - These taxis can only carry up to 3 people at one time.
    - These are shared – so if you are alone or with one other person, a third rider join might be picked up.
    - These are metered and the rate is by distance, not time.
    - To go anywhere in Rabat should not cost more than 30 MAD
    - Be sure to ask the driver to start the meter when you get in or agree on a set price before getting into the taxi
  - White (Grand Taxis)
    - These are intercity taxis (an alternative to bus or train)
    - These taxis carry 6 passengers – prepare to be crowded
    - Rates are fixed and vary depending on destination
    - Many are located across the street from Bab Chellah
- Tram - http://www.tram-way.ma/
  - There are 2 routes – both stopping by the medina (Bab El Had)
  - Cost is 6 MAD per ride per person
  - Trams should run every 20 minutes from 6am to 10pm
- SIT does NOT permit students to use the LOCAL PUBLIC BUSES – these have a history of being unsafe (structurally + socially)

Around Morocco
- CTM Bus - http://www.ctm.ma/
  - Bus station is in Agdal – a 20 min. cab ride from the medina (~20 MAD)
  - This is the safest and most reliable bus company in Morocco
  - It is sometimes advised to purchase tickets in advance (especially if you get motion sick and want to sit in the front!)
- Train - http://www.oncf.ma/
  - Main train station, Rabat Ville, is on Mo. V – 10 min. walk from medina
  - Arrive to the station 15 minutes before departure to purchase your tickets
  - Be prepared for slight to major delays on trains
Phones

Reminder of SIT’s Policy on Phones

▪ All students are required to have a working smart phone capable of making and receiving local and international calls throughout the duration of the program. You need a local number for communication with host family and program staff. You are required to maintain minimum phone credits at all times for emergencies.
▪ Facetime, Skype, WhatsApp do not satisfy the need for regular communication with local program staff and partners, not do they meet emergency communication needs. A local cellular capacity on each student’s phone is required for the entire program.
▪ Options: use a Moroccan SIM card OR purchase a smart phone in Morocco

3 Company Options

▪ Orange  |  Maroc Telecom  |  INWI

How to get a SIM card

▪ Choose what company you want to go with (no big difference between the 3)
▪ Be sure to bring your passport along
▪ The fee for a SIM card is typically 30-50 MAD
▪ Keep your PIN number just in case your phone gets locked at any point
▪ Make sure you get a pamphlet with recharging instructions (ex. *2 is for talk and text, *3 is for data, *4 is for international talk)

Talk/Text/Data (below are example prices)

▪ In Country Talk + Texting  |  100 Texts = 10 MAD  |  1.5 Hours = 20 MAD
▪ Data  |  1 GB = 10 MAD
▪ International Talk  |  1 hour = 20 MAD

How to Recharge

▪ Go to a shop that has your company sign & ask for the amount you want
▪ They will either give you a scratch card where you enter the code plus what you want recharged (*) OR they will enter your number into their phone if you tell them what you want recharged (refer to your pamphlet for prices and *)

Common Health Issues in Morocco

▪ Digestive Distress – This is a given – seriously, we would be very impressed if you made it your entire time in Morocco without any digestive problems. Some students want to see a doctor right away, while others prefer to wait a few days. Either is fine. Be sure to stay hydrated. Medication for any stomach issue is readily available at pharmacies and there are several English Speaking Gastroenterologist Specialists in Rabat if you experience persistent problems.
▪ Mental Health – Studying Abroad is a big deal and can be overwhelming! Students might experience mental health challenges for the first time or experience worsened symptoms of previous mental health challenges while navigating Study Abroad. Please see the following section “Self Care Strategies”
for additional information and tips and the “List of Doctors” for the recommended English Speaking Counselor.

- **Allergies** – Many students experience new allergies while living in Rabat – allergy medicine (such as Claritin) is readily available at pharmacies
- **Rabies** – Please be aware that this is a real problem in Morocco so exercise caution when interacting with street cats and dogs. It is recommended not to touch any animal on the street. There is a rabies clinic on Mohamed 5 just outside the medina if medical care from scratches or bites is needed.

**Policy & Mode of Communication for missing class because of being sick**
- Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs and the importance of students and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed in advance with your Academic Director or other designated program staff and language teachers.

**Cultural norms around things like medication, menstruation**
- Among women (like your host mom), you can be very open about these issues but not so much around men. CCCL & SIT staff is happy to offer additional guidance.

**Self Care Strategies**

Maintaining good health is critical to having a successful semester. This includes mental health! Cultural adjustment, academic challenges, a full schedule of class, travel, field-based activities, and the dynamics of your SIT group can present new challenges to maintaining a good attitude and healthy emotional state. As one student from the Fall 2017 Cohort said,

"this place is exhausting, mentally. Give yourself space to feel all your emotions. It’s a great opportunity, yes, but culture shock, homesickness, and frustrations are REAL. Don’t feel like you need to put on a happy face all the time."

We suggest maintaining any regimes used back home that you can of self-care. Here are additional coping strategies we suggest for self—care:
- Exercise | Draw | Journal | Read | Yoga | Music | Cafes | Netflix

It is important to make the time for self care! And reach out to someone you feel comfortable with on staff that you can talk to about coping strategies or seeing a counselor to help you succeed during your time in Morocco.
Lists of Doctors + Contact Info
Please talk to your Program Assistant or check the lists posted in the CCCL buildings for updated lists/contact information and additional recommended specialists who are not English Speaking. CCCL staff recommends all these doctors.

- **Clinics (walk-in, emergencies):** Clinic Agdal
- **Gynecologist:** Chami Yahya (Eng. Speaking) | 0537778831 | Agdal
- **Counselor:** Fifani Fatine (Eng. Speaking) | 0537711023 | Hay Riad
- **Gastroenterologist:** Alaoui Mohamed (Eng. Speaking) | 0537764939 | Hassan
- **Dentist:** Sbihi Chakib (Eng. Speaking) | 053775378 | Agdal
- **Dermatologist:** Benkhraba Fouzia (Eng. Speaking) | 053767461920 | Agdal
- **Ophthalmologist:** M’Rabet-Outarahout Zhor (Eng. Speaking) | 0537730555 | Hassan

**ISOS – How To!**
Talk to your Program Assistant – they can guide you through this process, help you set up an appointment and go with you to help with translating if needed.

1. Call the # on the blue card received during orientation and **ask if they can pre-pay!**
   a. On the weekends, you will likely have to pay out of pocket because insurance offices are closed both in the U.S. and in Morocco.
2. Go to doctor. Pay if necessary and **keep receipts!**
3. Keep any receipts from pharmacies as well.
4. Complete reimbursement form (if needed) and submit via e-mail (**customerservice@consolidatedhealthplan.com**), include a copy of receipts.
   a. This was sent to you by SIT with details about International Travel Insurance.
5. Reimbursement takes time, perhaps a month, follow up, as desired to check its status.

E-mail **studentaffairs@sit.edu** for any questions about reimbursement through ISOS. The Student Affairs Team is ready to answer questions you have about this process!

**Host Families Tips**
Each host family is unique so no two students experiences will be identical. Some families have been hosting students for years while others are new to the hosting world. Either way, they WANT to have you living with them! Give settling in time. You will find a balance between independence and dependence. If you have trouble getting along with them, please talk to Doha or your Program Assistant – they are happy to listen to your concerns, initiate dialogue to work through challenges between you and your family or place you with a new host family.
Students from the Fall 2017 semester offer this advice:

~ “You might feel pressured or controlled to act a certain way or live a certain way but I think as long as you are polite and communicate your needs to your host family respectfully, it can be a really nice co-habitation.”
~ “No one expects you to be miserable – if you’re uncomfortable– speak up! CCCL staff is here to help!”
~ “Spend time with them, even if it’s hard, it is so rewarding!”

- Food & Eating Etiquette
  - Some families eat with utensils while others eat the traditional Moroccan way, with their right hands. Using your left hand is taboo in this culture.

- Space
  - Depending on your homestay, you might feel like it is hard to have personal space when you want it. It is encouraged to let your host family know your needs of space early on – Doha can help communicate this. Also, make sure you make time for alone time - below is a list of cafes to go to. The beach and Andalusian gardens are other nice places to go for quiet time.

- Curfew
  - CCCL recommends that you are not out late in the medina as there are fewer people out and about and the streets are not always well lit. “Not too late” can mean anything from 9pm-11pm.
  - Determine a reasonable time with your host families – that way they will not worry to much about you being out.
  - This will likely change during your time with your host family – revisit as necessary.

- Laundry
  - It is typical for your host mom to regularly do your laundry – straight from a pile in your room, through the washing mashing, on the clothes line, and then folded back up in your room. If you need something washed before she gets to it, just let her know.
  - It is recommended for women to wash their own underwear when menstruating.

- Bathroom etiquette
  - You might have a Turkish toilet (squat style) in your homestay! Be sure to find out how your family wants you to dispose of toilet paper.
  - If you take bucket showers in your homestay, your host mom will be glad to heat up hot water for you. Ask how many times a week this is acceptable. Hammam is another alternative. Some hammams in the medina also have showers if you want this option.

- Expectations – If this would be helpful to you, consider coming up with a list of questions to ask your family when you first arrive so that you’re on the same page!
ISP (Independent Study Project) Time/Internships

Requirements

- Your Academic Director will provide ISP requirements and a rubric during the first month of your time in Morocco, once your program gets underway.
- The final outcome is a 20-40-page paper related to your program theme. You will work closely with your Academic and ISP Advisors to conduct research in the field as well as a review of literature. Findings will be presented to student colleagues, the Academic Director and the ISP Advisor.

Timeline

- September/February
  - Begin Brainstorming Research Ideas
- October/March
  - Reflect on classroom discussions, guest speakers, field trips, excursions, Moroccan’s you’ve been – where might you want to return to conduct research, who might you want to go deeper into conversations with?
- November/April
  - Who do you want to have as your ISP Advisor?
  - Determine Research Question
  - Submit Proposal & IRB Application
  - Conduct Research
- December/May
  - Compile & Present Research

Internships

- It is important to start thinking about this as soon as you arrive to Morocco.
  - What type of organization? | What responsibilities? | Where?
- Make connections with guest lecturers or where you go on excursions/field trips.
- Begin a conversation with your Academic Director during the first 2 weeks of classes so that you can get the best internship match possible for you!
- Check out a list of where students have done internships in the past

ISP Living Arrangements

- You will have to decide about 1 month prior to the start of your ISP time if you will continue living with your host family throughout ISP time.
- If you decide to move out, you will receive your stipend at the start of ISP.
- Students are successful finding housing the following ways (typically in groups):
  - Air B&B | Bulletin board postings at CCCL | Expat or English speaking Rabat Facebook Groups
- The final week of the SIT Study Abroad Program, you will be staying at a hotel as a group just like during Orientation.
SIT & CCCL Staff

Remember that you are a student with SIT Study Abroad. CCCL is the host institution of your Study Abroad Program. You have support from both organizations. Every staff member is here to support you and help you get the support you need to make the most of your semester abroad in Morocco!

Program Specific Staff

- 3 Academic Directors (SIT) – these are in charge of your academic program, including Field Visits and ISP proposals and advisor selection – they are also here to support you with your personal needs
- 3 Program Assistants (CCCL) – these are in charge of day-to-day program logistics and excursions and are the main liaison with your Arabic teachers and the Host Family Coordinator – they are also here to help you with personal and health related needs, like going to the doctors office to translate

SIT Leadership Staff

- Academic Dean for North Africa, the Middle East & Europe
  o Said Graiouid | said.graiouid@sit.edu
  o Please reach out to the Academic Dean if you have concerns regarding your program specific academics that cannot be resolved first with your Academic Director
- Student Affairs Team (based in Vermont)
  o studentaffairs@sit.edu
  o Your Academic Director reports student issues directly to this office to be logged into the SIT database, monitored and resolved

CCCL Leadership Staff

- Host Family Coordinator
  o Doha Lmachichi | Idoha@cccl.ma | Office in Marassa
  o Please reach out to Doha if you need help communicating with your host family, you have any questions about your host family or if you choose to pursue a switch in host families
- Language Coordinator
  o Bouchra Sahimda | sbouchra@cccl.ma | Office in Laalou
  o Please reach out to Bouchra if you have concerns about your Arabic class, progress in learning or other concerns regarding language classes

Please see CCCL staff directories posted in each CCCL building for additional contact information for faculty and staff.
List of Cafes, Restaurants & Bars/Clubs in Rabat

Cafes
- Renaissance (Mohammed V – Hassan)
- Café 7eme Art (Hassan)
- Hotel Oudayas (Medina)
- Starbucks (Agdal)
- Himmi (L’Ocean)

Restaurants
- Yamal Acham (L’Ocean)
- Hamza (Medina)
- Green is Better (Hassan)
- Le Mandarin (L’Ocean)
- Dar Naji (Medina)

Bars/Clubs
- Le Dhow (Medina)
- Upstairs (Agdal)
- Brasserie 288 (Hassan)

*These are the top recommendations of students from the Fall 2017 programs!

Map of where CCCL buildings are
Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle Theory

SIT Study Abroad is rooted in “experiential learning” – ‘Hands-on’ learning through reflection on doing/experience

Concrete Experience
(doing/having an experience)

Active Experimentation
(planning/trying out what you have learned)

Reflective Observation
(reviewing/reflecting on the experience)

Abstract Conceptualisation
(concluding/learning from the experience)

Experiencing
The Activity Phase

Applying
Planning Effective Use of Learning

Now What?

So What?

Publishing
Sharing Reactions and Observation

What?

Generalizing
Developing Real World Principles

Processing
Discussing Patterns and Dynamics

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Appendix D: Timeline of Intercultural Competency Development

1990-2000 (Birth through Elementary School)

- I was raised by a single mom who wanted me to have many experiences. She had me try extra curricula’s, had rules that encouraged me to read and play outside and not watch TV, made sure I spent time with family and friends, we took day trips in Virginia (both fun and educational) and traveled in the United States. By age ten I had travelled by car, bus, train and plane. I consider myself very well rounded from a young age. My elementary school was in a small, poor, rural town. Most of my peers never left a two-hour radius of home so they thought that I was crazy. By fifth grade, my mom moved me to a different school in a larger town for me to be surrounded with a more diverse community of peers and teachers.
- My mom shares that when I was a baby, the first time that I saw a Black person, I reached up and stroked their face with a big smile on my face. This is special because it notes that from a young age, I recognized and appreciated difference.
- The most intercultural exposure that I had during the first ten years of my life was thanks to the many books that I read, trips my mom took me on around Virginia and the U.S. (granted the focus of these was history), weekend classes at local colleges for gifted students, an introduction to the Spanish language, Girls Scouts and from going to summer camps where I was exposed to peers from all over Virginia, not just my small town!
- For my tenth birthday, my mom and I went on a three-week tour of Europe. This was my first time out of the country and the travel bug got me young. My favorite part was visiting places in Italy that I had learned about in my third grade history classes.

2000-2008 (Middle & High School)

- I attended a Mennonite Middle and High School. While I was a Christian, I was not familiar with the Mennonite Anabaptist Faith. I pushed back and challenged how their faith was different than mind and I was challenged to consider Christianity from another perspective. The most significant element of going to a Mennonite School was how at the root of my education there was a global perspective and community involvement. My classes also introduced me to experiential learning, which I absolutely loved. My graduating class only had 55 graduates so it was a close-knit community of students and teachers. I firmly believe that had I not attended this school that I would be a very different person today.

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18 As earlier defined, intercultural competency means that a person is able to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from other cultures.
• I was very involved in middle and high school. I played tennis, violin, piano, was on the yearbook committee, in Girl Scouts, church youth group and attended summer camps. I developed as a strong leader and learned how to manage my time well. Through tennis, I learned to function successfully on a team, as an individual and partner contributing to the larger cause. Encouragement, forgiveness and trust were crucial elements to our overall success. Through summer camps, I learned about communal living, received leadership training, and enjoyed experiential learning. At camp I got to work with Counselors from other Countries, which was exciting to learn more about the world. In Girl Scouts, I developed my curiosity, proactive nature, sense of service, dedication to my community and more. Church grounded me in my faith and provided another community of support. Other extra curricula’s provided me ample opportunities to work with diverse groups and learn transferrable skills. Attitudinally and awareness wise, I grew exponentially during this time.

• I had many role models growing up. Their key attributes were having distinct ways of leading and educating and being firmly confident in who they were and their beliefs. One was Melissa, who I met as a Junior Counselor at the age of 14. Interestingly enough, she is my current boss at Randolph-Macon! The second is Mr. Blosser who was a high school science teacher. He kept an eye on me and in High School I saw him as a father figure.

• When I was in eighth grade, my mom and I hosted a student from Germany, Netti, for a school year. This was one of the most influential years of my life. I did not like Netti at first as I was no longer an only child, but I came around. I watched her struggle to learn English, live in a stricter home than she was accustomed to and be homesick. She was an incredible role model because I was amazed that she was able to leave her family for an entire year to study abroad at the age of 16. We are now incredibly close and we visit each other and our families every other year or so. This is a lifelong relationship that transcends country boundaries and cultures. I really do not think that we could be more different, but friendship and watching someone grow and adapt is a powerful thing.

2008-2012 (College)

• Going into college, I envisioned studying history. That quickly shifted to Sociology. Halfway through that major, I decided that it was too depressing and did not like how we were not change maker focused. So I switched to studying Human Geography and Spanish. I focused on understanding cultures, how cultures evolved, how people communicate across cultural differences and development work in Latin America.
I studied abroad in Spain (6 weeks), Argentina (8 weeks) and Guatemala (10 days). I lived with host families, took classes in Spanish and studied the history and culture of these places. While none of these experiences was easy, they are the times in my life that I grew the most. I became confident in my independence of traveling, navigating new places, meeting new people and living with strangers, and improved my Spanish and understanding of Central and South America and Spain and the real differences of cultures between these three places.

Students Helping Honduras is a volunteer organization that I was a member of all four years of college. My first trip to Honduras in 2008 inspired me to major in Spanish because I wanted to return and actually be able to communicate with the people that I was working with. I returned each year to grow my relationships with communities in Honduras. I worked alongside Hondurans to build homes and schools, as well as worked in orphanages. Looking back, while I fully support this organization, in their initial stages, I learned to question the harm that can be done by external volunteer organizations and the ethics involved with all the money required to travel there, etc. This was a huge lesson for me on development work.

I was very involved in college. I played Club Tennis, was a member of a leadership program, participated in community service, was a tour guide, led a faith based organization, competed with the Geography Club and played intramural sports. These opportunities led me to meet many unique students with different backgrounds and interests. I learned to balance my time and by my senior year how not to over commit. Thanks to these student groups, I have a broad reach of friends around the world in different fields.

I worked for three years in the Study Abroad Office. I helped prepare students to go abroad, assisted with re-entry for students coming back, showed international students my favorite things about the U.S. and recruited for study abroad around campus. This work inspired my current interest in working in Study Abroad with Higher Education.

During college, I met one of my most important role models, Geography Professor Dawn Bowen. Not only was she my professor and academic advisor but she led my trip to Guatemala. She shared much knowledge on international development, cultures in Latin America and human geography. She continues to be a huge inspiration of the work I choose to do and is an excellent sounding board as I brainstorm ideas, ask questions and dream.

The independence afforded in college led me to better define who I am, find what was really important to me and I dreamed up life goals. I became more grounded in my love of learning, curiosity in differences and my passion to help people and communities.
2012-2016 (Early 20's)

- After graduating I was sidelined for a while with medical issues. While it is difficult for me to explain how I grew during months of recovery, I know that much introspection and self-reflection occurred and I grappled with an identity crisis. This identity crisis was because I could no longer live the active life that I had been able to before. I learned that I found identity in those activities and physical lifestyle. I have since reworked how I define and describe myself to more who I am at the core in my heart and mind.

- I spent two months backpacking in Ecuador and Peru with a friend. We met backpackers, primarily from Europe and Australia. During this trip, I came to better understand how the world viewed Americans. I also came to understand what other countries had to offer, like 6-8 weeks a year of vacation and universal healthcare. During these months, I lived in hostels, traveled by bus and lived on the cheap. Reflecting, I wish I spent more time off the tourist track and interacted more with locals to better understand visited communities.

- I spent several months interning in Guatemala alongside young Mayan women for a scholarship program teaching about agro ecology, nutrition, family planning, leadership, etc. Their native language is Q’eqchi’ but they spoke some Spanish. This was our common language. While I loved this experience getting to be a role model and empower these women, it was uncomfortable because I was clearly an outsider and could not even communicate in their indigenous language. I did though grow in skills of observation (since I did not understand much of what was spoken) and my Spanish language abilities. I also lived a very primitive life, collecting rainwater for showers, composting human waste, farming to eat, and living without electricity or running water.

- I spent 20 days with Dawn conducting research in Guatemala. We interviewed and led focus groups with Maya women that I had worked with during the women’s leadership in agro ecology program. Working with an experienced researcher allowed me to dig deeper to better understand motivations and program impacts in the life of these young Mayan women.

- During my free time I volunteered at a Food Pantry, translating for Spanish-speaking recipients. This work was incredibly eye opening to the challenges immigrants face in my home community. I heard stories about how these immigrants crossed the border and about their separation from family. This work allowed me to consider more deeply the different strata in communities in the U.S. I also met other like-minded volunteers interested in global issues, immigration rights and community-wide communication.
• Working at a Children’s Museum I was exposed to a variety of parenting styles, which came as a certain shock to me and I quickly learned that if I ever have children, the kind of parent I do not want to be. I had the opportunity, on an elementary level, to lead cultural programs for kids and their families but I did not find this level satisfying.

• By working at an adult literacy organization that offered GRE, English and Citizenship classes, I was introduced to challenges that are difficult for me to relate to as an educated, citizen of the U.S. I was embarrassed by the lack of knowledge I had that adults I was working with had to learn in order to greatly change the trajectory of their lives.

2016-Present (Graduate School)

• Moving to Vermont was a culture shock in and of itself. My year in Vermont helped me understand that I most closely identify as a Southerner.

• My year on campus at SIT grew my network of like-minded peers around the world. Hearing people’s stories and dreams was so inspiring and made me realize that I am not alone in the life I want to lead. I was greatly challenged by strong personalities, much more liberal mindsets than I am accustomed to being in conversation with and professors that pushed me to deeply self-reflect on how I perceive others.

• The classes that I took gave me new knowledge, skills, attitudes, awareness’s and language – but not the level that I had hoped for. Training classes were my favorite, as they most practically aligned with work prospects. Likewise, gaining group work and leadership experience was invaluable. My patience was tried as my expectations were not lived up to. I wished that I had been challenged more and gotten harsher criticism on my work. While I wanted this alternative academic experience, perhaps I did not understand what I entered. I leave wanting to return to school as I am not satisfied with my growth from this program.

• Studying abroad in Morocco was incredible as I discovered a new country and region that I love. The blend of culture there is incredible. Travelling with Mokhtar, a native of Morocco, was a treat. This provided a different lens to learn about a culture. Learning how to be an ethically aware tourist was valuable as I want to travel more in my future. Involving all stakeholders in a process inspired my research. My love for Morocco inspired my Practicum. My host family during this trip became my host family when I returned to Morocco.

• My two practicum’s intercultural competency growths were outlined earlier in this paper.
Looking Forward (Future Goals)

- I am excited to see what directions I choose to go in life. I think I will continue to be a lifelong learner both in formal classrooms and via experiential learning in other ways. I hope to gain experience in higher education in Student Affairs, International Education and Service-Learning. Perhaps one day I will be a Dean overseeing all of these areas. Of course this would require returning to school to get a PhD. Maybe I will become a professor. If so, I could envision teaching about intercultural work and leadership skills. Hopefully I will be able to lead students in trips abroad someday. I also would not be surprised if I returned to the non-profit world someday. Maybe I will even work abroad again. Who knows!

- **Knowledge:** As a lifelong learner, this one is tough. I am open to whatever knowledge I can bring into my life. It will be interesting to see if I choose to continue my trend of being well rounded or if I choose to really focus in on a specific field of learning. I do not feel like I ‘master’ any one thing but am a jack-of-all-trades at a basic level.

- **Skills:** I cannot wait until I conduct my own training outside of a classroom. I am confident in my skills to create and implement a training but need to experience putting those skills into action. This wish should come to fruition in August as I lead a weeklong RA training!

- **Attitudes:** I wish to grow in self-confidence and firmness in my thoughts and beliefs so that I truly have a voice in group settings. Being neutral with certain topics is not enough. It is critical to challenge the dominant narrative and recognize that sometimes the dominant narrative is what is not said. Recognizing when to speak up or when to listen is an important skill to have to best represent who and what I want to be as a trainer. 19

- **Awareness:** I want to grow in awareness of my inherent bias and assumptions, specifically unconscious bias related to white privilege and daily choices I make that I am not aware of.

- **Language:** I want to push myself to continue examining my words to make sure I am not contributing to the problems I am training others to work with. Word choice is important, as it is too easy to unintentionally and casually use hurtful words. Learning the depth of word meanings is a great starting point to work towards reaching this goal. Additionally, I want to keep my Spanish skills at a conversational level for the rest of my life.

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19 This is an idea introduced to me by routenberg, Thompson & Waterberg (2013).