AN EXAMINATION OF THE STUDY ABROAD ADVISING PROCESS IN A UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

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by

PAULINA PERKINS

Dr. Casandra Harper, Dissertation Supervisor

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE STUDY ABROAD ADVISING PROCESS IN A UNIVERSITY CONTEXT**

presented by Paulina Perkins,

a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

______________________________
Professor Casandra Harper, Chair

______________________________
Professor Jeni Hart

______________________________
Professor Pilar Mendoza

______________________________
Professor James K. Scott
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my grandfather who, despite not having the opportunity for education himself, has always encouraged and inspired me to further my education. There were a number of challenging times over the past 6 years of working on this degree and although he is no longer with us physically, his presence and words of wisdom carried me through.

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE STUDY ABROAD ADVISING PROCESS IN A UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

Paulina Perkins

Dr. Casandra Harper, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

For this qualitative case study, the aim was to better understand what informs study abroad advising practices from the perspective of the advisor and to examine these practices for evidence of developmental advising using Crookston’s (1972) developmental advising framework. This study significantly contributes to the very limited research that is available on advising for study abroad. Because of its limited nature, much of the review of the literature for this study centers on research in the field of academic advising, a closely related field, rather than study abroad advising. Five study abroad advisors at the University of Missouri participated in this study. The data were collected through interviews, written reflections, and video recorded advising appointments.

There are four distinct themes that inform study abroad advising practices: relevant experiences, formal training, resources, and professional experience. Additionally, there are elements of developmental advising practiced by the advisors in this study, including abilities, rewards, maturity, responsibility, and relationships. The implications for future research include studies related to the student perspective on developmental advising, longitudinal studies, student outcomes, and evaluation of study abroad advising practices. As for practical implications, this study can help inform training of study abroad advisors as well as student peer advisors; potentially increase the diversity of the study abroad population by having advisors utilize personal identity to build relationships with students; and, may serve to justify curricular changes within student affairs degrees to include student advising, which is currently lacking in many master’s level programs.
CHAPTER 1

Three times as many students study abroad today as compared to 20 years ago (Institute for International Education, 2013). According to the 2013 Open Doors report published by the Institute for International Education (IIE), more than 283,000 American college students chose to study outside of the United States during the 2011-2012 academic year (Institute for International Education, 2013). In addition to the increase in the number of students who participated in study abroad, the report also reveals that the locations where students chose to study are also becoming increasingly more diverse.

There are multiple reasons why the number of students who study abroad is increasing. Campus officials are heavily promoting study abroad opportunities due to the benefits and skills the research shows that students gain while abroad. Some of these benefits include personal, academic, and career gains such as cross-cultural skills; global understanding (Kitsantas, 2004; Norris & Gillespie, 2009); and, increased language proficiencies (Engle & Engle, 2004). Additionally, the support for study abroad has been strengthened by some federal initiatives such as the passing of the Paul Simon Foundation Act in June of 2009 in the House of Representatives (Amsler & Oaks, 2008). The goal of the Act is that by 2020, at least one million American college students from diverse backgrounds will study abroad annually. Although we are far from reaching this goal, the growth in numbers of students studying abroad has been steady despite challenging economic times.

With this steady growth in numbers, the advising process for study abroad now affects a substantial portion of the student population, in particular the undergraduate
student population. Not having an understanding of how this process impacts students could potentially mean that we are inadvertently discouraging students from studying abroad, not meeting the needs of some or all student populations at the home institution, and not allowing students to gain as much from their study abroad experience as they could with proper advising. The fact that the population of students who study abroad advisors work with and the countries students choose to go to are becoming more diverse means added complexity to the advisor’s role in the study abroad process. Thus, I believe that it is critically important to conduct a study that examines the role of the study abroad advisor to fill the gap of knowledge that is currently missing in the literature.

The setting for this case study is the International Center at University of Missouri (MU), a public land-grant institution located in Columbia, Missouri. As an institution, the University of Missouri sent 1,261 students abroad in the 2013-14 academic year according to the Center’s annual report (University of Missouri International Center, 2014). In the study abroad arena, MU is a fairly decentralized institution with a number of academic departments, colleges, and schools administering their own study abroad programs, generally only open to students within their academic department. The International Center serves to centralize many of the core processes for study abroad in addition to managing its own portfolio of study abroad programs. These centralized functions include health and safety monitoring of all MU students who study abroad, maintaining the centralized database of study abroad participants, and providing training for faculty leading short-term study abroad programs. To accomplish these tasks, the International Center study abroad staff consists of 10 fulltime employees, three graduate
assistants, and five undergraduate peer advisors who are all students who have studied abroad.

For this case study, I limit participation to include those with study abroad advising responsibilities as part of their job description and will exclude any part-time student staff, including graduate students. Thus, my possible sample will come from one assistant director for study abroad, two study abroad coordinators, and three study abroad advisors. In chapter three, I will further explore this sampling process and who opted to join the study. As the researcher for this study, I will not include my own advising in the study, although my position as the Associate Director for Study Abroad comes with some advising responsibilities.

**Statement of the Problem**

As the research shows, a steadily growing number of students participate in study abroad experiences annually (Institute for International Education, 2013). Furthermore, these studies (Engle & Engle, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004; Norris & Gillespie, 2009) indicate that study abroad experiences provide students with an opportunity to grow and develop in ways that they cannot if they stay at the home campus. While the benefits of study abroad participation are well-recognized in the research literature (Engle & Engle, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004; Norris & Gillespie, 2009), very little is known about the complex advising process that students undergo in order to study abroad that stems from empirical research. Not only do study abroad advisors need to be familiar with the internal application processes, they also need to be able to answer general questions such as applicability of financial aid abroad and policies for course transfer, thus need to have a clear understanding of the functionality of other areas of the university (Anderson &
Not fully understanding how study abroad advisors impact students during the study abroad advising process could have negative consequences on the outcomes of the students they serve, but that is yet to be determined through empirical research.

**Purpose of the Study**

Students who study abroad make significant gains in a number of areas, both personally as well as academically (Engle & Engle, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004; and, Norris & Gillespie, 2009); however, we have a very limited understanding of how students are advised prior to their study abroad experience. The purpose of this study is to provide an expanded understanding of what informs the practice of study abroad advising. Although this study will not assess outcomes based on differential advising styles, it will allow advisors the opportunity to reflect upon how they advise students. The information gleaned from these reflections may prove to be useful for other advisors, as well as the advisors who are participating in this study.

Additionally, the aim of this study is to examine whether or not developmental advising is present in today’s study abroad advising practices. This study will focus on understanding the study abroad advising process from the perspective of the home institution’s advising process, not the advising students receive from staff members on-site at their host university or from the study abroad organization the student used to help them get abroad. Lastly, the scope will be limited to advisors whose primary duty is to advise study abroad students. Thus, this excludes those advisors who have taken on this study abroad advising as an added responsibility, graduate students in part-time advising capacities, as well as the undergraduate student peer advisors.
**Research Questions**

Although the interest in study abroad has blossomed in the past few decades, by students and administrators alike, we have barely scratched the surface when it comes to empirical research pertaining to this aspect of higher education. To start filling the gaps in the research, this study will address the following research questions:

1. What informs study abroad advising practices?
2. Is there evidence of developmental advising in the process of study abroad advising?
   a. During the initial advising phase
   b. During the pre-departure phase
   c. While abroad
   d. During the re-entry phase

**Framework**

In recent years, educational programs have moved from being teacher-focused to providing a student centered approach to learning (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). These researchers found that the characteristics of a student centered approach include elements of cooperation, active learning by applying new knowledge to existing knowledge, and collaboration between the teacher and learner. Traditionally, advising students has been approached from one of two ways: prescriptive and developmental with the developmental strongly favoring the more student centered approach (Crookston, 1972). For this study, I will use Crookston’s (1972) lens for developmental advising to look at the student advising process in the study abroad context.
Working with students in a developmentally sound way in higher education is not a new concept. In fact, Crookston (1972) based his theoretical framework on the student development theories of the 1960s (Crookston, 1972). The student was no longer seen as a receptacle for knowledge, but rather an important piece, an active component, of the learning process. In developmental advising, the goal is not to direct students, but rather to guide them through the process (Kadar, 2001). This guidance includes assisting students to set goals and developing a plan for how to achieve them (Kadar, 2001). In the study abroad context, this might include assisting students in thinking about what their priorities for their time abroad are and how long they need to be abroad to achieve those goals. If language acquisition is the student’s most important reason for studying abroad, a program that provides opportunities for interaction with native speakers over a longer period of time will likely be more beneficial to achieve that goal (Dwyer, 2004).

The difference between the two advising approaches is that directed (prescriptive) advising often leads to a lack in the student’s development and skill set, whereas a guided (developmentally advised) student gains the tools necessary to successfully master skills and solve problems as they arise (Alexitch, 2002). Thus, long-term it is much more beneficial for a student to learn how to independently resolve problems, which is possible if the concept of developmental advising is used appropriately. This is the primary reason I have chosen to use this framework for the study.

Much like in academic advising, the advising for study abroad goes far beyond just assisting the student in choosing the right program (Kadar, 2001). Often, in addition to advising on academic or programmatic matters, study abroad advisors are asked and expected to respond to personal questions such as how to cope with homesickness or
what to do if the luggage gets lost. The study abroad advising process goes beyond just the term of application and the term that the student is abroad. Advising continues upon the return to the home campus as students are acclimating back to the home environment, often referred to as the reentry process. The expectation of repatriates is that it will be easy to return to what is familiar, so preparation for the return from an abroad experience is often lacking and that expectations for the return are often violated (Christofi & Thompson, 2007). Repatriate college students have often cited that they experience a sense of loss when leaving the host country, particularly students who became highly integrated in the host culture (Arthur, 2003). Anxiety, depression, academic reintegration problems, social withdrawal, and interpersonal difficulties during the reintegration process are often experienced by sojourners (Gaw, 2000). The re-entry phase of study abroad will be explored in greater detail in the literature review of this dissertation, specifically as I identify the four phases of the study abroad advising process. Because there are multiple stages of the study abroad process, study abroad advisors need to consider developmental approaches to their advising not only in the early stages of interacting with study abroad advisees, but throughout the duration of their interactions.

Training for advisors varies from one institution to another. At the International Center at the University of Missouri, there is no written advising manual for study abroad (B. Lindeman, personal communication, October 14, 2014). Rather, advisors are trained at the start of their hire for approximately one week through a series of sessions with their direct supervisor as well as other staff members to learn the various parts of their position (B. Lindeman, personal communication, October 14, 2014). These sessions consist of both the logistics of the operation of the office as well as learning how advising works
through sitting in on advising appointments with more seasoned advisors. In addition, staff members at the International Center are provided with ongoing training sessions through retreats, weekly meetings, and professional development opportunities, such as conferences and site visits to the locations for which they advise.

In the past, the staff at the International Center have developed an advising philosophy modeling the ideas of balancing challenge and support as developed by Sanford (1966) (B. Lindeman, personal communication, October 14, 2014). However, with recent staff turn-over and pressures to increase the number of study abroad participants, this philosophy has fallen by the wayside. In addition, although the staff as a whole agreed upon an advising philosophy to use in their practice of advising students, there was no consistent application of the advising philosophy nor a mandate for advisors to follow the agreed upon method of advising (B. Lindeman, personal communication, October 14, 2014). Similarly, although there are standards for good practice in advising as developed by the Forum on Education Abroad (2011), as well as suggested best practices set forth by NAFSA (Anderson & Murray, 2005), there is no evidence of consequences for not following these professional standards in the literature.

**Research Design**

This qualitative case study looked at the process of advising students interested in studying abroad. To gain insight into this advising process, there were four primary sources of data: written reflections by the advisor, semi-structured interviews, field notes, and video recorded advising appointments.

The first data that were collected were reflections by each advisor in the study. They were provided with prompts and asked to complete the reflection immediately after
an advising appointment. Next, I conducted semi-structured interviews with each of the study abroad advisors. The questions for the interview protocol came primarily from the literature pertaining to developmental advising in the area of academic advising, as well as some more general questions from the literature on study abroad. In the field notes, I made notations about the study such as observations about the physical environment and any hunches about where the study was taking me, for instance. Finally, one advising session per advisor was video recorded as part of this study. To make sure I got a broad sample of recorded advising appointments, I carefully selected appointments with students in each of the phases of the study abroad process as well as a balance of male and female advisees.

**Significance of the Problem**

Although the overall percentage of all U.S. college students participating in study abroad programs is relatively low, it still encompasses in excess of 283,000 American students nationwide and the number is growing steadily by approximately 3% annually (Institute for International Education, 2013). Thus, it is critical that more research is conducted in order to serve these students in a manner that is consistent with best practices that allows students maximum opportunity for growth and development. As indicated earlier in this chapter, developmental advising leads to an improved ability to problem solve independently and master new skills (Alexitch, 2002), both developmentally important aspects of higher education.

The outcomes of the study have multiple implications for both research and practice. First, it significantly contributes to the very limited research that exists on the advising process for study abroad. There is a fair amount of research available to the
outcomes of study abroad participation (Engle & Engle, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004; and, Norris & Gillespie, 2009) and the predictors of study abroad participation, including attributes such as students with increased foreign language or those students who score lower on scales measuring ethnocentrism (Goldstein & Kim, 2006), but very little is known about the advisor’s role in the process of study abroad. Based on the outcomes of the study, those in charge of training study abroad advisors can develop processes that reflect best practices in the field of education abroad that are grounded in empirical research. Second, it broadens the use of the theoretical framework of developmental advising, as it was specifically developed for academic advising and has not been applied in this context previously.

**Overview of the Dissertation**

The following chapter, chapter two, will examine the current literature pertaining to advising for study abroad. Because the research is virtually non-existent on this topic, I will also bring in literature centered on academic advising as it is a process that bears close resemblance, albeit not the same, to study abroad advising. Chapter three will describe the design of the study. It will include the methodology and research design; population and sample; sampling procedures; instrumentation and data collection procedures; data analysis; and limitations. Chapter four will outline the results of the study. The final chapter of this dissertation, chapter five, will provide implications for future research, practice, and theory.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Today, an increasingly larger number of American students choose to study away from the home campus to meet the demands of the globalized workforce (Institute for International Education, 2013). Some colleges even require study abroad as part of their degree programs (Connell, 2008). Yet, very little is still known empirically about the advising process for study abroad and the advisor’s role in that process. In fact, so little is known about this process that it is necessary to look at a closely related field, academic advising, in order to find relevant research on the topic.

There are a number of similarities between the two advising processes. For instance, much like academic advising, study abroad advising should “be intrinsically linked to the institution’s mission, values and learning goals, and to the individual student’s academic and personal goals” (Forum on Education Abroad, 2011, p. 28). The type of advising students receive in the academic advising area has great impact on their success at the institution. For instance, students who are advised using a developmental approach are more likely to be retained to graduation (Tinto, 1993). Although study abroad advisors interact with their advisees on a shorter term basis, there is no reason to think that study abroad advising would not have some impact on their student advisees as well, yet research is lacking to confirm that to date.

With new student development theories emerging towards the end of the 1960s in the United States, including Chickering’s (1969) seven vectors, a prominent theory of student development, the field of academic advising shifted from the traditional role of dispensing advice (prescriptive advising) to the more collaborative approach
(developmental advising) in the early 1970s (Harrison, 2009). Developmental advising, the approach that was developed by Crookston (1972), was grounded in cognitive developmental theory, psychosocial theory, and person-environment interaction theory (King, 2005).

Today’s dominant and preferred approach by academic advisors to the process of advising is still the developmental approach due to the benefits that both the student and the advisor receive as part of this advising philosophy (Schreiner & Anderson, 2005). For the student, these benefits include a higher rate of persistence at the institution (Raushi, 1993), greater satisfaction with the advising they receive (Coll & Draves, 2009; Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009), and increased learning (Astin, 1984). In addition, the developmental approach allows the student to develop problem solving skills and autonomy (Crookston, 1972). The old adage “give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime” perfectly sums up the intent behind the developmental advising philosophy. Teaching students to problem solve in a safe environment, such as at the university, will allow them to apply the same critical thinking skills once they graduate and enter a world without the same safety nets that a university setting provides.

The advisor also benefits from the relationship based on using developmental advising because both parties are responsible for the developmentally sound interaction, which means that the advisor is at times the teacher, but at other times the learner in the relationship (Crookston, 1972). The developmental tasks that the advisor and student engage in include reaching agreements pertaining to initiative, responsibility, and who is
responsible for the knowledge and skills shared between the two parties (Crookston, 1994). Crookston (1994) describes this negotiation process further:

The question of responsibility to the developmental advisor is, again, largely a matter for negotiation with the student. The advisor is fully aware of the responsibilities delegated him as advisor and those expected from the student, both of which he makes clear to the student. This clarification, leading to agreement on who is to do what, is followed by an exploration of areas for joint participation and responsibility. In addition to a decision on who is to take responsibility for what, there needs to be some mutual accountability for each fulfilling his end of the bargain. Failure of either party to do so results in a confrontation and a consequent redefinition of relationship. (p. 8)

Thus, although students may not be aware of the term developmental advising, they should be clearly made aware of their role in the process and the responsibilities that comes with this type of relationship.

From this developmental approach to advising, a set of core values for best practices in academic advising were identified by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and were last revised in 2005 (NACADA, 2005). These core values state that advisors must be responsible: (a) to the individuals they advise; (b) for involving others, when appropriate, in the process; (c) to their institutions; (d) to higher education; (e) to their educational community; and, (f) for their professional practices and for themselves personally (NACADA, 2005). These were created in an attempt to standardize the academic advising profession and to align advising practices with the developmental approach to advising. Specifically related to developmental advising,
academic advisors involve others in the process of advising as necessary by informing students of available resources, programs, and services on campus to allow the student to make decisions that are well informed (NACADA, 2005). Additionally, advisors hold students accountable for their behaviors and aid them in setting goals, both consistent with developmental advising practices. Though some of the values in the standards of good practice may at surface level seem to be competing with each other, they are all intended to put the student at the center of the advising process.

**Standards for Study Abroad Advising**

The process of studying abroad is complex and advisors need to be familiar with the process from start to finish to effectively advise students (Forum on Education Abroad, 2011). This advising includes knowledge of the different kinds of programs that are available and to help students find the program that is the best fit for them personally, academically, and professionally in the future through a series of questions. In addition, advisors must be familiar with the policies that study abroad students are subject to at the home institution (Chalou, Lantz, Felsing, & Lutfi, 1997; Forum on Education Abroad, 2011). For example, these policies may include the use of financial aid abroad, credit transfer, billing, and the registration process in order to maintain full-time status. Lastly, not only must the advisor be well versed in the home institution’s policies and procedures, the standard for good practice as developed by the Forum on Education Abroad (2011) states that the advisor needs to be familiar with the equivalent at the host university. This section will further explore each of the standards and what they mean for study abroad advising. Although the standards of advising are similar to those of
academic advisors, there is very little overlap between the two national organizations that regulate the standards for each group of advisors.

It is important to have standards for how the advising for study abroad is conducted, as study abroad advisors have the opportunity to positively influence their advisees by engaging them in a collaborative and developmental process. In recent years, the Forum on Education Abroad (2011) has developed a set of standards for study abroad advising for advisors on the home campus as well as a separate set of standards for those at the host institution. This literature review will only focus on the standards set forth for study abroad advisors on the home campus. The standards for study abroad advisors have been divided into five separate categories: (a) objectives of academic advising for education abroad; (b) responsibilities for academic advising for education abroad; (c) helping students make informed education abroad choices; (d) ethical and legal responsibilities; and, (e) organization and management.

The first objective states that study abroad advisors should adhere to the same standards of advising at the home institution as academic advisors. Similar to the goals of traditional academic advising (Harrison, 2009), the academic advising conducted by a study abroad advisor should be focused on supporting the development of students and their academic goals. For instance, much like in developmental academic advising, goal setting that encompasses both academic and personal goals is an important component in the advising process for study abroad according to the third standard of good practice (Forum on Education Abroad, 2011). Additionally, the standards set forth by the Forum on Education Abroad (2011) state that study abroad advising should encourage students
to become more self-directed and allow the student to develop decision-making skills, both important components in developmental advising.

The second standard clarifies that although advisors and students share responsibility, students should have the ultimate responsibility for their own academic plan. This means that although the study abroad advisor should provide information pertaining to academics at the host institution, the students are ultimately responsible for choosing courses that fit into their degree plan at the home institution and making sure the courses transfer as needed.

The third standard states that study abroad advisors should be knowledgeable about the host institution’s academic offerings and be able to provide resources for students to best be able to plan and prepare for their study abroad experience as well as setting academic goals. This also includes having sufficient knowledge of the academic system in which the student is about to enter as well as other cultural knowledge. Additionally, the third standard also specifies that the study abroad advisor needs to be familiar with the home institutions polices pertaining to degree requirement and aiding the student in managing the expectations for their time abroad.

The fourth standard holds the study abroad advisor to ethical standards of advising, which includes a discrimination clause that states that all students interested in study abroad should be accommodated regardless of race, national origin, and ability. Providing access for all students also means that study abroad advisors need to be familiar with fiscal matters, as cost tends to be a substantial barrier for students interested in studying abroad (Dawson, 2000; Dessoff, 2006). Although use federal financial aid has been allowed to be applied to the cost of studying abroad, making study abroad more
accessible to students (Bolen, 2001; Dolby, 2007), it is up to each institution to determine use of institutional aid for study abroad. In particular for those institutions that are not allowing institutional aid to be applied towards study abroad, it is critical for study abroad advisors to provide alternative resources for funding in order to avoid exclusion from participation.

The fifth standard specifies that advisors should be sufficiently trained and have relevant experience in order to perform their duties as advisors. Students should have adequate access to their advisors via advising appointments and advisors should maintain good relationships with other key offices on campus in order to disseminate appropriate information and help students prepare for study abroad.

Although standards for advising have been put into place, there are generally no repercussions for advisors who do not adhere to these standards. The following section will look more closely at the study abroad advising process at U.S. colleges and universities.

**Study Abroad Advising**

Unlike academic advisors, far fewer students come in contact with study abroad advisors during their academic career due to the still relatively low rate of participation in study abroad programming. To date, less than 2% of all college students in the U.S. participate in study abroad (Institute for International Education, 2013). Of these students, a staggering 76.4% of today’s students identify as White. However, this is a decrease of 6.5% as compared to 10 years earlier. The increased level of participation among non-White students is spread fairly evenly over other ethnic categories with one
exception, American Indian students. This subpopulation has held steady at a participation rate of approximately 0.5% over the last 10 years.

Low participation rates are of particular concern for students of color. There are a number of obstacles for all students interested in studying abroad regardless of the student’s ethnicity. For example, these obstacles include the transfer of academic credit into highly structured academic programs such as engineering or education, accounting for lower participation rates by students in those majors (Dessoff, 2006). However, students of color tend to experience greater and an increased number of barriers than White students when it comes to studies overseas, which has significantly influenced participation rates for these student populations (Dawson, 2000; Dessoff, 2006). For instance, this includes financial barriers (Dawson, 2000; Dessoff, 2006), lack of family support (Dessoff, 2006), and perceived language barriers (Hembroff & Rusz, 1993).

Often the barriers are too great for the students to overcome on their own, but there are a number of ways study abroad professionals can minimize them through the advising process in order to allow for equal opportunity and access (Brux & Fry, 2009). Institutions that aim to achieve equitable access to study abroad opportunities must be strategic in how they recruit and advise these students in order to provide the opportunity for overseas study for all, not just a select few privileged students. Study abroad advising practices may be a critical component in recruiting underrepresented students.

**Who are the Study Abroad Advisors on Campus?**

The make-up of study abroad advisors on U.S. campuses looks vastly different depending on institutional type and resources available at the institution. In a recent study, Yao and Hartnett (2009) found that at research universities in the United States, an
average of 6.35 FTE were employed to manage the university’s study abroad programming. However, of these staff members, only 62.3% were professional practitioners in the field. Non-professional staff may include support staff, student employees, or others who are not practicing study abroad at a professional level, including faculty members leading study abroad programs. Clearly, having staff members who are not professionals in the field advise and manage study abroad programs may significantly alter how the advising is approached at those particular campuses. In addition, a number of institutions have implemented peer advisor programs as a way for students to reach out to other students (Lo, 2006). Peer advisors can be an effective means to reach out to prospective students because they can provide advice on topics that students may otherwise feel uncomfortable bringing up with a regular advisor, such as homesickness (Rosenthal & Shinebarger, 2010). However, because they are students serving in an advising capacity, they may not have access to the same amount of information full-time advisors do, thus being more limited in the advising they can provide. Although it is not uncommon to have advisors who are not serving in a full-time roles as study abroad advisors, this study will focus specifically on the process of advising at a larger public university campus with a staff whose primary responsibility is to advise for study abroad in a full-time capacity. With that said, regardless of what the staffing situation looks like on an individual campus, it is important to provide a certain standard of advising to the affected students.

As study abroad advising can be an extensive and complex process, I have opted to divide the process into four distinct phases: initial, pre-departure, while abroad, and re-entry. This is consistent with the standards of advising set forth by the Forum on
Education Abroad (2011), which advocates for providing comprehensive advising before, during, and after the study abroad experience.

**Phases of Study Abroad Advising**

According to the standards set forth by the Forum on Education Abroad (2011), students should be supported in the three phases the organization has identified, which are before, during, and after study abroad. Because there is a substantial difference between advising a student who is in the process of applying for study abroad versus a student who is just in the information gathering stage trying to figure out if study abroad is a good fit for them, I have opted to divide the first phase into two separate phases. Thus, for the purposes of this study, I have identified the following four phases to study abroad advising: initial advising, pre-departure advising, advising during the time abroad, and re-entry advising. Every student’s journey through the process may be slightly different due to the individual differences in the student and their needs as well as depending on the type of support that is available at the home institution.

**Initial.** The initial advising phase occurs when students first become aware of study abroad opportunities and are taking the first steps towards achieving their goal of participating in study abroad. There are two important steps during this phase: assisting students in choosing the right program and securing finances that are critical in order for the student to progress to the next step in the process (Chalou et al., 1997). During the initial meeting with the student, advisors establish rapport and a sense of trust. This can be accomplished by getting to know the student by asking questions pertaining to his or her major, past travel experiences, and goals for their time abroad (Chalou et al., 1997).
**Program selection.** There are a number of variables advisors should prompt students to consider as they select their study abroad program, including finding a program that offers the courses students need for their academic program (Goldstein & Kim, 2006). Another variable that students should consider is the length of the program (Engle & Engle, 2003). Depending on what they hope to gain from their experience abroad, a longer program such as a semester or academic year program may be necessary in order to accomplish those goals. Engle and Engle (2003) devised a classification of program types aimed at providing a clearer idea of what students can expect from the program. These researchers primarily looked at the length of time a student spent abroad and the level of cultural immersion as the basis for the classification system. This type of classification system can also be very useful for study abroad advisors as they aid students in finding a program that is well matched with their needs and intentions for their sojourn experience.

**Guiding students through the financing process.** The cost of study abroad participation tends to be one of the major barriers for all students interested in studying abroad, but in particular for students of color, which may explain the lower participation rates (Dawson, 2000; Dessoff, 2006). These costs generally vary depending on length and location of the program. Thus, a study abroad advisor can guide students towards lower cost options if financing is the major concern for the student. Additionally, study abroad advisors have an opportunity to reduce these barriers by providing advising aimed at identifying scholarships and other financing resources, as well as assistance with the application materials for these funding opportunities (Brux & Fry, 2010).
**Pre-departure.** A critical element for students to have a successful experience abroad is the advising they receive prior to the departure from the home country. Engle and Engle (2003) stated that it is very important for students to have realistic expectations going into the study abroad experience, otherwise students’ expectations can be violated leading to dissatisfaction with the program and their overall experience abroad.

In addition to setting up appropriate expectations for students, pre-departure advising also serves as a safety measure in order to keep students healthy and safe during their time abroad. One study found that students tend to significantly underestimate the increased risks they are subjected to while studying abroad (Hartjes, Baumann, & Henriques, 2009). For example, the researchers found that many of the students participating in the study were unaware of malaria risks in the countries where they were planning to study. As such, “correcting misperceptions and focusing attention on destination-specific risk appraisal and personal protective measures will improve the odds for students’ safe return from global travels” (Hartjes, Baumann, & Henriques, 2009, p. 343). Thus, mitigating risks for study abroad participants is an important component of the pre-departure advising phase. A general health and safety orientation, as well as a site specific orientation, will allow advisors to address issues that study abroad participants in general face, as well as concerns in a particular location that students should be aware of in order to stay safe and healthy during their time abroad.

**While abroad.** Advising study abroad students does not end when the student leaves campus. Rather, study abroad advisees may require a lot of support once they arrive at the host location because of lack of preparation on their part or to help solve an unexpected issue that they may be facing. Because students have built relationships with
their advisor at the home institution, students may feel more comfortable continuing this relationship while abroad as opposed to connecting with a local on-site advisor. To allow a student maximum growth during their time abroad, it is important to balance challenge and support. Finding what Sanford (1966) calls the “perfect dissonance” is a major challenge in the study abroad profession.

If the environment presents too much challenge, students can regress to earlier, less adaptive modes of behavior; solidify current modes of behavior; escape the challenge; or ignore the challenge if escape is not possible. If there is too little challenge in the environment, students may feel safe and satisfied, but do not develop. (Sanford, 1966, p. 30)

Therefore, it is critical that study abroad advisors allow students enough space to make their own decisions, but provide enough support when things become too challenging.

**Re-entry.** The reentry process for study abroad returnees can be described as a series of highs and lows. Lysgaard (1955) found that the process of adjustment followed a distinct pattern shaped like a U. In the first stage, returnees experienced an initial high during which they are excited about the novelty of the situation. During the second stage, the initial high was followed by a low point, as the novelty wears off and those returning begin to miss more intimate relationships. As they begin to form deeper relationships with people in the foreign environment, they begin to work themselves to the top of the curve once again.

The “W-curve” proposed by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) extends Lysgaard’s (1955) U-curve by adding another downward slope, and specifically for students who study abroad, this occurs upon the return to the home country and is also known as
reentry shock. For students who were deeply entrenched in the foreign culture, the reentry shock is more prevalent (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). As opposed to the highs experienced by persons going abroad, the highs for persons during the reentry phase are very short. Therefore, Adler (1981) found that the low period begins earlier for returnees, sometimes as early as hours upon the return, with the greatest low point often occurring during the second and third month of the return. This is critical to keep in mind for study abroad advisors as they assist students in reintegrating back to the home campus.

As mentioned previously, little is known about the process of advising for study abroad. Thus, I have opted to include research from a very closely related field, that of academic advising. The following section will explore the literature pertaining to academic advising and how it compares and contrasts with study abroad advising.

Comparison between Academic and Study Abroad Advising

There are a number of differences and similarities between the two types of advising. This section will outline some of the major areas of advising and how they align between the two groups of advisors as identified in the current literature on study abroad advising. For the proposed study, these are the areas that I will focus on when looking at developmental advising in the study abroad context.

Interaction with advisees. A critical difference between academic advisors and study abroad advisors is that academic advisors may interact with their advisees on a longer basis as compared to the study abroad advisor. On the one hand, Habley (1981) stated that interactions with the academic advisors may be one of few consistent interactions throughout the academic tenure for a student. In study abroad advising, on
the other hand, assuming the institution is following the Forum on Education Abroad’s (2011) standards of good practice, study abroad advisors primarily work with their advisees the semester before their study abroad experience, the duration of their experience abroad, and likely the semester following their return from abroad. Although academic advising might be a more extensive process that encompasses the duration of students’ university experience, the process of discussing personal values and matching those with study abroad programs that meet their academic needs is similar in advising for study abroad.

**Referrals to other professionals.** Academic advisors are trained to refer students to mental health counselors as necessary based on triggers such as the inability to complete assignments or to attend classes (Robbins, 2012). Somewhat similarly, study abroad professionals also have mental health professionals to consult with should a student show signs of distress during the study abroad process. These resources may be either at the home campus or at the host location, depending on whether the student has departed or is still at the home institution. Because the cultural view of and resources pertaining to mental health issues may vary from one country to another, the resources students have available in the United States may not be available abroad (Saxena, Thornicroft, Knapp, & Whiteford, 2007). For instance, Saxena et al. (2007) found that there is a scarcity of mental health resources available, particularly in low and middle-income countries. Thus, study abroad advisers need to have sufficient cultural knowledge in order to properly advise and refer students as necessary.

**Advising patterns.** Whereas study abroad advisors see students interested in studying abroad throughout the semester in a less predictable pattern, academic advisors
tend to have peak seasons when advisees schedule appointments, primarily to plan out their schedule for the upcoming semester (Robbins, 2012). Because time is limited during these appointments, prescriptive advising is often the primary mode of conducting the advising session. However, Robbins (2012) found that when students seek out advising during other parts of the semester, the advising mode tends to lend itself more readily to developmental advising. Because the time limitations are not the same for study abroad advisors, this may be a critical difference between the two groups.

Another noteworthy difference between the two advising types is that academic advising may be hampered by students’ degree programs in a way that study abroad advising may not. For instance, one of the limitations of developmental advising in the academic setting is that certain degree programs do not lend themselves easily to a developmental approach due to the set nature of the program course offerings (Christian & Sprinkle, 2013). This may include academic programs such as nursing, engineering, and education that tend to have limited flexibility in what courses are taken and in what sequence. Although study abroad advisors may have the same limitation as an academic advisor in the academic component of the program selection for these students, they have the opportunity to provide developmental advising based on other goals that the students may have for their time abroad. This might include goals pertaining to cultural immersion and travel opportunities, for example.

**Use of technology in advising.** The use of technology has not escaped advising practices in higher education. In academic advising, systems have been developed to better assist the advisor in helping students choose an appropriate course from a selection of courses that meet the criteria for graduation (Phillips, 2013). With the use of the new
technology, advisors can now provide this information more quickly and efficiently in order to assist students in staying on track for graduation (Phillips, 2013). Not only is it important for students to take a specific set of courses in order to successfully graduate from a degree program, the sequence in which the courses are taken is also an important. Prior to computerized advising, the advisor would spend the majority of advising appointments looking up course information in catalogs, a system that was much more prone to errors. Due to technology, Phillips (2013) found that the time saved during advising appointments could then be used to focus on other important criteria to ensure the student’s success, including goal setting and other developmentally sound tasks.

In addition to making sure students stay on track for graduation, these computerized programs can also help students choose a major by suggesting majors based on their specific areas of interest. In particular at larger universities with an overwhelming number of majors, the process of choosing a major can be a daunting task for students. Ultimately, choosing the right major early in the educational process may reduce students’ time to graduation by taking courses that are required for their chosen major and not superfluous elective courses. Lastly, Phillips (2013) found that computerized academic advising systems can also assist administrators to schedule courses correctly in the appropriate sequence for each of the majors offered at the institution. With a large number of majors offered, this can be an otherwise challenging task.

In study abroad, the use of technology is also becoming more prevalent. A popular software program in the field of education abroad is StudioAbroad produced by Terra Dotta. In addition to better maintaining accurate records of student participants in
case of an emergency abroad, this software also allows users the opportunity to search for programs based on the specific parameters set forth by the student. This might include length of program, term, courses offered, and geographic region. Much like a computerized course database for academic advisors, this allows study abroad advisors to focus more on students and their needs, as opposed to looking up information in catalogs. However, from a developmental perspective, advisors should not neglect the opportunity to talk with their advisees about what the goals are for their time abroad, even if the advisee has self-selected a study abroad program with the use of technology, to make sure it is indeed a good fit for their personal needs.

Another way technology has become important in study abroad is the use of social media. Social media can be a useful tool for study abroad students to keep current with friends and family at home as well as to share their experiences abroad. From the advising perspective, social media technologies such as Facebook or Skype can be a useful tool for study abroad advisors to communicate with their advisees during their term abroad. In addition, study abroad advisors also need to know enough about the potential negative aspects of social media use in the study abroad context in order to advise students properly (Huesca, 2013). In his study, Huesca (2013) found that although technology served a purpose in building bridges between the volunteers in his program and the locals, as well as finding reference materials, the overall impact of technology was negative. Not only did technology distract members of the group from fully engaging in the local culture, but also from fully transforming on a personal level. Although more research is needed, technology use abroad should be a legitimate concern for study abroad professionals as we design new programs. The balancing act between
providing cell phones and other technology for reasons of safety and security needs to be carefully considered with the development we hope to see in our students post study abroad.

**Student Outcomes Associated with Developmental Advising**

There are a number of positive outcomes associated with developmental advising, including persistence at the institution, student learning, and satisfaction.

**Persistence.** Retaining students to graduation is a major concern for college administrators, not only from a financial perspective, but for accreditation purposes as well. In addition to being collaborative in nature, developmental advising is also goal-centered and requires ownership by the student for attaining these goals (Raushi, 1993). This requires both identification necessary steps in the process and action by the student. According to Tinto (1993), students who do not set goals are less likely to be retained at the institution because they are more likely to question their purpose for attending and graduating from college. Furthermore, Tinto’s (1993) research also shows that students need to be involved both in the social and the academic spheres of the institution to be retained to graduation at the most optimal rate. From the advising perspective, this allows advisors to have a major influence on their advisees as they work with students to set reasonable goals, consistent with developmental advising practices, as well as encouraging students to stay involved on campus and providing resources to that extent.

In a study of attrition between the first and second year, Metzner (1989) asked students to rate the advising advising experience on a five-point scale. Metzner found that students who received what they perceived as high quality advising were more likely to be retained to their sophomore year than students who received perceived low quality
advising. The students who received no advising at all were the most likely to drop out after their first year in college. Although it is not conclusive from Metzner’s (1989) study that the advising the students received was developmental in nature, it is likely based on students’ propensity for developmental advising (Hale et al., 2009).

**Student learning.** The developmental approach to advising requires significant contribution to the learning process by the student (Crookston, 1972). According to Astin’s (1984) theory of student involvement, it is the active approach to the learning process by the student that creates the optimal learning environment. He defines student involvement as “the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (Astin, 1984, p. 518). This includes not only the effort put forth in the classroom, but also the student’s involvement in campus organizations and interactions with college personnel and other students, for instance.

Astin (1984) looked at several models of learning, none of which had required active participation as described in his own theoretical framework. First, he looked at content theory, in which the faculty controls the learning environment by providing the knowledge to the student without any real engagement or involvement from the student. This approach is very similar to the prescriptive advising style (Crookston, 1972) where the advisor provides the content without any context or involvement by the student. Second, Astin (1984) looked at resource theory, a theory that specifies that if all resources are available to the student (fiscal, human, and physical), learning will take place. Again, this theory does not take into account any level of involvement by the student in the learning process. Lastly, Astin considered individualized theory of student learning. This approach emphasizes choices that the students can make in terms of
elective courses as well as personalized instruction methods, such as self-paced courses. Although this mode of learning can be successful, it is very costly to implement and it can be challenging to match learning styles with the educational programs offered.

By actively engaging students in the process of learning, either in the classroom setting or out of the classroom such as through developmental advising, the student is afforded learning opportunities that would not otherwise be present.

**Student satisfaction.** Coll and Draves (2009) looked at satisfaction with the advising students were receiving, particularly in relation to the students’ worldviews. Specifically, the researchers looked at the degree to which students’ worldview correlates with the satisfaction with the academic advising they received. In addition, the researchers examined how the relationship between students’ and advisors’ worldviews correlate with the level of satisfaction with advising. The study revealed that it is not necessary for the advisors’ and advisees’ worldviews to match in order to have satisfactory academic advising. Rather, students who were most satisfied with their advising were those who received developmental advising, which the researchers linked to increased academic performance, retention, and student development. Additionally, Coll and Draves (2009) showed that there is a positive correlation between satisfaction and time discussing personal values and academic majors. On the contrary, discussing financial aid had a negative correlation to academic advising satisfaction. The researchers hypothesized that this negative correlation is likely due to financial difficulties that students are encountering at the institution, leading to an overall negative view of the institution.
The findings by Coll and Draves (2009) are consistent with findings by Hale et al. (2009). In their study, the students were asked to fill out the Academic Advising Inventory in order to assess their preferred advising styles. This assessment asks students to choose between two statements, one linked to prescriptive advising and the other to developmental advising and rate their preference for each. The students in the study indicated that they preferred developmental advising at a rate of 95%. In addition, the same group of students was asked to rate their advisors based on the same statements and the degree to which they agreed with the statement. Nearly 80% of the students in their study identified their advisors as using the developmental advising style. The students who showed the most satisfaction with their academic advising experience were those who experienced congruence between their preferred advising style and the advisor’s actual advising style (Hale et al., 2009).

The preference for a specific type of advising shows some additional patterns. Christian and Sprinkle (2013) found that there is a significant correlation between age and preference for developmental advising. These researchers found that students who were early in their academic careers preferred to have the academic advisor prescribe advice, including which classes to take, whereas the students further along academically were more invested in their academic careers and preferred a collaborative method of advising and were more willing to accept responsibility for their academic progress. This might be a noteworthy finding as study abroad participants are primarily juniors (36%) and seniors (24.4%) (Institute for International Education, 2013).

The academic advising that takes place on our university campuses is an important piece in the services that are offered to students and might be one of few
activities that touch all students at multiple points during their academic careers.

Similarly, study abroad advising has the potential to be equally as important, but more information about this process of interaction is necessary before we can make that claim. In the following section, I will outline what we do know about study abroad advising to date. As is evident by this review of the literature, the advising process for study abroad is a complex one. The following section will explore a theoretical framework that I used as a lens to look at this process.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework that guided this study is the developmental academic advising model that was created in order to reexamine the functions of an academic advisor in a more developmentally sound approach that looks at the student in a holistic manner (Crookston, 1972). Prior to the development of this theoretical framework for advising, the academic advisor served in a helping role, primarily to assist students choose a major and to find a job and did not necessarily concern themselves with other aspects of student growth and development. Because Crookston’s (1972) theoretical framework of developmental advising was developed specifically with academic advising in mind and has not previously been applied in this context, there may be limitations to its applicability to study abroad advising. However, due to many similarities between academic and study abroad advising, it is my belief that this theoretical framework is appropriate for a study of this nature.

Again, due to the limited nature of studies applying this theoretical framework in the study abroad context, I have chosen to look at academic advising, which is a closely related field that has produced a wealth of information and research pertaining to the
topic of developmental advising. To further narrow and limit the topic, I am choosing to look specifically at developmental academic advising for undergraduate students. At most academic institutions in the U.S., very few graduate students participate in study abroad opportunities that may be available to them. According to IIE, less than 13% of the total study abroad population during the 2011-12 academic year were graduate or professional level students (Institute for International Education, 2013). Thus, the most appropriate related research will be the studies that have focused on developmental academic advising for the undergraduate population. The following section will closely examine Crookston’s (1972) theoretical framework.

**Developmental vs. Prescriptive Academic Advising**

There are substantial differences between prescriptive academic advising and developmental academic advising as identified Crookston (1972). Although the framework was developed for academic advising, the research shows that these two types of advising approaches are prevalent in study abroad advising and, therefore, relevant to a study on advising practices for study abroad as well. For instance, the Forum (2011) standards of advising for study abroad are very much in line with the developmental approach to advising, much like the equivalent NACADA (2005) standards for academic advising.

**Developmental academic advising.** Developmental advising has been in practice for more than 30 years (Harrison, 2009). The key difference between developmental advising and prescriptive advising is that developmental advising focuses on the relationship between the advisor and the student as they engage in tasks that lead to development for both parties (Crookston, 1972). This type of advising is a process and
is grounded in human development (Raushi, 1993). Furthermore, Raushi (1993) states that developmental advising is much more than just individual acts of giving advice to a student. Rather, it is a process by which advisors interact with their advisees that enhances their growth as students.

Crookston (1972) identified two basic assumptions for his model. First, he posited that higher education can allow a person the opportunity to plan professional training and work around your life plan instead of the inverse of preparing for a profession and then working your life into your professional life. Second, faculty (and other advising professionals) and students share the responsibilities of teaching and learning and the outcome of such a partnership. Teaching, Crookston (1972) stated, “includes any experience in the learning community in which teacher and student interact that contributes to individual, group, or community growth and development and can be evaluated” (p. 12). Thus, it is critical the both parties take ownership of the process in order for developmental advising to occur.

Developmental advising has also been referred to as collaborative advising, because it requires collaboration between two parties, in this case the advisor and the advisee, in order to make important decisions regarding the student’s education at the institution (Christian & Sprinkle, 2013). This might include decisions such as which courses to take and what semester, allowing for an individualized educational plan that is developed with input from the student, not just prescribed by the advisor. According to Christian and Sprinkle (2013), a collaborative approach puts emphasis on the internal motivating factors in the student, such as personal and/or professional growth, as opposed to external factors, such as grades. Additionally, successfully implementing a
developmental approach to advising also requires collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs due to the nature of educating the whole person (Raushi, 1993).

**Prescriptive academic advising.** Prescriptive advising is the more traditional role between advisors and their advisees (Crookston, 1972). The relationship is hierarchical in nature and the advisor, as the authority, would prescribe solutions to problems that the advisee then is responsible for implementing. Because students are not part of the solution to the problem, they also tend to deny responsibility for the outcome since they perceive the responsibility of the outcome to be the advisors’ because they prescribed the advice (Crookston, 1972). What Crookston (1972) was specifically concerned with in regards to prescriptive advising is that the advice given may only touch the surface and treat only the symptoms of the problem, not the root of the issues the students are facing.

There are a number of challenges that study abroad advisors face in their day to day work. Not only must they find ways to help students overcome barriers to participation, they must also serve as general advisors to a number of issues that accompany study abroad participation, such as questions about financial aid, the process of transferring back courses towards their degree at the home institution. In addition, they must juggle students who are all in various stages of the study abroad process. Thus, having a better understanding of this advising process will be critical going forward as student participation rates are steadily increasing. The following chapter will outline the proposed method for carrying out this qualitative study. This will include the selection of participants, detailed description of the site, as well as the methods for collecting and interpreting the data.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

To understand the complexity of study abroad advising, I aim to study the process closely from a variety of vantage points. This chapter will examine the methodology, research design, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, limitations, and significance of the study.

Research Questions

Two research questions have been developed for this study using case study design:

1. What informs study abroad advising practices of study abroad advisors at the International Center of the University of Missouri?

2. Is there evidence of developmental advising in the process of study abroad advising?
   a. During the initial advising phase
   b. During the pre-departure phase
   c. While abroad
   d. During the re-entry phase

Methodology and Research Design

Understanding a complex process, such as study abroad advising, is best accomplished through a qualitative study. Qualitative researchers are focused on learning about the experiences of individuals, how these experiences are interpreted, and what meaning the individual has assessed to that experience (Merriam, 2009). In addition, one of the goals for qualitative research is to understand the phenomenon, in this case
advising for study abroad, from the participants’ perspectives and generating a “thick”
description of said practices (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995). One strength of this kind of
research is that by using the researcher as the primary instrument for both data collection
and analysis, there will be opportunities for member checking with the participants along
the way to ensure accuracy of the interpretation (Merriam, 2009). Based on the
complexity of the problem that I have opted to study, a qualitative approach fits well and
will be used to guide this research study.

The design for this study will be an instrumental case study. Stake (1995) states
that this type of case study examines a broader problem while seeking a general
understanding of the issue through a particular case, which is consistent with my goals
for the study. Case study requires a bounded system (Merriam, 2009), what Stake (1995)
referred to as an integrated system. According to Stake, people and programs make good
prospective cases. In addition, a case needs to be both holistic and context sensitive
(Patton, 2002) and looks at the particularity and complexity of a single case (Stake,
1995).

The Case

The case for this study will be the International Center at the University of
Missouri (MU), specifically the study abroad portion of the organization. First, in order
to provide context for the case, I will provide some background of the university as a
whole. According to the university’s website, the University of Missouri was founded in
1839 as a public land grant university with a mission to serve the citizens of Missouri
(About Mizzou, n.d.). Today, the institution boasts a student population of 35,000, with
students from throughout the United States and 120 countries around the world. The
university offers more than 300 degree programs in 19 colleges and schools and has a strong emphasis of research. It is the only public institution in Missouri with membership in the Association of American Universities.

The organizational structure of study abroad offices vary significantly from one campus to another, quite often depending on where the office fits into the larger institutional structure. Some study abroad offices report to student affairs, whereas others report to academic affairs (DeYoung & Primak, 1997). At the University of Missouri, the International Center reports directly to the Vice Provost for International Programs, which is more typical of large educational institutions (DeYoung & Primak, 1997). Furthermore, the University of Missouri is typical in that it has one large centralized office that serves the entire student population and multiple departmental study abroad offices that provide specialized programming for students whose majors fall within that academic department. Departmental study abroad offices tend to be much more varied in terms of set up and organization than a centralized study abroad office. For instance, looking at the departmental study abroad offices at the University of Missouri, some offer programs only during the summer and intersession terms and only faculty-led program options, whereas others offer a full portfolio of program options during all available terms. Thus, because the International Center tends to be much more in line with what other centralized offices offer in terms of program availability, services, and responsibilities, I have opted to focus my study only on the advisors at the International Center in order to provide a typical case.
Population and Sample

Sampling Procedures

At MU, there is a central office, the International Center, which is designated by the Chancellor as the responsible party for approving study abroad programs as well as proving all health and safety preparations for faculty and students participating in study abroad. In addition, there are a number of departmental offices on campus that administer programs specifically for students in their department. This includes the College of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (CAFNR), the School of Journalism, the College of Business, and the College of Education. Although there are staff members with advising responsibilities in each of these departmental offices, this study will be limited to those with study abroad advising responsibilities at the International Center. The reason I opted to only include the staff at the International Center is because these staff members are advising for students from the entire campus, not just students from a select academic department. Thus, due to the broad nature of their study abroad advising academically, I believe that their experiences may be more transferable to other settings, or what Stake (1995) would refer to as a ‘typical’ case. Stake (1995) cautions that this does not necessarily mean that the study’s outcomes are generalizable to other cases, nor is it the goal of case study research.

Recruitment Process

Because there are only six staff members who met the requirements for participation in this study, I used a census method and included all six in the sample. Each of the participants was provided with a letter inviting them to join the study (Appendix A). Because I do serve as an indirect supervisor to all participants in the
study, these letters were delivered to each advisor personally by a neutral party in order to avoid any undue coercion to participate. The letter of invitation very clearly stated that participants are in no way obligated to join the study and nor will any outcomes of the study be used to evaluate their performance as study abroad advisors. Although the developmental approach may be the preferred standard in other areas of student advising, according to the director of study abroad at MU, there will be no negative repercussions for the advisors whose advising style may not align with these practices currently (B. Lindeman, personal communication, October 21, 2014). Rather, the outcomes of this study may help inform training of new advisors, as well as the processes of advising used by current advisors going forward.

In addition, the letter of invitation also provided an outline of what is expected of participants in terms of interviews, recorded observations, and reflections, as well as a statement that informed participants that they may withdraw from the study at any point without negative repercussions. One reminder email was sent out by the neutral party to participants who had not yet returned the consent forms within the specified 2 week window. Five participants consented to participate in the study.

**Positionality**

A potential concern about qualitative research is the potential bias that the researcher infuses into the study (Patton, 2002). As indicated earlier, I have minimized this potential shortcoming by implementing what Patton (2002) refers to as rigorous methods for doing fieldwork. In this study, this includes both member checking during the analysis phase as well as triangulation of data. Having a firm understanding of my own positionality will also help keep as much bias as possible out of the study.
As I approached this study, there were a few considerations that I felt necessary to acknowledge pertaining to my own positionality. First, although I do not serve as a direct supervisor to any of the participants in the study, I wanted to ensure that there was no undue pressure to participate or respond in any particular way because I am a member of the staff of the International Center. The invitation was very clear that there would be no negative repercussions for non-participation or for opting or dropping out part of the way through the study.

Second, in addition to ensuring that there was no undue pressure to participate in the study, I recognized that as an employee of the site where I conducted my study, it was critical to bracket my personal experiences (Merriam, 2002) and only look at the data that are collected during the actual study. Merriam (2002) advocates for putting aside personal attitudes and beliefs about the phenomenon that is being studied temporarily. Furthermore, Merriam (2002) discusses how beneficial bracketing is to the research process, in that “with belief temporarily suspended, consciousness itself becomes heightened, allowing the researcher to intuit or see the essence of the phenomenon” (p. 7). However, having some inside knowledge of the operation provided me with insights of the office culture that only an insider would have that I believe to be beneficial for my study. Although my goal was to bracket any previous experiences, it is likely that some preconceived notions have influenced the outcomes of this study.

Third, because this is my chosen profession, in particular at the site where I am conducting the study, I was also coming into this study with the lens of improving my own practice. In a sense, this study could be considered a form of action or practitioner research as I hope to use the results to bring about some change in advising practices at
the site where I am conducting the study. This is consistent with findings pertaining to action research by Herr and Anderson (2005) who found that “practitioner researchers see research as a way to deepen their own reflection on practice toward problem solving and professional development, as well as a way to generate knowledge of practice from the inside out” (p. 38). From a positionality standpoint, I have the advantage of being what Herr and Anderson (2005) refer to as an ‘insider’ but have the dissertation committee to serve as an ‘outsiders’ to provide guidance on the methodological aspects of the study. Furthermore, per the suggestion of these researchers, as an insider in this study, I have opted to recognize this status rather than operating from an outsider perspective and thus have not referred to myself in the third person.

Fourth, I believe that it is important to recognize that although the goal of this study was simply to examine the study abroad advising process for evidence of developmental advising, my personal bias is towards developmental advising. Because of this belief, my approach to this study may be a little different than a researcher with a preference for another advising method.

Lastly, I come into this study as a professional in the field of international education with 15 years of experience, both from a small private women’s college, a departmental study abroad office, and now a centralized study abroad office at a large public institution. Furthermore, growing up in Sweden until the age of 17 may slightly alter my perspective and how I approach things. As a high school student in Sweden, I participated in an exchange program for a year to the United States and have lived in the U.S. since that time, the entire time in the Midwest. These experiences may have some
influence on my epistemology and approach to this research project. Next, I will explore the instrumentation and data collection for this study.

**Instrumentation and Data Collection Procedures**

There were four data sources for this study, which included written reflections, interviews, field notes, and video recorded advising appointments. The triangulation of the data will be further explored in the section of this dissertation pertaining to the study’s trustworthiness. Each of these data will be explored next.

**Written Reflections by Participants**

The first data source in this study was written reflections by the participants, which took place directly after a study abroad advising appointment. Upon agreeing to participate in the study, the participants were sent an email with instructions for how to complete the reflection by the researcher (Appendix C). A reflection form was provided attached to the email with a few prompts on advising, including a personal reflection on how they felt about the advising appointment and what information they were drawing from to answer the student’s questions (Appendix D). This reflection allowed the participants to reflect on the advising appointment and their role as a study abroad advisor.

**Interviews**

The most extensive data in this study came from the semi-structured interviews with each of the participants. Interviews are an excellent way to gain insight to the participants’ lived experiences as well as their thoughts and feelings on a specific topic (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002). Fossey et al. (2002) stated that semi-structured interviews are generally used to focus the interview on a specific topic.
According to Stake (1995), focusing on a specific context—in this case the advising process—is appropriate for an instrumental case study, rather than broadening it to include aspects such as marketing and recruitment for study abroad. The interview instrument was created based on the current literature in the field of international education as well as that of developmental advising (Appendix E). Although I planned for follow-up interviews, I did not find it necessary in order to clarify any data that were collected as part of the study with the participants.

Each of the interviews was audio recorded to ensure that I captured the information accurately. These interviews lasted approximately 30-75 minutes each. Verbatim transcripts were typed shortly upon the conclusion of the interview to prevent loss or misinterpretation of data (Stake, 1995). The transcriptions in this study were completed solely by the researcher without use of any outside assistance. This allowed me, the researcher, to listen carefully to the interviews multiple times as I was transcribing the content. In addition, I took the opportunity during transcriptions to jot down initial thoughts and potential codes pertaining to the data during the process of transcribing.

Field Notes

Perhaps one of the most critical aspects of a qualitative study are the field notes collected during the interviews (Patton, 2002). According to Patton (2002), field notes should contain anything worth noting, such as details pertaining to the physical environment, social interactions, and when and where the observation took place. Throughout this study, I took extensive notes, which included noteworthy observations and thoughts as the study progressed. For instance, as further explored in chapter four, I
found that building relationships with students was critically important for the advisors in this study. My field notes included observations about the physical environment such as furniture placement, signs displayed in the office, level of eye contact by the advisor with the student advisee, to name a few examples. In addition, as the data collection progressed, I noted hunches I had about where the data were steering me and questions I wanted to be sure to ask during the interview with my next participant to see if answers could be corroborated. It was helpful to use a semi-structured format for these interviews to allow me to slightly alter and add questions to the original set of questions for the interviews as the study progressed.

**Video Recordings**

The final means of data collection came from video recorded advising appointments (observations) of the advisors and their advisees. This was to capture “naturally occurring routines, interactions and practices of a particular group of people in their social environments, and so to understand their culture” (Fossey et al., 2002, p. 727). To allow for the most natural environment for these video recordings, each took place in the advisor’s own office or cubicle. Only one of the five advisors in this study has a cubicle space as opposed to a more private office where they can close the door if necessary. One of the things I noted in my field notes after watching the appointment of this advisor is how the lack of privacy might affect what students share with their advisors in a space where he or she can be overheard by others. It was evident from the recording that no conversations were private in cubicle space as the camera was able to capture surrounding conversations as well as the appointment that I was focused on. This
might be a consideration for those designing spaces for study abroad advising in the future.

Prior to the start of each advising appointment, the study abroad advisees signed a consent form agreeing to allow me to video record the appointment (Appendix F). Because this study specifically focused on the advising process from the perspective of the study abroad advisor, not the advisee, the camera was focused only on the study abroad advisor. The recording equipment was placed in an unobtrusive location in order to avoid as much disruption as possible during the advising appointment. Each of the video recordings lasted between 30 to 90 minutes with the longest being an appointment in the pre-departure phase followed by the appointment with a student in the returnee phase.

I video recorded each advisor once conducting an advising appointment with one or more students. Because there were more advisors than phases, I was able to capture two recordings for the initial phase and one recording for each of the remaining phases of study abroad. To allow me a broader perspective of advising for students going abroad, I also purposefully selected a mix of male and female participants, although the female advisees significantly outnumbered the male, which is reflective of the study abroad population as a whole. In addition, I was able to capture a good mix of study abroad locations, including both the more traditional study abroad destinations in Europe, as well as Ghana and Jordan, two non-traditional study abroad destinations. The use of the terms ‘traditional’ versus ‘non-traditional’ study abroad locations are common descriptors within the field of international education (Wells, 2006). Thus, although the terms may have negative connotations, I have opted to use them in this study.
The video recordings in this study were not transcribed in their entirety. Rather, I opted to take observational field notes about the content and the setting and pull out specific quotes as I watched the videos. Field notes are frequently used to document observations of a particular phenomenon and adding another perspective of that phenomenon (Mulhall, 2002). For instance, Mulhall (2002) recognizes that what participants report that they do and what an observer is actually able to witness when observing a phenomenon are not always the same although both perspectives are equally valid and should be taken into account during analysis. As I will further elaborate on in chapter four, I used the video recordings primarily to exemplify developmental advising in each of the stages of study abroad advising. In this particular study, I was able to confirm that what advisors reported that they do during their interviews with me was indeed found in my observations of them performing their advising roles. Following, I will explain how the data were organized, coded, and analyzed.

**Organizing and Analyzing the Data**

As with most qualitative studies, there was a large amount of data collected in this study, which included more than 100 pages of transcriptions from the semi-structured interviews, hours of video recordings, pages worth of reflections by the participants, along with multiple pages of field notes. Because there was a substantial amount of data to manage for this study, I created a case record for each participant. This section will be devoted to the process of analyzing and making sense of these vast amounts of data.

**Coding and Data Analysis**

Stake (1995) stated that there is no specific point during the case study when analysis begins. Rather, he suggests that the analysis of the case is an ongoing process of
taking it apart and assessing meaning to it. Furthermore, both individual instances and aggregated instances of an occurrence are important to recognize during the analysis of a case (Stake 1995). Analyzing the data allows the researcher to group information and present it in a way that makes sense to the readers (Basit, 2003).

However, before data can be analyzed, it is critical that they have been categorized, or coded, in a systematic way. Basit (2003) stated that codes generally are “attached to chunks of varying-sized words, phrases, sentences or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting” (p. 144). Because the coding process for each research question was performed slightly differently, this section will be divided by research question.

**Research question 1.** For the first research question pertaining to what informs study abroad advising practices, I used an open coding process, highlighting passages and sentences that I found relevant in answering the research question by inserting codes in the margins of the transcript (Merriam, 2009). Although I may have been able to predict some codes based on the review of the literature and my work in education abroad, my preference was to allow the data to dictate the codes through the open coding process rather than using pre-set codes.

The second step in this coding process was to group the codes into logical themes. First, I created an Excel document with all codes that emerged in the study and omitted duplicates. Once I had a list of unique codes, I grouped them into categories (Merriam, 2009). Based on these groupings, I constructed the themes that are presented in chapter four of this dissertation. Based on the themes and subcategories of the themes, I created a master document. In this master document, I copied and pasted the relevant passages and
sentences from each transcript and reflection by the advisor under each theme and subcategory of that theme. This allowed me to easily pull quotes for chapter four as well as confirm that the data do in fact collaborate my findings.

**Research question 2.** For the second research question pertaining to developmental advising, I opted to use pre-set codes based on Crookston’s (1972) developmental advising model. Specifically, I opted to use a chart differentiating between prescriptive and developmental advising as set forth by Winston and Sandor (1984) as part of their development of the Academic Advising Inventory (AAI). For the purposes of this study, I recreated Winston and Sandor’s (1984) figure below, which clearly delineates between prescriptive and developmental advising:

**Error! Not a valid link.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Terms of</th>
<th>Prescriptive</th>
<th>Developmental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABILITIES</td>
<td>Focus on limitation of students</td>
<td>Focus on potentialities of students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTIVATION</td>
<td>Students are lazy</td>
<td>Students are active and striving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REWARDS</td>
<td>Grades, credits</td>
<td>Achievement, mastery, feeling of fulfillment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATURITY</td>
<td>Students are immature, irresponsible, and must be supervised closely.</td>
<td>Students are growing, maturing, and capable of self-direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INITIATIVE</td>
<td>Advisor fulfills duty by signing forms and giving advice; the remainder is up to the student.</td>
<td>Either student or advisor may take initiative -- who does what is a matter of shared decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTROL</td>
<td>By advisor</td>
<td>Not a major issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESPONSIBILITY</td>
<td>Advisor has primary responsibility for outcomes.</td>
<td>Clearly negotiated as to who does what (not the same with every student).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on this chart, I used the far left column as my codes when examining the data for evidence of developmental advising. Again, I created a master document with the combined passages and sentences pertaining to each category for the five participants. In order to accurately quote participants, their pseudonyms were still attached to each statement. As described in the following chapter, I was not able to find evidence of each developmental advising category in the data collected in this study.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Although qualitative research has been described as an interpretation of reality, there are ways to strengthen the findings (Merriam, 1995). To ensure trustworthiness of the study, I employed a number of techniques as outlined by Merriam (1995). Merriam (1995) suggested that triangulation of data in qualitative research may include multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm the findings. In this study, the data came from four different sources: written reflection, audio recorded interviews, field notes, and video recorded advising appointments. This allowed me to rely on multiple sources of evidence, all which corroborated each other. This allows the investigator to present the situation as truthfully as possible according to the perceptions of those who are in the situation (Merriam, 1995).

To validate the data, it was important to do member checks with each of the participants in the study. Thus, I met with each of them for about 10 to 15 minutes to ensure that my interpretation of the data was indeed on target. As part of this process, I
asked each participant if my themes and categories made sense to them, all which were affirmed. Recognizing the positionality that I bring as a researcher was important because this allows the reader to better understand how the data were interpreted in the way that they were (Merriam, 1995). In this study it was important to acknowledge that I am an employee of the site that I am studying—what researchers would consider an insider. Merriam (1995) stated that it is essential for the researcher to collect data over an extended period of time to ensure that a sufficient amount of knowledge is gained in order to understand the phenomenon that is being studied. In this case, because I am also employed full-time in the site where I conducted the research, I have had the opportunity to observe the site and interact with the participants for nearly 6 years. Having the prolonged exposure to the research site and the participants has allowed me to gain insights and has provided context for the study, which I have opted to include rather than reject. In order to share these insights to the greatest extent possible, I have used what Geertz (1994) referred to as rich, thick description in this study. This involves writing with enough detail so that the readers can see themselves in the setting. In his famous writing, Geertz (1994) stated, “what generality it contrives to achieve grows out of the delicacy of its distinctions, not the sweep of its abstractions” (p. 227). This was in reference to the very detailed descriptions he provided in regards to a culture that he was then able to use to come up with a generalizable sign system. For this study, this also included using key quotes to illustrate the claims that I am making as well as allowing the reader to hear the voice of the participants come through.
As with every study, there are limits to what can be learned. In the following section, I will outline each of these limitations, which specifically includes issues pertaining to the theoretical framework and methodology.

**Limitations**

There were a few limitations that should be acknowledged in this section. First, the timing of the study may have had some impact on the types of study abroad appointments and the advising styles used during the data collection phase. For instance, in two of the advising appointments, the students were late applicants and thus perhaps not ‘typical’ advisees as the vast majority of applications come in on or before the application deadline. Because of the time constraint of starting to explore study abroad after the application deadline, the students also had a more limited program portfolio to choose from because some program deadlines had already passed, which likely altered some of the typical advising protocols. In addition, the study abroad advisees were pushed through the process at a much faster rate than would be typical in order to get them caught up with the rest of the program participants.

Second, although five of the six potential participants opted to join the study, the sixth person could have added some valuable insights into this study as well. This is particularly true because this non-participant has experience advising for both faculty-led and more traditional study abroad programs and could provide a balanced perspective of advising for both program types. This would have allowed for a balanced perspective of advising for different program types that the rest of the study abroad advisors in this study lack to some extent as they tend to advise for one program type or the other, not both.
Third, there were a limited number of observations conducted in this study. Therefore, there may be limited connections to the model developed by Winston and Sandor (1984). Finally, although Crookston’s (1972) theoretical framework has been utilized in studies pertaining to academic advising, the initial model was used to examine advising conducted by faculty members. Thus, although it seems to be a good fit for this study, there may be limitations to what can be learned. For instance, the model does not take into account the different training that faculty members may have received that is different than that of academic advisors. It is more likely that professional full-time academic advisors would be trained in a particular model of advising, than faculty members who advise as part of their position.

Summary

When using a case study approach, a methodology that generates vast amounts of rich data, researchers need to be prepared for the time commitment involved in coding and analyzing the data. Even a small scale case study, such as this one, generated 100 pages in transcripts, hours of video recordings, and numerous pages of written reflections. At times, the amount of data and the time needed to organize the data in a logical fashion was overwhelming. By utilizing a qualitative case study approach, I was able to understand a complex process from the perspective of the participants and the meaning they assessed to those experiences (Merriam, 2009). By employing multiple means of collecting this data, which included interviews, observations, field notes, and reflections as well as performing member checking procedures, I was able to confirm the findings, which are presented in the subsequent chapter.
CHAPTER 4

Before delving into the results, I want to first provide additional context for the setting for this case study, the International Center at the University of Missouri (MU). Following this, I will provide short descriptions of the participants and their backgrounds to help uncover the experiences and perspectives that inform their advising practices.

The Case

The case for this study is the study abroad staff within the MU International Center. The International Center serves international students and scholars, as well as MU students interested in studying overseas. In addition to the international student and scholar (ISSS) and study abroad teams, there is a director’s team, which includes the communications, front desk, and fiscal staff members in the office. However the case, which is a singular case, only encompasses the study abroad staff members. As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, there are 10 full-time staff members who work with students interested in studying abroad. Of this staff, there is one study abroad assistant, three study abroad advisors, one fiscal administrative assistant, two study abroad coordinators, one assistant director, one associate director, and one director of study abroad. Again, staff members were included in the sample if their position included study abroad advising, even if their actual title was not necessarily reflective of that. Although this case study was only inclusive of full-time staff members, there are three graduate students and five undergraduate peer advisors who also contribute to the study abroad team within the International Center.

In addition to facilitating study abroad opportunities for MU students as well as serving the international population at MU, the International Center also supports
international initiatives across campus. For instance this includes maintaining MU’s relationships with other institutions around the world as well as facilitating internationalization in the MU curriculum. Very recently, the International Center also started offering passport and photo services to both the MU and local community in order to facilitate the process of getting a passport in hopes that this will increase the number of students who study abroad.

Physically, the International Center is located in the lower level of one of the central buildings on campus, the Memorial Union. Approximately half of the staff in the office has private offices, whereas the other half are assigned to cubicle work spaces. As you enter the International Center, there is a large resource room, which is supervised by the study abroad assistant. In addition to the study abroad assistant, this is also the work space for the five peer advisors. The resource room is utilized for daily study abroad 101 sessions that are aimed at providing students with some basic information about study abroad in an attempt to better prepare them for a meeting with their study abroad advisor. In addition, as funding study abroad opportunities tend to be an obstacle for students, the peer advisors also present financing workshops twice weekly in the resource room.

Participants

Of the six potential participants who were invited to join the study, five opted participate, which included one male and four female participants. The sixth participant did not provide an explanation for choosing not to participate in the study. Included below are short biographies highlighting the experience and background of each participant. All of the participants in this study are U.S. citizens and earned their degrees from U.S. institutions. In order to try to protect the confidentiality of the participants, the
names provided are aliases and not necessarily reflective of the gender of each participant.

Leah

Knowing that working with college aged students was her passion, Leah pursued a master’s degree in higher education. She soon discovered an interest in working with international students and interned at the International Center on her university campus. She later became a graduate assistant for study abroad in the same office and fell in love with the purpose of what study abroad is and how transformational it is for students. Other work experience includes a position working with credit transfer at another large public institution, which unlike at the University of Missouri (MU), was done upon completion of the study abroad program, not in advance. Part of this position also included much of the initial advising for students to assist them in choosing an appropriate program. “They didn’t have peer advisors like we have here at Mizzou, which I really like because I think students like to talk to peers in the initial phase of kind of figuring things out.” At MU, peer advisors conduct a lot of the initial advising with students, so that the prospective study abroad students are better prepared when they meet with one of the full-time study abroad advisors.

In high school, Leah participated in a student ambassador program overseas. “Even though it was short and it was with a group of students and we had program leaders, it completely changed what I wanted to do. It changed the trajectory of really my life at that point.” As a graduate student, Leah was able to complete some study abroad programs, which has allowed her to have a more holistic experience both from the perspective as a student and as an advisor. She did an internship with Residential Life at
a university abroad, which has afforded her an opportunity to compare and contrast two completely different models of higher education. Additionally, as a graduate student she spent a summer abroad working with an International Summer School program, primarily working with receiving international students to the program. In her current position as a study abroad advisor at MU, Leah advises for programs that tend to be language intensive. Furthermore, her advising portfolio includes a mixture of program options, with the exception of faculty-led programs. As I will explore further in this chapter, advising for faculty-led programs may look a little differently in terms of advising approach utilized, so I feel that it is an important distinction when looking at advising assignment of study abroad advisors.

Carly

Having travelled extensively growing up, Carly’s career path in the field of education abroad started after participating in a study abroad program as an undergraduate student. Upon return, she assisted with recruiting other students to this program as well as with pre-departure sessions. “Still to this day, I can remember how much satisfaction out of feeling like I knew something very well, I had no problem sitting with 10, 15, 20 students and talking about health and safety, how to get around, how to prepare yourself.” Based on the work she did as a study abroad alumna with her former program, the study abroad office at her institution hired her to work in their office.

Finding that she enjoyed teaching the pre-departure sessions, Carly decided to pursue a career as a high school teacher. However, she realized quickly that this was not the ideal position for her within the field of education and because of her interest in international education, Carly decided to pursue a master’s degree with a specific focus
on education abroad. During her years as a graduate student, she specifically focused on the re-entry process for students as well as pre-departure orientation. To date, Carly has spent nearly 5 years at the International Center at MU where she first started as an advisor for international students, the longest of all the advisors in the study. Her advising portfolio primarily includes faculty-led and affiliate programs.

**John**

John travelled a few times prior to college, but the most extensive experience overseas came when he studied abroad for a year as a college student. John credits his start in the field of international education to the work he did with an organization that facilitates study abroad experiences for students. The first year he was involved with this organization, he participated as a student and the second year he participated as a student leader. As a student leader, he was able to take part in the planning process for the program, very similar to the tasks that he currently performs in his position at MU where he mostly works with faculty-led programs.

Upon graduating with his bachelor’s degree, he sought out an unpaid internship in study abroad, which later led to a full-time position as a study abroad coordinator. As a study abroad coordinator, a large part of his duties included student advising, documenting processes, and creating a handbook for the office. From there, John went on to earn a master’s degree in a related international education field. Upon graduation, John worked as a global learning coordinator in a one-person office, which meant exposure to all aspects of study abroad programming including program management for faculty led programs, managing exchange student agreements, and developing processes and procedures for the office. In the position prior to coming to MU, John worked at
another large public university in the capacity of coordinator for two years managing a large portfolio of programs, including faculty-led programs, exchanges, and direct enroll programs. In his current position, direct interaction and advising of students is only a small part of his workload due to the nature of his position within the office and the types of programs he manages, all of which are faculty-led.

**Sarah**

After studying abroad twice in college, Sarah knew that she wanted to work in the field of education abroad in some capacity. Shortly after graduation, she was hired to serve as a resource room manager in MU International Center and was later promoted to study abroad advisor, which is still the position that she is currently holding. To date, she has worked for 2 years at the International Center and her advising portfolio encompasses programs in both traditional and non-traditional locations. Traditional study abroad locations would generally be defined as Western Europe and Australia/New Zealand (Institute for International Education, 2013). In addition to working with college aged students at the International Center, Sarah also has prior experience working in a different university context with international scholars, which included assisting them with the application process as well as arrival, financial, academic issues.

**Rachel**

Rachel received her start in the field of international education as a resident assistant during her undergraduate years. In this capacity, Rachel had the opportunity to interact with a number of international students on her floor. Among other things, she assisted them in getting adjusted to life in the U.S. and working on their English skills.
Additionally, she served in a leadership position for the International Student Organization on her campus, giving her further exposure to international cultures.

Rachel has had a number of international experiences abroad, all in the same country. She studied abroad first for a semester and then later returned for a language intensive program. “I got back and was still a little disappointed that I couldn’t study [the language] in the States so I went back a second time.” In addition to studying abroad, she has travelled in this particular country with friends and worked there as a translator for 2 months. As a graduate student, Rachel opted to focus on regional studies, which allowed her to continue to study a foreign language. Because of her knowledge of the region, she was asked to assist with pre-departure orientations for students about to go abroad to study. “I would help the students that were going to [country] and kind of give them some tips and teach them how to survive in the country. I was giving them first-hand experience on how to go abroad and to live in [country].”

Rachel was offered and accepted a position at her undergraduate institution’s international center where she gained experience working with students who were interested in studying abroad. Like Sarah, Rachel started as a resource room manager at the International Center at MU and was later promoted to study abroad advisor, the position she still holds. The total time spent as an employee at MU was less than a year at the time of data collection for this study. Her advising responsibilities include all programs in the geographic region to which she is assigned except those that are faculty-led.

As these descriptions reveal, the participants come into this study with varied backgrounds and experiences. There were a few common characteristics of the
participants. First, all have a college degree with three of the participants having earned master’s degrees, one finishing a final thesis to complete her master’s degree, and one with an earned bachelor degree. In addition, these advisors are all well-travelled and have personal experiences studying abroad at the collegiate level. As I will further explore in this chapter, these are all relevant to what informs advising practices for the participants in this study.

Three of the five participants in the study are classified as study abroad advisors by title, meaning their primary role in the office is to advise students. The other two participants, one coordinator and one assistant director, are tasked with administrative duties in addition to their advising portfolios. Although having varied regions and program types in their job descriptions, all participants in the study advise students on a regular basis, which includes advising for all four phases of study abroad.

The remainder of this chapter will first be devoted to exploring all the components that inform study abroad advising practices. This will be followed by an examination of evidence of developmental advising in these practices.

**RQ 1: What Informs Study Abroad Advising Practices?**

This study reveals that there is a substantial amount of knowledge and experience that goes into the complex process and practice of advising for study abroad. In her interview with me, Leah summed up her position in a unique way that highlights this complexity:

Study abroad advising is so interesting because you have to be a [source of] knowledge and a resource about everything from finances to credit to culture.

And I think that’s what sets study abroad advising apart from academic advising
or advising for non-traditional students, because there is a focus that is very
department specific whereas I feel like we are almost our own mini university
within a university and we are connected to hundreds of other universities and so
it makes the process a little bit different.

As Leah clearly articulated, understanding the processes and functions of other campus
departments is a very important component in advising for study abroad because advisors
are consistently asked to assist students with matters that are related to a student’s study
abroad experience, both on a domestic and international scale. Again, as Leah stated, this
can be matters such as culture abroad, but also issues that relate to the student’s ability to
pay for the program. This would generally involve collaboration with the financial aid
office and requires some knowledge by the study abroad advisor of their processes and
policies.

Based on my research, I was able to identify four distinct themes that inform
study abroad advising practices: relevant experiences, formal training, resources, and
professional experience. Each of these categories has been further subdivided and will be
explored next.

** Relevant Experiences **

Relevant experiences contributed to the advising practices of the advisors in this
study. This included both personal experiences, such as personal travel or studies abroad.
In addition, advisors also utilize others’ experiences to help inform their practices. This
included involvement from past study abroad student participants, either of a program of
interest to the prospective study abroad student or the advisor’s own study abroad
program.
**Personal.** One of the most noteworthy aspects that inform study abroad advising is using personal experiences and anecdotes to share information with advisees. When asked if it is possible to advise without personal experience, Sarah stated that “yes, you can do that technically but I think the best advising comes from the personal stories and the personal kind of experiences that you have with the student and I, personally, I don’t know that I would trust an advisor who has never been abroad to send me abroad.” This was a common sentiment among the advisors in this study.

In particular, having personal study abroad experiences was cited as a very important factor when talking to students. As indicated in the personal profiles of the advisors, they all have study abroad experiences, although vastly different kinds of experiences and in vastly different parts of the world. Sarah stated:

> I think it’s comforting, and it’s reassuring to students that you’ve studied abroad, you’ve done it, you’ve gone through the process, you’ve been there. You can tell them what it was like to live with a host family, what your classes were like, what the day to day activities [are]. You can talk about banking, issues with visas, things like that.

Leah found that “having study abroad experience is really helpful to be able to talk about some things that I have done. I have done homestay, apartment living, residence hall living, so I can talk about those kinds of things.” Thus, using the advisor’s own study abroad experiences was comforting for study abroad advisees as well as informational.

In addition, using personal experiences also helped the advisors bridge a knowledge gap when they were unfamiliar with a location. Carly said “sometimes what I’ll do is if I’m in the situation where I don’t know a lot about the region or where the
student is studying abroad, sometimes I’ll just tell them a little bit about my study abroad experience.” This strategy helps the advisor relate his or her own experience in a way that is relevant to the student advisee, even if the location is different. Although the advisor may not have studied abroad or travelled in the country where the student is going, the personal experience was still cited as highly impactful in advising practices. Sarah stated that “you can relate your own experiences because even though you might have studied abroad in a different country or you’ve travelled, it may not be the exact same, but you are going to experience similar things like culture shock, missing home, dealing with public transportation, money, travel, enrolling in classes abroad, having different styles of teaching.” Furthermore, Leah stated:

Even though my students who are going abroad are not going to the countries that I studied abroad in, I think a lot of the information and the stories that I tell, they can relate to. I think it’s very important to have had an international experience abroad because there are so many things you don’t know, if you’ve never been on an international flight or if you’ve never had to figure out how to get across a city you’ve never been in and the first language isn’t English…students want to know that you’ve done that.

Unfortunate personal travel experiences were turned into learning opportunities for students. Sarah said, “I tend to be unlucky when I travel and I’ve missed flights, they’ve been delayed, I’ve lost luggage, and so I think those help.” Thus, having relatable experience, whether through travel or studies abroad, is an important component in the advising practices.
Advisors also tend to use personal experiences pertaining to identity when advising students. For instance, Rachel used her identity to advise students:

I think it helps me prepare students who are going abroad to help them realize that they are not going to be treated the same way that they are going to be treated in the States. I can speak from first-hand experience of things that I’ve experienced in the States and abroad as well and I can help maybe ease some of those concerns that a lot of students have. I have done a lot of research and study about cultural diversity and in an international context, so I think that really helps a lot with students, especially those who are going to [country]. A lot of students are concerned about being the only student of their race there, even White students are very concerned about that there. Am I going to be stared at” or “how do they feel about Americans?” Because I’ve experienced it on a regular basis, I can kind of help get students to think about it and maybe look at what they can get out of the experience.

Clearly, based on the conversations that Rachel has with her students, identity abroad is something that students need and want to know about. Leah found that her students also want to know more about the diversity climate in her advising region. “If you go to [country], if you are a Black student, there will be racism. But in [country] if you are American, or gringo, they’ll consider that more important than if you are Black but you may face some racism.” Therefore, being comfortable talking to students about identity is important in the advising for study abroad.

Sarah opted to approach students in regards to diversity related topics in a straightforward manner by asking direct questions and by sharing personal experiences:
I like to say “so you’re studying abroad in the Middle East, let’s talk about your identity.” I have a safe space sticker and I think students see that I know that I am not going to be judgmental. I also like to bring things up. For example, if it’s a student of color who is studying in Russia I say “OK, do you have any questions about being a student of color in this country” or “being a female in the Middle East” or things like that. I think that if you bring it up and pose it as “have you thought about…,” I think it’s a really great way and just be forward.

By having open conversations with her students in a safe environment, Sarah is able to use her personal experiences with identity to inform her practices.

To get students to open up about topics pertaining to identity abroad, advisors used a variety of strategies and techniques. This included creating a comfortable and open environment for students. For instance, the advisors in this study display Safe Space signs in their offices, a clear sign of acceptance of diversity to students and an invitation to share concerns that they might have about diversity related topics. Because of staff turn-over, this training has been conducted a couple of different times at the International Center over the last few years, once only with the study abroad staff and another with the entire International Center staff. These training sessions were led by the LGBTQ Center on campus but were initiated by study abroad staff members who have developed a taskforce of sorts, to look at diversity issues within study abroad. This taskforce has been instrumental in providing training opportunities for the entire study abroad staff.

As a staff, they have participated in a number of webinars and training sessions that are relevant to diversity abroad to further their knowledge and to make sure their
current strategies align with best practices in the field. The webinars are often sponsored by the Diversity Abroad Network, of which MU is an institutional member. Topics range from working with students with disabilities to ensuring equitable access to study abroad for all students. Again, these webinars tend to be organized by the diversity taskforce.

Lastly, the staff has created pre-advising forms with topics that students could consider talking to their advisor about. This form is essentially a check-list of topics that students can talk to their study abroad advisor about. The form is not intended to be an exclusive list, but rather to provide suggestions and an opening for students to broach topics that they may otherwise be unsure of whether or not they are appropriate to talk to their study abroad advisor about. This has spurred conversations during advising appointments about race, diversity, and identity abroad, which have allowed the advisors to use their own identity and experiences pertaining to diversity abroad to connect with students.

**Leveraging the experiences of others.** Another key component that informs study abroad advising is the personal experiences of others. In particular, advisors draw knowledge from past and current participants in the study abroad program they advise, which may include informal conversations with their advisees upon the return to the home campus. This was exemplified in one of the advising appointments I video recorded. Rachel, the advisor in the appointment, met with a recent returnee to learn more about one of the programs she advises for. Much of the information she was able to glean from this conversation with the student, especially the information pertaining to the advisee’s personal experiences as a student in the program, is likely not something that she would have been able to find online or in a program catalog. For example, the
student advisee shared some of her frustration with how the overseas host institution 
would change the location of her classes without notification to the students. As an 
advisor, this can be very helpful information to share with future students in the program 
so that they are prepared for an educational system that is different than what they are 
used to in the United States.

In addition to logistical aspects of a program, advisors can also glean information 
from students pertaining to identity that can be shared with prospective student advisees. 
For example, Carly notes:

I do always make it a point to ask students when they come back if I can meet 
with them, especially if they’ve studied abroad for a semester or longer what it 
was like for them being abroad. We had a student come back from Senegal who 
was an Asian female who was gay and I remember asking her how it was like 
being a female over there and she was like “wow, no one has asked me that 
question” and I was like “wow, how has no one asked you that?” And then what it 
was like being Asian over there and she was actually very…we had already been 
talking for a while and I think she was very comfortable with me asking those 
questions and she opened up: “being gay was something I couldn’t share with my 
homestay family as close as I was to them.”

Clearly, this quote exemplifies the importance of gathering first-hand experience from 
past participants is an attempt for advisors to gain knowledge about program logistics as 
well as identity issues abroad.

Beyond informing their own practices, advisors frequently refer students to either 
past or current study abroad participants of the program in which the advisee is
interested. This may be particularly true if an advisor has limited experience in a particular country. For instance, Rachel stated that:

I’ve never been to [country] but I know students in the past of have gone [there]; some of our Peer Advisors have gone to [that country], so I will tell them, “hey, you know what, here is a good student you can go talk to who has lived this experience fairly recently. They can really help you kind of know some of the tips and tricks of surviving in [country].”

Sarah and Leah used similar techniques of referring current advisees to other students. In particular, Leah used this technique of advising when she had not been to a particular location within her advising region herself. “I haven’t personally been to [city], but I have a student who is there now and she’s given me all this great information. I can connect you and she can tell you where the great coffee shop is in [city], but I have the knowledge administratively to get you through this.” With the rather large advising regions for which the advisors are responsible, leveraging the experience of either students who have participated in a program recently or are currently abroad, is an important technique that the advisors utilize.

At the end of all study abroad programs at MU, students are asked to fill out a formal evaluation. This can be a useful tool for advisors who want to learn more details about the program from a student who has recently participated. Carly stated that this was an important component that informs her practice:

Recently I was looking at the one for [academic department] in preparing for their orientation, so it is something I look back to, seeing what things the students said they didn’t know last time and try to somewhat include those notes that I take
from their evaluations in the orientation that I do for them next. A lot of those are things like food (I’m tired of eating rice; I wish there were more options for food; I wish I would have known the food was going to be…). Well, for [country], I was really surprised that they said I wish I would have known that the food was going to be so different. We did have some [persons from this country] come in and talk about the food they would be eating, but I guess as [persons from this country], I guess they didn’t highlight enough how different this food might be than the food you eat in the U.S. I like [this country’s] food, but I’ve never been to [country] so I don’t think I realized how different the food was going to be and the students were actually really shocked at how different the food that they would constantly be eating would be for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in [country] with their host families. So I would definitely take that suggestion and make sure someone from the class, and alumni, was there or their voice was included in the orientation to help the students.

Thus, using information provided in formal evaluations can be useful tools that inform practice for study abroad advisors.

Another way to leverage the experience of others included inviting past study abroad participants to assist students who are about to embark on their study abroad experience at the pre-departure orientation. This was also cited as an opportunity for the advisor to learn more about the programs for which they advise that they can later deploy in their advising. Carly was one of the advisors who used this technique. “When it was advising for how to prepare for [country], I would always have a past participant come to orientation and after having several orientations, I felt like I learned a lot of stuff myself
about the location.” Therefore, utilizing the experience of past study abroad participants in the orientation for students in the pre-departure phase is an important tool that informs advising practices for study abroad advisors.

Beyond the experiences of self and others, advisors also draw from the training they received for their positions to inform their advising practices. What this training consists of will be explored in the next section.

**Formal Training**

Study abroad advisors gain formal education and training that they employ in their advising positions in a number of different ways. For the purposes of this study, I have opted to divide this category into training at the home institution, professional development, and formal education.

**Training at the home institution.** The advisors in this study gained substantial knowledge that informs their advising practices through opportunities and training sessions hosted by the home institution, both through their office as well as other university training programs. Each of the advisors participated in various amounts of initial training for their positions upon hiring. Rachel stated that “I got to learn about the myStudyAbroad [the application software used at MU] account; I learned how that worked. I learned about the paperwork and the administrative stuff, I think that’s what I was most nervous about and that was really helpful.” Furthermore, when asked about initial training, Leah said “it was really good, the first 2 weeks were all training. I had training about International Center policy about my programs.” The responsibility of training new advisors is split up between members of the current staff, generally by topic area. For instance, training on how students are billed and registered may fall to the
administrative assistant who is responsible for those processes whereas training on how to use the StudioAbroad software falls to the advisor who is responsible for that functional area.

When the advisors were specifically asked about training on how to advise students, four of them said that they learned how to advise for study abroad by observing other advisors as part of their initial training. This is consistent with suggested best practices in a guide to education abroad advising by NAFSA: Association of International Educators, one of the most important professional organizations for education abroad advisors (Anderson & Murray, 2005). John, who came into his position with more experience than the other advisors, was the only advisor who did not shadow other advisors during his training at the International Center at MU. Rachel found shadowing other advisors important for her advising:

Seeing the different ways that other advisors advise, it gives you a way to see what is successful with students and how they respond. Even though we have different regions and different types of students, you can still get an idea of what kinds of questions to ask, questions that you’ll need to know to fill out their paperwork, so that was really helpful. Figuring out kind of how to answer questions on the fly. Students might have a random question that you might not be prepared for, so seeing how advisors react to that was really helpful.

In short, beyond learning the aspects of study abroad advising that pertains to the technical aspects of getting a student abroad, learning actual advising techniques from others in similar positions may be the most influential in how the advisors learned how to be an advisor and forming their own advising styles.
Because study abroad advising is a complex and multi-faceted task, there is a lot of information to draw from when advising students that is not always easily located in the midst of an advising appointment. Rachel found another benefit of observing other advisors to be “finding out where information is. A lot of them were really quick at finding the answers and looking it up and I was able to see where they would find the information.” So, in addition to developing a personal advising style, the observations of other advisors were also helpful in learning where resources are located and how to best utilize them during an advising appointment.

As part of an effort to continuously provide training for the advisors at MU, the staff participates in webinars, which were cited by the participants as an important component in informing advising practices for study abroad. In particular, these training sessions tend to be related to understanding the student populations that the advisors work with.

The advisors stated that training sessions and workshops put on by other offices on campus were instrumental in the way that they work with minority populations in particular. For instance John cited the Chancellor’s Diversity Initiative sessions as important training for him whereas Sarah found Safe Space training and sessions by the LGBTQ Resource Center important in informing her advising practices. In addition, the Advisors Forum, a group that mostly consists of academic advisors on campus but that is accessible to study abroad advisors as well, offered a training session on serving the needs of diverse students and Leah found that to be particularly impactful for her advising. John stated, “we’ve done a number of webinars offered by NAFSA and the Diversity Abroad Network.” In addition to full staff webinars, the advisors also
mentioned that they sometimes took their own initiative to find webinars that are pertinent to their positions. For example, Carly said “there are a lot of webinars these days. Sometimes if you just google webinars, there will be a webinar on it in the next couple of months.” In a field that evolves quickly, these webinars are important ways to keep current with evolutions in the field and can be cost effective for the office as many of them tend to be free or at a low cost.

**Professional development.** Participation in training by professional organizations away from the office and the home campus through conferences as well as visiting the sites in the advisor’s region personally, significantly contributes to informing the study abroad advising practices as it allows the advisor to share personal experiences with students as well as learn best practices in the field and connect with other professionals. Although visiting a site allows an advisor to share some personal experiences with their advisees, I opted to classify any travel that was done under the auspices of their positions as advisors and paid for by the advisors’ employer as professional development.

Learning about a program first-hand through a site visit and being able to share that knowledge with student advisees was cited by the advisors as a very important component in the way that they advise students. Carly stated:

> Another really big asset to our job, and one of our large benefits that really helped my advising, helped my motivation at work, helped bring a lot back to my office are our site visits, so actually going to a site where students will be engaging in a program abroad and learning everything from housing to curriculum to meeting the staff on site there and then learning about what’s happening there. That’s
great for advising purposes to advise better but also it makes me a more well-rounded, more logical IE professional that knows what’s going on out there. I feel like doing a site visit to [country], to be able to know what’s happening on the ground and to be able to have specific stories to be able to tell students “this is what you could be doing or encountering in this clinic working with this organization as a health care provider” and then to be able to take that to create a context for students so they can see why they would actually like to do that in their professional life and get beyond what I know their assumptions might be about going to Africa to do service work as a health care provider.

Furthermore, Sarah also found this an important factor that informs her advising practices:

I have taken a site visit to visit some of my programs where I got to sit in on classes, visited housing, met the on-site staff, met with current students abroad to see how they were liking the program. Also, with the site visit, you were able to walk the streets and see how public transportation works and how they get around and what daily life is in that city.

Leah shared this sentiment:

My first year, I got to do a site visit to [country] and [country], which was absolutely incredible. I think it’s such an incredible experience to be able to tell the students that yes I’ve been there and I was able to see if from an administrative point of view of how the program runs and you can tell them “well the center is right here and if you take this bus, it will take you to the university” so that was incredibly important to me as an advisor and I think that’s a really...
important aspect for advisors to get to do some site visits because it’s hard to advise on all your programs, but if you’ve been to several of them, you can kind of reference that. My site visit was incredible, not only because I know those two programs, but I learned about the provider that I went with, I learned about the culture and that is something I’ve used a lot to develop rapport with students, so even students who are going to [country]. “I haven’t been there, but I went to [city] and they are run by the same organization and this is what the organization does really well, this is how they work, this is how all of their programs are run very much the same.”

As is evident from the accounts of these three advisors, having the opportunity to visit study abroad sites personally allows advisors to develop professionally and provide advisees with first-hand accounts of what their study abroad experience will look like in a particular location. As I will explore further later, it also allows the advisor to build trust with the students they advise, a particularly important aspect of developmental advising.

Conferences put on by organizations related to education abroad have also contributed significantly to the advising practices at MU. Leah stated:

This year, I went to a conference by a provider but it was just overall a conference about practices in education abroad and then I’m going to a conference later in April regarding the StudioAbroad software I run, which I’m really looking forward to because they typically roll out updates and we can go over “hey, this is what works, this is how different offices use the system.”

John, who works with diversity initiatives as part of his current position in the office, found that “the Diversity Abroad Conference is most influential in how I want to perform
my job as a whole in relation to students” whereas Carly who works extensively with health profession students stated:

I think I’ve been able to blend my site visit with NAFSA conference and seeing sessions on health science sessions abroad and how they try to support health science students to be safe about what they are doing and not overstepping lines and patient safety care and going to like the WISE conference where you are integrating cross-cultural learning and really getting students to realize they as individuals are unique, cultured people who are different than the people that they are studying abroad with.

By having the opportunities to participate in professional conferences, the advisors gained knowledge and skills that they use to inform their practices at the home campus.

In addition to attending conference sessions to gain more content knowledge about study abroad, advisors also have the opportunity to meet and connect with overseas colleagues at these professional conferences. Rachel who is fairly new in her position said “I will be going to NAFSA in a couple of months and I will get to meet with some of the programs which I advise for, so I will get to meet those people first hand.” Building personal relationships with overseas colleagues is an important reason to attend these types of conferences, in particular because it is often financially challenging to send study abroad advisors on site visits to meet with staff in international locations on a regular basis. Therefore, spending the funds on a conference that allows you to meet with all your colleagues in one location can be a cost saving measure for educational institutions without sacrificing the important personal connection.
In addition to training provided to the advisors as part of their current positions, their formal academic training also provided some insight into study abroad advising that informs their practices.

**Formal education.** By and large, the study abroad advisors in this study did not have degrees that were specifically designed for study abroad advisors, with the exception of Carly:

I think formal education in international education was not only working with a very diverse group of people from around the world that come from very different areas of international education coming together and bringing their thoughts and opinions about the field as well as studying anything from details and budgets and how the advising process works, to curriculum to just the field in general. I really feel that when I left my graduate studies I had a really big scope of what the field of international education looks like. So entering that field, I feel that the sky is the limit, like I am my only barrier to making so many things happen, which is nice. I feel like administratively now working in university administration, I see a lot of people getting locked into their office and their job and what they do and they only see growth as kind of a lateral thing as far as their paygrade or their status, people are trying to move up the grid. I feel like having the degree that I have, I step in and I see the breadth and depth of just being in an advising role and now with the title of coordinator I really think the sky is the limit as far as what I can do. There are a lot of limits with what I can do, obviously, but I do realize in my field that there is a lot of potential for growth and the field has a long way to go where it should be meeting the needs of the U.S. student population, the
international student and scholar population, and it was nice to leave with that scope.

However, even with a degree in a program that is specifically focused on education abroad, very limited information was shared by the faculty pertaining to how to advise students nor did the program promote specific philosophies of advising. From Carly’s perspective:

I would say advising in general wasn’t the biggest focus. We did take a lot of theory and practice courses and in those theory and practice courses we talked a lot about how an institution functions and works and different models of institutions and the way in which an advisor within an office works to make things happen. An administrator really has to really get people on their page and I remember talking a lot about a job as an administrator in study abroad is to get into other people’s spaces and offices in different departments and find out what they are doing, what their goals are, what their mission is and then working with them to get them more involved in study abroad or integrated with study abroad. We had several faculty that would always just say that you’ve got to be very humble in that not everyone is going to want to run to the international center and think your services are worthwhile because you’ve got to get on their page first, you’ve really got to get on everyone else’s page and they have to know that you know what they’re doing and that you’re in support of that and then trying to involve international education in their goals and missions. As far as specifically advising students going abroad, a lot of it was just talking about pre-departure, returnee, you know we had programs where we would practice interactive cross-
cultural learning exercises where students can learn more about themselves as individuals, you know the more touchy feely side of getting to know yourself. As far as one on one sitting with a student in an office, there really wasn’t much in the curriculum or the program in that. If you opened up a successful education abroad manual, there is an advising section there and we’re supposed to read it, I didn’t read it. I didn’t buy the book and I didn’t read that section and there were no consequences for me not doing that.

Thus, although there were opportunities to learn what advisors should share with students that she incorporates into her advising practices, limited information about the actual advising process were promoted in this program. Leah, on the other hand, earned her master’s degree in a higher education degree program at a mid-sized public university in Missouri. Although the focus of her program was not on international education specifically, she did have the opportunity to write a research paper comparing and contrasting the U.S. educational system for higher education with that in Canada that has been helpful in informing her advising practices.

Rachel, an advisor who is in the final stages of finishing her master’s degree in regional studies, said that is able to utilize knowledge gleaned from both her undergraduate and graduate programs in her advising for study abroad. For instance, her bachelor’s degree is in international studies and she said that “I have never been to [country] but I draw from my bachelor’s degree of general knowledge of political systems in different countries.” Thus, although on the surface the advisor’s degree program may not seem relevant to their position in the office, there are transferrable knowledge that helps support their advising practices.
John also found his degree program contributing to his advising practices for study abroad:

I suppose my grad degree has to a certain extent, I did some course work on student affairs and student development, maybe like two classes and it’s made me more aware of inclusion and diversity issues so that is something that I’m cognizant of in my advising, but it’s more influenced what I do in other areas of my work than my advising in particular I think.

Utilizing his degree in a broader context of diversity and inclusion is yet another example of how study abroad advisors leverage their educational experiences in the way that they perform their duties as study abroad advisors.

In addition to the formal education in a classroom setting, the participants in this study also found internships important contributors to their advising practices. In his interview, John stated:

I worked at [university] as an unpaid intern so there I was doing a lot of outreach work, like classroom presentations, organizing student volunteers and doing some marketing. I did some research on Facebook and things like that because that was in 2007 so that was right when organizations were starting in move onto Facebook, they just launched Facebook pages so I did some research on that. Although unpaid, John gained a lot of valuable experience in this internship position that he is able to utilize in this current role at MU.

Leah also participated in a multiple different internships that are related to the field of international education and that have been key components in her advising practices as well:
I did the internship with the International Student Services at [university] and I worked really closely with programming and their international student organization, which is pretty large. Then I was a non-traditional student, so it was really hard for me to study abroad for a semester, so I got to have the opportunities in [country] where I worked at [university] where I did an internship with their Residence Life department, which was really interesting.

Again, although perhaps not immediately obviously relevant to her position as a study abroad advisor, Leah gained transferrable skills and knowledge through her internships that she utilizes today in her advising. For instance, working with incoming international students allowed her to see study abroad from the reverse perspective of receiving students as opposed to being on the sending end. This allows an advisor to gain a much broader perspective of international education.

As is evident in this section, training in a variety of ways is an important component that informs practices of advising in study abroad. The next section will explore how resources accessible to the study abroad advisors play a role in the process of advising students interested in studying abroad.

**Resources**

A number of resources inform the advising practices of study abroad advisors. The resources that were identified in this study are international education colleagues (both internal to the institution as well as external colleagues in the field of international education), campus colleagues, printed materials, and online resources. Each of these resources will be explored in this section.
**International education colleagues.** An important resource for the advisors in this study was other staff members in the field of international education. This included both other staff members in their own office as well as colleagues at other institutions.

As the field of international education tends to be collaborative, a prominent resource that is often used to inform advising practices is tapping into the knowledge of colleagues in the office. For instance, Sarah was one of the advisors who utilized the expertise of others in the office as a resource for her advising. “Our resources are the other advisors and our directors who have been here and who have experience and know what they are talking about. It’s easy to ask a question, we are a very supportive team.” Carly also found this to be particularly helpful in her advising practices. “I feel like some other really great resources are just calling or walking to other offices of other advisors and brainstorming with them, popping into another advisor’s office and asking questions of them and figuring it out together.” Leah shared the same sentiment:

> I think what is nice about the office that I work in. We have ten total so there are so many people to bounce ideas off of. “Have you encountered this before? I have a student who has Crohn’s disease, have you ever sent a student abroad with Crohn’s disease before? What did they have to do? What medications?” things like that. So utilizing the knowledge of my colleagues is a huge thing.

Rachel, as the newest advisor in the office, has been using this technique frequently as she is learning the ropes. “All my other co-workers have been really great about me asking them a thousand questions about how to do things.” Thus, although each of the advisors has their own advising region that specializes in a distinct group of programs, there is substantial overlap in the advising and administration of the study abroad
programs that allows advisors to utilize the knowledge of others in the office to inform their own practices.

One of the great benefits of affording the advisors opportunities for professional development outside the office and home campus is the connections they are able to make with others in the field of education abroad. When it comes to resources, these connections are valuable assets for informing practice. For example, MU collaborates with a number of affiliate organizations that provide study abroad opportunities for University of Missouri students. Although the advisors have good general knowledge of these programs, the staff at the affiliate organization is often tapped into in order to provide more specific information about a program or to clarify details that a student might need. As Carly explained, “I remember when I was the advisor for Thailand, I got questions about Thailand that I knew nothing about and that is when I would connect with the provider and try to get answers from the provider on that topic.” Because the staff at the affiliate organization is directly involved with making the program arrangements, their expertise is a valuable resource that informs practices.

In addition to the affiliate staff based in the United States, typically, each program provider employs a local staff to administer the study abroad program on the ground. Sarah, in particular, found the on-site staff to be a valuable resource in her advising. Often, the study abroad advisors at MU have the opportunity to connect with the overseas staff members at conferences, especially conferences that are hosted by the affiliate organization.

Having a mentor in the field of education abroad was also deemed important. Leah found that a mentor, her former study abroad advisor, had been instrumental in the
way that she works with students today. “When I was in graduate school, I had a really supportive mentor who meant the world for me and taught me how to be a professional and how to be an advisor and how to work with students.” This was an example of how a good advisor has influenced her advising practices. Others had less positive experiences with advisors in their past, although these interactions have also been influential in informing study abroad advising practices of the advisors in this study. When asked about her own advising experience as a study abroad participant working with an advisor, Carly said:

I do remember having a faculty advisor who, when I was going to [country], right away had all these things that she wanted me to read, these movies she wanted me to watch and when I watched it she wanted me to come talk to her about them. She was really over my head, I think she was throwing some really great intellectual thoughts at me that I guess I wasn’t able to catch at the time, because I would go watch the movie, I would read everything and the next think I would know I would be sitting there and I would have no idea of what she was referencing or what she was talking about, historically, racially, with the U.S. and the relations with us and [geographic region] and then like to ask for all these various things that at the time I wasn’t sure what she was getting at. However, this slightly negative advising experience also informed Carly’s advising practices today:

But after coming back, I can now reflect on some of those things and realize that “wow, she really provided me a lot of really great information that’s useful for me now or after the experience”. I like, definitely would like to find a balance in my
advising, I think students, I really do want to provide them with more information than they know what to do with or use, but I want them to have a context for that. I would rather provide someone with three or four extremely useful tools or thoughts or readings or information they can really understand and know why they are reading it than a whole slew of things they don’t know what to do with and never tap into any of them.

Thus, positive or negative experiences with a past advisor can be an important learning opportunity for study abroad advisors. As is evident from the interviews with the study abroad advisors in this study, reflecting on the advising they have received themselves have significantly impacted and informed their own advising practices.

**Campus colleagues.** In addition to colleagues in the field of education abroad, this study revealed that other colleagues on campus also significantly informed practices for study abroad advisors. In particular for faculty-led programs, the faculty themselves served as an important resource for study abroad advisors. John, who works primarily with the faculty-led programs stated that “sometimes I get questions about housing, so it’s really just [utilizing] my knowledge of the programs themselves, which is what I usually get through the faculty member as I haven’t actually been able to visit an existing program.” This was collaborated by Carly who also works primarily with faculty-led programs:

I work with a lot of faculty led programs, you know I work with faculty in health sciences how we can best prepare students and how we can best work with students and I feel like if I can plant some of these seeds in my advising before they get to the program so they have some relatively good and realistic
expectations going into the first day of orientation when we start some of the pre-departure orientations.

Therefore, collaborating with faculty to prepare students for their time abroad was considered important. In particular, with a limited educational background in a specific academic area of the university, the faculty can help inform the study abroad advisor of matters that are important for students in their major. In Carly’s case of advising for health profession students, this included ethical issues that surround the practice of medicine abroad.

It is worth noting that those study abroad advisors who do not coordinate faculty-led programs did not indicate using faculty as resources for their advising. Rather, for academic matters these study abroad advisors would refer to an academic advisor rather than a faculty member for questions about the curriculum or policies in a specific department. Leah stated that she has taken the initiative to seek out academic advisors on campus to discuss programs and courses for her students:

I’ve actually met quite a few of the advisors: textile and apparel management (TAM), [foreign language]…the advisors that I work with quite frequently, I’ve gone to their offices and had meetings and sat down with them. I’ve gone over “these are the programs that your students are going on, what’s good about them, what do you not like about them, what are your policies for your department, is there a limit on the number of credit hours they can transfer in.” That’s something that’s really important for me to know even if I’m not the one that is making the final decision about their credits it’s good for me to say “hey, if you are a [foreign language] minor, you can only transfer in six credits.” Or, “if you
are a TAM major, you have 15 TAM electives that you can do abroad.” Just knowing those policies and keeping us on the same page is really good. This proactive approach of meeting with academic advisors has allowed her to share the knowledge gained from these conversations, which then informs the advising practices for students in her region.

As indicated in the review of the literature, study abroad advisors need to have a broad understanding of how a university operates in order to most optimally advise students for study abroad. This was also true at MU where advisors frequently utilize the knowledge of other campus staff members as resources that informs their practices as study abroad advisors. Leah said:

We always have a liaison with Financial Aid. I think it’s really important for students to think about finances very early. A lot of students are surprised by cost or they don’t understand what their loans are, what their options are also that scholarship deadlines are really early. I kind of want them to have that knowledge upfront before they make a decision. Depending on what their situation is and their personal background, I think we have some really good resources such as the LGBTQ Resource Center, the Black Culture Center, the Multicultural Center where students who are from more diverse backgrounds can find resources on what it’s going to be like to study abroad as a bisexual student in Italy. “How are people going to perceive me?” So I think we are doing a good job of making those connections, making sure that our colleagues in other departments are informed about study abroad as well as academic advisors. I think they are a huge resource for us because a lot of students will start there. “I
think I might want to study abroad next spring, what would credits look like?” I think our job is to collaborate and really communicate with those departments and say, “this is how the transfer credit process works; these are the course options available.” That way when they do go to talk to their academic advisor or they do go to the LGBTQ Resource Center, that they are giving them the correct information and they are providing them resources that we may not have all the answers to, so utilizing our colleagues knowledge and expertise is always good.

Because students have questions that touch on other areas of the university, it is clear from Leah’s statement that advisors need to know what their resources are in terms of other staff members on campus so that they can refer students to those as well as utilizing these resources to inform their own practices.

Increasing diversity in the study abroad population at MU is a top priority and a special task force has been established to reach out to traditionally underrepresented students in study abroad, including students of color, males, first-generation college students, and students with disabilities. Utilizing the knowledge of the campus colleagues for the offices that specialize in working with these student populations was mentioned by all of the advisors as important to informing their advising practices. For instance, Rachel, a member of the diversity task force, stated:

For me if I feel uncomfortable about something, I like to go to the office that specializes in that. For example, I work with the Multicultural Center sometimes since I’m part of the diversity committee. So I will talk to them if I have questions about what ways we can better serve our students, what ways we can better rephrase things to make it more accessible. Disability Services is someone
I would like to work with a little bit more since it’s an area that I’m not as familiar with.

Again, Rachel exemplifies utilizing the expertise of campus colleagues as a resource in her advising practices.

In addition to the academic advisors and staff at the diversity offices, advisors also utilize the knowledge of financial aid officers and international admissions officers to inform their advising when talking to students. Sarah stated, “I definitely work with International Admissions very closely. For outbound students they evaluate all the courses that the students are going to take abroad, they determine equivalencies for them, they maintain a database of past courses that have been transferred back.” Leah will also frequently reference this database when working with students:

Well, we have a wonderful international equivalency database for credit that’s basically just a historical record so I reference that a lot for students and then I’ll say “well, last spring that came back as Marketing 3000 but your final approval needs to come from your department.” So it’s good for me to have knowledge of how it’s worked in the past.

In Leah’s statement above, she exemplifies how utilizing campus resources may look in an advising appointment with students. She uses the database as a resource to tell the student how a particular course has transferred in the past, but refers the student to his or her academic department for final approval, thus another campus resource.

**Printed resources.** Printed materials were utilized in a couple of different ways by the study abroad advisors to inform their advising practices. On the one hand, Carly stated that she used printed materials purchased by the office to inform specific parts of
her advising role, primarily for the advising related to re-entry activities upon the return of the students to the home institution. Leah, on the other hand, used printed articles to send to her students on topics related to the programs for which she advises. These were used as a tool to inform advisees about specific topics of interest pertaining to the country or location they are interested in. Advisors also stated that they use printed materials from the resource room in the office, which hosts the daily Study Abroad 101 sessions as well as a plethora of catalogs and brochures related to study abroad.

**Online.** Advisors frequently mentioned using maps as they discussed what informs their study abroad advising. For instance, Carly said:

> When I was advising for [country] or countries that had multiple locations [referring to multiple program sites within the same country], I used Google maps to visually put markers as to where all the institutions were so I could point to each one and say this is an exchange [a program option in which a student from MU is exchanged with a student from a partner institution], this is a partner program [partner programs are administered by an outside organization that MU has contracted with to provide study abroad opportunities for MU students], this is an exchange and which one was which and then talk about the importance of regions and how the regions are different in [country].

Sarah tended to use a similar strategy of incorporating visual aids in her advising appointments. “I pull up a map and talk about the location where the country is in relation to other countries, I make sure that they understand that these countries tend to be a lot smaller than the United States so travel within them and between them tends to be a lot more convenient and accessible.”
In addition to helping students visualize geographic locations for study abroad, participants relied on online resources to help students find housing. For example, a logistical concern that sometimes prevents students from studying abroad is finding a subleaser for the time they are abroad. In her reflection following her study abroad advising appointment, Leah stated “My student was also having trouble finding a subleaser, therefore I referred her to different listservs that my students had used successfully in the past.” Providing suggestions and online resources for leasing an off-campus apartment is a good example of the kinds of questions students ask that others may assume are outside the scope of study abroad advising.

Other resources that are available online also include the documented processes saved on the staff’s shared computer drive. Each year the study abroad advisors are asked to document the processes for programs in their advising portfolio as well as any specific notes about the program as part of their annual evaluation. Sarah said “there’s history, we have things that are saved on shared drive that we can utilize.” Rachel as the newest advisor in the group stated that she wished there were more of these resources available:

I like lists and notes; transition notes would be really good. I think each advisor does things a little bit differently, but if you had a backbone or a structure of what you can expect during your advising appointment or what to expect as an advisor, like a list of things to be mindful of, I think that’s really helpful. I think, you know, it’s always going to be different depending on what your region is, depending on what kind of students you work with, depending on your own experience, but a set of general notes that everyone needs to follow. It can be
kind of open ended, but gives you some examples of things that students have done or tasks that you are expected to complete, that’s really helpful. Although some written program notes are available, Rachel’s comments reiterate the need for more resources of this type, particularly for new advisors to the office as they learn the duties of their positions.

Another online resource that advisors utilize in their advising is the StudioAbroad application software, which has substantially altered the way advisors work with students, particularly as they help identify suitable study abroad options for their students. Leah was one of the advisors who use this technology to inform her practice:

The software also has an interface for the public so doing a program searches and things like that. When I worked at [former institution], we had a PDF and then they clicked on and they had a list of all the programs, which was completely overwhelming if you were trying to look through a list of 300 programs. If a student comes to me and they say I want to go to [country] in the summer, I can bring up all their options. If they say [another region], I can bring up options like that. In terms of marketing and showing them different options, it does a good job of narrowing down their options from all the options we have.

Leah’s approach to helping students search for programs using this software has been very helpful as students can otherwise become easily overwhelmed when presented with too many programmatic options. In addition, the staff recently went through a winnowing of program options to reduce redundancies and now only highlight a select number of programs on their website. If a student wants to participate on another program by one of the current providers that is not highlighted on the website, they must
appeal for that right. In order to winnow down the program options, the office used the StudioAbroad software, which was instrumental in accomplishing this task, because it more easily highlighted duplications of offerings than what was previously available.

Rachel used the software in a similar manner “I use myStudyAbroad a lot, you can arrange it by program to see who the students are so if I need a refresher I just go back there and look” (MyStudyAbroad is the internal name for the software otherwise known as StudioAbroad in the field of international education). As suggested by Rachel, using the software has been another helpful tool to track the students who apply for study abroad. This allows for improved tracking of students in case of a health, safety, or security threat abroad. However, very little discussion centered on the health and safety for students overseas, although that might be because the advisors at MU have very little direct involvement with emergency response, which is left to the more senior staff members in the office.

The University of Missouri website, including the International Center’s own web pages, was another online resource that was frequently used to inform the practices for the advisors in this study. Referring to the International Center’s website, Carly said “online, I feel like our website is always developing and changing and trying to become more of a support, a lot of things on there I kind of look around and find.” In addition, Rachel used this part of the university’s website to assist students in finding funding opportunities. “I give them the links to our website, the scholarships, the external funding and I try to make it as obvious as I can where you can get money are located.” Lastly, Sarah stated “I think the website is a really great resource, I refer to it often, I utilize it, we put a lot of information on the website for that reason so I love having
access to that.” Therefore, because the advisors frequently use the website as a resource for students, it is critical that it is updated frequently with current information. At the International Center at MU, this has been assigned to the Marketing and Communications team.

Many of the advisors used the International Center’s website to show students how to search for programs and how to start an application for study abroad. In her reflection, Carly wrote “I sat down at a computer in the resource room and showed her the program webpage and explained the program to her and how the application would work.” In my video recorded observations of the study abroad advisors conducting advising appointments, I was able to confirm first hand that the use of the International Center website was a prominent tool used by all of the advisors in the study.

As for other parts of the university’s website, John mentioned frequenting the Cashier’s Office’s website frequently to gather information in terms of billing dates and fees. Many of the other advisors mentioned using the Course Equivalency database that is housed on the International Admissions website as a helpful resource the frequently use when talking to students about the course transfer process.

Lastly, as advisors at MU, membership in professional organizations such as NAFSA: The Association for International Educators, the Diversity Abroad Network, and The Forum on Education Abroad is provided to all advisors. These organizations provide online resources that are specifically aimed at improving practices for education abroad professionals. Sarah stated that “I draw from resources that we have online, the Diversity Abroad Network about the country climate.” Leah also found these online resources helpful when she is working with students. “I was able to send her a lot of really good
resources through Diversity Abroad and through some other information that I found.” Therefore, although an expensive investment on behalf of the institution, the educational resources provided by professional organizations are important to advisors and significantly informs their practices as study abroad advisors.

**Professional Experience**

Each advisor in this study came into their current positions with some background in working within the field of international education or in related positions. This section will explore the professional skills gained through previous positions that influences how the advisors perform their current duties at MU.

**Work in the field of international education.** Most relevant in this section are skills gained from positions directly related to their current jobs as study abroad advisors. Some of these skills were gained in very similar positions at other universities and others were accumulated through working overseas in some capacity.

John, the participant in the study with the most experience in the field of international education, explained his career trajectory that has influenced his current advising role:

As a coordinator, I helped manage a portfolio for a person who was going on maternity leave, so I did student advising, I was helping write down processes for the office and making a handbook. Then I worked at the [university] where I was a global learning coordinator and there I was the only full-time person working in study abroad for about 6 months until we hired a person, so there I was doing a lot of management for the faculty led programs, developing policies and procedures and helping manage exchange agreements, so kind of doing everything there.
Then I moved to [university] where worked for 2 years and there I was a study abroad coordinator and so I was managing a much larger portfolio of programs, somewhere around 400-500 students every year, and somewhere around 40 programs, including faculty-leds, exchange, and direct enroll programs.

Although the processes for sending students abroad may vary slightly from one study abroad office to another, the general scope is similar. Therefore, the skills gained in his previous positions are very applicable and transferrable to his current position at MU.

Unlike John, Leah, gained substantial experience in the field of international education by working overseas:

I think being in [country] was definitely my most transformational experience. I don’t speak [the language] but being in an environment where I constantly had a language barrier really helped me develop and be more flexible. Overall, I’ve just become…there are all these buzz words about what you gain from study abroad cross-cultural communication, but I think overall I’ve just become a more curious person.

Although the tasks in Leah’s overseas position may be different than what her day to day duties are at the International Center at MU, there are a number of transferrable and complementary skills that she gained in this position overseas that inform her practice as a study abroad advisor today. For instance, being able to work on the receiving end of study abroad allows for a fuller picture of what students can expect when they arrive overseas, which is something that study abroad advisors can utilize in their advising with outbound students. Additionally, in terms of her experience abroad, Leah shared:
Some people study abroad in like India and they’re very in love with Indian culture. I don’t think I’ve had that experience where a lot of people do. I think for me, that’s a little bit of a challenge in the field, but I think my experience is very similar to many other students’ experiences who may not be able to go abroad for a longer term program in terms that they are curious and they just want to experience other cultures. I don’t want to make my experience abroad any of my students’ experiences abroad, if that makes sense. My experience in [city] was really transformational and I loved the [country] culture and the warmness of the people there; it was just really eye-opening.

Thus, although she may not have the deep connection to one specific destination that many other study abroad advisors have who have spent significant amount of time in a particular location, she can relate her overseas experience to students who may only be able to go abroad for a shorter amount of time.

Similarly, Carly and Rachel have both worked overseas, which had direct implications on the way that they advise students. In Carly’s case, she led a group of students abroad and that is where she realized that the combination of travel and education is the ideal career path for her. Rachel, worked abroad for a couple of months upon graduation from college. As she is now the advisor for that country, the experiences that she gained during this time, directly inform her day to day advising with students interested in studying in this part of the world.

**Relevant work outside the field of international education.** A number of the advisors had held other positions outside the field of international education that
influence the way that they work with students. For instance, Sarah gained relevant experience working with students in a different capacity.

I worked with international teaching assistants and their English requirements and administering English language exams. I also worked with [country] fellows; they are scholars here and help them through the application process and arriving on campus, and dealing with financial and academic issues.

In Sarah’s case, although the population of students who she worked with was very different than the U.S. undergraduate population she works with today, having the opportunity to work in a university setting has helped broaden her perspective and knowledge of how the university functions. This is particularly helpful in study abroad as advisors must have a broad understanding of other functional areas of the home institution in order to best serve the students they work with.

Rachel gained some of her experience working with students as a resident assistant (RA) at her undergraduate institution working with students in a residence hall. “As an RA, I lived with them for 2 years…I had fun. I really got to see their transition from high school and they were nervous and had no idea of what to do and I really got to facilitate that process of getting into various parts of campus life.” Because study abroad advising encompasses so many parts of a student’s experience overseas, including the housing, Rachel has found her undergraduate experience working in the residence hall setting to be valuable in this context as well.

As is evident by the vast number of influences on the advising process, it is a complex process. Because there are many components that together inform study abroad advising practices, it is critical for those in management positions to consider this as they
make decisions pertaining to training of study abroad advisors. Although the cost can be prohibitive at some institutions, it is important to budget for advisors to participate in site visits. Being able to relate first-hand experience of a program not only made the advisors feel more confident in their advising appointments, they were also able to convey specifics of the program that would be difficult to otherwise obtain from websites and university catalogs. In addition, attending conferences or other training sessions are an important way for advisors to gain content knowledge about the field of international education as well as networking with others in the field and should not be discounted as an important influence on advising practices. Lastly, because relating personal travel or study abroad experiences were deemed important for all the advisors in the study, it is something hiring managers may want to consider as they select staff. With that said, study abroad advisor candidates without travel experience may be able to contribute differently to their positions. For instance, someone with prior experience working with students with disabilities could be an important asset to an organization and whose skill set might complement the skills and experience of the other advisors in the office.

This section has provided evidence of what informs advising practices of study abroad advisors. Next, I examined how advisors approach their advising appointments and whether or not there is evidence of developmental advising.

RQ2: Is There Evidence of Developmental Advising in the Process of Study Abroad Advising?

This section will further explore developmental advising in each of the phases of study abroad, something that has not been explored to date. First, this section addresses how students are advised from a developmental standpoint more generally across all
phases. Following this general look at developmental advising, I will outline how this plays out in each of the phases identified for study abroad (initial, pre-departure, while abroad, re-entry) from my video recorded observations of advising appointments in each of these phases. There is substantial evidence of developmental advising being utilized as an advising technique by the advisors in this study across all phases, which will be explored in detail next.

**Developmental Advising**

As indicated in the coding section of this dissertation, the categories used in answering the second research question were derived from Crookston’s (1972) developmental advising theory (Winston & Sandor, 1984). In their research, Winston and Sandor (1984) identified eight components in terms of developmental advising (abilities, motivation, rewards, maturity, initiative, control, responsibility, and relationships). In this study of study abroad advising practices, I was able to find evidence supporting five of the eight components of developmental advising. Each of the advisors utilized some developmental advising techniques, although the only category that all five advisors displayed a consistent use of this advising approach was in the category of responsibility. Carly, the advisor with the longest tenure in the office, was the only advisor for whom I found evidence using developmental advising in all five categories. John, who has more total study abroad advising experience when combining his tenure at MU as well as that of previous positions, provided less evidence of employing developmental advising techniques in his study abroad advising practices. With that said, the type of advising that John performs, primarily advising for faculty-led programs, does not lend itself as naturally to developmental advising. This notion, along
with a more detailed evidence of developmental advising in the practice of advising for study abroad will be explored next.

**Abilities.** In developmental advising, the focus is on the potentialities of students rather than the limitations, which are prevalent in the prescriptive advising model. Specifically, the advisor would look at past performance and the student’s current aspirations to anticipate potential, rather than using past performance to predict obstacles (Appleby, 2001). In relation to study abroad, barriers such as finances can be huge obstacles for advisors to help students to overcome (Dawson, 2000; Dessoff, 2006). The advisors in this study employed a few different techniques to help students look at the potentialities rather than their limitations. In her interview, Carly said “I feel like my job is to kind of let students know that the sky’s kind of the limit as far as what you want to do when going abroad and trying to make it possible for them if it’s within their reach.”

Leah approached her advising in a similar manner. “That’s also just kind of to get their wheels turning and I think when they see that it’s something that can actually happen and that it’s not as expensive as I thought, that it’s actually easier than I thought, that’s our role to provide them with those resources and kind of expand their minds.”

Again, study abroad advisors have the opportunity to support and advise students in a way that focuses on the potentialities of the student rather than on limits that are often self-imposed by the student, often pertaining to financing of study abroad. As Leah mentioned, providing the student with the tools they need and supporting their aspirations can go a long way in changing this mindset.

**Rewards.** Rewards in the developmental contexts refer to the sense of fulfillment, mastery, and achievement as opposed to focusing on credits and grades. In
study abroad advising, this was reflected in a number of ways. For instance, talking to students about what they hope to gain from their study abroad experience and what their goals are for their program was a common occurrence between all of the advisors in the study. When asked about whether or not she asked students about their goals for the program, Carly said:

It’s not a specific question that I would ask, but in one way or another, I always ask students if I haven’t met with them before, you know I’ll say “so what’s your major?” and if they’ll say health sciences, I’ll say “so within health sciences, what do you want to do with that?” And I always do want to know what the student wants to do after graduation or what they see themselves doing, where they are from, and what their plan is after graduation what they kind of see themselves doing. I think I’m just really curious how students see themselves getting there, because a lot of things need to fall into place to kind of get to know yourself before you get there, so I always like to encourage students. I’m always looking for that moment when a student says “I want to go to PA school to be a Physician’s Assistant but I’m also really interested in bikes” or “I’m also really interested in the outdoors,” “I’m interested in writing, creative writing” and those are always the things that I, for some reason, I always latch on to the little things that students have that are outside of their major that I really encourage them to focus on. If I can ever get to talking with a student more about that, what their interest is, I always try to link…I think it’s really important for students to try to link what their alternative interests outside of their degree with their degree in some way and I always like to make sure that they have the support to try to
combine those two things if they ever could in the future or at least follow their passion and somehow weave that into their passion with their academics as well. Although it may not be a specific question that is asked of the students, it is evident from my interview with her that Carly tries to engage her advisees in the conversation about what they hope to gain from their study abroad experience. Instead of focusing on a particular grade or credits that the student wants to earn abroad, she looks at the broader picture and helps them identify an appropriate program based on that information.

Rachel approaches her students in a similar manner. “I really like to ask them intentional questions about why they have chosen that program, what their interests are, their future goals and that kind of thing.” Talking to students about future goals is a prime example of developmental advising. Furthermore, Leah also approaches her advising appointments by asking about what the student is hoping to gain from the experience as part of assisting students in identifying an appropriate program:

When students come in, I ask them “what are your goals, what do you want out of this experience?” Not “what country do you want to go to, what do you want to study, when do you want to go,” but “what do you want to get out of this?” “Do you want to become fluent in a language? Do you want to get credit for your major or do you just want to take some elective credit?” Or “do you just want to have a really interesting cultural experience?” And then from there, that leads into so “you want to be fluent in Spanish and you are an engineering student, there are some great programs for you in Santiago” and so I think it’s kind of good to see their big picture goals and then move down from there. I often start kind of open ended and then we move into details so it’s kind of like a funnel.
Again, Leah’s approach to talking to students about the broader picture rather than being more narrowly focused on just the academic credit offered in the program, allows the students she works with the benefits of developmental advising.

**Maturity.** Maturity from the developmental advising perspective refers to students maturing, growing, and being capable of self-direction. In prescriptive advising, students are looked at as immature and in need of being supervised closely. In her interview, Leah indicated that students at times need to be encouraged to exercise this maturity:

> A lot of times I get an email when they first arrive and they’ll say “hey, just got in a couple of days ago and everything is going great,” but then after that I don’t really want them to keep emailing me every detail because they’re there and they’re not supposed to be on their computers emailing about it, but I do love to meet with them when they come back.

By encouraging her students to make mature decisions, she allows them the maximum opportunity for growth, which is consistent with developmental advising practices.

Similarly, John encourages his students to become more mature and independent by not fixing the problems for the students, but providing the student the tools necessary to problem solve and make mature decisions on their own:

> If they have concerns about finances, not necessarily that they have all those concerns alleviated, but having ideas of how they can work through those obstacles, so not necessarily fixing everything, but at least moving them in the direction of feeling that they can participate and that they feel comfortable participating.
As illustrated in this example, teaching students to make mature decisions in an environment that is supportive and encouraging exemplifies the developmental method of advising.

**Responsibility.** In developmental advising, it is clearly delineated who takes responsibility for what tasks and the tasks are shared between the advisor and the advisee. In this type of advising, both also share the responsibility for the outcome of the task, not just the advisor. In study abroad advising, I found this practice very prevalent. In regards to sharing responsibility for next steps in the process, Sarah said:

> I hope that when they leave my office that they know the next steps they need to take to follow through and that they are excited to begin the process. I always at the end of an appointment reiterate that now it’s your turn, so you need to do this, this, and this. Get these things done and then feel free to email me or come back in and we go through the next part of the process. I want them to be comfortable with the next steps.

In this example, by sharing the responsibility with the student for the outcome, Sarah provides developmentally sound advising, which allows the student to take some ownership of the process going forward and become independent. This may be a particularly important concept in study abroad advising because once the student leaves the home campus, they need to be able to make independent decisions as their advisor is not quite as easily accessible as when they are on the home campus due to physical distance and time difference.

Furthermore, John used a similar strategy with his students in regards to placing responsibility on the student when it comes to doing their part:
Most of it is when the students don’t read, so there have been times when I get the same or related questions from a student that I know is answered in materials that they already have. So the first one or two emails when they ask questions that I know they should be able to find the answer to, I’ll give them the answer and say “please make sure you read the materials, there is a lot of important information in there that you need to know.” After the second email, where they still obviously aren’t reading things I’ll say “this information is all in those materials, please read through them and get back with me if you have additional questions.” So a lot of it is making sure that they are taking responsibility for the application and the knowledge that they need to have. By deliberately not answering some of their questions, it forces them to go to some of that material for the answer because I don’t know what else they are missing if they haven’t read that information.

In this example of responsibility in developmental advising, John guides the student to the information, but ultimately puts the responsibility on the student to read the documents that they have been provided with.

A common question that study abroad advisors often receive is ‘what is the best program?’ In her written reflection of an advising appointment in the initial phase of study abroad, Leah said “She needed me to outline what her next steps were, and I did so by giving her action items. I want to support my students in making a decision, but at the end of the day it is their decision to make. I gave her the tools she needs to come back to me with her final program choice.” This is another example of responsibility in the developmental model of advising that ensures that the student does his or her part in the
selection of the study abroad program. Leah, as the student’s advisor, provided the tools, but allowed the student to make the final decision.

Lastly, Carly found that by pushing back some responsibility on the student, she alleviates some of the stress that comes with having all the responsibility of the outcome of a particular task:

I definitely sat in on a lot of other advising and that was really important, I felt like that helped a lot because I remember sitting in with [advisor] and trying to figure out how to advise for some of the [country] applications and I remember being a little anxious about some of them because they were so involved, but just watching a different style that was like “yes, you are responsible for filling out this form, you should read through it thoroughly on your own and if you have questions, come to me with those questions,” I felt that that took a lot of pressure off of me as far as having to know every single detail. I remember after having some of my observations with various advisors, I actually started if there was another application that I have not completed this application myself, I have supported several students doing so, please read thoroughly and ask me any questions that you have, so putting it more on the student to have to complete the application.

Crookston (1972) stated that developmental advising is beneficial to both parties. This example of developmental advising shows that by putting some of the responsibility on the student for the outcome of the task, it alleviates some stress for the advisor; it also allows the student to become more independent, thus creating a mutually beneficial relationship.
**Relationships.** The relationship between advisor and their advisees is of critical importance in the developmental model. This relationship is based on the nature of the tasks, the situation, and high trust and there is a lack of emphasis on the status. In particular, I found that the element of high trust was of substantial importance to the study abroad advisors in this study. Specifically, advisors developed a high level of trust by establishing credibility as an advisor. Establishing this credibility was done in a number of ways. First, letting the advisee know that the advisor has first-hand experience studying and/or travelling abroad was deemed important. Sarah shared:

Credibility is definitely important. I think it’s highly important and it builds that trust. It might be the student’s first time out of the country, their parents are going to be nervous. It’s a big step to study abroad and so I think credibility is going to be a key factor in advising. You can relate your own experiences because even though you might have studied abroad in a different country or you’ve travelled, it may not be the exact same, but you are going to experience similar things like culture shock, missing home, dealing with public transportation, money, travel, enrolling in classes abroad, having different styles of teaching.

Building a trusting relationship by sharing personal experiences to establish credibility with the advisees also ties in with the first research question. In answering that research question, I established that using personal experience does inform study abroad advising practices for the study abroad advisors at MU. This section confirms that this is consistent with developmentally sound advising practices.

Rachel also agreed that trust is an important factor in her advising. “You want to build a feeling of trust with that student so that they can rely on you, so that they feel that
they are in good hands and so that they feel like they are well taken care of, especially if they are nervous or uncomfortable, they really want to know that they are going to be alright.” This might be particularly true for students who have limited experience travelling overseas. In that case, using personal examples of traveling or studying abroad can help alleviate some of the fears that students have.

Another way advisors created a relationship with their advisees was establishing a sense of rapport that allowed students to share information with the advisor in a comfortable and trusting manner. Leah found this particularly important with her students:

I think it’s just like building a rapport with students and being really knowledgeable about the programs that I advise for. For example, I’ve never been to [country] but I feel really comfortable advising those students because I’ve worked with those programs closely for a year and a half, I’ve talked to students who have been on them, I know the provider really well. Just showing that I know what I’m talking about, I can provide you resources, here’s who I can connect you to. I think it’s also just being honest with students. “I haven’t personally been to [city], but I have a student who is there now and she’s given me all this great information. I can connect you and she can tell you where the great coffee shop is in [city], but I have the knowledge administratively to get you through this.”

Again, in the first part of this chapter, I established that study abroad advisors rely on information from past or current participants to inform their study abroad advising practices. From my interview with Leah, it is clear that these advisors also use past and
current study abroad participants to build trust with prospective students as they establish relationships that are developmental in nature.

Carly shared a strategy that she uses to build rapport with her advisees:

I feel like I’ve had moments when I know that students are feeling uncomfortable in an advising session and I think sometimes as advisors, we all have our days when we are busy and have a lot of things going on and you can’t always have that perfect balance. I have a long walk to my office and I feel like that’s a great icebreaker and time to set up and get everyone on the same page. You know, it’s like every great performance or acting performance you ever see. They say warming up together is the best any true actors can do before a performance, warming up together and getting all in the same groove and I feel like I try to do that on the walk to my office. I go up and I say “hi” and I kind of have a series of questions and I really like to ask them a funny question about the weather, are they ready for spring break, the weekend, and try to make a little joke and then I’ll ask what their major is. It’s just the walk back, I really just try to get to know them a little bit and let them know that I’m relaxed, easy going and then we sit down and then we’ll have a little more conversation and I’ll say “what kind of questions do you have?”

From observing other advisors in the office, using the time walking from the front desk where they pick up the student to their office space for getting the student to feel comfortable is a strategy that is commonly used at the International Center at MU.
However, for Leah as a young staff member in the office, it can sometimes be challenging to be seen as a trustworthy and credible person, which can have an effect on how she interacts with her students:

I’m also new in the field and new in my career so right now I’m not that much older than my students, which is fine but sometimes I feel like I have to be a little bit more professional because they see me and I’ve been asked like “how old are you?” I think that plays into how I interact with them and sometimes that means that we are developing more of a rapport because we are talking about things that we have in common but it’s also me keeping that professional line very clear because some of my students have been older than me, which isn’t a big deal but I think it does affect kind of how I interact with students and that’s probably why it’s going to change in 5 years.

As illustrated in this example, it can be challenging to keep a balance between being a professional and building a trusting a relationship, particularly for younger staff members that are close in age with the students they advise.

In discussing the goals for building a relationship with her student advisees, Carly summed it up nicely:

Most importantly, I hope that they leave here with a really calm spirit, they’re not anxious and they feel really confident that they are on the right path to the application, to studying abroad, that they have no reserves about it that after meeting with me, that they feel very confident. I feel like it’s kind of like a doctor’s visit sometimes where you go to a doctor and you’re thinking that you might have some pains, you have a lump on your neck and the doctor’s like “eh”
and it just takes that calm, nice attitude that says “yay, you’re going to be fine, take some Advil or aspirin” and although you don’t always like to pay a big copay visit to go see a doctor, it’s always worth having someone say “you’re doing OK, you’re great, you look great, you’re in good health. Come back if you have any questions!” I really would like to see students leave here with that calmness just knowing “you know all I have to do is just email him, come in for another appointment, I know where [advisor] is at.”

From her example, one of the most important things when working with students in a developmental capacity might be to build the kind of relationship where students feel supported and comfortable knowing that the advisor is there to support them through the process.

From the findings discussed above, there is evidence of developmental advising. The following section further examines developmental advising and what it might look like in each phase of the study abroad process.

**Developmental Advising Across the Phases for Study Abroad**

This section will further examine how developmental advising is manifest in each of the advising phases for study abroad. These data will come primarily from video recordings I captured for each of the advisors performing their duties as advisors in an actual student appointment.

**Initial advising.** For the initial phase of study abroad, I was able to observe two advisors, John and Leah. The study abroad advisors primarily used the developmental advising concepts of responsibility and relationship, each explored in greater detail next.
Leah was meeting with a student who was late applying for study abroad for the fall semester. Unlike the student John was working with, Leah’s advisee is in the more exploratory phase of looking at program options. Due to a graduation requirement set forth by his academic department, the student must complete a study abroad program before graduating, which is one of the reasons he is meeting with Leah at this point, even though it is 2 months past the application deadline. The shared responsibility approach was clearly illustrated in a couple of different ways during this appointment. First, the advisor provided the tools for choosing an appropriate program, but ultimately assigned the student the responsibility of making a program choice that would best meet his needs. Second, because the student had concerns about having limited language ability and living with a host family in a Spanish speaking country, the advisor provided the student with contact information for a current student who was having similar concerns before studying abroad who is now living with a host family. The student agreed to take on this responsibility in order to learn more about the program and to make sure he was making an informed decision when choosing a program.

As for the concept of relationship, it was evident that the student responded well to Leah’s advising style and that a relationship was forming, although still young because it was the first meeting between the advisor and her student. However, it was still evident that the student felt very comfortable talking to her about his concerns of living with a host family with his limited language ability, a clear sign that he is placing some trust in the advisor to guide him through that process.

John’s appointment was also with a student who was applying late to a faculty-led program. He employed responsibility as he ventured into the pre-departure phase in
order to get the student up to speed with the rest of the applicants who had already completed their applications. John explained the details of the program, which is typical for the initial advising phase. A great example of assigning the student responsibility for the interaction is when John and the student discussed a timeline for when the student needed to complete the application materials, because it was long past the original application deadline. In addition, John and the student talked in great detail about booking the flight and letting the faculty member know when she would be arriving. This is also an example of the task assignment that characterizes this part of the developmental advising method.

**Pre-departure phase.** Carly was the advisor who was video recorded for the pre-departure phase. This appointment was conducted with two female students who were about to depart for Ghana. Although it was set up as a pre-departure advising appointment, it turned into an orientation for these students. Typical appointments in the office last less than 30 minutes, this appointment lasted nearly three times that. Two primary themes of developmental advising emerged in this appointment, each which will be explored further next.

One of the primary ways that Carly was able to share responsibility with her student advisees was through the booking of the flights for the program. In the appointment, she was able to show them step by step how to make flight reservations by pulling up Expedia’s website online. She also utilized the affiliate organization’s website to help students locate information about when they needed to arrive in the host country. Once Carly had showed the students how to book flights she turned the responsibility
over to the students to complete this task on their own time as flight reservations is not something that is done through the International Center at MU.

As indicated previously, building a trusting relationship is an important component in developmental advising. From my observations, Carly was able to do this in a couple of different ways. First, because she had personal experience in the location that the students were going to, and in this case also with the program that they were participating in, she was able to share a substantial number of personal anecdotes and experiences from her time studying abroad. For instance, this included personal experience taking malaria medications and contracting malaria, using laundry services, and sharing information about how locals dress. By sharing these experiences with the students, she established a sense of credibility and expertise as an advisor, which the students clearly responded well to. Second, Carly created a comfortable environment for the advising appointments. This included opportunities for students to ask any questions that they have, the use of good eye contact, and removing any physical barriers between herself and the advisees. Although this was a long appointment by typical standards, it never felt like she was rushing the students out the door, even once the office officially closed for the day.

**While abroad.** For this phase, I was able to observe Sarah as she advised a female student in what would be considered a non-traditional study abroad location. The primary reason for this advising appointment, which was conducted via Skype, was to check-in after the student switched host families to make sure she is doing well. The reason for the switch was to be closer to school and live with a smaller family. The
original host family extended beyond the immediate family and encompassed 20 persons living together, which was too overwhelming for the student.

From my observations of this advising appointment, the advisor primarily used developmental advising in the category of relationship. It was very evident that the student and advisor were very comfortable in this relationship with each other. For instance, in addition to talking about the switch in host families, much of the discussion in this advising appointment also centered on just making sure the student was having a good experience abroad and how she was adjusting to the culture. Sarah employed an active listening style by nodding her head frequently and making eye contact, something that can be challenging when advising via Skype. It was clear that the student trusted Sarah, who used some personal experiences in this region from a recent site visit, to provide suggestion for places to visit during her time abroad.

Re-entry. Rachel conducted an advising appointment with a female student who had recently returned from France. Initially, the student was contacted with a request to assist with a pre-departure orientation for students who are about to attend the same program she recently participated in, which is a common practice at the International Center. Three components of developmental advising were evident in this advising appointment: initiative, relationship, and rewards.

Initiative is a component in developmental advising that I did not come across through my interviews with the study abroad advisors in this study. However, I did find some evidence of initiative during my video recorded observation of Rachel. Initiative refers to the concept that either the student or the advisor may take the initiative and that decision making is shared between the two entities. Rachel in her capacity as study
abroad advisor took the initiative to contact the advisee initially to ask her to assist with a pre-departure orientation for students who were about to participate on the same program that she had attended. Although the advisee was not able to assist in that capacity, she initiated another meeting, the one that was recorded, with Rachel to discuss her experience as a participant on the program.

Although this was the first time the student met with this advisor (the advisor she worked with previously has left the office), it was evident that there was a comfortable relationship between the two. For instance, both felt comfortable sharing personal stories and backgrounds throughout the conversation. Additionally, the student used her smartphone to share personal pictures from her time abroad. Looking at the physical environment that might have contributed to this comfortable relationship, a couple of points are worth mentioning. First, the student and advisor sat in Leah’s cubicle space facing each other with no physical barriers between the two. This seemed to create a much more relaxed situation for this type of conversation. Second, the advisor displayed several signs of appreciation for diversity and an openness to a variety of viewpoints in her office space, which I believe can be interpreted as a judgment free zone that allowed the student greater freedom to share personal information. These signs included a Safe Space sticker and a completion certificate of a diversity training program.

Rewards, other than the tangible grades and credits that the student earned in the program, were discussed at length. Part of this conversation centered on what the student hoped to do in the future with her degree. In addition, Rachel talked to the student about workshops for returnees, which specifically helps them explore some of the rewards of study abroad, such as personal and professional growth and how to articulate those.
In order to summarize these findings, I have opted to expand on the figure that was developed by Winston and Sandor (1984). In the far right column, I have provided some examples of what developmental advising may look like within the context of study abroad advising.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Terms of</th>
<th>Prescriptive</th>
<th>Developmental</th>
<th>Developmental Advising in Study Abroad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABILITIES</td>
<td>Focus on limitation of students</td>
<td>Focus on potentialities of students.</td>
<td>▪ Provide students with resources to help overcome obstacles such as financing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTIVATION</td>
<td>Students are lazy</td>
<td>Students are active and striving.</td>
<td>Was not observed in this study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REWARDS</td>
<td>Grades, credits</td>
<td>Achievement, mastery, feeling of fulfillment.</td>
<td>▪ Help students identify appropriate program based on goals (e.g. language acquisition, cultural immersion)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| MATURITY    | Students are immature, irresponsible, and must be supervised closely. | Students are growing, maturing, and capable of self-direction. | ▪ Provide tools for students to problem solve on their own.  
▪ Discourage constant contact with advisor at the home institution while the student is abroad; allow student to exercise their maturity |
| INITIATIVE  | Advisor fulfills duty by signing forms and giving advice; the remainder is up to the student. | Either student or advisor may take initiative -- who does what is a matter of shared decision-making. | ▪ Students may initiate contact to share program information upon return to the home campus. |
| CONTROL     | By advisor | Not a major issue. | Was not observed in this study |
| RESPONSIBILITY | Advisor has primary responsibility for outcomes. | Clearly negotiated as to who does what (not the same with every student). | ▪ Email to students with next steps in the process delineating what the advisee and advisor are each responsible for.  
▪ Teach students how to problem solve by directing to resources rather than simply providing the answer. |
| RELATIONSHIPS | Advisor demands respect based on status and position. Relationship is formal and guarded. | Relationship is based on the nature of the tasks, situation, and high trust. Position and status are de-emphasized. | ▪ Establishing credibility as an advisor (first-hand experience travelling or studying abroad).  
▪ Building trust and rapport, especially important for first-time travelers. |
Prescriptive Advising in Study Abroad

Participants reported examples of developmental advising and I observed evidence of developmental advising directly, I also found numerous examples of what Crookston (1972) calls prescriptive advising, which may be unavoidable in study abroad advising practices. For instance, in terms of rewards, an important component in study abroad advising is to assist students in identifying programs that offer academic credit that keeps them on track for graduation. However, talking to students about what credits they need would be considered prescriptive advising (Crookston, 1972). Furthermore, Leah, as a young advisor, sometimes found it necessary to establish a sense of authority with her advisees in order to build a trusting relationship. Again, this could be considered prescriptive in nature. Advising for specific program types may also more readily lend itself to prescriptive advising. As John mentioned in his interview pertaining to advising for faculty-led programs:

Comparing different countries and different programs, that kind of a thing, what is the language going to be like and those are concerns that you don’t see as much in faculty-led because it’s a short experience, it’s a group experience, courses are taught in English, travel is facilitated for them. Most of my students, I don’t see for faculty-led, I see maybe 25% whereas with you exchange programs most of the time you need to see them at least once just to kind of talk about the materials and the expectations, what they need to do to apply for the program. So I think the advising in those two areas are very distinct and I feel like faculty-led program advising is much less advising than answering questions.
From John’s statement, it appears that advising for faculty-led programs align much closer with prescriptive advising than developmental. The limited interaction that the advisor has with their student advisee may contribute to a lack of opportunity for relationship building. However, whether or not prescriptive advising in the study abroad context has negative consequences would need to be studied further.

**Summary**

As is clear from this chapter, study abroad advising is informed by a substantial number influences. This included relevant personal experiences of the advisors such as travel or studies abroad. In addition, the advisors’ practices were informed by experiences of others, primarily other students who had participated on the programs for which the advisor is responsible. Other influences included training, professional development, formal education, and resources that are available to the advisors. Lastly, the advisors in this study cited that their practices were informed by other relevant professional experience.

In addition, the style used by the study abroad advisors in this study show clear signs of developmental advising, primarily pertaining to rewards, responsibility, and relationships. Developmental advising was not limited to one particular phase of advising. Rather, I was able to find evidence of developmental advising techniques being utilized by the advisors in this study in each of the four phases. All of the advisors tended to talk to students about their goals for their time abroad with great frequency (rewards). Rather than just asking what kind of academic credit the student hopes to earn abroad, the advisors would often ask about broader goals such as how the study abroad experience will fit into their future plans. In terms of responsibility, I found that the
advisors clearly shared the responsibility for completing tasks related to study abroad participation with their students. Lastly, the participants in the study placed high value on the relationship with their student advisees. In developmental advising, relationships are based on high levels of trust between the advisor and advisees (Winston & Sandor, 1984). For study abroad advising, establishing credibility as an advisor was found to be a significant component of trust.

I believe this study has significantly contributed to the limited research that is available pertaining to study abroad advising. The following chapter will provide a discussion of the outcomes as well as implications for future research and practice.
CHAPTER 5

As indicated in earlier chapters, study abroad participation is increasing among the U.S. college student population (Institute for International Education, 2013). Significant research has been conducted to establish benefits of such participation (Engle & Engle, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004; Norris & Gillespie, 2009) as well as potential barriers that prevent students from participating. In particular, the barriers are most significant for students of color, including financial barriers (Dawson, 2000; Dessoff, 2006), lack of family support (Dessoff, 2006), and perceived language barriers (Hembroff & Rusz, 1993). The advising process for study abroad has received little to no attention when it comes to empirical research. Thus, the aim of this study was to learn what informs study abroad advising practices and whether or not there is evidence of a developmental advising approach as identified by Crookston (1972) in study abroad advising practices.

In this chapter, I will present a summary and discussion of the key findings. In addition to a summary of the findings, I will also present a model of developmental advising for study abroad. Lastly, I will present implications for future research and practice.

Summary and Discussion of Key Findings

The data for this study were collected through several means: written reflections by the study abroad advisors, interviews, video recorded study abroad advising appointments, and field notes. Again, the research questions for this study were:

1. What informs study abroad advising practices?
2. Is there evidence of developmental advising in the process of study abroad advising?
   a. During the initial advising phase
   b. During the pre-departure phase
   c. While abroad
   d. During the re-entry phase

In this section, I will provide a summary of the key findings for each of the two research questions.

Factors Informing Study Abroad Advising Practices

There were a substantial number of factors that work together to inform study abroad advising practices, including relevant experiences, formal training, resources, and professional experience. Each of these will be summarized next.

Relevant experiences. As evidenced in this study, study abroad advisors utilize relevant experiences to advise students to a great extent. First, this included personal experiences that they were able to utilize to inform their advising practices. Specifically, being able to relate a personal study abroad or travel experience helped the advisors build trust with their advisees, even if it was not in the same location that the student is interested in going to. According to the advisors in this study, there is enough other overlap between study abroad experiences that make one relevant to another, such as culture shock, using public transportation, and experiencing a new learning environment, even if they are not in the same location.

In addition to personal travel experiences, advisors utilized personal identity to connect with students. As explored further in chapter four, students connected with
Rachel’s identity and felt comfortable asking her identity related questions, which allowed her to draw on personal experiences both in the U.S. and abroad to inform her advising. It is worth noting that as a staff, the advisors in this study have shown an extraordinary commitment to diversity and have undergone a significant amount of diversity related training in order to best serve underrepresented student populations. This included Safe Space training and displaying the safe space sign in each of the advisors’ offices, creating an environment where students feel comfortable approaching diversity related topics.

Lastly, leveraging the experiences of others, primarily other study abroad participants, was cited as a key in informing the study advising practices for the advisors in this study. One of the ways that the study abroad advisors were able to glean this information is through interaction upon the return to the home campus. This was done both through formal evaluations that are sent to all study abroad participants upon completion of their study abroad program as well as through informal conversations with students. Additionally, advisors invite past participants to assist with the pre-departure orientation of students, which was also cited as an important way for the advisors to learn more details about the programs for which they advise that they utilize in their advising practices.

**Formal training.** There are various kinds of formal training that plays an important role in informing advising practices for the advisors in this study. This included training that they received at their home institution, professional development, and formal education.
All of the advisors received varying degrees of training for their positions upon the start in the office. What this training consisted of varied slightly depending on how much experience they came in with when hired. One of the key aspects of this training was shadowing other advisors in the office. Beyond learning where to find specific information that they needed in order to answer a student’s questions, this also allowed the advisor in training the opportunity to see different kinds of advising styles utilized as they were developing their own. Other training that they received at the home institution included webinars on varying topics pertaining to advising for study abroad as well as diversity related sessions led by offices on campus that specialize in those topics.

Another type of formal training that was cited as important in informing advising practices were site visits to programs in the advisor’s region. Having the opportunity to sit in on classes, see the housing in which the students will be living, and meeting with the on-site staff were all important take-aways from site-visits that the advisors utilize to inform their practices. As it may not be financially feasible to visit every program in an advisor’s portfolio, professional conferences is another way that advisors can connect with overseas staff as well as learn more about study abroad programming in general. It is important to note that the International Center where these advisors are employed pays for institutional and personal memberships in a number of professional organizations, including NAFSA and the Forum on Education Abroad, a significant professional benefit that may not be available to all staff members at other institutions. The resources and conferences that are available through these professional organizations were cited as key influences in how the advisors perform their duties.
Lastly, formal education that advisors received through their educational programs played a significant role in informing study abroad advising practices. Although only one advisor has a degree that is specifically focused on international education, all of the advisors found some aspects of their degrees that were applicable in informing their advising. For instance, Rachel utilized her undergraduate degree in international studies to inform her advising when it comes to talking to students about different political systems in other countries. John, who took some student affairs courses as part of his master’s degree, has utilized knowledge that he gained in his coursework to inform practices specifically pertaining to diversity and inclusion in his advising.

**Resources.** A substantial number of resources informed advising for the participants in this study. This included international education colleagues, campus colleagues, printed materials, and online resources.

In terms of education abroad colleagues that helped inform advising practices, this included both other staff members in the office as well as those at other institutions and affiliate organizations. According to the participants in the study, the office environment where they work is very collaborative and it is easy to ask each other questions and seek feedback, which can then be utilized to inform advising practices. As for collaborating with other professionals in the field of education abroad, the participants found that conferences were a good place to make connections with staff members at other institutions as well as with staff members at affiliate organizations whose expertise can be utilized to inform advising practices. Additionally, some of these colleagues, particularly past employers in the field of education abroad and former faculty members, also serve as mentors to the advisors in the office. The mentors’ expertise in the field
provides key contributions to the participants advising practices according to participants in the study.

Because advising for study abroad is complex and touches upon many areas of the home campus, expertise of staff members in other campus offices were also often utilized to inform study abroad advising practices. For instance, this included staff in the financial aid office, the registrar’s office, and academic advisors, to name a few. Specifically for advisors who coordinate and advise for faculty-led programs, the faculty leaders contributed key information that advisors use to inform their practices.

In terms of printed resources that inform study abroad advising practices, the advisors mentioned using materials purchased by the office, such as guides for re-entry programming, that were useful in informing their advising practices. In addition, the printed materials housed in the Education Abroad Resource Room, such as catalogs from affiliate organizations, were helpful for advisors as they work with students. Lastly, many of the participants in the study found written articles on a particular country or topic helpful in informing their practice and were also something that they often share with student advisees to help them prepare for their time abroad.

Lastly, there were a number of important resources online that helped inform the advising practices of the participants in the study. For instance, several of the advisors mentioned pulling up maps online to show students during advising appointments. Additionally, utilizing the application software StudioAbroad was mentioned as important for all the advisors. In particular, this online tool was often used to assist students in finding suitable study abroad program options that meet their personal and academic needs. Other web resources that helped inform participants’ practices as
advisors included professional resources from organizations such as NAFSA and the Forum on Education Abroad as well as the International Center’s own website.

**Professional experience.** The advisors in this study all came into their current positions with some experience in the field of education abroad or in higher education positions that are related to their current positions as advisors. The skills and knowledge gained through these positions directly inform the way that the advisors perform their duties in their current positions. For instance, John found that although the processes may vary slightly from one institution to another, the general scope of the positions and how to advise students can be transferred from one institution to another. Other advisors had previously worked in residence life positions and with international scholars on college campuses. Although not directly related, these positions also helped inform advising for study abroad. Overseas work experience, even in fields that do not directly relate to international education, was also cited as key influences in informing advising.

**Developmental Advising in Study Abroad Advising Practices**

The second research question in this study examined evidence of developmental advising in study abroad advising practices. Using Crookston’s (1972) framework, I examined developmental advising using categories developed by Winston and Sandor (1984). These researchers used eight categories to look at developmental advising (abilities, motivation, rewards, maturity, initiative, control, responsibility, and relationships). In this study, I was able to find evidence of five of the eight components of developmental advising, which included abilities, rewards, maturity, responsibility, and relationship. I will briefly explore each of these categories next.
**Abilities.** In developmental advising, the focus is on the student’s potential rather than possible limitations. A significant obstacle in study abroad tends to be overcoming the financial aspect of paying for a program (Dawson, 2000; Dessoff, 2006). This may be either a real or perceived barrier for students, depending on their personal circumstances. The advisors in this study showed evidence of this type of developmental advising by providing the tools the student needs to make study abroad happen as well as being very supportive of their aspirations.

**Rewards.** Rewards, from a developmental advising perspective, needs to be focused on achievement and mastery, rather than grades and credits. I found substantial evidence in this study that study abroad advisors put key emphasis in talking about broader goals for their time abroad and what the student hopes to achieve overseas. Rather than discussing a particular grade the student hopes to achieve in their foreign language class, the advisor might talk to the student about what level of fluency they hope to achieve. This is important information for an advisor in order to assist a student in choosing the right program as some are more language intensive than others.

**Maturity.** Unlike prescriptive advising, the developmental model assumes that students are capable of self-direction and that they are maturing and growing. This was evidenced in the study in a few different ways. For instance, John exemplified this by teaching students to make mature decisions for themselves in an environment that is supportive and encouraging, rather than just fixing the problem for the student.

**Responsibility.** Shared responsibility between the advisor and the advisee is an important concept in developmental advising. In this study, I found that advisors often used this technique in order to get the student to take responsibility and ownership for
moving forward in the process of study abroad. For instance, John shared an example of putting responsibility on the student for reading materials that they have been provided in order to find answers to their questions rather than just simply giving them the answer that they are looking for. Becoming self-sufficient and having the ability to problem solve are important aspects of being successful abroad. Thus, sharing responsibility with the student advisee for outcomes early on helps the student develop these skills.

**Relationship.** The relationship between advisors and their advisees is key in the developmental advising model. As part of this relationship, high trust is an important component. In study abroad advising, the advisors created this trust in a number of ways. For instance, this included establishing credibility with students, which was often done by sharing first-hand experiences of travelling or studying abroad. Another way that the participants in this study built trusting relationships with their advisees was to establish rapport with students, which allows the student to feel comfortable sharing concerns that they might have. This included being knowledgeable about the programs they advise for as well as providing useful tools and resources for the student.

**Developmental Advising Across the Phases**

A particularly noteworthy contribution of this research is the development of the four phases of study abroad. Previously, the Forum on Education Abroad (2011) recognized three phases (before, during, and after). This study has contributed justification for division of the “before” phase into two separate phases (initial and pre-departure) as the activities that advisees engage in and the advising they receive, are quite different between the two phases. When looking at each of the phases of study abroad
(initial, pre-departure, while abroad, and re-entry), there was evidence of developmental advising in each phase. This section will summarize these findings.

**Initial.** In the initial phase I was able to see evidence of both responsibility and relationship. John, one of the advisors that I was able to observe in this phase, assigned her advisee very specific items that she needed to complete as part of the application, consistent with responsibility in the developmental approach. Leah, the other advisor I observed in this advising phase, used a relationship approach to developmental advising in order to create a comfortable environment that allowed the student to trust her as an advisor.

**Pre-departure.** As with the initial phase, responsibility and relationship were the two primary developmental advising approaches in this phase of study abroad advising. Again, the students (two in this appointment) were shown how to book their flights, but the responsibility were ultimately turned over to them to complete. As for the relationship, Carly who is a study abroad alumni of the program the students were going on, was able to share lots of personal stories and anecdotes that were helpful in creating a sense of trust. A high sense of trust is one of the most important components of building a relationship in the developmental advising model.

**While abroad.** Through a video recorded Skype advising appointment, I was able to witness the relationship that Sarah has built with her advisee. The student had recently switched host families and it was evident that she placed a lot of trust in Sarah as her advisor.

**Re-entry.** The final phase of study abroad revealed some other aspects of developmental advising that were not present in the other three phases. This included
initiative, which in this case meant that the student took the initiative to seek out the advisor to share information pertaining to the study abroad program that she participated on. Again, relationship was an important developmentally sound advising technique used in this phase. Although the student and advisor had never met previously, the advisee felt comfortable enough to share personal stories and pictures with the advisor. Lastly, rewards, other than the tangible grades and credits, were discussed at length as well as how to articulate these. In this case, one of the rewards included language acquisition.

**Model for Developmental Advising in Study Abroad**

The evidence in this study suggests that study abroad advisors do in fact employ developmental advising techniques in their advising for study abroad. The following model has been developed in order to document what developmental advising looks like in each phase for study abroad. Although the concepts of abilities and maturity were only self-reported by the advisors, I opted to include them in the model.
Further studies on developmental advising may expand this model to also include the concepts of control and motivation. This study failed to identify either of these developmental advising concepts, either through the observations or as self-reported by the participants in the interviews.

The following section will look at how these findings connect to the rest of the literature on study abroad advising as well as developmental advising.

**Contribution to the Literature**

This study significantly contributes to the very limited research that is available on the process of advising for study abroad. Much of the related research used in the review of literature for this study centered on developmental advising in the field of academic advising rather than advising for study abroad. This was done because academic advising is a closely related field and no research was found that specifically looked at study abroad advising in this context. This section will connect my findings to the literature on developmental advising.

**Mutual Responsibility**

Crookston (1972; 1994) stated that a significant aspect of developmentally sound interactions come from advisors and advisees sharing responsibilities. This includes clearly articulating what is expected of the student and coming to an agreement of who is to do what (Crookston, 1994). Much like what Crookston described in the literature, the study abroad advisors in this study clearly outlined next steps for the students they were working with. This included assigning responsibility for next steps in the application process as well as for booking their own flights. Additionally through his developmentally sound advising, John also ensured that students read their pre-departure
materials by letting the student know where to look for the information, rather than simply providing the answer.

**Involving Others in the Process of Advising**

A significant aspect of developmental advising is involving others in the advising process as necessary. In fact, this is so important that NACADA (2005), the professional organization that has developed standards for advising practices in academic advising, included it in their best practices. As was evident in this study, involving others in the advising for study abroad was also important in informing the practices of the participants in this study. This included both other staff members in the office, staff members in other offices on campus, as well as colleagues in the field of education abroad. For faculty-led program advisors, faculty members were also important in informing their practices and often utilized as an expert as necessary.

**Adherence to the Forum Standards of Advising for Study Abroad**

The Forum on Education Abroad (2011) standards for study abroad advising states that advisors need to have familiarity with the process of study abroad from start to finish in order to effectively serve in their roles. This includes both familiarity with the policies and procedures at the home institution (Chalou, Lantz, Felsing, & Lutfi, 1997; Forum on Education Abroad, 2011), as well as the equivalent at the host institution. Based on the evidence in this study, I found that advisors are familiar with policies that pertain to students when they study abroad. For instance, the use of financial aid for students who study abroad is an important component in overcoming the financial obstacles that sometimes prevent students from studying abroad. These barriers may be real or perceived and advisors need to be familiar with the policies for transfer of
financial aid for study abroad in order to best serve these students. The participants in this study not only had general knowledge of these procedures, but also have access to a staff member in the Office of Financial Aid who is specifically trained on financial aid matters for study abroad participants whose expertise they can utilize. In addition to general familiarity with the entire process of study abroad advising, the Forum standards (2011) included the following five categories.

**Objectives of academic advising for education abroad.** As with academic advising (Harrison, 2009), study abroad advisors should focus on the development of students, including their academic and personal goals according to the standards of good practice (Forum on Education Abroad, 2011). In particular, this was evident when the participants in this study talked to their advisees about their goals for their time abroad, which encompassed both personal as well as academic goals. Consistently, I found that advisors are not choosing programs for their students, rather they present the options available. Often this is done through searches using the technology and other resources that are available to the advisors. By not choosing a program for the student, the advisors are encouraging students to become more self-directed which is an important component in the Forum’s (2011) standards as well as in developmental advising.

**Responsibilities for academic advising for study abroad.** This standard refers to the responsibility of students for their academics abroad (Forum on Education Abroad, 2011). Essentially, although the study abroad advisor should assist students in finding courses and being able to provide advice on the academic system at the host university, it is ultimately the student’s responsibility to make sure the courses that are taken abroad fit into their academic plan at the home institution. The advisors in this study approached
this slightly differently. For instance, Leah took a very proactive approach in meeting with advisors for academic areas that tend to send large numbers of students on her program, such as Textile and Apparel Management, in order to share program information as well as learning about course requirements for these students.

**Helping students make informed education abroad choices.** In particular, this standard (Forum on Education Abroad, 2011) focuses on sharing knowledge of the educational system and culture in the overseas location as part of the advising process. When looking at what informs practices for the advisors in this study, personal experiences and experiences of other student participants were particularly impactful. The personal experiences included both travel and studies in the overseas locations, which the advisors turned into learning opportunities for the students they work with. In addition, being able to personally see a program through a site visit and sharing the first-hand knowledge gained from such a visit not only helped the advisors feel more confident in their advising but also made them feel more credible with student advisees.

**Ethical and legal responsibilities.** All students should have the opportunity to participate in study abroad, regardless of race, gender, or ability according to the fourth standard (Forum on Education Abroad, 2011). In response to this standard for best practices, the International Center at the University of Missouri has specifically developed a task force that looks at diversity issues in the study abroad context. John, one of the members of this task force, has been instrumental in creating resources specifically for underrepresented students in study abroad, specifically to address concerns that are relevant to a variety of student populations, including students with disabilities, first generation college students, students of color, and those who are part of
the LGBTQ community. In addition, as mentioned previously in this study, the staff has undergone training sessions that are specifically focused on diversity related topics in order to best serve minority populations.

**Organization and management.** Access to advising is an important component in the fifth standard (Forum on Education Abroad, 2011). At the University of Missouri, advisors are assigned based on the program the student is interested in. This varies depending on what geographic region the student is interested in as well as sometimes their major or program type (specific advisors are assigned to faculty-led programs and internship programs, for instance). In addition, another way that the International Center has ensured adequate access to advising is through the use of five undergraduate Peer Advisors who are all former study abroad participants as well as a Study Abroad Assistant in the Resource Room that students can see on a walk-in basis anytime the office is open. Another part of this standard is maintaining good relationships with other offices on campus. This is done in a number of ways at the University of Missouri. For instance, each advisor is assigned to a key office on campus and serves as the primary liaison with that office. This helps streamline communication and creates efficiencies for both offices involved.

**Phases of Study Abroad**

The Forum on Education Abroad (2011) stated that students should be supported before, during, and after their study abroad experience in order to comply with the organization’s best practices. As I outlined in Chapter 3, I opted to divide the ‘before’ phase into Initial and Pre-departure as the interactions with student advisees before they leave campus varies significantly depending on which part of the before phase the student
is in. In this study, I was able to collect data that supports the division of the four phases (Initial, Pre-departure, While Abroad, and Re-Entry), which will be explore further next.

**Initial.** According to the literature, the Initial phase is often characterized by assisting students who are just becoming aware of study abroad in finding an appropriate program (Engle & Engle, 2003; Goldstein & Kim, 2006) and assisting students in identifying means to overcome the financial barriers, which is often one of the greatest obstacles to participation for students wanting to study overseas (Brux & Fry, 2010; Dawson, 2000; Dessoff, 2006).

In this study, I was able to find substantial evidence that the study abroad advisors who participated in the study utilized a number of resources in order to help students find an appropriate program. Among other resources, this included use of the StudioAbroad software in order to search for programs, as well as utilizing other resources on campus in order to find the best program for the student. For instance, one campus resources that the advisors utilized in this study was involving the student advisee’s academic advisor in the discussion in order to find a program that best meets the academic needs of the student. As for discussing finances with the students, advisors utilized resources such as costs and budgets online as well as a designated person within the Office of Financial Aid in order to assist students in overcoming the financial obstacles that are generally prevalent in this phase of study abroad.

**Pre-departure.** In this phase, Engle and Engle (2003) found it critical that students are well prepared for their time abroad in order to have a successful experience. As part of this study, I was able to observe as Carly conducted a pre-departure advising session with two of her female students going to a non-traditional country. In this case,
the advisor was able to set realistic expectations for the students, as suggested by Engle and Engle (2003), in order to prevent possible dissatisfaction with the program, which can otherwise occur when students’ expectations are violated. Additionally, Carly was able to utilize this time to prepare the students for any safety issues that they may encounter abroad, which is an important facet of this phase of advising (Hartjes, Baumann, & Henriques, 2009). For instance, in terms of safety abroad, Carly spoke with her advisees about the use of taxis in the country where the students were going to.

**While abroad.** Providing advising that balances challenge and support (Sanford, 1966) is an important task for advisors as they work with students in the while abroad phase of study abroad. As part of the recorded advising appointments, I was able to observe Sarah advise one of her students via Skype who ran into an unexpected concern regarding her host family abroad. Because of their connection that was developed prior to the student departing for her study abroad program, the student felt comfortable confiding in Sarah as her advisor with her concerns.

**Re-entry.** The research indicates that students tend to experience a low point emotionally upon the return to the home campus (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). Although the student advisee that Rachel met with did not specifically indicate that she was experiencing emotional difficulties, Rachel was able to provide some online resources for study abroad returnees. However, because she is a very recent returnee, it is quite possible that she has not yet hit the low point, which Adler (1981) found to be most common 2 to 3 months upon the return. Thus, providing some of the resources for study abroad returnees may serve as a preventative measure for when the student may be experiencing reverse culture shock (Gullhorn & Gullahorn, 1963).
Use of Technology

Much like academic advising, the use of technology is prevalent in study abroad advising practices. As stated in the review of the literature, Phillips (2013) found that the use of technology can be a time saving tool for academic advisors, allowing more time for developmentally sound tasks. The participants in this study cited use of the application software Studio Abroad, which is developed by Terra Dotta, a useful tool that informs their study abroad advising practices to a great extent. According to Leah, the use of the software not only saves time, but it also serves as a useful tool in narrowing down suitable program options for students. At one of her previous institutions, the programs available were simply listed on a PDF handout and not searchable in any way. She often found that this is overwhelming for students as they try to narrow down their program options.

In this study, I was able to find evidence of the use of technology as a prevalent tool when advising students across the phases of study abroad. For instance, this included the International Center’s website, which hosts the StudioAbroad application software, using Skype and other information that is available online. In the initial phase, the advisors were primarily using StudioAbroad to show advisees how to search for programs as well as how to start their applications. In the pre-departure phase, I was able to observe Carly as she showed students how to book flights online. Ultimately, however, the responsibility of actually booking the flights was put on the students in a developmentally sound fashion. In addition to showing her advisees how to book their flights, Carly also used internet resources to show students appropriate ways of dressing for the country where they were going to as well as pulling up maps to give the students a
better sense geographically where they were going. In the while abroad phase, I was able to observe Sarah as she conducted a Skype advising appointment with one of her advisees overseas. Although Huesca (2013) cautions that the overuse of social media can negatively impact a student’s study abroad experience, using Skype can be an effective means of communicating with students while abroad. In a similar vein as Huesca (2013), I found that Leah cautions her students from overusing social media while abroad. In fact, she specifically encourages students to not email her with every detail of the program while they are abroad. Rather, she invites them to come and share their experiences with her upon the return to the home campus. In the re-entry phase, one example where I saw the use of technology was by the advisee to share her personal photographs during the debriefing meeting between the advisor and her student. These pictures can be useful when sharing program information that can later be used by the advisor to inform his or her practices.

The following section of this chapter will look at the implications this study has for both practice as well as further research when it comes to advising practices for study abroad.

**Implications for Practice**

As a practitioner in the field of education abroad, I find this section particularly impactful. This is especially true in terms of how the increased knowledge about advising practices for study abroad will impact the students we work with on a daily basis.
Increasing Diversity

The research shows that students of color participate in study abroad at much lower rates than White students (Institute for International Education, 2013). This study showed that advisors can utilize their personal identities in order to connect and build relationships with the students they advise. In order to effectively and comfortably be able to talk to students about identity and diversity abroad, it is important for staff member to receive proper training. As was evident in this study, the participants not only had a great passion for diversifying study abroad, they had also received significant training through both online webinars as well as training sessions with diversity offices on campus. Those responsible for managing study abroad staff should consider this an important aspect of professional development.

In addition, creating a physical environment that is conducive to encouraging students to have open conversations pertaining to diversity related topics is also an important factor in order to diversify the study abroad population. Having signifiers, such as the Safe Space signs, prominently displayed in the advisors’ offices is a great step in that direction. Furthermore, having private office spaces where conversations cannot be overheard by other members of the office may play an important role in whether or not students feel comfortable sharing personal information, such as that pertaining to race or other identity characteristics abroad. All of the participants in this study had offices with doors that could be shut for additional privacy, with the exception for Rachel. From my recorded observation of Rachel, it was clear that conversations can easily be overheard from one cubicle space to another as the video recordings had picked up other conversations in addition to the one Rachel was having with her advisee. If limited in a
study abroad office, it might be worth considering assigning the more private offices to those with the highest numbers of advisees in order to maximize privacy for the greatest number of students. Alternatively, a private office should be made available for advisors who are assigned to a cubicle space as needed for private conversations with their advisees.

**Information Retention**

As is clear from this study, the knowledge gained from professional opportunities, such as site visits and conferences, play an important role in informing advising practices. In addition, it also allows advisors to be more credible with their student advisees, which creates a sense of trust that is a critically important component in developmental advising. However, these kinds of opportunities can be a costly investment for an office, so how can this information be better retained during staff transitions? The advisors in this study suggested that better documentation about programs and processes may aid study abroad offices in retaining important information during staff turn-over. One of the ways this has been accomplished at the University of Missouri is during the annual evaluation process, which typically takes place in May. Advisors are asked to document the information and processes for all programs they advise for as well as any other special projects they are assigned to as part of their positions in the office. This can then be useful for new staff members as they learn about the programs for which they advise.

In addition to these process documents, I would also suggest asking advisors to create documents that are more specifically targeted towards the culture of each country in their advising region. Again, most advisors have not studied or visited all the locations for which they advise, so passing knowledge about cultural practices from one advisor to
the next may help bridge this knowledge gap. This information can be gathered in a number of ways, but I would suggest utilizing the resources that are already available to the study abroad advisors as a starting point. For instance, past participants of the program can provide a lot of useful information that could be incorporated in a document of this nature. In addition, because the University of Missouri International Center is a member of the Diversity Abroad Network, these advisors have access to country specific information that relates to culture that could be incorporated.

**Staff Retention**

Another consideration when looking at how information can be retained in the office is taking a close look at staff retention. This can be done in a number of ways, but as the advisors in this study suggested, having clearly articulated avenues for advancement within the office is critically important in order to retain staff. As was noted in the profiles of the advisors, several of them started in the office by working in the office’s resource room and were later promoted to advisors as positions became available. However, it is my sense that future steps towards promotions are not quite as clearly outlined in this office.

In addition, the advisors spoke of professional development opportunities as important factors when deciding whether or not to stay or consider other positions in the field of education abroad or elsewhere. Thus, in addition to providing the advisors with additional skills and knowledge about the programs they advise for, as well as study abroad in general, these professional opportunities also serve to reinvigorate the advisors’ enthusiasm for international education. These kinds of opportunities are very costly for
an educational institution, so it is important to pay close attention to retention measures in order to get a good return on this investment.

**Advisor Training**

As is evident from the outcomes of this study, training for these study abroad advisors is a bit inconsistent and lacking in some areas. Although all the advisors in this study agreed that they received some training upon the start of their positions, what that consisted of varied from one advisor to another. For instance, John did not shadow other advisors in the office, something that the rest of the advisors found to be very helpful as they were learning how to become advisors and developing their advising styles.

Although there was some evidence of developmental advising in each of the advising appointments that I was able to observe, I believe that a more intentional training on how to perform developmental advising would be beneficial to both the advisors and the students they serve. This would allow for a more consistent use and application of this advising method across advisors and programs for each phase of the study abroad advising process, which has shown to be beneficial in other settings such as in academic advising (Crookston, 1972). One consideration for continuous training for advisors is to allow staff members to sit in on appointments with more seasoned advisors in order to observe how those advisors implement developmental advising into their practices. By offering continuous opportunities to learn from each other, advisors can gain techniques and tools that they can incorporate into their own advising. It will be important for those in charge of training to ensure that the advisors who are being observed do in fact practice developmental advising techniques.
As for the specifics of this training on developmental advising, NACADA, the primary professional organization for academic advisors, offers many resources pertaining to developmental advisor training. These resources could be adapted and conducted inexpensively in-house for training study abroad advisors. In addition to setting aside funding for professional development that more directly pertains to study abroad, those in leadership positions should also consider allowing study abroad advisors the opportunity to partake in webinars, many of them offered by NACADA. Again, because these may be specifically focused on academic advising, it will be important to follow up with a discussion about how the information can be applied in a study abroad context.

Another consideration for developmental advisor training, would be to partner with those responsible for training academic advisors on campus. In addition to building effective campus relationships, which is the fourth standard of good practice according to the Forum on Education Abroad (2011), this measure could also serve as a cost saving solution, as webinars or other training resources can sometimes be costly. Because study abroad is an academic endeavor, these relationships would be critical not only for a more consistent way of advising students across campus, but also for making connections in the academic advising offices that can be helpful when questions about a particular department's curriculum arise.

In addition to training for full-time professional staff, I believe that study abroad peer advisors can also benefit from training on developmental advising. At the University of Missouri, students generally meet with a peer advisor first before they meet with the advisor for the region or program in which they are interested. Before the
meeting with the full-time advisor, the student is asked to narrow their program options to two or three. Thus, the peer advisor has a lot of influence on the process by which the student chooses the two or three options that they will discuss with their full-time study abroad advisor, so it will be important that they are trained appropriately.

**Advising for Faculty-led Programs**

Because faculty-led advising seems to lend itself more naturally to prescriptive advising and simply answering students’ questions rather than what programs to consider that fulfill the students’ goals for their time abroad, I believe it will be important to create specific training for faculty-led advising that is grounded in the developmental approach. Although I have not found evidence of prescriptive advising to be harmful, per se, the developmental approach has been linked to positive outcomes such as improved student retention (Raushi, 1993); student learning (Astin, 1984); and, student satisfaction (Coll & Draves, 2009). Although students may have a firmer idea of the program they want to go on, the advisor can still talk about goals and what they hope to gain from the program. This is typically done in advising for non-faculty led programs as students are trying to narrow down their program options. Having a clear idea of the outcomes students hope to achieve will be beneficial for faculty-led program participants as well.

**Graduate School Curriculum**

College Student Educators International (ACPA) in conjunction with Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) produced a set of professional competencies for the student affairs profession (College Student Educators International & Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, 2010). These competencies include advising and helping; assessment, evaluation, and research; equity, diversity, and
inclusion; ethical professional practice; history, philosophy, and values; human and organizational resources; law, policy, and governance; leadership; personal foundations; student learning and development. For the purposes of this study, I will only focus on the first competency, advising and helping. On a basic level, these advising competencies include skills such as the ability to establishing rapport with students and to facilitate goal setting, both of which are important tenets of developmental advising (Crookston, 1972).

Although the vast majority of the participants in this study have master’s level degrees, they by and large have limited educational training on how to be a student advisor. Thus, it is my suggestion for those who design graduate programs, in particular those programs that are focused on work with students in the field of education abroad or more general student affairs degrees, to look at what is currently offered in terms of working with students one on one in an advising capacity to make sure it is incorporated into the program’s curriculum in order to meet these competencies. In addition, although it is outside the scope of this study, my recommendation is also to review curricular offerings to ensure that all of the competencies that ACPA and NASPA (2010) has outlined are adequately taught in graduate programs in order prepare students work for within a higher education environment.

Within student affairs programs, there may not be enough room in the curriculum to devote an entire course to student advising, but it could be incorporated in a general student development course or helping skills type of course. Alternatively, one suggestion might be to look at counseling programs to see if there are courses that may be applicable for graduate students wanting to work as advisors upon graduation. This will ensure that this current gap in the curriculum is filled and that advisors have a more solid
theoretical foundation to base their advising decisions on when they come into an
advising position.

In addition to a practical application of the empirical evidence that this study has
provided, it also opens new avenues of future research, which will be explored in this
final section of the dissertation.

**Implications for Research**

There is a significant gap in the research pertaining to study abroad, especially
study abroad advising. This study fills a small gap in this research, but there is much
research left to be done before we have what I would consider a good understanding of
this area of higher education. This section will outline some suggested areas of where
future researchers may want to focus their efforts.

**Student Perspectives of Developmental Advising**

For this study, the focus was solely on understanding developmental advising
from the perspective of the study abroad advisors who participated in the study. Future
research may want to focus on incorporating perspectives of students into the research on
developmental advising within study abroad. Although the Institute for International
Education (2013) reports that study abroad participants tend to be female and White,
future studies may also want to focus on how developmental advising may benefit
student groups differently. For instance, an important study in order to increase diversity
within study abroad would be to look at whether students of color would be more apt to
participate if developmental advising techniques are utilized. Another consideration
might be to see if students respond differently to developmental advising based on
gender. If in fact some groups of students respond differently to advising practices, it
would be important for advisors to know in order to adapt their advising techniques accordingly.

**Developmental Study Abroad Advising in Other Contexts**

For this case study, I opted to select a case that is what Stake (1995) called typical. Future studies may want to look at study abroad offices that fall outside of what might be considered typical. For instance, the same study could be repeated in a departmental study abroad office that is only focused on administering programs for students of that major. In addition, the setting for this case study was a large public institution. Other studies may want to look at study abroad advising practices at smaller private institutions. Another consideration for a different institutional type would be to examine the study abroad advising practices at same-sex institutions, and MSIs.

**Longitudinal Studies**

This study was limited to one study abroad application cycle over a rather short period of time. As such, the study did not follow the same student throughout the advising process across all four phases. Rather, the observations highlighted different students in each phase of the process. In the future, studies may focus on developmental study abroad advising over a longer period of time. Perhaps instead of choosing different students for each of the phases of study abroad, the researcher might want to choose students to follow throughout the application process through all four phases.

**Multiple Observations**

In this study, five study abroad advising appointments of students in the four phases of study abroad were observed. Although I was able to document sufficient evidence that some of the developmental advising components are indeed present in
study abroad advising, future studies should consider examining a larger sample of students in each of the phases to see if the remaining components can be observed. At this time, there is no evidence that suggests that study abroad advising is incompatible with the missing developmental advising components, but additional observations may be able to confirm this empirically.

**Evaluation of Advising**

With the expanded use of the developmental advising theory by Crookston (1972), future researchers should also consider using the evaluative approaches of advising programs that have derived from this theory to examine and evaluate advising for study abroad. Winston and Sandor (1984) developed the Academic Advising Inventory (AAI), which has been used to evaluate academic advising programs. It is my belief that this can easily be adapted for study abroad advising as well. By conducting a study using this instrument, researchers can make a substantial contribution to the literature on study abroad advising by having the ability to compare and contrast advising practices either within different departments on a campus or between different campuses (Winston & Sandor, 1984).

**Student Outcomes**

The goal for this study was not to look at outcomes of developmental advising. Rather, the intention was to see if indeed there is evidence of developmental advising in study abroad advising practices. Now that I have established that there is some evidence of developmental advising, it will be critical to measure the outcomes of this type of advising in the context of study abroad. For academic advising, the developmental approach has shown significant benefits to the student, including persistence to
graduation (Raushi, 1993). This will include looking at the benefits for students who receive developmental advising as well as any potentially negative repercussions for those who do not receive this type of advising, if any.

**Student Retention**

Student retention in higher education is an important factor not only for the students involved, but institutionally for the bottom line financially and accreditation purposes as well. With increasing pressures of sending more students abroad, looking at retention from the perspective of retaining students from initial interest to completion of the program and through the re-entry phase is something researchers in the field of international education should be paying close attention to. In this study, Leah provided an example of following up with students who did not submit an application for study abroad after meeting with her. Measuring the effectiveness of an intervention such as this would be an important contribution to the literature. The outcome of a study of this nature would have substantial practical implications for study abroad advisors as they work with students.

**Student Advisors**

This study focused specifically on full-time advisors for study abroad. Future studies may examine advising practices of student advisors for evidence of developmental advising. This may include both undergraduate peer advisors as well as graduate assistants who may be interacting with student advisees. As indicated in the implications for practice, all who serve in advising capacities should be trained in the developmental advising model, including part-time staff. Thus, it will be important to see
how students are currently being advised and to create training models for student staff that can address potential short-comings.

**Training Models for Study Abroad**

Although NACADA has provided much needed training on developmental advising in the context of academic advising, research is needed in order to find adapted training models that will be suitable for study abroad advisors. As the two groups of advisors generally have different previous training and backgrounds, empirical studies are needed to see what is needed in order to effectively teach study abroad advisors how developmental advising can be implemented in their practices. In addition, research is missing that reflects what methods of teaching developmental advising would be most effective for study abroad advisors. For instance, research may want to look at whether observing other advisors who are already utilizing developmental advising in an effective method. Measuring effectiveness online training modules or webinars that address developmental advising may be a different research study worth pursuing.

As indicated throughout this study, there is limited research pertaining to advising for study abroad. Thus, the implications for research in this section are by no means an exhaustive list, rather just a few suggestions for where researcher may want to focus future studies.

**Conclusion**

Although this study was conducted examining the study abroad advising practices from the perspectives of study abroad advisors, the students these advisors serve have always been at the forefront of my mind while executing the study. Although I have outlined some implications based on the evidence of this study, most important to me is
what students will gain from this expanded understanding of the study abroad advising process. First, creating an understanding of what informs study abroad advising practices can be used to inform decisions regarding training and professional development for study abroad advisors. As this study reveals, opportunities to grow professionally significantly inform the practice of study abroad advising. Attending conferences, site visits, webinars, and other means of furthering their professional development should not be viewed as a luxury, rather a necessity for responsible practices in study abroad advising. As such, those who manage study abroad offices should be mindful that time and money needs to be budgeted for these professional growth opportunities. By allowing advisors to grow professionally, students they serve will significantly benefit when the knowledge and skills gained through these professional development opportunities are incorporated in their advising practices. Second, understanding developmental advising in the context of study abroad has the opportunity to substantially impact the way that study abroad advisors work with student advisees in the future. By providing a broader use of the developmental framework for advising in study abroad, study abroad advisor can now conduct self-assessments on their own practices to see where they may be able to incorporate developmentally sound approaches to their advising.
Appendix A

LETTER OF INVITATION

Study Title: An Examination of the Study Abroad Advising Process in a University Context

Dear study abroad advisor,

My name is Paulina Perkins and I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis program at the University of Missouri and I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree program. As a study abroad advisor at the International Center at the University of Missouri, I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

In this study, I will be examining the advising process for study abroad, an area of research that has been severely understudied to date. The goal is not to identify “right” or “wrong” ways of advising for study abroad. Rather, this study aims to simply understand what the process of advising for study abroad looks like in a university setting. In order to capture pertinent advising practices throughout the entire study abroad experience, I have chosen to divide the process into four separate phases:

- **Initial**: The Initial phase in the study abroad advising process is first phase when the student initially becomes aware of study abroad. This phase is often characterized by discussions centered on financing a study abroad program and program selection.

- **Pre-departure**: The second phase in the study abroad advising process is generally characterized by assisting students with the final preparations for study abroad. This may include orientation sessions, assisting with host university paperwork, and helping the student with the course selection for their time abroad.

- **While abroad**: The third phase is focused on the time the student has left the home institution. Topics that may come up through advising in this phase may include home sickness, how to change or add courses that were not on the initial list of approved courses at the host institution, and managing unforeseen instances such as a lost passport or illness.

- **Re-entry**: The final phase of study abroad advising occurs when a student has ended his/her study abroad program. There may be lingering logistical questions about how to obtain a transcript from the host institution, when courses will be posted to the transcript at the home institution, and whether or not grades will be included in their grade point average. In addition, students may be struggling with re-entry shock and advisors may be called upon to provide advice to the student on how to best reintegrate at the home institution.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to (in order):
• Provide a written reflection of one of your advising appointments (written prompts will be provided)
• Meet with me for an interview which will likely last 60-90 minutes
• Allow me to video record one of your advising sessions
  o The specific advising session that will be chosen for video recording will be determined by the researcher in conjunction with the study abroad advisor in order to capture students from the various phases of the study abroad process
  o Prior to recording the advising session, permission will be obtained from both the advisor and the advisee
• Meet with me for a follow-up interview (if necessary to clarify any concepts from the first interview and/or the written reflection)

All interviews will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and place and will be audio recorded so that I can accurately reflect on what was discussed at later date. The tapes will only be reviewed by the researcher (me) who will transcribe and analyze them. If requested, my faculty advisor may also wish to access the data that is collected in this study.

I am hopeful that you as a study abroad advisor will receive some benefit from participating in this study by having the opportunity to reflect on your own advising practices. In addition, my goal is to also contribute to the very limited research that currently exists on the topic of study abroad advising. Having a better understanding of what study abroad advising looks like on a university campus will likely also affect future study abroad participants in a positive way.

The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings/conferences. Video recordings and still shots will not be used as part of these presentations or publications. As with most research, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed, although pseudonyms will be assigned to participants in the study. Using these pseudonyms, specific advising practices may be highlighted as part of this study.

Taking part in the study is your decision; you do not have to be in this study if you do not wish to participate. You may also withdraw your participation in the study at any time or decide to not answer a question you are not comfortable with. Participation, non-participation, or withdrawal after the start of the study will not affect your status as an employee at the International Center in any way. Again, the goal of the study is not to determine right or wrong when it comes to study abroad advising practices, just simply to understand the process.

I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at 573-489-4352 or perkinspau@missouri.edu or my faculty advisor Dr. Casandra Harper at harpercas@missouri.edu or 573-882-2818 if you have study related questions or problems.
Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in this study. If you would like to participate, please return the enclosed consent form to Paulina Perkins within two weeks of receipt.

With kind regards,

Paulina Perkins
573-489-4352 or 573-882-8956
perkinspau@missouri.edu

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY - ADVISOR

Researcher’s Name(s): Paulina Perkins
Project Number: 2001504

Project Title: An Examination of the Study Abroad Advising Process in a University Context

INTRODUCTION

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This research involves an examination of study abroad advising practices on a university campus. When you are invited to participate in research, you have the right to be informed about the study procedures so that you can decide whether you want to consent to participation. This form may contain words that you do not know. Please ask the researcher to explain any words or information that you do not understand.

You have the right to know what you will be asked to do so that you can decide whether or not to be in the study. Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to be in the study if you do not want to. You may refuse to be in the study and nothing will happen. If you do not want to continue to be in the study, you may stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

In this study, the researcher will be examining the advising process for study abroad, an area of research that has been severely understudied to date. The goal is not to identify “right” or “wrong” ways of advising for study abroad. Rather, this study aims to simply understand what the process of advising for study abroad looks like in a university setting. In order to capture pertinent advising practices throughout the entire study abroad experience, I have chosen to divide the process into four separate phases:
• **Initial**: The Initial phase in the study abroad advising process is the first phase when the student initially becomes aware of study abroad. This phase is often characterized by discussions centered on financing a study abroad program and program selection.

• **Pre-departure**: The second phase in the study abroad advising process is generally characterized by assisting students with the final preparations for study abroad. This may include orientation sessions, assisting with host university paperwork, and helping the student with the course selection for their time abroad.

• **While abroad**: The third phase is focused on the time the student has left the home institution. Topics that may come up through advising in this phase may include home sickness, how to change or add courses that were not on the initial list of approved courses at the host institution, and managing unforeseen instances such as a lost passport or illness.

• **Re-entry**: The final phase of study abroad advising occurs when a student has ended his/her study abroad program. There may be lingering logistical questions about how to obtain a transcript from the host institution, when courses will be posted to the transcript at the home institution, and whether or not grades will be included in their grade point average. In addition, students may be struggling with re-entry shock and advisors may be called upon to provide advice to the student on how to best reintegrate at the home institution.

**HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE IN THE STUDY?**

About six people will take part in this study at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

**WHAT AM I BEING ASKED TO DO?**

You will be asked to:

- Provide a written reflection of one of your advising appointments (written prompts will be provided). Time estimate: 30-45 minutes.
- Meet with the researcher for an audio recorded interview. Time estimate: 60-90 minutes.
- Allow researcher to video record one of your advising sessions. Video recorded sessions will allow the researcher a fuller picture of your advising session, including elements such as eye contact, body language, etc. Time estimate: 30 minutes.
  - The specific advising session that will be chosen for video recording will be determined by the researcher in conjunction with the study abroad advisor in order to capture students from the various phases of the study abroad process
  - Prior to recording the advising session, permission will be obtained from both the advisor and the advisee
• Meet with researcher for a follow-up interview (if necessary to clarify any concepts from the first interview and/or the written reflection). Time estimate: 30-45 minutes.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THE STUDY?

This study will take up to four months and approximately five hours total of your time to complete. You can stop participating at any time without penalty.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING IN THE STUDY?

I am hopeful that you as a study abroad advisor will receive some benefit from participating in this study by having the opportunity to reflect on your own advising practices. In addition, my goal is to also contribute to the very limited research that currently exists on the topic of study abroad advising. Having a better understanding of what study abroad advising looks like on a university campus will likely also affect future study abroad participants in a positive way.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF BEING IN THE STUDY?

Participation, non-participation, or withdrawal after the start of the study will not affect your status as an employee at the International Center in any way. Again, the goal of the study is not to determine right or wrong when it comes to study abroad advising practices, just simply to understand the process.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF BEING IN THE STUDY?

There is no cost to you.

WHAT OTHER OPTIONS ARE THERE?

You also have the option of not participating in this study, and will not be penalized for your decision.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings/conferences. Video recordings and still shots will not be used as part of these presentations or publications. As with most research, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed, although pseudonyms will be assigned to participants in the study. Using these pseudonyms, specific advising practices may be highlighted as part of this study.
All data will be saved on a password protected computer using a secure university network, separated by advisor using the assigned pseudonyms. The key to these pseudonyms will be saved in a separate location in order to provide additional confidentiality of records.

WILL I BE COMPENSATED FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY?

You will receive no payment for taking part in this study.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT?

Participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study.

You will also be informed of any new information discovered during the course of this study that might influence your health, welfare, or willingness to be in this study.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR COMPLAINTS?

Please contact Paulina Perkins at 573-489-4352 or perkinspau@missouri.edu if you have questions about the research. Additionally, you may ask questions, voice concerns or complaints to the research team.

WHOM DO I CALL IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS?

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research and/or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study, you may contact the University of Missouri Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585 or umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu.

You may ask more questions about the study at any time. For questions about the study or a research-related injury, contact Paulina Perkins at 573-489-4352 or Dr. Casandra Harper (faculty advisor) at 573-882-2818.

A copy of this Informed Consent form will be given to you before you participate in the research.
SIGNATURE
I have read this consent form and my questions have been answered. My signature below means that I do want to be in the study. I know that I can remove myself from the study at any time without any problems.

_________________________________________  ______________
Participant                                      Date

MEDIA RELEASE
For valuable consideration received, I hereby give The Curators of the University of Missouri, a public corporation, ("University") the absolute and irrevocable right and permission, with respect to the photographs/images/audio that the University, or its agents, has taken of me or given permission to be taken of me during my enrollment at the University of Missouri

a) to copyright the same in its name, The Curators of the University of Missouri;
b) to use, re-use, publish and re-publish the same in whole or in part, individually or in conjunction with other photographs, audio or images, in any printed or electronic medium for the University purposes;
c) To use the same in whole or in part, individually or in conjunction with other photographs, audio or images on the University’s World-Wide Web sites, for University purposes only.
d) To use my name in connection therewith if the University so chooses.

Signed____________________________________
Print name________________________________
Date_____________________________________
Witnessed by ______________________________

Assignment/notes:
Appendix B

Follow-up email to participants (sent by neutral party):

Dear study abroad advisers,

This is a follow up to the letter to the invitation to participate in the study “An Examination of the Study Abroad Advising Process in a University Context”. If you would like to join the study as a participant, please submit the consent form that was included with your letter of invitation (also attached to this email) to Paulina Perkins no later than 5 pm on Monday, March 16.

Again, your participation in this study is completely voluntary and will have no negative repercussions pertaining to your employment at the University of Missouri International Center. The study is not designed to look for flaws in the current advising process. Rather the goal of the study is to simply understand what study abroad advising looks like on a university campus and your participation is a critical component in gaining that understanding.

If you have questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher, Paulina Perkins, at 573-489-4352 or perkinspau@missouri.edu.

Thank you for your consideration of the request for participation in this study!

Sincerely,

Paulina Perkins
Appendix C

Written Reflection Email

Dear Leah,

Please find attached the written reflection prompts. This reflection should take place immediately following an advising appointment and should take no more than 20-30 minutes. Please return the reflection via email to perkinspau@missouri.edu at your earliest convenience.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Paulina Perkins
Appendix D

Written Reflection Prompts

Immediately following the advising appointment, please reflect on the following:

General Information

- Please provide a general description of the advising appointment:
  - Is this a student you have seen before?
  - Which of the four stages is the student in?

Advising

- How did you approach the advising appointment?
- What information did you draw from when answering the student’s questions?
- How would you describe the style of advising you used?
Appendix E

Interview Protocol for Semi-structured Interviews

Advisor Background:
- How did you get into the field of education abroad?
- In what capacity have you been involved in this field?
- How many years have you worked at the International Center at the University of Missouri? In what roles?
- Tell me about any personal experiences you have as a study abroad participant.
- Tell me about other life experiences that have been influential to you as an advisor.
- What is your educational background? In your opinion, what aspects of your formal education inform your study abroad advising?
- In what other capacities have you worked with college aged students?

Training and Resources:
- When you first started in your current position, how were you trained to perform your duties as a study abroad advisor?
- What are some of the resources that are available to you as a study abroad advisor?
- What resources do you wish were available to you?
- What types of professional development is available to you as a study abroad advisor at the University of Missouri International Center? What have you participated in?
- What type of professional development have you found to be most influential in the way you advise students?
- Are you a member of any professional organizations? If so, what is your involvement with these organizations?

Advising:
- How would you describe your advising style?
- Describe an advisor in your past whose style you try to emulate. What made him/her a good advisor in your opinion? What makes a bad advisor?
- How do you approach your advising sessions with your advisees?
  - During initial advising
  - During pre-departure advising
  - During the time the student is abroad
  - In the re-entry phase of study abroad
- What do you think makes an effective advisor?
- How would you define effectiveness from an advising perspective?
- If a student asks you a question that you do not have the answer to, how do you respond?
- What are some typical concerns that students bring to your attention? How do you know how to respond to these concerns? What information do you draw from?
- Describe/walk me through a typical advising appointment. What do you hope the outcome will be?
- Describe a typical advisee. How do they know how to find you?
- How is study abroad advising different than academic advising?
Is there anything else that you think might be helpful for me to know about study abroad advising that I have not yet asked you about?
Appendix F

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY - ADVISEE

Researcher’s Name(s): Paulina Perkins
Project Number: 2001504

Project Title: An Examination of the Study Abroad Advising Process in a University Context

INTRODUCTION
You are being asked to participate in a research study. This research involves an examination of study abroad advising practices on a university campus. When you are invited to participate in research, you have the right to be informed about the study procedures so that you can decide whether you want to consent to participation. This form may contain words that you do not know. Please ask the researcher to explain any words or information that you do not understand.

You have the right to know what you will be asked to do so that you can decide whether or not to be in the study. Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to be in the study if you do not want to. You may refuse to be in the study and nothing will happen. If you do not want to continue to be in the study, you may stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?
In this study, the researcher will be examining the advising process for study abroad, an area of research that has been severely understudied to date. The goal is not to identify “right” or “wrong” ways of advising for study abroad. Rather, this study aims to simply understand what the process of advising for study abroad looks like in a university setting. In order to capture pertinent advising practices throughout the entire study abroad experience, I have chosen to divide the process into four separate phases:

- **Initial**: The Initial phase in the study abroad advising process is first phase when the student initially becomes aware of study abroad. This phase is often characterized by discussions centered on financing a study abroad program and program selection.
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list of approved courses at the host institution, and managing unforeseen instances such as a lost passport or illness.

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**HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE IN THE STUDY?**
About six students at the University of Missouri, Columbia will be participating in this study.

**WHAT AM I BEING ASKED TO DO?**
You will be asked to allow the researcher to video record one of your advising appointments. Although your voice will be captured as part of this recording, the video recording device will strictly be aimed at the study abroad advisor and no images of you will be captured. Video recorded sessions will allow the researcher a fuller picture of the advising session, including elements such as eye contact, body language, etc. displayed by the advisor. *Time estimate: 30 minutes.*

**HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THE STUDY?**
By signing this consent form, you only commit to participate in the study one time. Follow-up appointments with your study abroad advisor will not be recorded.

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING IN THE STUDY?**
I am hopeful that you as a study abroad advisee will receive some benefit from participating in this study by allowing your study abroad advisor to become more aware of his or her practices as an advisor. Having a better understanding of what study abroad advising looks like on a university campus will likely also affect future study abroad participants in a positive way.

**WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF BEING IN THE STUDY?**
Participation, non-participation, or withdrawal after the start of the study will not affect your status as a participant in study abroad or student status at MU in any way. Again, the goal of the study is not to determine right or wrong when it comes to study abroad advising practices, just simply to understand the process.

**WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF BEING IN THE STUDY?**
There is no cost to you.

**WHAT OTHER OPTIONS ARE THERE?**
You also have the option of not participating in this study, and will not be penalized for your decision.
CONFIDENTIALITY
The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings/conferences. Video recordings and still shots will not be used as part of these presentations or publications. As with most research, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed, although pseudonyms will be assigned to participants in the study. Using these pseudonyms, specific advising practices may be highlighted as part of this study.

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You may ask more questions about the study at any time. For questions about the study or a research-related injury, contact Paulina Perkins at 573-489-4352 or Dr. Casandra Harper (faculty advisor) at 573-882-2818. A copy of this Informed Consent form will be given to you before you participate in the research.

SIGNATURE
I have read this consent form and my questions have been answered. My signature below means that I do want to be in the study. I know that I can remove myself from the study at any time without any problems.

_________________________________________  __________________________
Participant                                          Date
MEDIA RELEASE

For valuable consideration received, I hereby give The Curators of the University of Missouri, a public corporation, (“University”) the absolute and irrevocable right and permission, with respect to the photographs/images/audio that the University, or its agents, has taken of me or given permission to be taken of me during my enrollment at the University of Missouri

e) to copyright the same in its name, The Curators of the University of Missouri;

f) to use, re-use, publish and re-publish the same in whole or in part, individually or in conjunction with other photographs, audio or images, in any printed or electronic medium for the University purposes;

g) To use the same in whole or in part, individually or in conjunction with other photographs, audio or images on the University’s World-Wide Web sites, for University purposes only.

h) To use my name in connection therewith if the University so chooses.

Signed________________________________

Print name________________________________

Date_____________________________________

Witnessed by _____________________________

Assignment/notes:
References


Alexitch, L. R. (2002). The role of help seeking attitudes and tendencies in students’ preferences for academic advising. *Journal of College Student Development, 43*(1), 5-19.


Robbins, R. (2012). Everything you have always wanted to know about academic advising (well, almost). *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy, 26*, 216-226.


Paulina Perkins was born and raised in Sweden and came to the U.S. as a high school exchange student. After graduating from her host high school, Marmaton Valley High School in Moran, KS, she stayed in the U.S. on a track and field scholarship at the nearby Neosho County Community College where she earned an associate’s degree. From there, she transferred to the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg, MO where she earned a bachelor’s degree in Tourism and a master’s degree in Communication. As a graduate student, she worked for two years as a graduate assistant at the International Center on campus. With an interest in travelling and exploring new cultures, this is where her passion for international education was ignited. After graduation, Paulina worked for seven years at Stephens College in Columbia, MO as the Director of Residence Life and Associate Vice President for Student Services. As part of her work at Stephens College, she also managed the study abroad programs the college offered as well as worked with the small population of international students on campus.

In 2007, Paulina made the leap to the University of Missouri, also in Columbia, MO, where she started as a Study Abroad Coordinator for the Missouri School of Journalism and later transitioned to Associate Director for Study Abroad at the International Center in 2008. In her current position she has the opportunity to advise students who are interested in studying abroad and coordinate many of the larger processes within the office, such as billing and registration. In addition, she oversees the advising process for non-faculty led programs, which is from where much of the passion for the topic of study abroad advising stems.