

LIFE AFTER POPPING THE BUBBLE:
Reentry into St. Olaf After a Global Semester Abroad
2003

Abstract:

We studied the reintegration of St. Olaf students to life on the campus of St. Olaf College after spending a semester abroad. Specifically, we looked at students who participated in Global Semester in the past two school years. Using in-depth interviews with sixteen students who participated in Global Semester and participant observation of an informal dinner with Global students and a Global softball game, we began to better understand the struggles students encounter when they return to the campus of St. Olaf College. Global students often have difficulties both in the classroom and with their old friendship circles, but the transition is eased through activities and interaction with fellow Globalites. As a result of our interviews, Global students are now able to more fully understand their personal reentry process.

Setting/Community:

Letter from Global Semester Students to the St. Olaf community:

-December 2, 2002

"We now realize that our study abroad experience is halfway done. As a group, we have traveled around the world together through six countries so far. The close-knit community that we have formed is valued by all of us. We continue to look forward to learn and explore all the experiences that Global offers. Yet, our hearts are often drawn to home, especially with Thanksgiving right around the corner. We will be thinking of all of you as we eat a traditional Thanksgiving on the other side of the world."

Global Semester is a St. Olaf College sponsored program where students have the opportunity for experiential learning in places around the world. Students apply to go on Global Semester in the spring by writing essays, going through a panel interview, and filling out lots of paper work. At last, the international study office selects up to twenty-eight students who are eligible from all applicants, and they immediately begin their abroad orientation meetings on safety, health, culture shock, and similar issues about travel abroad. Most of

the students on the trip tend to be juniors and seniors, but occasionally, sophomore students apply for the program and get accepted. Students from other campuses are also permitted to join this program; however, our focus has been only on St. Olaf Global students who have participated in the past two years in this program. Often, one St. Olaf professor and spouse will accompany the students and act as chaperone, professor, and friend throughout the course of the journey. The group leaves around the end of August to venture on a five-month journey that will orbit the whole globe. For instance, the fall 2002 Global Semester itinerary included Switzerland, Turkey, Egypt, India, Thailand, Hong Kong, China, and South Korea. Their last stop to wrap up the journey is Hawaii, and from there, they fly back to school just in time for the spring semester.

This semester abroad program differs from all other programs because of its particularly rigorous itinerary. No other program visits such a large number of countries, and therefore, they have a different experience than other trips such as Term in Asia. Also, on many of the other programs, the St. Olaf students get to live with host families within their countries for at least a part of their semester, and/or they live in separate university housing. The Global Semester is unique in the fact that the students are never separated from each other during the course of their journey. Therefore, they are able to form a community that has the potential to be more unified as a group overall.

Upon return to campus, Global students often seem to have a newfound identity, and the community, which they built on their travels, continues to function in new ways back in the campus life. First, we will mention some characteristics of this community of students. In one sense, they are unique in the fact that only certain types of people make up the group. As we have found in our research, the majority of Global students have done extensive traveling around the globe prior to Global semester. Therefore, their desire to travel and see new places and meet new people is one of their primary reasons for applying. We concluded that Global students have more of what they call "the travel bug" than the typical college student across the U.S. For many of the participants, the Global program seemed to further enhance their symptoms of the "travel bug" condition. This program is also one of the most expensive study abroad trips St. Olaf sponsors due to the many airplane tickets from country to country. The cost of the trip does deter many people from participating on Global Semester, but that is not to say that all Global Semester participants are more financially well off than any other Olaf student.

Another distinguishing fact about the Global program is the community of the group. No other St. Olaf program gets the opportunity to form such a tightly knit community since all the other programs separate students on university campuses or in home stays with residents of the foreign countries. This group

of students and their chaperones eat, sleep, and travel together each day for the entire five months, with the exception of their few holidays. Originally, people volunteer to work on social committees in order to help the group function more efficiently. For instance, some students participate on the communications committee, which is responsible for posting updates on the St. Olaf web page. Consequently, the group grows beyond these social committees to become a more personal community. They ultimately learn to work together and start to function as a family, as many of them informed us. Some serve the role of mother and comforter, some play the part of peacemaker, some are the cheerleaders, and they all become like brothers and sisters who have the occasional rifts, but ultimately share a deep love of each other. As Globalites travel around the world, they are in such unfamiliar cultural settings that their group provides the only familiar faces they see, which likely contributes to the great bond they form with each other. In terms of personality, the majority of our Global interviewees told us about their individual growth. They discussed how they were more "aware" of their global ties with the rest of the world, and their values have changed in many ways due to their eye-opening experiences. After seeing all these new faces and places, coming back to the American continent can be rather difficult. This was the final characteristic of the Global community. They said that they often felt different from their peers and professors who had not had the opportunity to see new places and gain new perspectives on all subjects. The International Studies Office warned these students before they left that the reentry process would be difficult. Some students laughed while others took it more seriously. However, upon return, we have found the general consensus to be that this reverse culture shock is one of the most difficult experiences of the Global Semester.

While our focus for this project is the community of Global students on St. Olaf campus, it must be noted that each group from each year has slightly different characteristics. For instance, the 2001-2002 Global Semester experienced September 11th while in Cairo, Egypt. They constantly lived in a state of uncertainty on whether or not they would have to leave their region due to safety factors. On many occasions, these students were forced to stay in their hotels because of anti-American sentiments in the community at large. Therefore, this group had the potential to grow and develop differently than other Global Semester groups.

The Problem

One student confided that when she looks around at Global students and other study abroad students from first semester, she thinks that they outwardly seem to be doing okay. However, when they get together to talk, she realizes that everyone seems to be having a difficult time readjusting. Not everyone is doing okay. Another claimed that many people on Global described their experience with reentry as an incredible weight and “you can’t get this weight off of you.” Finally, a third returning Globalite described reentry as “the craziest thing a person ever has to go through.”

Author John T. Hogan discusses how students who study abroad often encounter psychological difficulties in terms of adjusting to their homeland culture. Hogan uses the word "crisis" to describe the reentry process; the Globalites we interviewed often exemplified this attitude of crisis. As Hogan notes, the transition into the student’s old life seems to be hard after having so many enlightening experiences (1983). Moreover, we learn from Goldammer’s study of the Global Semester program at St. Olaf College that reentry has been difficult for Globalites in the past. In her study of the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 participants on the Global Semester, Goldammer found reentering the United States to be a fairly hard experience for most people from the 1999-2000 group as well as from the 2000-2001 group. Furthermore, many found it was even more difficult to come back to St. Olaf than simply to the United States. Goldammer’s findings speak to the relevance, as well as the importance, of our research.

As these authors have shown, returning to campus after studying abroad can potentially be very traumatic. We decided to investigate this problem of reentry in greater detail. Before all of this, one co-author was casually discussing our research project with a friend one day, and asked her if she had any suggestions on which community of St. Olaf students we should study. She listed many wonderful topics on the spot, but the one that struck us the most dealt with how students who travel abroad readjust to St. Olaf College upon returning from their travels. The topic was very poignant to both of us because each of us had recently returned from study abroad programs, and we have had experience with reentry ourselves.

Over lunch one day, we were discussing which study abroad program to research, and we weighed the pros and cons of both Term in Asia program and Global Semester because they both had large numbers of participants this year, and it would make our population sample potentially larger. Additionally, from the outsider’s perspective, they seemed to have very tight-knit communities. After consulting the International Studies Office, we found that the Global Semester had more participants in the past two years combined compared to the Term in Asia program. Therefore, we decided to delve into the lives of the Global participants. After settling on Global Semester, we

brainstormed categories associated with the problem of reentry. We narrowed our topic of research to focus only on social interaction at St. Olaf upon return.

Reverse culture shock and reentry have been extensively studied in the past fifty years due to globalization. Study abroad has increased dramatically since the 1960's. Gullahorn & Gullahorn (1963) proposed an extension of the U-curve Hypothesis. They explain the model of the U-curve as it pertains to the cross-cultural traveler. Initially, there is a stage of excitement over new ideas and experiences, followed by a period of depression as one encounters difficulties, and finally a sense of satisfaction and/or personal growth if one is able to again behave effectively in the new culture. As the title suggests, Gullahorn & Gullahorn extend the hypothesis of a U-curve to a W-curve acknowledging that the same process of adjustment occurs again in the individual's home culture. Similarly, many Globalites described feelings of excitement over returning to St. Olaf. However, these same students soon afterwards experienced feelings of depression, which supports Gullahorn & Gullahorn theory of a W-curve.

Unlike the W-curve hypothesis developed by Gullahorn & Gullahorn, Peter Adler makes no attempt to attach time sequences to the stages (Contact, Disintegration, Reintegration, Autonomy, Independence) of his model of a transitional experience. Adler defines a transitional experience as a movement from a state of low self- and cultural awareness to a state of high self- and cultural awareness. (1975: 15) Throughout the duration of Global Semester, students gained new insights into the daily lives of people across the world. They received lectures in non-Western universities and listened to some people who held anti-American sentiment. Coming back to the United States and St. Olaf campus, students often became frustrated (part of Adler's Reintegration stage) due to the lack of diversity in thought and people. While Gullahorn & Gullahorn's W-curve is helpful for understanding the concept of post-return adjustment, we benefit from Adler's more fluid model that allows for individual variation. For instance, a few students described how their reentry difficulties were not addressed at first because they were so busy with other scholarly projects. However, once their lives slowed down, they encountered the common frustrations of reentry.

Methodology:

We focused on behavior and interaction during the reentry process and though

we did a few hours of participant observation, we relied mainly on self-report of an interviewee's actions.

Our primary method of data collection was through personal, on-campus interviews approximately one hour long. Understanding that a longitudinal study would make our data more generalizable, we interviewed students from the past two years of the program. Our population included all students from the 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 Global Semester programs who are still on campus. We limited it to students who are still on campus for two reasons. First, by nature of our topic, in order to readjust to life on the campus of St. Olaf or to provide comparison between one's first and one's second or third semesters on the campus of St. Olaf, it is necessary to be on the campus of St. Olaf. The second is a question of practicality. Locating and connecting with alumni proved outside the scope of our resources.

After obtaining the official rosters from the International & Off-Campus Studies Office, we sent an email to every Global student still on campus asking them to participate in our research. (Appendix A) Of the twenty-six students from this year and the fourteen still on campus from last year, twelve students replied. After scheduling interviews with these twelve students, we resorted to coercion. (Only joking.) From this point, our sample selection included part begging and part snowball sampling. After word got around that we were studying them and that the interviews had the potential to be both helpful and fun, many students offered to participate.

As one of our interviewees noted, this voluntary method of sample selection gives us a rather biased representation of reentry. The students who actually do the interviews with us might be students who really enjoyed their program or who really want to share their experience with someone. As one Globalite we did not interview suggested, they may also be the Globalites having the most trouble with reentry. Therefore, their experiences may not represent the entire population of the students who participated in Global. However, to enhance the data gathered from these interviews as well as to help us better understand our population, we took part in several hours of participant observation.

We conducted seventeen personal interviews: sixteen with students of the Global Semester and one with the faculty advisor for this year's program. Eleven of the sixteen students interviewed participated in the 2002-2003 program. The five students from the 2001-2002 program were all women. However, this is not as detrimental as one might think – two-thirds of the students still on campus from the 2002-2003 program are women.

The interviews we conducted were semi-standardized, or semi-structured, interviews. After asking a few demographical questions and explaining the focus of our research, we simply asked the interviewees to respond to the statement, "Tell me about your life from the moment you stepped back onto

campus.” However, each interviewer also had a list of topic areas that she asked each interviewee to address in terms of his or her reentry to St. Olaf College. (Appendix B) In addition, the interviewer used other questions, planned and unplanned “probes,” to further understand each individual’s experience. Despite the fact that consent was implicit in responding to our questions, to appease the Institutional Review Board, each interviewee also signed an informed consent form. (Appendix C)

Though difficult with a relatively small interview population in a school the size of St. Olaf, we have tried to protect the identities of our interviewees. We have avoided idiosyncratic references such as “the junior red-headed and freckled male who laughs like a hyena” and specific, identifying activities such as the Acrobatic Club. Fortunately, most of the information we collected is not particularly sensitive. Furthermore, each interviewee had the opportunity to read a draft of our paper before it was published. We e-mailed all of our participants asking for feedback and/or suggestions. (Appendix D)

While not sensitive per se, the data was poignant. We, the researchers returned to campus this semester after time abroad. Even though our experiences were quite different from those of the Globalites—we were in “Westernized” countries and we remained in the same country for the course of our study—we could both relate, in many ways, to the students we interviewed. Many times we longed to turn the interview into a conversation. We found it was difficult to bite our tongues and continue taking notes. One co-author recorded in her field notes, “I wanted to say something here, but I restrained myself from influencing her answers.”

Finding ourselves relating to our interviewees, we realized we were both dealing with some aspects of reentry ourselves! Emotional attachment to our research as well as to our interviewees likely lent what could be considered a “reentry bias” to our study. This should not be viewed as a weakness, but rather a testament to the reality of reentry. In fact, it points to the generalizability of our results to students beyond those of the Global program.

Implied by the “we” in the preceding paragraphs, both researchers conducted interviews. Having two interviewers allowed us to interview twice the number that one interviewer could interview. However, with both of us busy interviewing and typing up field notes, our communication with each other regarding the interviews lessened. Later on in the research process, we realized that we had each slightly adapted the questions to our own interviewing style and one of us had dropped a question in which the other was keenly interested. This would be a greater problem had we been doing quantitative research. For our purposes, we used agreed-upon specific topic areas to ensure comparable data, along with unscheduled probes to ensure that each interviewer had a firm grasp of the idea the interviewee was trying to

communicate.

After each interview and/or participant observation, the interviewer typed up the notes she had taken—“cleaning up,” clarifying and expanding, as need be. After our interviews were completed, we printed out and exchanged our field notes. Reading through 60+ pages of single-spaced typed field notes, several themes emerged. Using colored pencils (one co-author) and markers (the other co-author), we read through the notes, coding the data. For example, any notes dealing with interaction between Globalites after reentry were marked green. We chose green to symbolize the bright green global T-shirts we see all over campus. In fact, many of our interviewees wore them to their interview so we could recognize them! Next we studied each of our colored themes, searching for patterns as well as the best way to synthesize and present the information. As we discussed in our problem section, rather than a theoretical framework, we chose to write under a conceptual framework. We draw upon many authors’ ideas of reverse culture shock and reentry. However, the primary concept one needs to understand before reading our paper is that of reentry.

Reentry...or Readjustment?

Our definition of reentry is simply the return of a traveler to his or her home country. Reentry, for those who return home, is not a choice. However, travelers do have choices in how they cope with it. Théoret, Adler, Kealey, & Hawes identify three typical reentry styles in their booklet *Re-entry: A Guide for Returning Home* (1979: 8-10).

The first is alienation. One Globalite in particular we interviewed exemplified the “alienated returnee.” After living out of a suitcase for five months, he realized how much stuff he had and how little he actually needed in order to survive. When he went home, he threw out three-fourths of all the stuff he owned. During his interview, he discussed his distaste of pop culture and style. One co-author commented in her field notes, “If you can’t tell by now, [he] is on a very anti-American society kick right now, and he even said that this was the case.”

The second reentry style is reversion. Though this approach did not seem too prevalent among Global students, one Globalite described reverting to his prior life style (Théoret, Adler, Kealey, & Hawes 1979: 9). He feels like things are just back to normal; it is pretty much like he came back and started where he left off.

The third is integration. In integration, “the returnee tries to use the stress and changes of the re-entry period in order to learn... He or she tries to

synthesize or integrate changes that have occurred while abroad and to develop a new identity and life style in accordance with the changed self” (Théoret, Adler, Kealey, & Hawes 1979: 10). Another Globalite, who was a Junior Counselor last year, still spends quite a bit of time mentoring the guys from his floor. This is helpful to the reentry process because it brings up issues from the past. For example, one of his guys will tell him about a problem he is having and the Globalite will remember similar problems he experienced as a sophomore and he will remember how he dealt with the problem then. But he also knows how he would deal with the same problem now. This helps him to reconcile these two selves. In the interview he said something like, “it brings who I was then, with who I am after, together.”

As Théoret, Adler, Kealey, & Hawes note, these descriptions are generalizations. In fact, “there may be elements of all three types of reaction in a given person” (1979: 11). While reentry is not a choice, reactions and much of readjustment are.

In our research, we looked at how reentry affects a student’s behavior and interaction with others. For the purpose of giving organizational flow to our paper, we discuss reentry in terms of the categories of social interaction, activities, interaction in the classroom, and interaction with the St. Olaf community at large. However, we wish to note that these distinctions are often meaningless. Many times, it was difficult to categorize our data. Most of the vignettes could have supported findings in categories other than the one in which they are placed. Reentry is an intricate, complex process that defies categorization.

A further disclaimer:

Reentry is a process. Like a snapshot, we captured these Globalites at a certain stage in their personal process. The first thing that one of interviewees immediately noted upon hearing our topic was that whatever she said today, at this particular moment in time, is bound to change tomorrow if asked the same question. Frankly, this is evidence that reentry is still occurring in their lives. Moreover, another Globalite pointed to the fact that all her Global friends were readjusting at different stages. It should be noted that differences among Globalites might be due to the fact that one participant was at the bottom of the second “U” of the W-curve, if you will, while another Globalite had already begun the ascent.

A New Person:

Most Globalites seem to be operating under the assumption (or from the experience) that going on the Global Semester significantly changes a person. One interviewee said Global “takes you through a blender” and then “puts you back in a place that hasn’t changed.” He modified his statement to say that St. Olaf has changed, “but not nearly to the extent we did.” Another interviewee spoke of her outlook shifting; she believed she had changed a lot in the last year. This is reminiscent of the symbolic interactionist Goffman, who believes that the self is not an unchanging entity, but rather the result of one’s interactions (Ritzer 2003: 147). Many referred to their “new person.” One woman said that when you get back from Global, you want people to know you’re a new person and to relate to you in new ways. Another named the questions she has been forced to ask herself during this period: What parts of my new self do I want to change and why? What do I need to do for myself in any given situation? What do I really want in and out of life? Considering her new person in terms of reentry and readjustment, another Globalite is not sure she wants to readjust. Readjusting means picking up habits, tendencies and characteristics from before and “I like who I am now so much better.”

For others, Global was not only about the person you become, but also about accepting the person you are. This idea parallels George Mead’s theory of the ante “me” and the present “I.” “In other words, the ‘now’ or what Mead called the ‘present’ is the sphere of the ‘I,’ while the ‘me’ consists of the organization of past attitudes (Collins and Makowsky 1998, 174-175).” Perhaps the Globalites’ selves while on the program represent the “me,” while their current identities back on campus exemplify the “I.” One interviewee feels he is now “a little more accepting of whom I am.” Another commented how, for her, a big part of Global was about coming to accept herself. She now feels more comfortable being herself in front of her old friends. She feels like her new Global person also comes out more with her old friends at Olaf. Another interviewee believes Global taught her about identity. She claims that on Global you get to know yourself a lot better, and that reentry is getting familiar with your new self.

Social Interactions:

Because returning Globalites are in the process of getting familiar with their new selves, they sometimes find it difficult to relate to their old friends. To further complicate the experience, often old friends do not seem to know how to relate to the person their friend has become.

The first three weeks or so back on campus, one interviewee stated that she felt

unfeeling and dead around her old friends. She did not want to be with them, but she did not want to hurt them either, and she knew that was going to happen. This increased her reentry anxiety. Another interviewee, during what she labeled as “Stage 1” of her reentry process, described most of life as being dead and emotionless, and then she would experience super highs during the few moments that she saw her Global friends. We have attempted to illustrate her experience in the following graph.

GRAPH: ____^____^____^____

Another Globalite arrived to campus with hopes of really sharing her experience with her sextet podmates, but upon arrival, she noted that the pod atmosphere was the first thing that let her down. People seemed non-caring and rather aloof. Instead of the pod lifting her up, she found that her reunion with the Global students was the most satisfying part of returning to campus. One interviewee feels he has lost friends. He feels he was “out of sight, out of mind” for five months. Similarly, another Globalite left thinking he had “twenty really good” friends, but came back to realize he has “five wonderful” friends.

Some Globalites, on the other hand, have not spent much time trying to reintegrate back into their old groups. However, as one interviewee pointed out, neither had her old friends made much effort to drag her back. Another Globalite thinks of it differently, she believes that somehow, all of her old friends seemed to know that she would be going through this tough reentry period, and that she needed space and time. She was amazed at how well they have been accepting her in spite of everything. She jokingly thought that maybe they took some prep class about reentry for friends. ☺

“My Globals”

The majority of students we interviewed from the 2002-2003 program spoke of the incredible importance of their friends from Global. One interviewee claimed, “I can’t live without my Global friends.” In fact for many, Global friends are “more like family” than friends; you ask more from them and expect more from them than you do friends. They are “closer than friends.” Back on campus, this Global group has “stayed pretty cohesive.” One Globalite feels they are “always going to be there for each other.” However, he feels that there are “probably two people” from the group “who don’t feel that way.”

He is right. The entire group does not feel that way. One Globalite we interviewed was not enthusiastic about his “family” – in fact, this word or

words like it were never mentioned. He did say that those Globalites he was closer with on the trip, he is closer with here. These people he hangs out with and stuff, but there are others that he just passes and says hi. Another interviewee, a sophomore, said that while most of the other Global students hardly have any time left at St. Olaf College, he feels like he still has a lot to experience. Therefore, he feels differently than everyone else. He feels that he spent five months with them, but now they are back on campus with their own friends, and they all have separate lives to live again. He does not really miss them that much. Instead, he is trying to figure out his real group of friends. He guesses they will probably be from his sophomore class. Nevertheless, most Globalites would likely agree with the interviewee who said that he spends an “extraordinary amount of time” with his Global friends.

A few likened their dependence on Global friends to that of drugs. One woman bluntly said, “It’s like drugs.” She needs to be around these people in order for her day to go okay. Another interviewee, while talking about the different ‘stages and phases’ Global students go through, claims the first stage was “withdrawal.” She related these symptoms of reentry with those of a person who has suddenly quit smoking. You know you need to get away from the cigarettes, but you continually want to indulge in more. Similarly, she knew that she needed to form new relationships on campus; she needed some space from her traveling companions, but she longed to only be with them, perhaps because they knew her the best. Similarly, though lacking a reference to narcotics, one Globalite at the beginning of the semester craved seeing her Global friends. She felt the need to see them in between each class so as simply to give meaning to the day.

Goldhammer, in her study of the Global Semester notes, “I saw group identity at St. Olaf among Global Semester students that did not seem as prevalent in other group programs” (2001: 275-276). Our interviews support this claim. One student declared, “the Global group is one person.” A Globalite from the 2001-2002 program recalls that while she was aware she might experience culture shock while abroad, when she got back, she didn’t really expect the group culture shock. She described how she went through a disbandment process from the rest of the group upon their return. She felt that now she was separated from her thirty other halves. That’s how close she felt to some of these people! Another Globalite, from the 2002-2003 program, also felt that the loss of her Global family was the hardest shock to deal with.

Before she left for Global in 2001, one woman had two separate groups with which she hung out. After reentry, her focus gradually shifted to her Global friends and some other friends she had before. Like many of her fellow Globalites, she hung out with her Global friends a lot. Raschio has found this to be typical of students who study abroad. He found that most returning

students alter their circle of friends to include those who have had similar travel experiences (1987: 158). Another Globalite is “drawn to people who are okay with me talking about Global.” Often, this is other Globalites. One interviewee and her old friends would say, “yeah, we’ll hang out,” but it just never happened. She hesitated to say it and then said it was horrible to say, but she thought they wouldn’t talk about anything meaningful. Another woman, who recently returned from Global, said she has the “same group of friends” that she had last spring semester. However, other than with some of her close friends, she, too, has “most of [her] most meaningful interactions” with Global people.

Of the five students interviewed from the 2001-2002 program, two women explicitly stated that their good friends now are the friends they had before going on Global. As one of them explains, her friendship circles have “mainly stayed the same.” Though she will always have her Global friends, their “connection is Global.” Globalites do not share the same experiences she has for years with her other friends. Her first month back at Olaf, she hung out with primarily Global students. Then these friendships “decreased” in importance and old friends came back. This “decrease” took place by the end of last spring, for sure by the fall of this year. The other woman explains it a little bit differently. She says that her good friends from before are still her good friends now; but now she has twenty-eight more! She believes she sees her old friends about the same amount that she did last spring semester. She maybe spent a little less time with them last spring semester, but this spring it’s pretty normal – she may spend a little less time with them, but only because she’s a senior and has a hundred things to do

Another interviewee claims that, to this day, she still spends many of her free hours with the ten or so Global people who are left on campus. There are fourteen people from the program still on campus, but not all of them still hang out. In the same way, one interviewee notices a difference in herself this spring in that she does not feel the need to maintain relationships she has no interest in maintaining. She realizes she does not have to be friends with everyone. She has really been able to identify, “What do I really want to spend my time doing and who do I want to spend it with?” Another interviewee acknowledged that each person experiences reentry differently. There are a few guys who do not really hang out with the Global group anymore, even though they were on the program. She did not try to judge them, but she simply said they did their own thing when coming back, and that was perfectly fine too. On the other hand, several Globalites remain grateful for the broader friendship base they now have. One mentioned that this was really exciting to her; she has met many of her Global friends’ old friends, and she has become quite close to some of them. She also mentioned that perhaps this applied to all the abroad

trips. Another interviewee recalls that, over time, she grew comfortable with old and new friendships. Now she feels as if her circle of friends has really expanded.

Balancing Act

Many of the 2002-2003 students, however, mentioned the “balancing act,” which one student describes as “weird,” between the friends they had before and their new Global friends. “You can try to mix them, but they don’t; Global people inevitably start talking about Global and other friends get sick of it.” Another student noted this balancing was especially hard when it came to meals. If she had solo dinners with each Global student all the time, it would take over a week to get them all done, and she knew that she still needed to eat with her old friends too. She mentioned how stories like this had brought tears to some of her friends. The only thing that she could do was apologize; she couldn’t change the way she was feeling. Another Globalite echoed this sentiment. She claims that her old friends were very careful and understanding when it came to her spending time with her Globalites, but she still felt bad when they said things in a little voice like, “You’re going to eat with them again?” Many Globalites’ friends are jealous of their Global relationships leaving them feeling “constantly torn in different directions.” One student who returned to campus this spring divides his time fifty/fifty. Globalites, his best friend from first year, the guys he was a Junior Counselor for last year and other “close friends” claim fifty percent of his time and the other fifty percent is divided between other friends and acquaintances. Obviously, “homework doesn’t get done.” He jokes that the other (negative) zero percent is allotted for homework.

The Right Questions

A woman who just returned from Global claims that her old best friend doesn’t understand why anyone would ever want to go on Global. Her old best friend sees that it only creates painful situations upon return, and she doesn’t feel that the trip is worth it. The Globalite, however, disagrees with her friend and treasures her Global experience.

Many Globalites mentioned the carelessness with which some people on campus treat their experience. One interviewee seemed disappointed that some of his friends whipped through his five months of pictures in an hour. Some of

his friends (even those who had spent time abroad) “don’t know the questions to ask.” They underestimate the “importance of asking obvious questions.” However, more than a few Globalites cringe at the all-too common questions, “What was your favorite country?” and “Did you have a good time?” “Was it fun?” One woman claims there are two things wrong with asking the question, “What was your favorite country?” One, it is “impossible” to answer. She liked all the countries; sure there were things she didn’t like, but they were all incredible. Two, the people who ask are “not really interested” – they only want to hear a one, two or five word answer. Similarly, one interviewee also felt that no one really cared about his experiences; they would ask him how his trip was, and then they would immediately change the topic before he could respond with one word. Perhaps for this reason one Globalite said she has not really shared any meaningful stories with her old friends on campus about any specific life-changing events. Instead, she mainly tells the funny little incidents that make people anywhere laugh.

Another interviewee remembered that when people, close friends or acquaintances, asked her how she was feeling, she often had a hard time articulating her thoughts and sensations. She said that even their simple questions “weirded her out.” One student hated the caf because this was how she first saw most people on campus, and this is where she had to answer the first brief questions about her experience. She hated summing Global up in one word, but that was all that time permitted during these meals in the caf. Plus, she didn’t have the time or emotional energy to explain her experience to three hundred people. On the other hand, this same student claims some of her old friends really helped her readjust because they asked the right questions and really let her discuss her experiences. This helped her reform her old bond with these people. On the whole, however, most Global students we interviewed would seem to agree with the Globalite who concluded that people don’t really care. She says, “Oh, they’ll look at your pictures and stuff and ask questions, expect[ing] you to talk about it for the initial two weeks, then [things should get] back to normal. But you keep thinking about it. It’s now part of your life.”

However, one population on campus that several students cited as important to their reentry process is the International Students. One interviewee mentioned that she has now formed friendships with people from the countries she has visited. They have even provided her with the opportunity to return to one of these countries after graduation. The interviewee in the paragraph above that was disappointed with the friends who whipped through his pictures spent seven and a half hours looking at pictures with a student from another country. He really appreciated the time she spent with him and the questions she asked. Lerstrom recognizes the importance of time spent like this to

reentry and names it appropriately, “the gift of listening.” (1995: 7) This interviewee also noted that international students could be helpful for students coming back because they are familiar with a lot of the things Global students experienced on the trip. A few things he specifically mentioned include values and conceptions of time. Similarly, another interviewee feels he can better relate to his multicultural friends on campus since traveling around the world.

Activities

Tuesday, April 15th 2003:

“Come on G!! Strike that batter out!” the Global IM softball team shouted to their pitcher. “Watch out for those line drives, G!!” the pitcher advised herself out loud. Oops! Too late. On the second throw, the batter slammed the perfect pitch right into the G.’s foot. She let out a scream and immediately fell to the ground half laughing and half crying. Immediately, the infielders and outfielders ran to surround their teammate and help her to the bench. They told jokes to make her feel better and rubbed her back as she “iced” her injury with her water bottle. Within the next inning, she was back in the game, however, with the rest of her team, shouting words of encouragement to the others and laughing together as their Global group shared yet another experience of friendship, teamwork, and community.

Participating in various personal and group-oriented activities, students can more easily integrate back into their former community and ultimately ease the impact of reverse culture shock. In terms of the W-curve, these activities often aid in rising out of the stage of depression. As Barbara Gallatin Anderson noted in her article on culture shock, student travelers must learn how to “neutralize” or balance their new experiences abroad with those former experiences back on the home front (1971). Global students from both semesters have involuntarily incorporated this balance of their cultural experiences through their active participation in certain clubs. For example, one female Globalite from the first semester now works for the college as an international student counselor. This activity gives her a closer connection to her Global experience because she has been able to form friendships with people from the countries she visited. Additionally, some Global students have become active in the college’s Political Awareness Committee (PAC). One of our interviewees is even the coordinator of the committee this year. Finally, some students have mentioned attending the World Issues Dialogue weekly

dinners sponsored by the International Domestic Off-Campus Studies group, and other guest speakers sponsored by the college. All these events help students with their reentry process because students are able to share their abroad experiences with others in these settings. Therefore, they are integrating and balancing their two cultural occurrences which consequently helps validate their learning experiences abroad.

Philip Bock discussed in the forward to his book, *Culture Shock: A Reader in Modern Cultural Anthropology*, how immigrants cling to each other in new countries. Often, one will find concentrated Hispanic populations in cities because they have a common background that differs from the community at large (1970). Global students also tend to “cling” together upon reentry into St. Olaf life. They have so many shared experiences and shared feelings that they can relate to each other and lean on each other for support. This is very important in readjusting into the fast-paced college life, and many of our interviewees have mentioned that they would not have been able to reintegrate back into St. Olaf without the assistance and support of their Global network.

Global activities, therefore, are an important part of the reentry process for these students. Both Global years extensively used the Global e-mail alias. Letters about all subjects were written in order to maintain the tight connection among the community. As time went on, and some Globalites graduated and others became more integrated into the college community, the operation of the alias diminished as we have observed with the Global Semester 2001-2002. Additionally, the school initiates weekly dinners for the students to get together and once again experience their community, which many find very difficult to maintain back at St. Olaf since so many students are pulled apart by class and club obligations. These weekly dinners have continued into the second year for the Global 2001-2002 group. Even though they don't use the alias as much anymore, they still find ways to get together on a weekly or sometimes daily basis. Laura has often witnessed this particular group eat lunch and dinners together various times throughout the course of one week. Likewise, the Global Semester 2002-2003 has informal gatherings each week too. For instance, some of them meet in the Cage during chapel each day to “study,” which usually results in simply fun discussion. Moreover, this group has organized Global slumber parties as well as cookie parties to reunite their Global family once again. While students from the previous year did not mention these particular types of activities, they did state that the first semester back to campus is usually the one and only semester that Global ties remain so strong. Once some of the students graduate, the group obviously becomes smaller, and they stated that they become more natural friends with each other rather than “Global” friends. Furthermore, Global students were able to maintain their social connections to each other through St. Olaf sports. Last

year, four Global girls ran on the varsity track team together, and this year's group created an official Global intramural softball team consisting of approximately two-thirds of this year's Global Semester students.

As St. Olaf College is a Lutheran school, students have many opportunities to explore their faiths and learn about new beliefs. While on Global, the students witnessed religious rituals and ceremonies of people from all walks of life. Some students mentioned how these close encounters with such devout people really made them reevaluate their own faith. Upon returning to Olaf, the people who had had these strong religious experiences seemed to look for ways to incorporate their new understandings about their spiritual selves. While a few of our interviewees discussed really jumping back into their evangelical Christian groups on campus, many others talked about how their religious views had become harder to pin down. Often, these students would feel that they did not fully agree with the American perspectives implicitly taught within these Christian organizations, and therefore, they sought other methods of developing their spirituality. One, for example, began to get more involved with the interfaith dialogues offered on Monday nights. Another student mentioned that she joined the international student Bible Study to gain more of a worldwide Christian viewpoint rather than a simply Westernized Christianity. These activities were all important in the spiritual growth process that many of our interviewees underwent during the course of their program. By participating in these group activities, they were able to remain connected to their Global Semester as well as integrate and readjust to their different old lifestyle back on campus.

While many of these students benefited from the St. Olaf sponsored activities or the Global group activities, they also made personal changes in their lifestyles to further facilitate their reentry process. For some this meant keeping a journal. To them, this individual activity was an extension of their Global travels. Students on the trip kept a travel journal in order to remember their experiences, but the journaling also served the purpose of meditation. On the trip, journal time meant time away from the group for just oneself. Often, returning students complain that there is simply no time for themselves anymore at St. Olaf because you have so many other things to do. However, some of our interviewees have incorporated their Global journaling habits into their lives back on campus. Some students have even commented that this particular activity was an extension of Global, and it really helped them evaluate their thoughts and feelings of both their experience on Global and their reentry process onto the St. Olaf hill.

Along with journaling, many of the returning students have talked about their great desire to leave campus every now and again. In fact, for some students, this was a daily event for the first month or so. Both the Global 2001-2002

students and the Global 2002-2003 students commented on how they needed to see other people and places other than Oles and the limestone buildings everywhere. A few interviewees told us how grateful they were to have cars on campus after returning. One would drive down to Blue Mondays coffee shop in Northfield and sit there to do homework. Others mentioned that they really missed the coffee shop experiences that they had all around the world, and therefore, little trips such as going to restaurants, coffee shops, or even up to Minneapolis/St. Paul helped them feel a closer connection to their previous Global days. Therefore, in these small trips, returning students were able to decrease their feelings of restlessness. Some of the Global students from 2001-2002 stated that after their first semester of reentry, they felt better about hanging out on campus, and didn't feel so much of that restless spirit that was so present their spring semester following the Global Semester.

In Class Interaction:

Letter from the Global Program to the St. Olaf community:

-Written by: Laura Wilkinson

-December 18, 2002

In the city, there are numerous diversions. There are Katie's shopping expeditions, happy hours to partake in (Michelle is a big fan), sights to see, and museums to visit. Popular sights were Hong Kong Park, Victoria's Peak (where some of us completed the Challenge Course!), the Bank of China building, the Temple of 10,000 Buddhas, the Night Market, and the waterfront. There is [sic] always interesting things to see while just walking around and several students have done just that, with their cameras out. I'm sure there will be great pictures. Many of us have visited the Hong Kong Museum of History. There is currently an exhibit that features pieces from the "Terra Cotta Army," which we learned a great deal about in our art classes, so it was exciting to actually see the figures.

Now, though, we have been scurrying to see the final things on our lists of "Stuff to Do." Our classes, tests, and papers are finished for the time being; now all we have to get done is laundry. We leave tomorrow morning for mainland China and are having a nice farewell dessert party tonight. Sarah Steingas will be buying us all cake, as she has suddenly come into a lot of money ... you'll have to ask her about that one.

Classroom experiences differ drastically from individual to individual, however, each experience can fit into the reentry framework of the W-curve. For some students, we found that the classroom experience was very

fulfilling and rewarding in terms of getting back into the groove of college; thus one sees the far right, upside of the curve being carried out. On the flip side, other students described the classroom environment as a completely strange, non-stimulating atmosphere. These feelings and experiences reflect the left side of the curve on its downward wave. Finally, it is important to remember that each individual goes through different phases of the curve at different times, and not everyone has a difficult reentry process. Classes can be either positive upward events in reentry or they can act as downward events adding to the reverse culture shock syndrome.

Before looking at the specific classroom interactions and experiences, it is important to first note the vast difference between the two Global Semesters. While, the 2001-2002 group described both negatives and positives concerning their classroom settings, they spent less time on the subject matter as a whole. Also, their attitudes on the classroom were more optimistic in general. In contrast, the Global students just returning from their 2002-2003 program had numerous grievances and/or joys to state about this specific duty as a St. Olaf student.

We tried to look for patterns within the students who felt positively and those who felt negatively about their classroom situation. However, as we do not have access to previous academic records, we cannot make assumptions about the type of student (e.g. A-student) that struggles in the classroom upon return. The gender factor seemed to have little difference in affecting classroom attitudes. From both males and females, we received both upbeat and depressed responses concerning their readjustment into classroom life. For one interviewee, dealing with the classroom setting was the first step in her readjustment process because that was the first thing she had to encounter. Many Globalites do not have the opportunity to take a class where they can use the information that they gained while on their program. As the Coordinator of Program Advising/Student Activities, Helen Stellmaker, mentioned, some abroad programs offer students the chance to come back and complete a class where they can use their information gained abroad. For instance, students who traveled on the Term in Asia semester often come back to take a few more Asian study classes to obtain an Asian Studies concentration or major. The Global program, however, does not have any class or concentration specific to its travels.

Classes are especially important in the reentry process due to the time commitment that they take, especially at St. Olaf. A full-time student at St. Olaf is in class at least 12 hours per week. Additionally, for every hour of class, a student is expected to spend three hours on homework. Many of the newly returned students are slightly worried about the lack of time devoted to their studies, and the Global 2001-2002 assured us that first semester was more

difficult in terms of focusing on school. Many of our interviewees from both groups discussed their lack of interest in school and their lack of study skills in general now. Many students have dropped classes or taken other classes pass/fail, but almost all students say that they make more time for their friends and other interests. While grades are creating stress for some of the students, a few participants from the 2001-2002 Semester said how their grades increased during the spring semester more than ever before. Two of our interviewees from the 2002-2003 Semester also felt that classes were not as difficult either. (They were definitely in the minority among their Global peers from this year, though.)

A lot of our interviewees from the 2002-2003 trip talked about their distaste for the traditional classroom life in general, with one exception: they enjoyed the shorter time length of classes at St. Olaf. They seemed to feel being in a classroom confined one's learning capabilities. One specifically stated that returning to the classroom was like "putting [her] brain back in box." (However, these same students said that they did try to engage themselves more fully while in class. For instance, they did not daydream or fall asleep in class as much.) The 2002-2003 semester students really seemed to emphasize the value of hands-on learning which they did every day on the streets of places like Hong Kong and Cairo.

Interaction between the students and professors on the Global Program and at St. Olaf College varied greatly with each individual. Globalites in general often voiced positive sentiments about their St. Olaf professors. They felt that these professors were able to challenge their students more than some of their international professors. They also appreciated the greater accessibility of professors back on campus. When it came to voicing opinions about the St. Olaf students, themselves, opinions seemed to be less favorable. The Global students from 2002-2003 especially felt frustrated with the unwillingness of their fellow Ole students who had not been abroad to hear other views. These Globalites longed for more diversity within the classroom in terms of opinions, and people in general. One girl did mention that she really likes to hear a fellow student talk about the perspectives she gained growing up in Costa Rica. Unfortunately, St. Olaf lacks the diversity required in order to give every class a more global atmosphere.

During the 1970's Michael Flack (1976) studied how American students use their information from going abroad in the classroom setting after they return from their travels. His research was still continuing when he wrote his article, but we were also interested in this same topic. Therefore, we asked our interviewees how much of their Global knowledge they actually use in class upon their return. Surprisingly, this question seemed to receive the most common answer between both Global Semesters. Students essentially said that

they use their “factual” knowledge, such as world statistics, when it fits into the class discussion. However, they rarely have a chance to share their personal experiences with the class. Even when they do, they often actively try to avoid using phrases that begin, “Well, on Global I learned” for fear of coming across in a snobbish way to the rest of the class. Many students, though, voiced their frustrations that their classes gave them very little opportunities to use their Global knowledge. Some students stated that their classes were mainly number based (e.g. statistics), and therefore, that left little room to insert valuable information about places like Thailand or Switzerland.

Out of the sixteen students we interviewed, only two were able to claim that they had the chance to utilize their Global experience in an academic setting. These two students worked with a third fellow Globalite in order to create a project on globalization and economics. In order to receive an upper level credit for their economics major, they presented their findings at St. Olaf’s annual Globalization Conference. The conference was held at the end of February, and they worked approximately seventy hours at the beginning of the semester to put their research together into presentable form. Both of these students realized how this project was extremely helpful in the sense that they could absorb and reflect upon their entire semester. One of the students noted that the project helped her pull her “experiences into a nice little neat ball.” But even so, Global was not just about the economic situations within the various countries. The other student mentioned that although the conference facilitated her reentry process, partly because it allowed her to spend time with her Global companions, ultimately, it only helped analyze one aspect of Global.

Interaction with the St. Olaf Community:

John Hogan (1983) commented on the “reentry crisis” that many students encounter upon their return. The “crisis” mainly deals with a strong negative feeling or attitude toward American society and every secondary institution below this. The majority of our interviewees voiced similar opinions to those students in Hogan’s study. While he mainly discusses a student’s reentry into American society, we have found that the same holds true for the smaller setting of the college campus.

Outside of the classroom, reentry often has the capacity to be difficult in new ways. For some students, who previously felt very loyal to St. Olaf College, they no longer feel the same close connection that they were sure would be present when they returned. For others, however, they were pleased to be back at their “headquarters” as one student commented, and the former connection was still strong to some degree. Whether or not they were glad to be back on

campus, though, the general consensus was that each Globalite had to reestablish a niche within the St. Olaf community, and this was not the easiest task in the world to accomplish. At a glance, the Global students from each of the years that we interviewed seemed to initially be doing well with their readjustment onto campus, but when asked what it was like being back on the hill, many from both years ranted about certain negative aspects about the student body and the daily procedures of the campus as a whole. The St. Olaf lifestyle is quite rigorous both in the academic and extracurricular sense, and it can be overwhelming to students just returning from any abroad program. Speaking of overwhelming events, many interviewees mentioned the treachery of the college's cafeteria. Upon returning to St. Olaf, each Globalite must face the ominous Stav Hall, a.k.a. "the caf." The crowds of Oles pushing for the pizza, the familiar faces of acquaintances from the past, the huge selection of the food, the questions asked by the non-Globalites. These encounters are all too much for the individual Globalite to undergo simultaneously!

Since the Global Semester is highly organized, the Global students do not have control over their schedules and daily activities. On campus, however, the students return to a schedule where they dictate the course of their days. They have to make their schedules for school, meals, and activities. One student described herself as "rusty" when she talked about coming back to St. Olaf. Another student went as far as to say that she almost felt like a first year all over again because the whole process of going to scheduled classes felt so foreign to her. Another student also said that being back at school made her feel younger, only in a different way. She no longer had to think about her safety, her methods of transportation, or where she was going to eat. The Globalites felt disconnected from the college at many different levels. Students from both years voiced multiple stereotypes that they believed existed about Global students in general. One female student mentioned that many Oles see the Global program as an international, drunken shopping spree. She believes this to be entirely wrong. She also thought that many of the non-Global Oles called the Global students the "Global Cult" and these same Oles simply saw this cult as being filled with a bunch of weird students. The notion of a cult or clique, which could work as a synonym here, reflects the opinion of many students on campus that Globalites are exclusive. This stereotype only creates a stronger divide between the Global community and the surrounding St. Olaf community.

While Global students realize they are being judged outside of their circles, they also have the tendency to cite the St. Olaf student body as one of their own sources of frustration. This attitude from Global students contributes to the divide between themselves and the St. Olaf community at large. Globalites from both semesters made similar comments on how Oles often seem

materialistic, self-centered, and concerned with trivial matters. One student from the 2001-2002 semester noticed that Oles spend most of their time discussing trivial matters such as grades, classes, and extracurricular activities. In contrast, Global conversations seemed to be more “soul” discussions, as one Globalite described it. They had so much time to spend together that they felt comfortable sharing personal thoughts and reflections on life. These conversations, however, take a fair amount of time, and as another Global student commented, St. Olaf students have very little time in their busy lives for these deep discussions.

Additionally, Global students get used to absorbing new ideas and new perspectives on life each day of their trip as they come in contact with all types of people in all types of situations. As a result, they often come back with more questions than answers about life in general, and they often have a more tolerant view on the world itself. These traveled students often find the narrow thinking of St. Olaf students to be very exasperating. One female Globalite felt that there was not an acceptance of new ideas within the Ole student body. She described the students’ opinions as being very “black and white,” and she said that many people did not appreciate the “finer shades of gray.”

Conclusions:

Paraphrased from one of the Global 2001-2002 interviewees:

I can’t emphasize enough that reentry gets better! Over time, life at St. Olaf will become valuable and fun again. Readjustment is entirely possible. Part of you will always be different after Global, but that new part of you will find a niche and an identity that includes St. Olaf for those of you who have another year to go on the hill.

Reentry, on the whole, is a process of coming back to a once familiar setting and finding a niche for oneself. The process itself, while relatively easy for some, can also be a painful procedure full of doubts and trials. Most of the interviewees appeared to experience a new self-awareness while on Global, and a lot of their reentry seemed to be about fitting that new self into the old setting of St. Olaf College. Reentry involves renewing old friendships, or in some cases, abandoning old friendships. It’s about balancing time and emotions between old friends and new friends. For some Globalites, classes and extracurricular activities facilitated the reentry process by diminishing the

feeling of disconnectedness. Others, however, dreaded their classroom experiences and longed for something more experiential.

The majority of the interviewees informed us that they loved St. Olaf, but they still treasured their Global experience more than any other in their life. As a result, many of the newly returned Globalites were experiencing mixed feelings about St. Olaf. As one interviewee stated: "It just sucks to be here." Though he "loves St. Olaf to death" and has had wonderful experiences here, it still "sucks" to be here. One of the main sentiments expressed by the Globalites was their continual inner conflict during their first semester back. In some ways, they were glad to be back at St. Olaf, but in many respects, they wanted to leave the hill and travel some more.

Reentry can be the hardest part about the entire Global Semester abroad, according to one 2002-2003 interviewee. For some students reentry can take only weeks while for others the process can last many months. We found lots of variation in both the 2001-2002 and the 2002-2003 semesters. Reentry is difficult for many reasons. For instance, Global students are not used to the structured class scheduling, the fast-paced life of the college campus, and the daily assignments given in each class. In addition, many of the returning students feel that they are no longer a part of the St. Olaf community. They have to find ways to balance their time between their new Global families, their old friends at Olaf prior to going on Global, and all their extracurricular activities. Often, this task is overwhelming, and they can easily become discouraged in trying to balance their time.

Ultimately, the Global "family" clings to each other upon first semester of their return so that they can readjust as a group rather than try to face all these challenges alone. The time shared among fellow Globalites is incredibly important in the reentry process. The International Studies Office (ISO) at St. Olaf College sponsors a few activities such as a welcome back dinner on the first day of classes for all international study abroad programs. They also can provide counseling opportunities for the students, and the administration can be sympathetic to students who are not readjusting to the St. Olaf academic life. However, as one female student summed it up, "We are a family, and we take care of our own." Global students are the biggest support for each other during reentry.

Recommendations and Practical Application:

According to our interviewees, St. Olaf's part in the reentry process was to gather the Global students together to discuss the pros and cons of the program itself, but they do not really work with the individual students. According to

the Globalites, the ISO provides a list of some negative reentry symptoms that students may experience (Appendix E), but they do not provide very helpful suggestions for dealing with these symptoms. As a disclaimer, Global students were very grateful to the ISO for the wonderful program of Global itself, and every thoughtful act that the ISO did for them throughout their Global Semesters. However, many students felt that they had to figure out their emotional states and relearn their St. Olaf identities without any guidance. They turned to each other, but their Global friends were at the same loss as the rest of them. Therefore, we suggest conducting a reentry workshop. A workshop could cover the basics of reentry as well as providing a venue for students to present and become accustomed to their “new selves.” Additionally, students from the 2001-2002 Semester appreciated the fact that their chaperones/professors hosted Global reunions at their house a few times after returning to the campus. Students informed us that this activity was really helpful. One of the strongest themes presented in our interviews was the importance of spending time with other Global students. For this reason, we suggest that anything done to facilitate this would be beneficial.

A workshop would be valuable not only for the Globalites themselves, but also for the friends of Globalites. Many Globalites felt that although their friends from campus were wonderful overall, they often asked the wrong questions, and they did not understand what to say or think about Global. Some Global students jokingly stated that there should be a reentry class for the friends of Globalites who stayed on campus. This way, the friends would be somewhat prepared to find their old friend a new person, at least on some level. A workshop could warn friends of Global students that the Globalites might say and do some funny things, but not to take it personally. Our number one recommendation might be: Don't ask this question! “What was your favorite country?”

In terms of application, future Global students can use our research as a resource. They can learn about what fellow Oles went through upon their return from the Global Semester. Reading about others' struggles with reentry, they can be reassured that their “reentry crises” are normal. As one participant asked near the end of her interview, “Do I sound really wack?” She wondered if what she was saying was strange, or if it was perhaps breaking the norms of returning Globalites. On the contrary, this person's experience was very similar to the responses among former and fellow Globalites. Moreover, the majority of students who attend any semester or yearlong program will experience some type of “reentry crisis” upon returning to their former campus life. This was certainly the case with one co-author's reentry to St. Olaf. She was abroad for a semester in England, and when the co-author returned to the hill, she felt incredibly excited at first. However, as the initial thrill wore off,

she felt very disconnected from the campus life and community for quite some time.

By conducting these interviews, students had the often-rare chance to talk to a non-Globalite about their Global experience. Many of our interviewees were really excited about our research, and they told their Global friends how much fun it was to be interviewed. Others called our interviews Global counseling sessions; we actively listened and let them talk to their hearts' content. One interviewee commented that she had "not been asked questions like that before," and it was "helpful" and "kind of fun." Ultimately, our hope was that in conducting these interviews, Global students would more fully understand themselves and their own reentry process. We were hoping the interviews would benefit the interviewees as well as the interviewers. We had a wonderful time with the interviews, and many of the interviewees told us they really enjoyed them, too.

Suggestions for Further Research:

If further research on the Globalite population is undertaken, we suggest conducting interviews with the students before going on Global as well as upon their return to St. Olaf. This way, the students would not have to rely as much on their memory when thinking back to how campus life used to be prior to Global. (Students did seem to have trouble remembering how they behaved in class prior to Global, etc.) Also, people in general tend to have more nostalgic feelings when remembering events in the distant past. Hopefully, this approach to the study would create more dependable self-reports. This new methodology stemmed from some of our interviewees who mentioned that they had taken the Meyers-Briggs personality test prior to their Global Semester. These students felt they would answer many of the questions differently after their Global Semester.

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Appendix A

Subject: Hey Globalites :)

Date: Sun, 16 Mar 2003 15:57:57 -0600

From: one co-author

To:

We (the co-authors) are conducting research on how St. Olaf students readjust to life on the hill after going abroad for a semester. Specifically, we are interested in the students who went on Global. We were hoping that you could help us out by participating in our interviews. Don't worry - we won't be interviewing until after Spring Break, but we do hope to schedule interviews within the first two weeks after break. The interview would be approximately one hour long, and we will work around your schedule. We are hoping to interview at least 20 Global students total, around 10 people from each of the past two years. Please respond as soon as possible if you are willing to help us out.

Thanks!

The co-authors :)

Appendix B

Readjusting to Life at St. Olaf after a Global Semester

Preliminary Questions

- Which year did you participate in Global Semester?
- What is your major?
- What had been your experience with other cultures before leaving on your Global Semester?
- Do you feel you experienced culture shock upon returning to St. Olaf? (Yes / No)

The Questions

Tell me about your life from the moment you stepped back onto campus. (What frustrates you about St. Olaf upon returning to the hill? What are you grateful for now that you took for granted before you left St. Olaf?)

Cheat Sheet: In what ways has this contributed to the culture shock of St. Olaf?

- How have your experiences in the classroom changed?
 --do you share your knowledge with the class
 --attitude toward professors
 --attitude toward other students
- How have your friendship circles changed since you came back?
- Has your value of money and/or material wealth changed? If so, how has this impacted your return to St. Olaf?
- How has your value of time changed?
- What activities do you participate in at St. Olaf? How do these activities help or hinder your readjustment process?

Do you feel that St. Olaf achieves its goal of providing students with a global perspective while living on the hill?

For seniors who participated in the 2001-2002 Global Semester:

- Is readjustment possible over time? How has time helped you readjust to life on the hill?
- Were there any particular events and/or activities that facilitated your readjustment process?

Appendix C

Readjusting to St. Olaf after Studying Abroad

We are studying the reintegration of students to life on the campus of St. Olaf College after spending a semester abroad. Specifically, we are looking at students who participated in Global Semester in the past two years to determine if there are any patterns in their reentry process. Each voluntary interview will take approximately one hour and we hope to interview 20 people. We anticipate that through these interviews, the Global students will come to a greater understanding of their own reentry process.

If you wish to receive any information about the nature of this research, please email _____ or _____, who are students in Carolyn Anderson's Sociology 373 Research Methods class. We do not foresee any risks to the subjects, but if you have any complaint about your treatment in this study or

wish information about the ethical requirements of research done by the Sociology Department at St. Olaf College, please contact:

Jo Beld, Administrator
St. Olaf College Institutional Review Board
St. Olaf College
1520 St. Olaf Avenue
Northfield, MN 55057
beld@stolaf.edu
507-646-3343 or 507-646-3910

Detach bottom portion and return to researcher

I certify that I have had the nature and procedure of this study on abroad experiences described to me. The researcher has described the potential benefits and risks of my participation in this study, and has informed me that my data will be kept in confidence. I also understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time.

Interviewee's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

Subject: Rough Draft of Global Paper
Date: Fri, 9 May 2003 12:22:33 -0500 (CDT)
From: one co-author
To:

Hello,

This is simply a rough draft of our paper on Global reentry, so if you want to make any suggestions, feel free to do so in the next couple of days. We may not include every suggestion, but we want to make sure that we are representing your reentry correctly. If you don't have time, that's ok too...we realize how busy everyone is right now:)

Have a great day!
the co-authors :)

Appendix E

Reentry Symptoms:

“Reverse culture shock can include symptoms of disorientation, alienation from family and friends, rejection of one’s own culture, boredom, and lack of direction. More specifically, students may find that they have little in common with their old friends; that beyond polite inquiries no one seems to be very interested in listening to them talk about their experiences abroad; that attitudes of family and friends seem parochial; and that there is seemingly no place to go with the knowledge and skills learned abroad. Moreover, life on the home campus often seems restrictive and unexciting” (Hoffa and Pearson 1997: 246).