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Utilizing a Learning Management System to Support Access to Study Abroad: A Program Evaluation at the University of Denver

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This doctoral research project investigated issues of access to study abroad at the University of Denver (DU). The study evaluated the use of the learning management system Canvas during Fall 2017, in preparation for student applications for study abroad during Fall 2018. The evaluation utilized qualitative data from focus groups with students and families, interviews with higher education professionals and analytics data on the usage of Canvas. The findings identified that the usage of Canvas during Fall 2017 was low in comparison to the number of individuals who applied to study abroad and was focused on the preparation for the application to the program. Various suggestions for improvement were generated by the participants of the study and these suggestions provided support for the recommendations to the OIE staff. The framework of Critical Disability Studies with a focus on the emerging Disability Media Studies (DMS) was used to investigate how the distribution, content and organization of Canvas impacted access to study abroad by underrepresented populations at DU.

The recommendations for the improvement of the delivery of the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas were developed to support the work of the OIE staff and to be immediately actionable. These action steps originated from the discussions and contributions of the OIE staff, DU professionals, students, families and myself. The recommendations ranged from content re-organization, increased access to study abroad advising staff, testimonials from previous study abroad participants, study abroad information in Spanish to support family awareness and a revisiting of all online tools used by the OIE. A major recommendation is on the creation of a theory of change or learning map for the complete study abroad experience along with the establishment of an annual evaluation program.

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UTILIZING A LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO SUPPORT ACCESS TO STUDY ABROAD: A PROGRAM EVALUATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

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By

Christopher Chaves e Silva

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Chapter One: Introduction

The number of American students participating in study abroad programs has increased significantly in the past 25 years. The total amount of participants has gone from approximately 75,000 in 1990 to over 300,000 in 2015 (Institute for International Education, 2016g). Today, one in ten undergraduate students studies abroad (Institute for International Education, 2016h). With study abroad numbers at an all-time high, various higher education institutions in the United States have joined an effort called "Generation Study Abroad," to double annual study abroad enrollment, aiming to bring it to 600,000 by the year 2019 (Institute for International Education, 2017i). Other efforts are also in place, such as the programs "100,000 Strong in the Americas" and "100,000 Strong in China" (Klebnikov, 2015). The purpose of these programs to increase study abroad participation has been framed as supporting college students' career preparation within a globalized economy, whereas someone who participates in study abroad has greater chances of obtaining a job and better income (Institute for International Education, 2017i). The University of Denver (DU), currently ranked third in undergraduate study abroad participation in the US, has also committed to increasing its study abroad programs numbers, as detailed in its strategic plan, the DU Impact 2025 (University of Denver, 2017b).

While overall student participation in study abroad has continued to increase, the participation of students of underrepresented groups in such programs has not followed the same pace. Study abroad participants are generally white females (Stroud, 2010), and

underrepresented minorities such as first-generation college students, African American, Asian American, Latinx, Native American students, males and students with disabilities are not proportionately represented in study abroad programs (Hamir & Gozik, 2018). For example, African Americans comprised 14% of the American higher education enrollment, yet only 6% of the overall study abroad cohort of 2014 (Schulmann, 2016).

Maintaining study abroad program information has also become logistically complex and time-consuming. The amount of information provided to students has gone from a few paper brochures and a handful of information sessions, numerous websites for each type of program, drop-in advising sessions, orientation meetings based on region and program duration, outgoing and returning student onboarding classes (M. Hayes, personal communication, August 10, 2017). Study abroad offices now employ industry-specific software to curate their programs' information, such as TerraDota and Simplicity, and constantly identify new methods to engage with their students and share program and liability information (D. Cope, personal communication, April 1, 2017). Scholarly research on the impact of study abroad management software usage was not available during the time of this evaluation.

While the number of technologies available to support the management of study abroad programs has increased throughout the years, the scholarly body of knowledge on these issues has not yet followed suit. In searching for evidence, I was only able to find conference presentations discussing best practices from specific universities, and no comparisons or broad understanding of the impact of increased use of technology on study abroad participation. The purpose of this program evaluation, thus, is framed in

supporting the increased understanding of how technology has impacted access to study abroad in a specific campus setting.

The Client/Stakeholder Need

The Office of International Education (OIE) at DU sends nearly 70 percent of DU's junior class to study in another country (Institute for International Education, 2016), and its mission is to "support for-credit study abroad/away opportunities for all undergraduate DU students and incoming undergraduate exchange students" and its goals are of "promoting increased understanding of global interdependencies, a greater sense of cultural identity, and expanded knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks and commitment to social justice" (Office of International Education, 2017, p. 3).

After assessing all its online content in 2016, the OIE at DU changed the online tool used to share its Study Abroad Handbook. At the start of Fall 2017, students and their family members were provided access to the Study Abroad Handbook via an electronic learning management system (LMS) called Canvas. The Study Abroad Handbook informs on all the steps of the study abroad experience, from application details to advice for program returnees. It works in tandem with the DU Passport, another OIE online tool that serves as a search and application tool for all study abroad academic programs. The decision to use Canvas was due to consultations with colleagues from the Office of Teaching and Learning at DU (S. Roberts, personal communication, February 10, 2018).

Research has yet to be done on the usage of learning management systems (LMS) as tools that support study abroad program information sharing, and therefore, the Director of the Office of International Education (OIE) at DU sought this evaluation to

understand how the usage of Canvas impacted student interest, knowledge and applications to its study abroad programs. The study abroad program at DU is a core element of this university's experience and the OIE staff would benefit from an evaluation to identify potential improvements to its services. The OIE was interested on how the usage of Canvas impacted the interest and application of students who are underrepresented in their study abroad programs. Since the Canvas content was accessible to anyone with internet access, the OIE was also interested in understanding the impact of the content in the experience of family members using the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas.

The timing and the method by which information about study abroad programs are conveyed can impact a student's decision to participate in a program. Studies on the barriers and support systems for underrepresented students and their interest in study abroad highlight the need for university administrators to be attentive to sharing information in advance with students and families (Matthews, Hameister and Hosley, 1998; Soneson & Cordano, 2009). Furthermore, along with early communication, an integrated advising process is encouraged to involve colleagues from various student services units (Hameister et al., 1999). The need to increase support to students and families to better learn and plan to study abroad is present at DU, corroborated by the needs discussed with the client of this evaluation, the Director of the OIE (D. Cope, personal communication, April 1, 2017).

The Evaluation

In this Utilization-Focused Evaluation, or UFE, I utilized a case study methodology with qualitative data by conducting document analysis, interviews and

focus groups. The UFE is a flexible program evaluation framed on the needs of the primary users of the evaluation, aimed at delivering an actionable evaluation report (Patton, 2012). The UFE method focuses on the usage of the results of the evaluation to improve the program, in contrast to other evaluation methods which may be focused mainly on accountability (Ramirez et al., 2013). In this case, the primary users are a small number of staff members of the OIE who sought formative information about their newly implemented program. The evaluation was designed to understand the user interaction information from Canvas, which served as the documents analyzed, while the focus groups and interviews added detail on how students and families learned about and used the online content. The experiences of Canvas users provided valuable insight that also became recommendations to the staff of the OIE. All data supported analysis and recommendations on how to adjust and improve the dissemination of content towards improving access to study abroad programs to the DU community. The results of the evaluation were presented to the OIE and may serve as an example for the evaluation of other study abroad services in other institutions of higher educations.

The colleagues of the OIE required an evaluation whose results supported their decisions in maintaining or adjusting the usage of Canvas as their newly implemented content management system. They benefited from an evaluation that used data from the 2017-2018 academic year, with findings available by June 2018. Denise Cope, the Director of the OIE, informed that her team reads feedback and engages on implementing changes to their programs after the closing of the school year, which occurs yearly during the first week of the month of June (D. Cope, personal communication, July 28, 2017). The following research questions were used to achieve the goals of this evaluation:

1. How are students and families interacting with the Canvas content?
    a. What inferences can be drawn from their interaction patterns as displayed in the Canvas analytics?
    b. Are there relationships between the content visited in Canvas and students' choice of study abroad program?
    c. In what ways does Canvas maintain or support access to study abroad by students from frequently marginalized groups?
2. What adjustments can be made to content in Canvas to support students with marginalized identities to participate in study abroad?

The Framework

Critical Disability Studies (CDS) was an overarching framework used throughout this program evaluation. CDS scholars advocate for the liberation of individuals who may be disabled or impaired, and anyone who is oppressed, investigating the "norms and conditions which concentrate stigmatized attributes to particular groups" (Schalk, 2017, p.3). For this evaluation, I utilized a subsection of CDS, called Disability Media Studies (DMS), to analyze the findings and frame my conversations with the OIE staff. DMS was be used to inquire how the use of Canvas enables or disables users, especially those who were already marginalized by other elements or systems at the University of Denver. I utilized the concept of the "preferred user position" to discuss how information, and its choice of usage and dissemination by the OIE, impacted access to information on study abroad for both students and families.

Significance of the Evaluation

The purpose of this study was to understand the usage and impact of the Canvas tool by students and families learning about study abroad during Fall 2017. The OIE at DU sought to evaluate its decision on utilizing the learning management system Canvas as their content depository for the Study Abroad Handbook and to add formative data to its evaluation and assessment resources. Furthermore, a key aspect of this evaluation was the concept of access to study abroad, with an initial focus on students with disabilities, which later was expanded to any individuals underrepresented in the DU study abroad programs. The aspect of access was key criteria brought forward by the client of the evaluation, the Director of the Office of International Education, Denise Cope.

The findings and recommendations provided in this evaluation support the OIE in their goal to better understand their own processes and its impacts on students and families, as well as identify new avenues to support access to the DU study abroad opportunities. This is aligned with goals of the DU 2025 Strategic Plan as previously mentioned in this chapter (University of Denver, 2017b). The interactions with the OIE staff and myself throughout the Fall of 2017 and Winter and Spring quarters of 2018 were part of this evaluation work and resulted in various dialogues about the use of technology, evaluation work and access to study abroad programs at DU.

Professional Contributions

The results of this evaluation served three purposes: to support the staff of the OIE by an actionable report; to inform the international education profession of a new perspective in study abroad content sharing; and to help my own experience as a higher

education program evaluator and student affairs administrator due to the completion of a doctoral research project.

The recommendations were based on the findings and designed according to the needs of the primary users of the evaluation, the colleagues of the OIE. The data provided in this evaluation informed their decisions about content delivery, staffing, organization, location and others. The choice of the OIE on selecting Canvas was based due to a suggestion from the Office of Teaching & Learning and based on challenges with the management of a large volume of website content (D. Cope, personal communication, July 10, 2017). Based on this evaluation report, the OIE staff may make selective adjustments to their Canvas site and other internet-based tools.

This formative evaluation supported further understanding of how students and their families interacted and engaged with the information and decision-making process to study abroad, adding to the OIE's assessment culture. The Director of the OIE might share this data with senior administrators at DU during their annual report and budget cycle, to support funding and staffing requests. The OIE staff might utilize the suggestions provided by students and families of underrepresented populations for adjustments of their advising as to increase knowledge and access to their programs.

The practices I utilized in this evaluation contributed to praxis-focused research within the field of higher education. Sharing information about how learning management systems impact access to programs is essential for decision-making regarding technology use, and can also have impact on staff, time and finances available by different offices. The benefits and drawbacks observed by the DU community due to the usage of Canvas in study abroad information may be benefit colleagues in the

international education field, and may be shared via a NAFSA conference presentation, panel or roundtable discussion. NAFSA is the acronym for the Association of International Educators, who brings together over 10,000 members who work and study the field of International Education (NAFSA, 2018). NAFSA hosts an annual research forum focused on expanding evaluation and assessment on international education programs. Ideas about publications or presentations related to this evaluation were discussed with the client, Director of the OIE, Denise Cope, and will be pursued in 2019.

The use of Disability Media Studies as a framework for analysis is a new concept and is worth sharing with other colleagues. The concept of DMS being used alongside a program evaluation, and not used solely on populations with disabilities, is aligned with the advice from scholars of the field, and with its intent of being interdisciplinary and liberation-focused (Schalk, 2017; Minich, 2016). Others are likely to be encouraged to use this innovative framework given the experiences shared in this evaluation.

This program evaluation served as a contribution to my own professional development. I gained experience as a higher education evaluator, served in a role akin to a consultant with a university office, learned about its issues and advised on ways to improve operations. The Utilization-Focused Program Evaluation model was highly interactive and encouraged the constant engagement of the evaluation with the client and all stakeholders involved (Patton, 2011). The interactions proposed by the model provided opportunities to interact and learn about other university offices, providing insight on their operations and how to best work with them.

The skills learned from evaluating a program supported my professional development as a higher education administrator. My job as Director of Housing at

American University required me to evaluate the work of individuals I supervised, and programs and services implemented by our office. Furthermore, the Association of Colleges and Universities Housing Officers International, or ACUHO-I, listed assessment and evaluation as key practices of the housing profession (2017). The integration of the concepts learned in the coursework of the higher education administration program at DU, with the research methods and experiences of this program evaluation, served as a test for my progressive experience in higher education.

In the next chapter, I outline various research studies related to the study abroad literature, with special focus on access to study abroad. I also discuss concepts on learning management systems and knowledge on its use for intervention to support student success. Concepts of Critical Disability Studies and Disability Media Studies are also explained. In the chapters that follow, I detail the methodology of the study, the findings and then the recommendations. The methods section, clarifies the use of the UFE method alongside a qualitative case study, and how the framework of Disability Media Studies was utilized. Finally, I provide the various recommendations that were generated in a collaborative process to support increased access to study abroad programs at DU.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This literature review highlights research on study abroad programs and examines the use of learning management systems (LMS) in higher education settings. The study abroad literature review begins with historical context on the development of study abroad programs, demographic information on participants of study abroad programs, followed by an overview of structures, formats and study abroad types. A contrasting discussion follows on the research of impacts and outcomes of study abroad programs with a focus on underrepresented students populations such as communities of color, students with disabilities and first-generation college students. The discussion on the LMS research focuses on the decision-making processes and benefits of the usage of these systems in the academic setting and originated from case study data on projects at specific universities. I conclude the literature review with details on Critical Disability Studies (CDS), with a focus on the emerging field of Disability Media Studies (DMS), the analysis framework utilized in this research, and a summary of the main issues and how they support this program evaluation.

Study Abroad

In this section of the literature review, I provide historical concepts on the demographics of American students participating in study abroad, focusing specifically on the participation of underrepresented populations of students (i.e. students of color, students with disabilities, and first-generation college students). Secondly, I discuss the different types and length of programs offered to students. I follow with an explanation

on the learning outcomes of the study abroad experience. The outcomes discussion is followed by a description of the issues of access to study abroad, with literature on recommendations for improvement based on cases from different universities.

Historical. The first study abroad experiences in the United States of America can be traced to nineteenth century informal university faculty-led excursions to Europe. Composed mainly of female participants, these trips were focused on visits to historical and religious sites with chaperones (Twonby et al., 2012) as to provide students with a "refining gloss for a marriageable young woman" (Fischer, 2012, p. 1). Formal experiences organized by higher education institutions appeared in the 1920's and provided year-long academic programs or semester-long tours of multiple countries (Hoffa, 2007). The founding of the Institute of International Education (IIE) in 1919 is considered a marker for the expansion of study abroad experiences across American higher education due to the institute's advocacy for formalized study abroad opportunities (Institute for International Education, 2018). Further expansion of study abroad occurred after World War II, with programs and grants funded by the American government. Government funded programs encouraged study abroad with an underlying focus of maintaining and increasing American influence abroad (Bu, 1999).

Since the 1960's study abroad has been framed as a benefit to the collegiate experience to provide the participant cross-cultural competencies that lead to a well-rounded individual better prepared to the workforce (Twonby et al., 2012). Following an expansion on the availability of program types and durations from the 1970's to the early 2000's, universities have since focused on the concept of internationalization (Twonby et al., 2012). Internalization at its most simple level is about increasing study abroad

opportunities for American students, improved availability of language courses and international topics on academic majors and the increase of international student enrollment in US universities (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Today, the continued commodification of higher education has created a network of services that support the field of study abroad and its increased the opportunities with short-term, non-credit and third-party programs, making it so that nearly all universities can offer a study abroad programs (Twonby et al., 2012).

People and numbers. Participation in study abroad programs by students from the United States of America (USA) has quadrupled in the past twenty years. Today, participation is at an all-time high with more than 90 percent of higher education institutions providing these international opportunities (Savicki & Brewer, 2015). The Institute for International Education (IIE) reports that over 313,000 students received college credit for study abroad during the 2014-2015 school year (2016b) and that over half of these participants attended institutions located in Europe for a period of less than eight weeks (2016d, 2016c). The website of the IIE holds vast amounts of data about the field of study abroad, such as site locations, student demographics, academic programs and multiple historical elements. Their annual publication, *Open Doors*, is funded by a grant from the US government and is a main resource of information about study abroad students and programs (Institute for International Education, 2016).

Most American study abroad participants are white, with ethnic minority students representing less than 30 percent of total students in study abroad programs (Institute of International Education, 2016e). A study from 2010 indicated that white females attending universities away from home are the most prone population to participate in

study abroad (Stroud, 2010). Male participation has remained historically low since the inception of study abroad opportunities (Walton, 2009), and some scholars have tried identifying the reasons of these low numbers. Lucas (2009), informed that males are likely to not be as interested in study abroad as women, as male students have traditionally had increased access to international travel at various times in their lives and not just during college. This concept is also discussed in another study, which extends that women identify college as a time where they have more freedom to travel abroad, as opposed to later in life when motherhood may limit their available time and resources (Twonby et al., 2012). It is important to note that the data on gender representation in study abroad has been, and still is, available only on the gender binary spectrum. Organizations such as the NAFSA Rainbow Special Interest Group and the Diversity Abroad Network have encouraged the inclusion of transgender and genderqueer identities in the study abroad data (Hamir & Gozik, 2018, p. 26).

Although consistently increasing, the participation of students with disabilities in study abroad programs is still low, ranging from 5 to 8 percent (Institute for International Education, 2016a), with learning disabilities being the most common disability, followed by mental health issues (Mobility USA, 2015b). There is concern that the reported numbers of students with disabilities in study abroad is not accurate due to a lack of disclosure by students, and that the numbers are much higher (Hamir & Gozik, 2018). Participation of racial and ethnic minorities has increased in the past 20 years and now represent over 25% of all participants. Hispanic and Latinx students account for approximately 8 percent of all study abroad participants (Salisbury, Paulsen & Pascarella,

2011; Fry, 2011). African Americans nearly 6%, Native Americans account for 0.5% and Asian Americans represent 8% of study abroad participants (Hamir & Gozik, 2018).

Structures, formats and types. Study abroad programs are primarily categorized based on their duration, subject matter and hosting organization. Program duration, or the amount of time a study abroad experience lasts, is usually based on an academic term such as a semester or quarter. Today most programs last approximately 8 weeks or less (Schulmann, 2016). In the 1950's, full academic year programs made up about 70% of the study abroad participants (Dwyer, 2004). In an assessment of participants over a 50-year time span, Dwyer (2004) found that benefits were found across all program durations. Engle and Engle (2003) challenged universities to define and classify their programs very specifically as to ensure proper comparison. Programs can range from one year to a handful of weeks, and numbers reported by institutions may include both experiences (Savicki & Brewer, 2015).

Study abroad programs were initially hosted by a university based in another country, the host institution, which allowed US students to attend classes on their campus (Walker, 1999). Today, some American universities operate their own remote study abroad sites, where faculty teach courses and emulate a support network like their campus in the USA (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Walker, 1999). One example is American University, which has fully serviced study abroad sites in Madrid, Brussels, and Nairobi (M. Hayes, personal communication, August 10, 2017). Another hosting option is the third-party provider. Third-party options are usually provided by for-profit organizations, which teach and coordinate logistical aspects of the study abroad such as housing, transportation and language courses. Research on third-party providers support the

benefits provide by these fee-based options due to all-encompassing support systems for students, such as daily assistance, secured and clean housing, field trips, dedicated faculty and cultural orientation programs (Norris & Dwyer, 2005). However, third-party programs are not easy to change or customize, in comparison to a program that is owned and operated by the home university (Savicki & Brewer, 2016).

Outcomes. Multiple studies discussed the impact of study abroad programs on a student's undergraduate career and its long-term benefits. Some of these assumptions are that participation in study abroad increases students' intercultural communication skills (Williams, 2005); impacts cultural awareness and personal development (Black & Duhon, 2006), influences career choices (Wallace, 2009, Norris & Gillespie, 2008) and increases creative thinking (Lee, Therriault & Linderholm, 2012).

An important element of the discussion on the impact of the study abroad experience is its association with degree completion. Studies conducted at multiple universities inform on the positive correlation of study abroad and graduation rates (O'Rear, Sutton & Rubin, 2012; Sutton & Rubin, 2010). A study conducted at a large state university found that study abroad participants had a 4-year graduation rate that was 10 % higher than those that did not participate in study abroad. The 6-year graduate rate was also higher, with a 25% difference (O'Rear, Sutton & Rubin, 2012). Another study with data from two large state universities, found that study abroad participation was also a marker of higher graduation rates when compared to cohorts of students who did not study abroad (Sutton & Rubin, 2010).

Shames and Alden (2005) found that study abroad participation benefits students diagnosed with learning disabilities, such as attention deficit (AD) and hyperactivity

disorders (HD). Benefits were identified as increasing curiosity, adding knowledge and skills, along with feelings of normalization and independence (Shames & Alden, 2005, p. 22). A resource from Mobility USA (2015a), targeted specifically to students with disabilities, encouraged study abroad participation to increase employment opportunities, graduate school admissions and the development of interpersonal skills. The booklet from Mobility International shared cases of previous study abroad participants and their respective disabilities, and the challenges faced prior and during the trip. followed by their successes and learning experienced in the trip (Mobility USA, 2015a).

The assessment and evaluation of study abroad programs encompass the analysis of academic learning outcomes, cross-cultural learning experiences, and long-term impact of the study abroad experience. A recent publication, *Assessing Study Abroad*, brought together a compilation of works related to the evaluation of programs, with the focus on encouraging data gathering for program improvement (Savicki & Brewer, 2015). The book, and an article from Salisbury, An and Pascarella (2013) challenged the past 30 years of research on study abroad outcomes by stating that most studies lack validity and cannot be generalized due to the absence of conceptual models and the misuse of statistical processes. These two works did not discount the significance of study abroad participation but asked the research community to further investigate the link between study abroad involvement and intercultural competence with greater emphasis on research methods (Salisbury, An & Pascarella, 2013; Savick & Brewer, 2015).

Access and barriers to study abroad programs. Research has been conducted on the reasons why students decide to study abroad, as well as on the barriers they face

deciding and attending classes abroad. Several studies discuss the reasons why students decide to participate in study abroad (Amani, 2011; Luo, Jamieson & Drake, 2015; Matthews, Hameister & Hosley, 1998; Salisbury et al., 2009). Intent, or interest in participating in study abroad, and the actual participation in study abroad are directly correlated, with the most successful determinants being a student's gender, race, academic major and their participation in extracurricular activities (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2014). Furthermore, the level by which one engaged in international travel prior to studying abroad was found to be a significant determinant of their inclination to study abroad (Van Der Meid, 2003).

Salisbury et al. (2009) found that the main aspect that impacts study abroad participation is cultural capital. Cultural capital is derived from family influence, and encompasses "knowledge, language skills, educational credentials, and school-related information" (p. 123). Therefore, the experiences an individual has before college and in their first year of university play a role in their chances to participate in study abroad. (Salisbury et al., 2009). Students originating from a high socioeconomic status were 85% more likely to participate in study abroad, compared to counterparts hailing from lower socioeconomic status. Research with Asian American students and study abroad found that the main reason to be involved in such programs was for the opportunity to be in another country, and that the interest in international education developed mainly during a student's high school years, as opposed to college (Van Der Meid, 2003).

Another perspective on the interests and barriers towards study abroad participation came from the literature on students with disabilities. Some of these access concerns were financial difficulties, lack of awareness, perception on the importance of

study abroad, family constraints, curricular requirements and the fear of racism (Salisbury et al., 2009). Similar issues were found when studying students who identified as African Americans and Asian American (Thrush & Victorino, 2016). Lack of affinity support networks in their intended study abroad site, the absence of mentorship and positive stories from students who previously attended study abroad programs were also barriers for their participation in study abroad programs (Van Der Meid, 2003). Students with permanent or temporary mobility needs have also shared that lack of supporting infrastructure are barriers for participation in study abroad (Link, 2016).

One of the most important aspects identified in this literature review was that challenges or barriers faced by students with disabilities are similar to those experienced by students without special needs (Matthews, Hameister and Hosley, 2008). One of the barriers is the anxiety students experience when selecting a study abroad program and meeting application deadlines. Research on the perceptions of families and students have identified the common frustration over the short amount of time available to evaluate, discuss and decide on a program. Studies also discussed that more information should be provided to inform students and families in their decision-making process (Johnson, 2000; Kutsche, 2012). Furthermore, one study found that by providing program information in advance also benefits and improves accessibility for students to make decisions (Soneson & Cordano, 2009).

Another aspect that negatively impacts access to study abroad for students with learning disabilities is an application process that relies heavily on academic achievement (Shames & Alden, 2005). For example, students with learning disabilities such as AD/HD might have low grade point averages (GPA) compared to most of the student

population due to “challenging educational histories in learning environments” (p. 24). GPA then might not be the best measure for their prior and possible academic success in study abroad as opposed to an application process that considers extra-curricular activities, reference letters and community service (Shames & Alden, 2005).

Campus-specific research has provided information regarding the reasons students decide to participate in study abroad. An undergraduate thesis conducted at Texas Christian University (TCU), a school with high participation of undergraduate students in study abroad (Institute for International Education, 2016a), utilized a survey to assess the reasons why students attended study abroad. The results uncovered that the enjoyment factor of being overseas, or in other terms, the potential for students to have fun during their time abroad in another country was the more important deciding criteria along with the impact on employment opportunities after graduation (Spindler, 2017). While DU and TCU are considered peer-comparison schools (University of Denver, 2017) no studies currently exist to better understand the decision-making process of DU students.

Improving access. Articles discussing barriers and the decision-making process to study abroad conclude with suggestions and implications for practice. The most common suggestions are on the development of information and support systems focused on equity (Link, 2016; Ablaeva, 2012; Holben & Özel, 2015). Suggestions encourage programs to focus not only on advising students, but also families, in an integrated process that involves multiple campus colleagues. Matthews, Hameister and Hosley (1998) suggested that information should be widely available at least six months in advance of application. Collaboration between university administrators is encouraged and meant to create a supportive university environment focused on student success

(Kelley, Prohn & Westling, 2016). Study abroad program managers, disability support staff, faculty members and financial aid officers should be meet frequently to understand each other's' roles, share new practices and lessons learned from previous study abroad participants (Johnson, 2000; Holben & Ozel, 2015).

A study conducted in Turkey, suggested that student advisement and mentorship prior to program participation can play a role in supporting students towards a successful study abroad (Holben & Ozel, 2015; Johnson, 2000). A peer-mentor, usually someone who previously participated in the same program, can share experiences, advice and suggestions. These elements will help the student, and their families, towards more clarity and empowerment for their study abroad decision (Holben & Ozel, 2015).

Lastly, one unique practice to support the reduction of anxiety in students and families was suggested by Twill and Guzzo (2012), who encouraged the creation of a mock weekend-long trip to replicate adaptation issues faced by study abroad students. This experience provided students with the challenges of traveling to a new location on their own, carrying their own items, finding resources and facing anxiety due to a new setting. They suggested that this trip occur approximately six months prior to the study abroad experience. The authors also encouraged the involvement of parents in a pre-trip information session to share expectations and create a support network. Student involvement in providing feedback was also encouraged (Twill & Guzzo, 2012). The creation of a student advisory committee was suggested as a means for professionals to hear students' suggestions and feedback on previous study abroad experiences (Johnson, 2000).

The literature on study abroad programs and its access issues vary across universities and the needs of different students. There are similarities on the tactics to support greater access of all students, not just students with disabilities or others who may identify as being part of underrepresented populations. Aspects discussed multiple times are on the type of information, its sharing time frame and to whom this information is shared. These concepts are directly related to the research on learning management systems such as Canvas, which was the newly implemented tool of the OIE for the 2017-2018 school year.

Learning Management Systems

In this section of the literature review, I explain the purpose of a Learning Management System (LMS), discuss its implementation issues and inform on its benefits in the academic setting. A learning management system, or LMS, is a tool that supports access to learning content from any web-based browser at any time (Black et al., 2007). Most LMS offer similar tools, such as quizzes, tests, discussion forums, schedules and deadlines, grade posting, templates for instruction and meeting spaces.

LMS and study abroad. Aligned with their goal of improving access to information, the Office of International Education (OIE) at DU is utilizing the Canvas learning management system to share information about its programs to students and families (D. Cope, personal communication, July 1, 2017). The learning management system literature is young, especially one that focuses on the benefits or concerns on the use of LMS. While conducting this study, I identified universities using Canvas alongside their study abroad program. Some of these universities are Northwestern University, the University of Arkansas, the Metropolitan College of New York and Eastern Michigan

University (personal communication, October 20, 2017). These universities utilized LMS as academic courses, different from DU, which uses it as a content depository. I found no research on the use of learning management systems to supports study abroad information and participation. While references for study abroad are not yet present, there may be assumptions about use of LMS in the academic setting which provide relatable information to this program evaluation.

Benefits. Several researchers have identified correlations between the usage of a learning management system and the engagement of students in the classroom and course satisfaction (Naveh, Tubin & Pliskin, 2010). The positive correlation with course satisfaction is increased when students believe the course is well structured (Xu & Mahenthiran, 2016). One other aspect of positive course reviews is related to the usage of Canvas on desktop computer and mobile platforms, with the latter being the most appropriate choice to engage college students (Wilcox, Thall & Griffin, 2016).

Other benefits convened by students who used LMS include greater connection and comfort for sharing information with peers; less stress in communicating their opinion about content; and increased collaboration (O'Kelly, 2016). Furthermore, LMS usage has supported the identification of students who might be facing academic challenges and not engaging with online content, providing an early alert system to which faculty members can respond with extra support (Lee et al., 2016). Some of the studies on LMS and content analysis suggest the importance of high levels of interaction between users and content managers, with the latter group monitoring usage and engagement on with the content, thus determining which interventions are appropriate and effective throughout courses (Arnold & Pistilli, 2012).

Drawbacks. Some of the research on the usage of learning management systems is framed on the implementation of an LMS by a whole university, and the concerns on the institution's reliance of technology in teaching. As early as 2006, research articles highlighted that differences in the LMS systems were negligent and mostly an issue of brand, since the most used systems offer the same technical components and outcomes (Black et al., 2006). Scholars have expressed concern about the spreading of LMS across higher education discuss issues of access. Studies inform that by the selection and use of one type of LMS technology to support teaching, university administrators are "boxing in" faculty members and students in one mode of learning that may not be appropriate to all (Groom & Lamb, 2014). The research suggests that universities deciding to use LMS should use them to supplement teaching, but not substitute it (Black et al., 2006).

While there is still opportunity for further research on the impact of LMS as a content depository for study abroad information, the current known benefits of LMS might help the study abroad community. LMS tools that support user engagement and early alerts may provide study abroad advisors with resources to improve access and identify students who may require unique support. The use of technology to support learning must be balanced with discussions on the purpose of those technologies. These discussions are aided using critical frameworks to highlight issues of access.

Disability Studies

Critical Disability Studies, or CDS, are studies on the intersectionality of gender, race, class and disability, and aim to highlight the marginalization of those who are not able to fully have rights to participate in society (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2016; Gabel, 2005). CDS scholars agree that large scale policies aimed at access improvement do not

actually elevate and improve the lives of individuals with disabilities, as those policies do not account for the various intersectionalities at play with individuals, as well as the undervaluing and discrimination people face in their lives (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2016). Furthermore, CDS scholars encourage that given their interdisciplinary thought, CDS should be included as a framework in all aspects of education research and practice (Gabel, 2005). CDS traces its beginnings to the 1970s and draws from multiple theories such as Critical Legal Studies, Critical Race Theory and Queer Theory in the struggle for diversity and social justice (Meekosha & Dowse, 2007). CDS scholars also discuss colonialism and post-colonialism, and its impacts on individuals and communities (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2016).

Utilizing CDS as framework in a program evaluation is a new concept encouraged by academics. Schalk (2017) explains that CDS should "not be about directly studying disabled people" (p. 1), but any individuals whose access is hindered. The idea of disability or ability can be used to refer to how policies, social norms and expectations are used to privilege or exclude anyone (Schalk, 2017). An article from a university in Cyprus used CDS to analyze the higher education setting in that country and highlighted the importance of the use of social justice discourse to improve access for students with intersecting identities and disabilities alongside an integration of Universal Design theory to modify university services (Liasidou, 2014).

A newly developed subsect of CDS is Disability Media Studies, or DMS, which aims to study the intersection of CDS and the field of Media Studies, providing an integrative and interdisciplinary view on access, technology, participation and barriers to populations (Ellcessor & Kirkpatrick, 2017). The young DMS scholarship has provided

examples of research that explored intersectionalities in an applied concept. Examples of those studies were compiled in the recently published book called *Disability Media Studies* (Ellcessor & Kirkpatrick, 2017). Some of the concepts explored in that book are how film and pop culture in the USA normalized policies on the US government's "War on Terror" and its war-ensued disabilities; how television commercials for anxiety medication associate mental health issues with femininity; and how the development and commercialization of new technology costs more for those who cannot fully utilize its benefits. One example of these analyses is an article on technology from scholar Toby Miller. In the article, Miller explains how a blind individual has limited use for the iPhone even though they pay the same price for the device as someone who is not blind. Miller calls users that do cannot fully enjoy all resources provided by a technology as "effluent" users – those who are left by the wayside (2017, p. 300). Miller goes on to discuss how all technologies and processes rely on taking advantage, financially, of those who do not fully enjoy the use mainstream technology.

A concept frequently discussed in the DMS texts regarding use of resources, is on the *preferred user position* (Ellcessor, 2016). This concept informs that whenever any resource or tool is developed, it is done from the perspective of the majority, with an assumption on who will be its preferred user. By setting a preferred use and user, the developer is creating a scenario where others who do not fit the mold are going to be hindered, or in this case, disabled, from fully enjoying its total and most productive use. One example used by Ellcessor (2016) is on the film and television industry and their use of captioning services, and government regulation to enforce its use. Television and film

content are designed for individuals who do not need captioning services, and these usually are an after-thought service that does not encompass all original information.

The literature on disability studies and its interdisciplinarity provide a beneficial framework to examine the use of technology as an information sharing tool by the Office of International Education at DU. The newly published texts on Disability Media Studies are practical examples of the use of this framework and serve as a springboard for discussion with the OIE staff about their programs, and the analysis of the findings of this program evaluation. In this program evaluation, I utilized the DMS framework to question the decision-making processes of the OIE in using Canvas, as well as the purpose of the content of the Study Abroad Handbook and the format in which it was displayed. Furthermore, I highlight the intersectionalities present in the discourse of the students and families during their experience navigating the content of the Study Abroad Handbook.

Conclusion

The participation of American students in study abroad programs has significantly increased in the past thirty years, although the participation by students of ethnic minority and disabled identities has not yet followed suit. The barriers hindering access to study abroad participation are known and similar across various identities. Programs that support family involvement, a key criteria to support study abroad participation, need to be expanded and henceforth, its evaluation. The existing research informs that all students, not just those who are underrepresented in study abroad, would benefit from advanced program information for themselves and their families. This is also valid for increased financial support and information on unique cultural issues associated with

discrimination and marginalization, along with a detailed discussion on available support systems in study abroad. Students would also benefit from universities where administrators from various offices collaborate, are trained on cross-cultural awareness and utilize inclusive language.

The use of learning management systems provides benefits in supporting teaching in higher education, and some of these positive elements may benefit the use of LMS by the OIE with its Study Abroad Handbook. The concerns on the LMS use are also important and related to the Disability Studies framework in the discussion of creating alternatives to a preferred user scenario. The emerging field of Disability Media Studies Provides examples and an avenue for discourse on the use of technology and information, and its impacts on access, which will be used to analyze the information and processes of the study abroad program at DU.

Chapter Three: Methods

The Director of the Office of International Education (OIE) at the University of Denver (DU) sought a formative evaluation to understand how students and families used their newly implemented learning management system during the Fall quarter of 2017. The staff of the OIE wanted to understand the impact tools such as Canvas have on the interest, understanding of and application to their study abroad programs. Canvas is a learning management system (LMS) widely used by over 2000 higher education institutions to deliver and manage course and program content (Canvas, 2017). This system was deployed during Fall 2017 to substitute various websites which hosted the Study Abroad Handbook. Access to Canvas was available to family members of DU students, with the intent to share information about programs and the study abroad application process (D. Cope, personal communication, July 15, 2017).

In determining the evaluation needs of OIE, it was resolved that the results of this evaluation would inform further usage of Canvas as their content management system. That is, the results of the evaluation may lead to continued maintenance of or adjustment of the Canvas tool. The OIE wanted to benefit from an evaluation that obtained data from the 2017-2018 academic year, with findings available by June 2018. Denise Cope, the Director of the OIE, informed me that her team reads feedback and implements changes to their programs after the closing of the school year, which occurs yearly during the first week of the month of June (D. Cope, personal communication, July 28, 2017).

It is important to note that in the description of the methods of this evaluation, the reader might notice that the steps of the Utilization-Focused Evaluation are not in a sequential order, but instead are discussed in the order in which they occurred. Further explanation is provided in each specific section clarifying the need for that step.

Research Questions

The following questions were used to achieve the goals of this evaluation:

1. How did students and families interact with the Canvas content during the Fall 2017 quarter?
    a. What inferences could be drawn from their interaction patterns as displayed in the Canvas analytics?
    b. Were there relationships between the content visited in Canvas and students' choice of study abroad program?
    c. In what ways did Canvas maintain or support access to study abroad by students from marginalized groups?
2. What adjustments can be made to content in Canvas to support students with marginalized identities to participate in study abroad?

Conceptual Framework and Research Paradigm

This program evaluation followed the Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) framework set forth by Michael Patton (2012). This framework was chosen because of its focus on the involvement of users in the planning, design and decision-making processes of the evaluation. The primary users of the evaluation guided the steps and supported the creation of the final recommendations, as they intended to use them to implement changes in their work. The focus of UFE was aligned with my initial discussions with the

Director of the OIE during the Spring quarter of 2017. One of her interests was to conduct a formative investigation of a critical issue of practice to yield information that her staff could use to check progress and improve their programs (D. Cope, personal communication, April 1, 2017).

A pragmatist research paradigm is associated with real-life issues and facts, and the applications of those elements to derive research findings and was therefore an optimal companion to the UFE method (Creswell, 2014). This research paradigm is problem-centered and uses multiple viewpoints to interpret and understand the consequences of actions. Michael Patton, the author of the UFE framework, states that pragmatism means "doing what works in a given situation" (Patton, 2012, p. 44), hence, the adaptable focus of UFE. This worldview supports the combination of multiple research methods and procedures, to meet the needs of this evaluation and its intended users (Creswell, 2014). Pragmatism as a modern philosophy was discussed by Pierce in the 1800's, where its focus was to link the "experiential conditions of application with observable results" (Ormerod, 2006, p. 892). In the 1900's, as a research paradigm, pragmatism was used and expanded by John Dewey, who encouraged its use within the educational and social research fields to align theory with practice and application (Ormerod, 2006). The individuals working in the OIE were program administrators seeking actionable information to support their work.

Program Evaluation Methodology

Utilization-Focused evaluation (UFE). UFE is a program evaluation method that aligns evaluation results with its use by the primary users of the evaluation. The creator of this methodology, Michael Patton, suggests that the essence of UFE is about the

constant examination and adaptation to how people apply findings and experience the evaluation process (Patton, 2012). The UFE framework relies on the participation of the primary users in all the stages of the evaluation to ensure that the processes match the agreements made at the beginning of the evaluation. It also discourages the choice of the research design and methods solely by the evaluator. In this way, the evaluation serves the needs of the intended users. This framework is comprised of 17 steps which are displayed in Figure 1. The sequence, while lengthy and visibly complex, is flexible and not strictly sequential, and its practical flow is meant to serve the purpose of an evaluation (Patton, 2012).

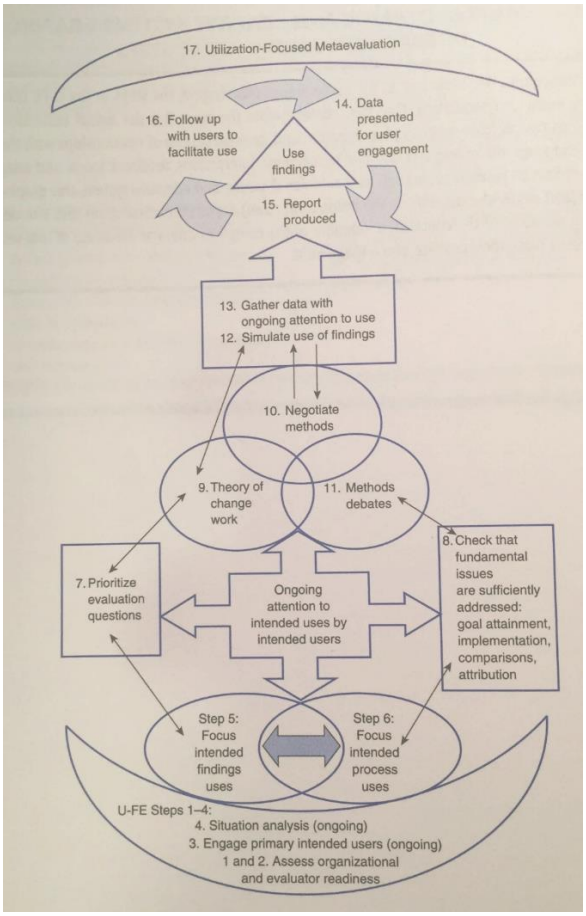

Figure 1. Utilization-Focused Evaluation Complex Dynamic and Adaptive System Graphic. Interactions Among all 17 Steps

The UFE "does not advocate for any particular evaluation content, model, method, theory, or even use" (Patton, 2012, p. 5). This flexibility of method was beneficial, especially in the research methods negotiation with the main stakeholder, and given that this evaluation was being conducted as part of a doctoral research project (DRP). At the same time, I needed to anticipate some of the steps of the UFE to ensure compliance with the DRP proposal format. The steps 7 through 10, which included the creation of the research questions, literature review, and fundamental methods discussion and planning, were determined during the DRP proposal process (Patton, 2012). Denise Cope was open to the needs of the DRP project, and to any adjustments suggested by the committee members of the Higher Education department at DU. The DRP proposal was written during the months of July, August and September of 2017, alongside a research methods course taught by Dr. Judy Marquez Kiyama. The proposal was subsequently defended and accepted on October 3, 2017, with the primary Institutional Review Board application approved on November 17, 2017.

Analysis, engagement and readiness. The UFE manual outlines in steps 1 through 6 that the evaluator must work with the client to identify the users and the focus of the intended uses for the evaluation (Patton, 2012). Steps 7 and 8 are about clarifying the research questions and checking that fundamental issues have been addressed. These fundamental issues are related to the overall goals and implementation steps of the evaluation. During all these steps, the model asks that the evaluator remain focused on the intended of the results by the users.

For this DRP, the client was the Director of the OIE, Denise Cope, and the primary intended users were the staff members she supervised. I met with Denise various times in the Summer of 2017 and discussed her needs for an evaluation. During those meetings, Denise outlined the primary and secondary users of the evaluation, as well as stakeholders of the results. Denise discussed how students and parents are stakeholders impacted by the usage of Canvas. On July 29, 2017, Denise organized a meeting with her staff to discuss the purpose of the evaluation, its benefits and ideas on the possible uses of the final report. The OIE team confirmed that they were interested in understanding if and how, students and families used the Canvas content (personal communication, August 1, 2017). Given Denise's discussions early in the process about her interest to continually expand access to study abroad to underrepresented populations, I suggested the addition of the Critical Disability Studies lens as an interdisciplinary concept to investigate how the content in Canvas supported or inhibited the participation of students in study abroad.

After the approval of the DRP proposal, during the months of October, November and December of 2017, I communicated with Denise to clarify the approved evaluation purposes and research questions. Denise suggested that proceed in engaging directly with the primary users of the evaluation to conduct an objective and outcome clarification process. On December 12, 2017, I held a conference call with Stephanie Roberts and Jennifer Bohn, both considered primary users of the evaluation. These staff members reconfirmed their need to understand how users engaged with their Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas, and to provide them with recommendations to move their phase 1

project (transitioning the Study Abroad Handbook content from websites to the Canvas site), to a phase 2 (adjusting and refinement of content within Canvas).

During the December 2017 meeting with the OIE primary users, I also conducted an exercise focused on discussing "what if" questions on the use of the report, as suggested by the UFE method (Patton, 2012). These questions provided an understanding on what type of recommendations they believed could be implemented, and how they would practically use the report once it was completed. They suggested that the recommendations of the evaluation be grouped by order of most impact and potential for completion within a short time frame and adjusted based on feedback of the first report draft. The ranking concept would allow for the primary users of the evaluation to quickly enact change based on the results of the evaluation and ensure a "to-do list" for future implementation. Finally, I informed them on the upcoming focus groups, and requested their support for the recruitment of students for the data collection phase. The clarification calls and e-mails with Denise and her team were aligned with the UFE method which encourages constant interaction with the primary users to learn new issues or processes that may be implemented in the program; refine the evaluation purpose and usage; and identify and test a sample evaluation report (Patton, 2012).

Case Study. The methodology utilized for this program evaluation was a holistic, single-case program implementation case study (Yin, 2013). The choice for the case study was because the evaluation was on the use of a specific program, in this case the Study Abroad 2018-2019 Handbook located in the Canvas system, with a group of students and family members, within in a certain period at the University of Denver. A case study methodology is a flexible process, which supports the need to understand the

effects of a program on a specific group within a specific context (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, case studies work well with innovative and unique programs such as the usage of Canvas by the OIE, providing a large and rich interpretation of what is occurring (Balbach, 1999).

This case study was of the program implementation type, seeking to understand what occurred due to the implementation of a program (Stake, 2013). By utilizing the case study research methodology, one can learn much about the process and outcomes of one specific program as the case study supports the intense study of a specific event with a group. While this methodology supports details on a specific case, it is limited in its potential for generalizing (Balbach, 1999). Given that this DRP is focused on a specific program at the University of Denver, its findings are not meant to be generalized for other programs or populations.

The validity of study was supported by evidence from multiple focus groups, interviews and document analysis (Yin, 2013). The documents came from usage data from the Canvas system. Individuals interviewed included two individuals from the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL), one from the Disability Support Programs Office (DSP) and one from the Learning Effectiveness Program (LEP). The focus groups were conducted with students and families of DU students. These various perspectives provided sufficient material to triangulate the data to support a greater understanding on how Canvas was used by students and families in the investigation and application for study abroad.

Site and Participants

The site for this program evaluation was the University of Denver and the participants were DU community members, divided into primary and secondary users of the results of the evaluation.

Primary users. The primary users were staff members of the Office of International Education. They were the Director, Assistant Directors and Program Managers. These individuals are tasked with establishing and maintaining study abroad programs with foreign universities; managing the various electronic tools used to inform and educate future program participants; and supporting students in the steps to participate in a study abroad experience. These colleagues were frequently consulted regarding the progress of the project to ensure its focus on the use of the findings. A small subset of this group was called the "Dream Team" and worked directly with the implementation and management of the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas. This small group of primary users were my direct contacts to create the core elements of the evaluation and ensure the focus on usage (Patton, 2012). These professionals were individuals of various ages, educational backgrounds and employment histories.

Secondary users. The secondary users were other staff members of DU who indirectly supported students interested in attending study abroad. These were professionals from the Disability Support Programs Office (DSP); the Learning Effectiveness Program (LEP) and the Office for Teaching and Learning (OTL). Colleagues from the Center for Multicultural Excellence (CME) were also considered by the OIE as secondary users of the evaluation, however, accessing them for interviews was attempted multiple times but was not successful.

Stakeholders. Students, parents and family members were individuals impacted by the design of the program, and hereafter called "stakeholders." The student group was composed of students from various ages and class standings who attended DU during the Fall quarter of 2017. These students had access to the Study Abroad Handbook on Canvas starting on September 5, 2017. The final application deadline for the study abroad program for Fall of 2018 was January 18, 2018 (S. Robertson, personal communication, August 2, 2017). The pool of participants were mostly students of traditional college age, ranging from 17 to 20 years old (M. Xu, personal communication, January 21, 2018). One student was a non-traditional student who was nearing their graduation. Their academic majors varied, as did their interest in study abroad sites. The parents and families of students also received access to Canvas to learn about various options of study abroad programs.

Data Collection

The data collection for this evaluation employed qualitative methods such as document analysis, interviews, and focus groups.

Document analysis. The two documents analyzed were the content of the study abroad Handbook in Canvas and the user usage data of the Canvas site.

***User usage data*.** The Canvas site tracked the number of page views and actions users took during a certain day and displayed it in a section called "Canvas Analytics." I copied the data from the Canvas site and pasted it in a worksheet in Microsoft Excel, as to conduct a graphic representation of the data and its averages. The source data is displayed on Appendix A. The first column references page view for the course. The second column references actions users had with the content, such as a mouse click.

Study Abroad Handbook Content. The content of the Study Abroad Handbook was accessible to anyone with its internet hyperlink, https://canvas.du.edu/courses/63078. The main page of the Canvas site had eight main links: Modules, DU Passport, OIE Website, Appointments, First Step, Drop-In Advising, Deadlines and Policies. The Study Abroad Hand book itself was in the Modules section. This area had 49 sections, and a total of 136 sub sections with some subsections having more than one page.

Focus groups. The focus groups were intended to obtain perspectives of two stakeholder groups: students and their families. These two groups were divided into a dominant group and a group of underrepresented populations in study abroad. Underrepresented populations were discussed in the Literature Review chapter of this DRP and were students with disabilities, first-generation college students, and students representing ethnic minorities. Focus groups are beneficial in obtaining insight into what individuals believe about a certain issue, their opinions about what has happened or is about to happen through a setting that capitalizes on group dynamics to stimulate discussion (Guest et al., 2017). Furthermore, focus groups benefit the understanding of common or different experiences among individuals, and the further explanation about a phenomenon (Kruger & Casey, 2014). The interactions between focus groups participants provide more data and a richer context than individual interviews (Nagle & Williams, 2013), along with a wider range of views and ideas (Guest et al., 2017).

The student recruitment for the focus groups was done via email and word of mouth. The e-mails were sent as early as December 10th, 2017, by the Center of Multicultural Excellence (CME), Disability Support Programs Office (DSP), the Learning Effectiveness Program (LEP) and the Office of International Education (OIE).

Copies of the recruitment email, as approved by the University of Denver Institutional Review Board are located on Appendix B. The focus group activity was determined by the protocol (Appendix C) and recorded via an electronic audio recorder.

The questions utilized in focus groups originated from Appendix D. The interview protocol and questions were designed to first elicit information on the participants' awareness and knowledge of study abroad in general and the study abroad program at DU, followed by specific questions on the use of Canvas to explore study abroad program information. The specific questions were associated with the research questions of the evaluation, which sought to understand how Canvas was used, and obtain feedback for improvement. For the focus groups held in person, I connected a laptop computer to a video screen in the meeting room as to show the Study Abroad Handbook Canvas website to the focus group participants. The visualization of the Study Abroad Handbook was beneficial to elicit feedback from those students who were not aware of the site. A 20-dollar Amazon gift card was provided as an incentive for participation to each participant at the end of each focus group.

Three 60-minute focus groups were held on January 5th, 2018, in the Anderson Academic Commons at the University of Denver. One focus group was for the general student population; one for students associated with the Center for Multicultural Excellence; and one with students associated with the Disability Support Programs Office and Learning Effectiveness Program. Table 1 informs the confirmed and actual participants of each focus group.

Table 1

Distribution of Participants in Focus Groups

Focus group Type	Population	Method	Number of confirmed participants	Number of actual participants
Students	General Population	In person	13	8
Students	Supported by DSP	In person	2	1
Students	Supported by CME	In person	8	7
Students	General Population	Online via Zoom Conference	16	8
Students	General Population	Online via Zoom Conference	16	11
Parent/Family	General Population	Phone	2	1
Parent/Family	General Population	Phone	2	1
Parent/Family	General Population	Phone	2	1
TOTAL			61	38

A total of 16 participants attended the focus groups, from a total of 23 students who confirmed their presence. The focus group for the general population had a participation of eight students; the one with CME students had seven; and the one with DSP/LEP students had one student. Participants had a varied experience with study abroad, with some having participated and others still exploring the options for application. Two other focus groups were held on January 25, 2018, via Zoom conference

call. Participants were recruited via e-mail by the Office of International Education and received a link to peruse the Canvas site prior to the call. The calls lasted approximately 50 minutes and comprised a total of 19 participants, with one focus group having 11 and another 8 participants. The participants of these two focus groups had not yet participated in any study abroad program at DU, and most had applied for the Fall 2018 program. The members of these two focus groups were not confirmed to be supported by DSP or CME and are therefore considered to be part of the general DU population.

Families members were recruited for the focus groups via the DU Facebook parent page and from referrals from students who participated in the student focus groups. Only three parents accepted the opportunity to share their perspectives on the usage of Canvas. Each parent was only available at a different time, therefore, the focus groups for families became individual interviews and were held over the phone. Family members were also provided a 20-dollar Amazon gift card for their participation in the data collection process. The questions for the family focus groups followed the same protocol as the student focus groups, which began with general questions about the understanding of study abroad concepts, moving to specific questions on the use of Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas.

Interviews. Interviews were held with colleagues from the Office of Teaching & Learning, and from the Disability Support Programs Office and the Learning Effectiveness Program. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain expectations, opinions and viewpoints regarding their knowledge of study abroad at DU, the usage of the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas by their students and suggestions for improvement. The interview questions were open-ended and are listed in Appendix E.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted once interviews and focus groups were completed, and its recordings were transcribed, and any reports were downloaded from Canvas. Data were stored in my computer in a password-protected folder ensuring the integrity and confidentiality of the data. I utilized a pragmatic analysis, following in line with the worldview of the study and the UFE characteristics. During the analysis, by utilizing both inductive and deductive analysis, I sought to identify the themes being created by the answers to the questions of the focus group as they related to concerns and suggestions for the improvement of the Canvas content. Furthermore, I noted concepts about the study abroad program, and notions that informed on the topic of access to study abroad. The framework of Critical Disability Studies (CDS) was used as a lens, with a specific criterion of the "preferred user position" (Ellcessor, 2016) which is further detailed in Chapter 4 of this evaluation. The CDS framework informed the data analysis during my reading of the transcript, and coding of the text. I sought information that aligned with explanations on how individuals learned or not about the Canvas content, or how they used it or not, and what reasons they provided to inform on that use. Understanding the frequent way in which the Handbook was used pointed to the issues that hindered its access to certain individuals. Furthermore, I noted concepts that described ease of access or lack thereof and were associated with a preferred choice of technology or interaction.

Canvas data. The corporate website of Canvas informed that their analysis functions support a university administrator or faculty member in understanding students' usage and behavior (What are Analytics?, 2017). The analytics function of Canvas

allowed me to understand, both graphically and numerically, how many individuals visited and logged in to the site throughout the Fall quarter of 2017. This pattern observation supported the description of the behavior of the users.

The content analysis (Appendix F) was conducted utilizing a conceptual analysis format, with the depth of the analysis set at the landing page links, the headings of the Modules section and the content of the pages which referred to students with disabilities and students of color. The depth of analysis was considerate of the number of pages within Canvas and the time allotted for this evaluation.

Focus groups and interviews. In conjunction with the focus groups and interviews, I organized, listened and transcribed all recordings into text by utilizing the software nVivo. The analysis of the data throughout the qualitative data collection allowed me to create a structure to describe the information collected. During this process, I coded all collected data using open coding in relation to the unit of analysis of the research questions. For example, if an answer related to how an individual used or not the Canvas site, that concept was coded as being part of the usage code. If an answer related to suggestion and possible improvements, then it was coded as related to the suggestions for improvement code. In the coding process, I did not set a limit on the number of concepts for which to code, as to allow for a flexible process. Furthermore, I decided to code for the existence of concepts, as opposed to the frequency of concepts. Coding for the existence of concepts allowed for a broader understanding of the information presented on the site. The coding process is outlined in Appendix G.

Following the first level open coding, where statements alike were brought together, I organized those elements into second level coding. Codes that informed on the

ways individuals used Canvas were grouped, as well as codes that explained how and why individuals were not aware of Canvas or did not use it. Suggestions were also grouped based on theme (Creswell, 2014). A visual representation on the coding process is available on Appendix G. For example, statements that answered the first research question, "How did students and families interact with the Canvas content during the Fall 2017 quarter?", were organized in two groups. These level 2 codes were (1) the concerns and challenges on using the Canvas site, and (2) on the benefits of using Canvas. Following these two codes, Level 3 codes were created and defined as "Importance of the set up and the distribution of the Study Abroad Handbook and its impact on access to information" and "Explains how students used the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas during Fall 2017".

Comparison with Canvas usage. The themes created by the coding process were compared with Canvas usage and interpreted in a side-by-side comparison followed by a discussion (Creswell, 2014). The differences, similarities and unique elements of each data source supported a greater validity of the results of this evaluation. The use of different data sources to confirm or deny a claim is encouraged as part of both the case study methodology and the UFE framework process. Case study supports the involvement of qualitative and quantitative data as to provide a richer understanding of the individuals, setting and incident investigated (Balbach, 1999). The Utilization-Focused Evaluation encourages methods choices that are practical and are aligned with intended use (Patton, 2012, p. 265). Since the OIE staff had planned to continue the use of Canvas beyond the 2017-2018 school year, it was important to use a data source that can be compared between years. Furthermore, since the Canvas tool has a built-in

analytics tool that is easily accessible, it was a practical decision that provided access to aggregated and non-identifiable user data.

Validity and Trustworthiness

In supporting the validity of the qualitative data, I followed the methods presented by Creswell (2012): triangulation, member checking, detailed descriptions, research bias clarification and peer debriefing. Triangulation was used to identify converging themes that emerged from the data of the focus groups of students and parents. Member checking was employed by asking students and family participants of the interviews and focus groups to read over the major findings of the case and provide feedback. Peer debriefing was done with colleagues who worked in the field of study abroad, such as Mark Hayes at American University, Kevin Konecny, from University of Central Florida, and Katherine Wildman, of Black Hills State University.

Due to the nature of the program evaluation framework, several meetings with the primary users were held throughout the project. These meetings provided clarification to my progress and informed on any adjustments that needed to be made. These improvements were intended on ensuring the final report was in line with the use of the evaluation as per the UFE method (Patton, 2012).

The primary user group was engaged monthly throughout the evaluation, after the Institutional Review Board request was approved, to ensure the process was being followed according to their intended use of the evaluation. The secondary user group participated in two processes. The first one was by participating in interviews. At the next interaction, they were asked to provide feedback on the draft findings of the evaluation. Since the secondary users were staff members of various offices, they were also asked

about any feedback they had received on the usage of the systems by the students. Colleagues from DSP and LEP were asked about their suggestions on how content might be adjusted to fit the needs of frequently underrepresented student populations in the DU study abroad programs.

Positionality and Role of the Researcher

It is important to note my positionality with the study. I am a student affairs professional with nearly fifteen years of experience in the higher education setting. My experiences are both in the helping profession and in the administration of student services units. My research interests lie in the usage of data for change management and implementation of programs to support student access, learning and success. Secondly, given my training and experience speaking to students and families, my listening and attention skills are positioned to pay attention to both verbal and nonverbal cues.

My biases in this research are in line with the intention of this study, to produce actionable findings that the staff members of the OIE can employ to improve their programs. Furthermore, my own identity as an international student and professional in the United States of America, impacted the lens by which I considered the choice of this project and the assumed importance of the study abroad experience in college student development. Finally, the choice of the project was a practical one, as it was aligned with the requirements for the DRP and provided access to the staff and the data, given my previous work with the OIE. My concern was to not conduct an evaluation of my own office, however, to still make sure the staff members were accessible and supportive to the evaluation work.

Ethical Issues

All participants were able to remove themselves from the focus groups and interviews at any time, and all necessary considerations and requirements from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) were followed. I ensured that student data was stored in a secure computer server, and that no identifiable information was available. The evaluation was based on the essential standards of utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy and accountability (Joint Committee on Standards for Education Evaluation, 2010). All interview and focus group participant identities were kept anonymous.

Limitations

This evaluation was limited due to its methods and my limitation as the researcher. The data collection process was based on students and families attending the focus groups, and their participation was not guaranteed. The same was valid for the family and parents of students and their participation in the phone calls. The distance to the site, due to my relocation to Washington D.C. for new employment, was one limitation which impacted my quick access to sources and meetings with the OIE staff, which were held via conference call and phone.

Conclusion

The methods utilized in this program evaluation were aligned with the needs of the client and primary users of this evaluation. Given that the colleagues of the Office of International Education at DU required an evaluation that was focused on applied and practical use, the Utilization-focused Evaluation method was beneficial to achieve their goal. The flexibility of the UFE method, alongside the combination of qualitative focus groups, interviews and Canvas analytics, provided a robust infrastructure to gather,

analyze and inform on the use and future improvements for the Canvas learning management system.

Chapter Four: Findings

In this chapter I present and discuss the findings of this program evaluation according to the research questions and the needs of the primary users of the evaluation and offer additional insights from the data beyond the research questions. The data for this formative program evaluation encompassed qualitative information, hailing from focus groups and interviews with 35 participants and university colleagues. User analytics data from Canvas was also utilized to inform on how students and families used the Study Abroad handbook during Fall 2017.

While the next chapter (Chapter 5) outlines the Recommendations, the suggestions for the improvement of Canvas are also analyzed in this chapter as they were provided by the participants of the interviews and focus groups. I begin this chapter with a description and an explanation of the usage of Canvas during the Fall quarter of 2017, drawing from the analytics of Canvas and the data from the interviews and focus groups. I then follow with a discussion on the reasons for the usage of Canvas, or lack thereof, and on the suggestions to be implemented for the continued development of the Canvas tool to support access to study abroad.

The lens of the Critical Disability Studies (CDS), specifically Disability Media Studies (DMS), is used throughout this chapter to discuss how the content, set up and dissemination of the Canvas tool provided or hindered support for access to populations frequently excluded from study abroad programs. Disability media studies is an

interdisciplinary concept that explores the planning, dissemination and format of information and its impact on access. In this chapter, I discuss the findings against DMS' concept of the "preferred user position" to explain that at the creation of a resource there is a preference, whether intentional or unintentional, that defines use, which in turn supports or hinders access (Ellcessor, 2016). Once more, the research questions for this evaluation were:

1. How did students and families interact with the Canvas content during the Fall 2017 quarter?
    a. What inferences could be drawn from their interaction patterns as displayed in the Canvas analytics?
    b. Were there relationships between the content visited in Canvas and students' choice of study abroad program?
    c. In what ways did Canvas maintain or support access to study abroad by students from frequently marginalized groups?
2. What adjustments can be made to content in Canvas to support students with marginalized identities to participate in study abroad?

Canvas Usage during Fall 2017

The findings on the usage of Canvas, which are associated with the first research question, are described in the following paragraphs. I begin with a detailed description on how many individuals used the Study Abroad Handbook according to the data provided by the Canvas analytics, and further illustrate the data with information from students and family focus groups and interviews. I follow the same structure when discussing to what

end Canvas was used by students and families during their preparation to apply to study abroad.

Low Usage. Based on the data provided by the analytics tool of the Canvas site, and the information from students and families during focus groups and interviews, the usage of the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas during Fall 2017 quarter was low. During the 135 days between the start of the Fall 2017 quarter, until the final deadline to apply to study abroad for Fall 2018, the Canvas course had a daily average of 96 page views and the daily average of 2 actions. The most frequent number of page views (the mode) was 20 daily page views. Page views are counted anytime a user opens any Canvas webpage in their internet browser. Actions with the content are any mouse click on a page or tool in Canvas. There were 99 days when there were no actions with the site, where those 99 days represented 70% of the timeframe of this study. Figure 2 provides a visual representation of this data.

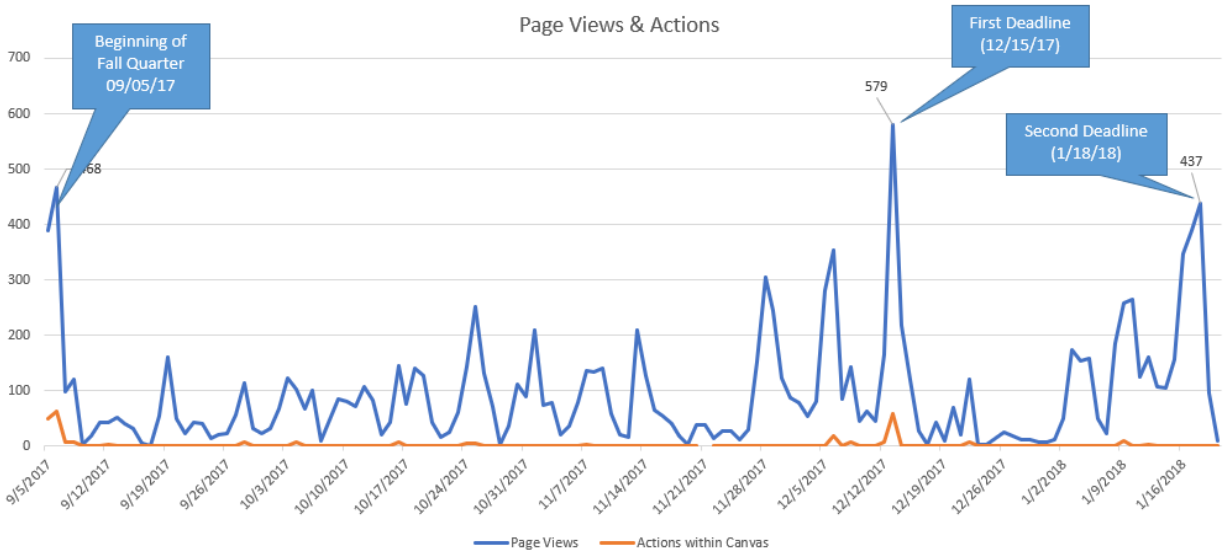

Figure 2. Canvas Analytics on Page Views and Actions.

The claim about low usage is further evidenced when compared to the total number of Fall 2018 study abroad applicants of 790 students. This number of applicants is similar to those of previous years (M. Xu, personal communication, January 20, 2018), and suggest that the presence of Canvas did not impact study abroad application. The mode (20 page views) represents 2.5% of the total applicants.

In investigating the reasons for the low usage of Canvas, information from students and families provided useful insight. Seven students who participated in the focus group and applied for study abroad for Fall 2018 mentioned not being aware of the site. Students who previously participated in a study abroad program also mentioned not being aware of the presence of the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas, even though they were daily users of Canvas for academic coursework. Furthermore, advisors from the offices of Disability Support Programs (DSP) and Learning Effectiveness Program (LEP) shared not being aware that the Study Abroad Handbook was available in Canvas. The following quote from Dani, a student who applied to study abroad during Fall 2018, provided a useful summary of the issue:

> I did not know we had a Canvas board until you [Christopher Silva] sent out the email this week about it. I just used directly Passport and the study abroad website. I got the same information, but it would've been really nice to know of it. I could've gotten it all in one place. Maybe I just wasn't paying attention, but I had no idea that we had a website for it.

The students who confirmed using the site remembered learning about it from interactions with an advisor of the Office of International Education (OIE). This interaction was via an in-person advising session. One student mentioned finding out about Canvas by browsing the OIE website. Family members who used Canvas discussed learning about it from an online webinar. During a discussion of these findings, an OIE

staff questioned the claim that students were not aware of the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas, due to the possibility that students might have used Canvas without being aware. The OIE staff provided links to specific Canvas pages in the DU Passport website. Passport is the website that provides information to each specific study abroad program, such as country, university and courses offered. The OIE staff believed that students read pages in Canvas but reached and navigated them through pages of the Passport site. The DU Passport can be accessed from the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas, or via the OIE website. This inference might explain the low numbers of actions within the Canvas site. If this was the case, then actions in Canvas would not have been tracked correctly, and the low numbers could be explained. The way the Canvas site was set up, and its connection with other OIE content, is a concern for measuring user engagement with the site and is discussed later in this chapter.

The insights made by students and families who used Canvas, when analyzed from a Disability Media Studies lens, support the assumption of the "preferred user position" and its issue with access. Students who attended an in-person advising session with an OIE advisor at the International House (I-House), the building where the Office of International Education is located, and families who participated in a webinar during Fall 2017, were the ones most likely to know about Canvas. Users who did not engage in one of those two experiences did not have the same chances to learn about Canvas. Even with Canvas being available to anyone, and the tool being widely used by students in their academic coursework, a human interaction held two blocks away from the DU main campus at the I-House was cited by students as a critical part of their engagement with Canvas. Judith, a student participant of the focus groups said: "I didn't really find out

about it until a meeting with an advisor" and Amelia confirmed that "My advisor recommended it to me. So, I was just curious, so I went through a lot of it just to gain some information." Therefore, students who might have had a physical disability or a mobility impairment, or whose schedules did not allow for an in-person meeting, were at a disadvantage from receiving or being reminded of information to prepare for their application process. Similar is the situation for parents and families who did not attend the online webinar during which the Study Abroad Handbook was shared.

Inequality in access to study abroad information is especially concerning when the literature (Matthews, Hameister & Hosley, 1998) discusses that frequently underrepresented populations, such as students of color, first generation and individuals with disabilities, benefit from direct access to advisors and information about programs provided well in advance. The "normal" situation, where resources for study abroad are available online with the expectation that students will "find it," and an advising process that is held in the International House, may serve the need of many of the students, but not those whose access is already limited. If access to study abroad programs at DU is to be continually expanded, then new arrangements for those populations should be explored. Disability Media Studies calls these "alternative user positions" that can help "denaturalize" the preferred user position (Ellcessor, 2016, p. 77).

Using to Prepare for Application. Analytics data extracted from the Canvas analytics interface suggests that those who used Canvas, used it during the dates surrounding the submission of the application to the study abroad program. The dates with the highest Canvas page views and actions were the start of the school year, September 5th, 2017, with 468 views and 62 actions. After that, the days with the highest

usage were the days preceding the due dates for study abroad on December 15, 2017, with 579 views and 58 actions; and January 18, 2018, which was the last study abroad application deadline and had 437 views and zero actions. It is not possible to detail how many of these page views were from unique users, or possibly, even one single user. The most common pages viewed are displayed below in Figure 3.

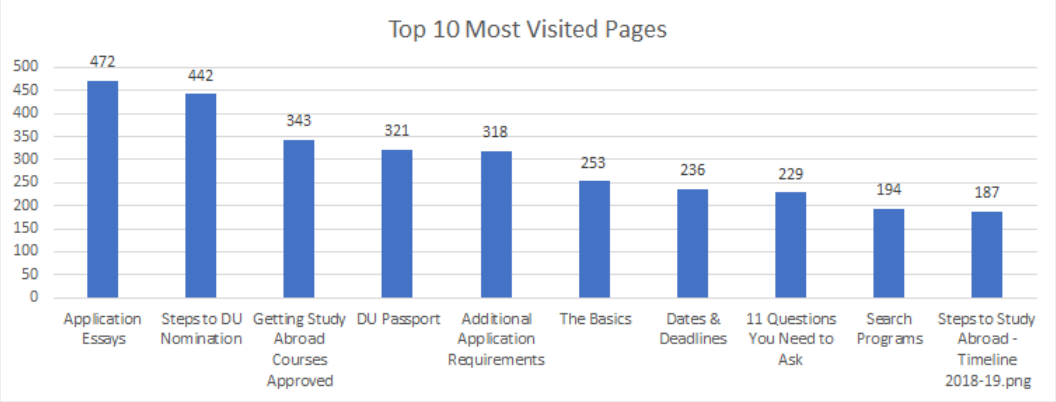

Figure 3. Top 10 most visited Canvas pages.

Focus group participants who mentioned using Canvas informed that they used it to prepare for the application essays, clarifying questions about financial issues, or obtaining other general study abroad information. Several participants discussed using the Canvas content to support their submission of the application essays. These statements are in line with the list of the top 10 pages visited as shown on Figure 3. One participant, Charlie, said:

> I'm pretty familiar with the canvas study abroad thing. The only way I found it was through the application essays. When I was looking online to find out specifically what they wanted for the application essays, this is what was linked from the OIE website. That's how I found it. I didn't necessarily use it until I was starting to write my essays, which it would've been really helpful. But that's how I found it.

The claim about the low usage of Canvas is also supported by focus group statements on how students used the content. One student, Faye, mentioned that they

“used it a little during the application but after that I basically haven't looked at it” and another student, Alison, mentioned “I didn't use it for anything else besides the [application] rubric.”

The least visited pages in Canvas are ones with less than 10 total view counts and are listed in Table 2 below. A log that informs on all page views is located at the end of this evaluation, on Appendix H.

Table 2

Canvas pages with the least number of views.

Page name	Total number of views
Food and water safety	10
Obeying local laws while abroad	10
Transportation	10
Communications	10
Culture of safety	10
Inclusiveness & diversity abroad	10
Lamont music forms	10
Pre-departure health & wellness preparations checklist	10
Anti-Americanism	9
Fire safety	9
International SOS (ISOS)	9

Short-term study abroad through DU	9
Water activities	9
Service, internships & work abroad	9
Carbon offset donation & DU tree project	8
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	8
Routine care while abroad	8
Travelers with disabilities	8
What does all this mean?	8
Deferred action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students	7
Disabilities and learning differences	7
Resources for victims	7
Tools for dealing with culture shock	7
Shortening your study	7
Housing tips and reminders while abroad	6
Lengthening your study	6
Reverse culture shock & adjusting to life back home	5
Engage with the Denver community	3
Graduate studies abroad	3

Helping your returnee adapt to life back home	3
Incorporating study abroad in your job search	3
Strategies & resources for adapting when you return	3
Useful tips on communicating	3
ISOS LGBT Flyer - Europe - 2017.10.17.pdf	2
Engage with the OIE & DU	2
ISOS LGBT Flyer - Americas - 2017.10.17.pdf	1
ISOS LGBT Flyer - MENA - 2017.10.17.pdf	1

The focus group participants did not report learning about Canvas from an unofficial peer interaction. Focus group participants who previously attended a study abroad program reported that if they had the opportunity to use Canvas prior to their application, they would have used it because of the vast amount of information available in one single site and because it is in Canvas. Most of focus group participants reported a positive outlook about the Study Abroad Handbook being in Canvas due to this learning management system being frequently used for university coursework. A participant named Dani also said about the content in Canvas: “It has like everything there, so it's like all connected. It's like a central port.”

I was only able to interview three parents, and due to this low number of interviews, it is difficult to make many assertions about their usage of Canvas. One parent reported a positive experience using the site and sharing the content with their spouse,

which focused on general information on study abroad. The two other parents interviewed had not interacted with Canvas on their own and learned about the site due to the link shared with my recruitment email. Both parents, Sam and Alex, expressed that their main interest in reading about study abroad was learning about how the university and students will handle issues of security and special needs, such as medical accommodations. Sam explained their focus on "... reminding students that if you have food allergies you probably don't want to go to a country where your food allergy is a staple in their diet". They also followed with concerns about the LGBT community, informing that "You know, the LGBT community can't safely go to every country, and so you know, reminding students to ask". Various pages of Canvas provide information on these topics, located in a section called "Health & Safety."

If the information located in Canvas was only reviewed and used by some individuals, then only a few have benefited from it. If the OIE invested time and resources in tools and services that were used by the "majority group" of students, the OIE unintentionally limited access to information to those who are consistently underrepresented in study abroad experiences. A small group of individuals, such as students of color and ethnic minorities, and those with disabilities, remain as the outcasts of the DU community, not fully enjoying its services. From a financial viewpoint, students and families who for any reason did not engage with all its services, still paid the same cost as other students who benefited from the Study Abroad Handbook information. Disability Media Studies calls this the "extra cost" that is paid by those who do not fully engage with a service or product because it was not designed with them in mind or not fully shared as to be thoroughly enjoyed by all (Miller, 2016). Frequently, services are

designed for the majority, causing an unequal exchange of price for resources for those who do not fit those services.

Usage patterns compared to program application. The method by which Canvas was set up, along with the format of the content within the site, did not allow for a triangulation of user data with the program application numbers. A colleague from the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL), Maria, stated that an open course such as the one for the Study Abroad Handbook, while allowing for access by anyone, has limited analytics options. This is due to the detailed analytics being associated with a user who has signed up for a course and has a profile in the central Canvas system. Only registered DU students, faculty and staff can have a profile in Canvas, thus making it inaccessible to parents and family members. This issue was further confirmed on March 3, 2018, when I analyzed the content in the Canvas site after the students who applied for the Fall 2018 study abroad programs were loaded into Canvas. The data provided insight into the pages most and least viewed by students, as well as the number of times students engaged with the content.

Maria also informed that by using Canvas to be a central depository of links to other websites, it is challenging for any tracking to occur with the content of the other sites, as opposed to a course where all content is located within Canvas. Maria stated that "You're missing all the analytics for who's clicked on this, because this isn't something that Canvas is tracking". I verified this position, as my content analysis of Canvas showed links to at least 11 different online tools such as PDF documents, DU websites, Prezi presentations, YouTube videos, external websites, e-mail addresses, the student service site PioneerWeb, a DU OIE appointment site and the DU OIE Passport site.

Further discussion on the issue of data gathering for analysis will be part of the recommendations for future adjustments on Canvas and other study abroad content. Both experts for the Office of Teaching & Learning discussed the needs for any Canvas site to be appropriately set up based on the program's needs and requirements for analytics and measurement. The literature on learning management systems and faculty support advocates for detailed information on a student's usage of a site as a proven positive resource for purposeful faculty engagement (Naveh, Tubin & Pliskin, 2010).

User concerns. Several concerns were shared by the participants of the interviews and focus groups and describe barriers for students and families when using the Study Abroad Handbook located in Canvas.

Overwhelmed. A common concept described by students and families, and corroborated by the colleagues from DSP, LEP and OTL, was the concern for the large volume of content displayed in the Modules section of Canvas. There was a total of 136 unique pages in the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas, located under 10 headings and 49 subsections. When downloaded to a Microsoft Word document, the file had 315 pages. A view of the landing page of the Modules section is displayed below in Figure 4.

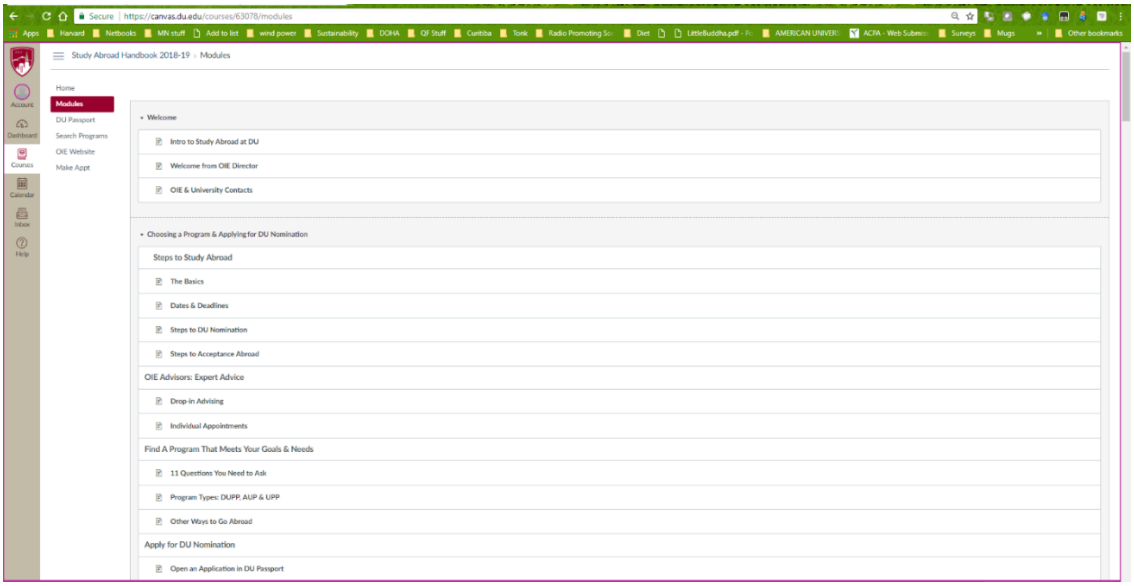

Figure 4. Landing page in the Modules section of Canvas.

The following student quote from Jaime, a student who applied to study abroad for the Fall of 2018, served as a description of the issue: "I felt like when there is that much information, it kind of made you want to use it less." Maria, a colleague from the Office of Teaching & Learning, the DU Canvas expert, stated the following about the amount of content in the Modules section of the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas:

> I don't know if any undergrad has ever seen this amount of content in Canvas. Maybe graduate students in University College in a course that is completely online or a course in graduate sports psychology, or some other fully online programs. I think the average undergrad will go into a class and they might see their class laid out in modules with three or four things in each, but their actual deliverables, and most of the text will be on pdfs, words, textbook.

The concern for the impact of the large amount of content is exacerbated when discussing issues of access with colleagues from the Disability Support Programs Office (DSP) and the Learning Effectiveness Program (LEP). These colleagues shared their concern that the amount of information displayed in Canvas might inhibit students with learning disabilities and executive functioning needs to further engage with the content in Canvas, thus not learning the information. Marci, a colleague from LEP, asked "With all

of this content, how do students decide on which link to view?" The Study Abroad Handbook contains sections to inform on the support for disabilities abroad, with various links to website and services for students with learning and physical disabilities.

One parent, Robson, was also concerned about vast amount of content available, and questioned the navigation of Canvas: "How will I know where I am in the content and how much more time I have left to read everything?" The parent explained that being able to know the percentage of the content still needed to be read, or an approximate amount of time, would have supported them adjusting their schedule to learn more about study abroad. During the content analysis I conducted (Appendix F), I faced the same challenges as mentioned by the parent. Understanding my position within the section, and the overall content, was challenging as there was no information on my progress or position within the content.

Language. In the focus groups, several students shared that their parents might not interact with Canvas because of two reasons: they do not speak English and others because they do not speak "college" language. When I further inquired for detail, one student named Paulo, explained that their parents never attended college and are not aware of the meaning of the information they receive from DU: "my parents don't even understand what DU sends them anyway." Another participant, Ariel, said: "they don't understand because of language, because of being in English, or they don't understand it because they may not know that concept."

The one student who participated in the focus group for students who received support from DSP and LEP, mentioned the use of acronyms as a barrier. The acronym OIE (Office of International Education), was not familiar to them. Furthermore, a link at

the bottom of the main page on Canvas mentioned the possibility of users downloading an “ePub” version of the course, which provides a way for content to be viewed or printed in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat Reader. Our solo participant, Patricia, mentioned that this was confusing, as those acronym letters had no meaning and created more questions in their mind: “What is an epub? I don't know what that is. Do you know what that is? I have no idea what that is.” During my content analysis, I also found the use of acronyms to be prevalent, as the words DUPP, AUPP, INTZ and CGS were frequent across various subsection headings (Appendix F). These are various acronyms of types of programs offered by the Office of International Education.

The two issues outlined by the specialists from the OTL and focus groups participants highlight that the amount of written content and how that content is described had an impact on the user’s perspective and its use. If the expectation of the OIE is for essential information to be provided via Canvas, and that this information can improve access to study abroad, then consideration about the form and the medium of this content are paramount. This means that decisions on using a certain website, or document format, along with the quantity of documents available, should all be carefully discussed and planned to ensure access. The care and concern for the discourse on the creation and the dissemination of information are as critical as the information itself (Ellcessor, 2016).

Adjustments to Support Access

Suggestions from the various focus groups participants and interviewees were organized based on a thematic grouping, which was created during the coding process and based on the unit of analysis of the second research question. The themes were on summarizing and re-organizing content; the use of non-electronic resources; peer to peer

interactions and program reviews; resources in other languages; and informing on how the study abroad program information is organized. The concepts discussed in this section do not encompass all suggestions made by students, families and experts, as it would not be possible to cover all within a reasonable timeframe for this doctoral research project. It is important to note that these suggestions are not the same as the recommendations that will be part of the final chapter of this evaluation. These suggestions were discussed with the OIE primary user team on February 24, 2018 as a part of the UFE method process of sharing of initial findings (Patton, 2012).

Planning with assessment in mind. The central aspect of the interviews with the experts from the Office of Teaching & Learning focused on understanding the purpose of Canvas as a tool and questioning the use of Canvas for content sharing versus using Canvas for a traditional academic course. From their perspective, content sharing should not be conducted via Canvas. Canvas is a tool for academic coursework and active faculty-student engagement with content, quizzes, discussion and assignment submission. Tools such as the DU Portfolio, or even a website, might be more appropriate tools to share and organize content for the OIE. Furthermore, the possibility of conducting a more advanced usage analysis for program improvement is available when using a website with a Google Analytics account, which is not possible in Canvas. The OTL colleagues, Maria and Joseph, suggested that those considering Canvas should first begin with an extensive discussion on their learning objectives, and then follow with an engagement process with experts (in this case, members of OTL), to identify the appropriate tool to accomplish those outcomes.

In my search for other schools that use learning management systems for study abroad, I found that DU was in a unique situation. Other campuses informed that they use Canvas for a specific study abroad preparation course, or as a tool to engage with students who might already be studying abroad in a certain program. Maria from OTL, suggested that the OIE develop a goal, a learning process, and then choose a tool:

> I'd say, begin with the end in mind. When someone comes to this page, what are you asking them to do? How long are people on this page? From this page, where do they go? How long do they stay? Do they abandon it and close their browser, because Canvas isn't going to get any of that. With that metrics, you can really look and say, "Okay, everybody is hitting additional study abroad expenses and closing out of the program," or everybody is clicking on this eligibility, stays there for five minutes, which is great, because we want them to stay.

The discussion of Canvas as the tool for the Study Abroad Handbook is one of internal political concerns for the OIE and OTL. The OIE staff mentioned that the OTL staff recommended Canvas after an inquiry about the best tool to accomplish the study abroad preparation process, and the OTL staff explained they did not provide such advice and would suggest the OIE to simply use a website, or the DU Portfolio. During my conversations, I have maintained attention and confidentiality ensuring that relationships between the two departments are not damaged by sharing this information.

Reorganization of content. Most of focus group and interview participants mentioned that a possible solution to reduce the chances of feeling overwhelmed with the content is for it to be reorganized. Several participants suggested that content should be collapsed into three to four categories, and that a visible search box be made available to support the fast identification of the information for which one might be searching. One participant named Fabio mentioned that organizing content in a timeline manner might be beneficial, such as “a tab by date, so you can see what you have to do and when you have to do it. Also breaking it up maybe into region specific like, Europe or Asia.”

A colleague from DSP, Ashton, supported the inclusion of a comprehensive search tool: “Students are familiar with using Google as a search tool. A similar function should be available in Canvas, as they will for sure look for it.” Furthermore, they asked: “What if someone is not computer savvy?” and suggested that perhaps adding comment to the page “if you need help using this website, please email or call here.”

Finally, another focus group participant, Fernando, discussed the importance of having an explanation on how the Canvas content is organized by having a page “that talked about the website really quickly, like say how it was organized.” They mentioned that by knowing where a certain information may be, they could quickly identify which resource to utilize.

Peer review and peer interaction. A frequent discussion during the focus groups and interviews was on the benefit for students and families to learn from the experience of those who already participated in study abroad. Several students mentioned that they would enjoy being able to learn about the uniqueness of various study abroad sites, and the experiences students had living in certain countries either via an in-person activity, or via testimonial videos available on Canvas. The purpose of learning from these peer reviews was on how they would aid in their choice of study abroad site. This interest is similar to what is found in the study abroad literature on the benefits of peer advice and mentoring, which supports students in seeing themselves in the experience by knowing that others like them have also been able to manage such experiences (Holben & Ozel, 2015). Pedro, a student in the general population group, provided an insight on peer review and feedback: “...the best way to understand and be able to make an informed

decision about where you want to study is to actually talk to a current student... or someone who has studied with that program before."

The parent interviews also provided similar information, as parents discussed benefiting from learning about challenging logistical situations that students might have faced, such as receiving medical support, navigating unique public transportation, or overcoming a financial challenge. Parents shared that testimonials from other parents would also be beneficial, especially on how they navigated logistics. This parent mentioned that currently they may visit Facebook to obtain answers to questions such as "how do I make sure that my kid has health insurance abroad?", or "what's the best way to communicate with my kid when they are abroad?"

One parent shared the concern for their student with the issues of gender-based discrimination, and how it would have been important for both her and her student to know how members of the LGBTQ community would be welcomed in certain countries. Marci, from LEP, shared that testimonials from students who learned from previous study abroad, in line with Holben and Ozel (2015), would provide a positive reinforcement to her students, who might be questioning if they are able to study abroad due to their anxiety over the number of steps required to complete the application process.

Non-Electronic Resources. A small number of focus group participants shared they would benefit from the Study Abroad Handbook also being available in a printed format. Two students mentioned the need for "something to hold on" and to make notes, which they could refer when having questions. Another student mentioned that having a printed resource was a way to feel comfortable and secure with the information that had been provided. Various students discussed a large brochure, with photos and information

about the study abroad sites which could be consulted at any time without having to visit any website. Students also mentioned the need for a paper checklist, to summarize the main steps of the study abroad application process, which they could keep and post on their room wall or place it in their planner. Jackson, a student participant in the focus groups, mentioned that "…the printable checklist, that would be a really great idea. I really like crossing off the boxes as I'm going."

Language. Students whose parents do not speak English suggested the availability of resources in other languages, which in the case of the participants, was Spanish. The students informed they do not suggest all content to be available in another language, but that main concepts of the study abroad program would be beneficial. Information in Spanish might include explanations on the purpose of study abroad program, financial information and the contact information of OIE staff who is fluent in Spanish.

One student mentioned that it would be beneficial for information on staff members at the university who speak Spanish and emergency resources in Spanish to inform about their student during a crisis. One student whose parents speak Spanish, Jorge, mentioned that they might appreciate "something that would accommodate your parent's situation, like an email that's translated into Spanish language" and added "that used to work a lot in my high school. It was like an automated message. First English, and then Spanish, and that's where my mom would get all her information." Finally, it is important to note that someone utilizing the Google Translate tool might have challenges using the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas. I tested if the website could be translated to Spanish and received an error informing that the site was too large to be translated.

In the two previous sections, I sought to answer the research questions, which inquired about how Canvas was used by students and families during Fall 2017, and their suggestions for improvement of the system. The data from the Canvas analytics, the focus groups and the interviews, informs that the usage was low and used on the preparation for the application to study abroad. Users shared concerns for the volume of the content, the usage of acronyms and English as the only written language. Secondly, the stakeholders suggested various improvements to the system which included a reorganization of content and the addition of peer advice and information. Other suggestions included resources that would accompany Canvas, such as the addition of non-electronic resources and availability of resources in Spanish. In the next section of this chapter, I discuss other findings that did not originate from the main research questions, yet were salient topics informed by data.

Additional Relevant Findings

The additional findings originated mainly from the student, family and staff interviews and focus groups. The three themes uncovered common concepts discussed in the various interactions and may serve as new information for the Office of International Education at DU, both for their increased understanding in their programs and to encourage future assessment and evaluations.

Deciding to study abroad and deciding where to go abroad. During the focus groups and interviews, a common concept began to emerge about the decision-making process to study abroad. Students discussed the difference between deciding *where* to study abroad and deciding *to* study abroad. This issue was identified during two focus groups, when asked about their decision-making process to study abroad. Students

mentioned that they knew they would study abroad before they even came to DU. Patrick, one student in the general population focus group mentioned: “The decision was already made for me before I even applied, or knew I was coming to DU. I knew I wanted to study abroad. DU just makes that really easy.” Some students mentioned parental influence, and others informed having participated in study abroad programs during their high school years. These themes are in line with discussions on “acquired capital” that impact study abroad participation (Van Der Meid, 2003; Salisbury et al., 2009).

Students in the focus group for students supported by CME mentioned they remembered learning about study abroad during their first admissions tour. Patricia said “they really emphasized it on a tour when I took my junior year of high school. They got me really quick.” A similar concept was explained by Jennifer “it gets put in your face a lot, like with banners, table tents.” The nature of DU undergraduate students to be associated with the study abroad experience was also mentioned by the colleagues from OTL, OIE and LEP. Maria from the OTL informed that they know the DU study abroad program is a cornerstone of the university experience, and in their volunteer function as student organization advisor, they frequently communicate with members of the organization who are studying abroad.

The experiences of non-traditional students. In contrast to the previous discussion point, some students mentioned not knowing about the study abroad program until they received specific information from a student support advisor. Patricia, the one transfer student who identified as outside of the “traditional” aged college student and who received support from DSP, mentioned not knowing about the study abroad

offerings until an academic advisor asked if they would be studying abroad. Elise, the second transfer student, mentioned “When I got here, I did not know that DU had a study abroad program. I just did not know that. But then again, I'm an older student.” These discussions, while only being mentioned by a small number of students, indicated that there are traditional and non-traditional paths to learn and to study abroad. Students who are not part of the common undergraduate admissions process, which may include involvement with the DU Admissions tour program, and other orientation programs for traditional-age college students, may at the outset be set up to not have the appropriate information to participate in study abroad as other students.

The insights provided by the two transfer students in the previous paragraph inform that there may be a preferred recipient of the initial study abroad information. The individuals and families who participate in on-campus tours may be benefitting from early information about the study abroad process, different than those who join DU as non-traditional undergraduate students, thus being encouraged and role modeled to participate in study abroad. Issues of access then might already be at play, and I return to the “preferred user position” concept (Ellcessor, 2016). The way study abroad is marketed by the DU Admissions Office might be creating different experiences that will impact access to study abroad, as they reinforce or encourage the study abroad experience to their participants.

Canvas: A new Fad in the non-academic sector. The usage of Canvas as a tool for more than academic coursework has been discussed several times during this DRP, especially amongst staff members. During my conversations with the OTL staff, they informed me that various non-academic offices have asked them to provide a Canvas

course, so they can share content with students. A colleague in the LEP office, Marci, mentioned having discussions in her office about the possible benefits of having Canvas as a website for it might easily reach students as well as being easy to edit. Study abroad administrators from other universities whom I contacted earlier in the project showed interest in learning about the benefits of using a learning management system to share information to students. These issues might provide suggestions for future research linked to the interest in administrators to grab students' attention, and the need for staff to easily create and edit web content, as opposed to needing a specific web designing training or staffing.

In the additional findings, I sought to bring light to different themes uncovered in the data collection which were not part of the two main research questions. It was evident from the transcription and coding that the general student population is enrolling at DU with a predisposition to participate in study abroad. Secondly, students of non-traditional college age, and transfer students, are receiving less or no information about study abroad. Finally, the usage of Canvas for non-academic work is a curious effort at DU, and possibly worth future discussion and research with the Office of Teaching and Learning.

Conclusion

The OIE staff members intended that by placing their information in the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas, as opposed to several webpages, they would bring their information to one central location accessible to all DU students (S. Roberts & J. Bohn, personal communication, December 15, 2017). Their assumption was that most of DU students use Canvas for their academic courses. Furthermore, by making it an open

course, they extended the access of these resources to not just registered DU students. Students, families and staff members interviewed shared a positive and welcoming concept about having the Study Abroad Handbook in a central location such as Canvas.

In the critical decision of using Canvas, the staff members of the OIE, unintentionally, defined the *preferred user* of the Canvas site as an English language speaker student or family member who is knowledgeable using the learning management system used by DU. Furthermore, the placement of the content in Canvas, as opposed to a printed brochure, assumes that the user of Canvas should have access to a computer and the internet and prefers an electronic learning resource. The creation of this study abroad "universal model of engagement" (Ellcessor, 2016, p. 65), while beneficial to the staff for management, and easy to access to those who are knowledgeable of Canvas, has likely ignored barriers, creating issues of access to others. Furthermore, due to the setting of an open-access course, the primary users from the OIE lost the detailed data on users' interaction with the site's content, as opposed to the fine analytics which are can be provided in an academic course and can benefit positive student intervention.

In a positive light, the OIE staff expanded the reach of its content by placing it at the forefront of the student attention, alongside the various academic courses a student might be registered. In a time where students' attention span is limited, and the number of e-mails and messages sent to a student being large, using intelligent ways to reach a student is key. Parents also appreciated having all information available in the same resource as their student.

The data collected in this evaluation has not indicated that issues of access to study abroad have been advanced by the OIE by having the Study Abroad Handbook in

Canvas. The effect of the availability of content in Canvas was likely not “felt” widely, since not all students were aware of its presence. Secondly, advisors of the groups that are frequently underrepresented in study abroad, such as DSP and LEP, were not aware that Canvas was available, and thus, did not inform their students. Furthermore, the purpose of the usage of Canvas and its association with measurement was not previously clear and can be improved to measure and support claims of access to study abroad programs.

Chapter Five: Recommendations

The aim of this program evaluation was to investigate the usage by students and families of the study abroad content in the Canvas learning management system during Fall 2017. The research questions for this evaluation were:

1. How did students and families interact with the Canvas content during the Fall 2017 quarter?
    a. What inferences could be drawn from their interaction patterns as displayed in the Canvas analytics?
    b. Were there relationships between the content visited in Canvas and students' choice of study abroad program?
    c. In what ways did Canvas maintain or support access to study abroad by students from frequently marginalized groups?
2. What adjustments can be made to content in Canvas to support students with marginalized identities to participate in study abroad?

In the previous chapter (Findings and Discussions), I analyzed and discussed the insights from 35 students and family members who participated in focus groups, and four interviews with colleagues from different offices at DU. The analysis was framed in answering the two research questions via a lens of Critical Disability Studies (CDS). In accordance with the Utilization-focused evaluation framework (UFE), I worked alongside staff members of the Office of International Education (OIE) at DU, the primary users, to provide feedback and suggestions on the analysis and discussion of the findings, as well

as to discuss potential recommendations (Patton, 2012). In this chapter, I revisit key findings of the evaluation, and list recommendations to be implemented by the primary users of the evaluation. The recommendations are aligned the UFE method, ensuring that they are linked to the central research questions, are derived from the findings, and discuss a timeline for implementation. Furthermore, I also suggest future assessment, evaluation and research to be conducted by the OIE.

Key Findings

Canvas as a content depository for the Study Abroad Handbook can be noted as a successful tool to the students who used it during their application to study abroad for the Fall quarter of 2018. Students who used Canvas responded that content was easily accessible and supported the creation of their application essays, information on basic study abroad concepts and used as a launching pad to other OIE sites. The ease of accessibility for the Study Abroad Handbook as the Canvas platform was due to students' frequent access of that tool for academic coursework. One family member who used Canvas also found that the availability of information online, and its vast details, were beneficial to their research on issues of safety and security during a study abroad program.

Other students expressed concern of not knowing that the Canvas site and all its information was available, and some individuals informed only learning about it from in-person advising sessions. Two family members informed not being aware that Canvas was available. The amount of content located in Canvas was also discussed by both students and families as being of high volume, leading them to feel overwhelmed, and therefore not fully engaging with the content.

Specialists in learning management systems from the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) encouraged the OIE staff on the continued discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of Canvas as opposed to other online tools such as websites or the DU Portfolio. The purpose of Canvas being used as a tool that helps faculty members engage students in academic coursework is different than the OIE's current use of Canvas, which is one of content depository and a hub of links to other online tools.

The opportunities for access to study abroad for underrepresented populations were not found to have been advanced by the usage of Canvas. A main concept from the tenet of Disability Media Studies challenges content managers to create multiple avenues to share information to ensure all individuals are informed. This is in opposition to having only one method of information that is aligned with a "preferred user" (Ellcessor, 2016) or consumer of information which benefits from resources. Users who do not fit the preferred user mold, have restricted access to resources. Recommendations within this chapter will seek to advance interventions and resources that can address these issues of access.

Recommendations

The recommendations were created based on the findings of the evaluation, which originated from the answers of the focus groups and interviews, discussions with the primary users of the evaluation, feedback from colleagues in the study abroad field and best practices from the literature. The recommendations are listed in order of priority and possibility of completion, as discussed with the OIE staff.

Theory of change. The OIE will benefit from the creation of a theory of change. The development of a theory of change is more than an object or plan, but a process

aimed at informing on what the program is achieving with all its parts (Patton, 2012). These parts are inputs, actors, systems, and based on various types of students on the DU campus with the intention to explain what change is occurring as they interact with the various OIE resources and staff. The theory of change, once completed, can serve as the base for future holistic program evaluations. Alongside the theory of a change, the OIE might develop an outcome map, which provides a visual representation of how the various parts of the program interact with one another (Annie, 2004). An example of a simple theory of change development process is shown in Figure 5.

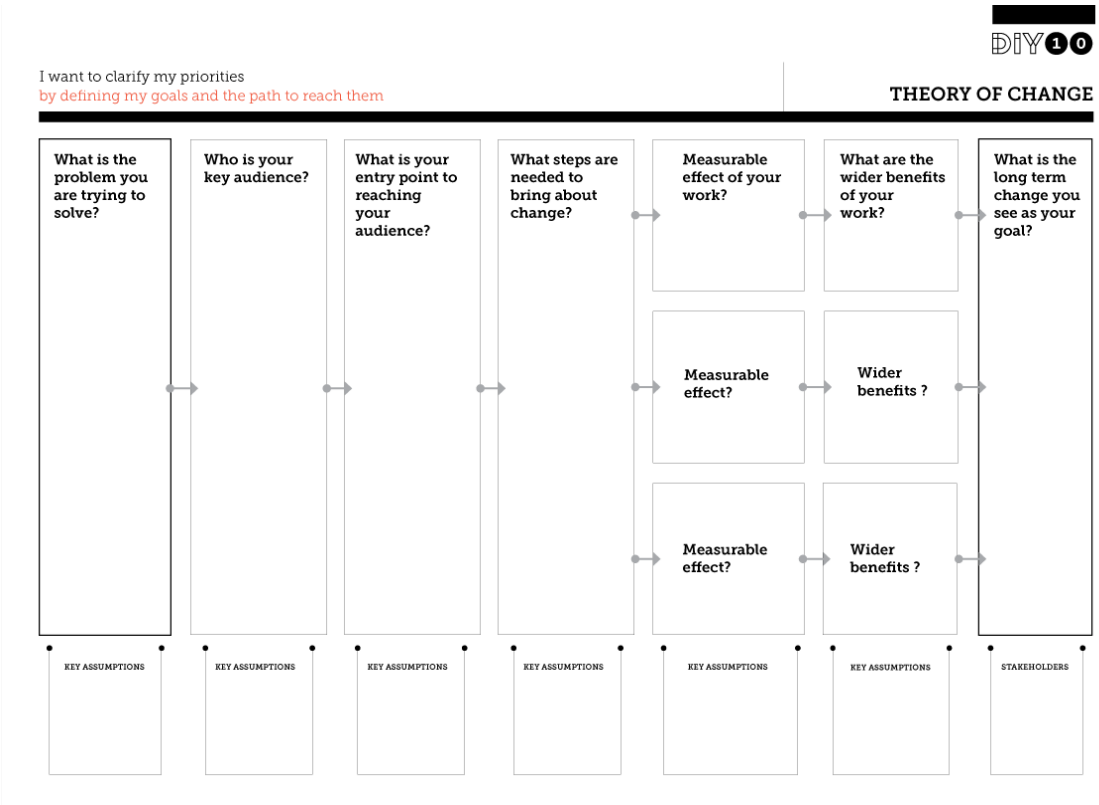

Figure 5. Theory of Change Model (Development, Impact & You, 2018).

In this evaluation, I investigated only one aspect of the study abroad efforts, the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas. In the future, with the development of a theory of

change, the OIE will map their whole experience, and include all stakeholders, learning tools, and outcomes. By defining their experience and outcomes, the OIE will also begin to define what it hopes to achieve with its various online tool and resources, and how these various interfaces support access to study abroad.

The theory of change is also beneficial when considering the concept of Disability Media Studies, which encourages content creators to provide multiple information-sharing processes (Ellcessor, 2016). The theory of change developed by the OIE should consider that not all students enter DU via the traditional undergraduate admissions process. For example, transfer students shared in the focus groups that they were not aware of the study abroad opportunities at DU until after they started their university experience. This is in contrast with most of focus group participants and even parents, who knew about study abroad at DU even prior to starting school. A complex theory of change will consider these two scenarios, and ensure they are considered when interventions are developed.

The OIE hosts an annual retreat during the summer months. The theory of change work is likely to occur during that event and be revisited throughout the year. According to program evaluation literature (Patton, 2012), it is critical that the OIE consult with peer offices to verify their theory of change and obtain more feedback. The development of a theory of change is of low cost, as it can be achieved by the OIE staff itself with support from academic resources or an external consultant. The theory of change work is the core recommendation as its findings and continued use impact all other recommendations. Internet links to different websites with information on the creation of a theory of change are available on Appendix V.

In the development of the theory of change, the OIE should also consider how it wants to utilize Canvas tools and its data analytics. A learning management system can provide various benefits to students, such as improved learning of content (Xu & Mahenthiran, 2016) and to staff, in the more efficient use of resources (Lonn & Teasley, 2009). The Director of the OIE will need to evaluate the alignment and need for such tools, and its possible interventions, and the necessity of extra staffing or adjustments of responsibilities. If extra staff time is not available to extract and analyze the data, the OIE might benefit from working with the Office of Teaching and Learning and their technical staff to advance the use of Canvas or other learning technologies.

Bi-annual meetings with colleagues from DSP, LEP and CME. Students who are frequently supported by the Disability Support Programs Office, the Learning Effectiveness Program and the Center for Multicultural Excellence mentioned relying on information from advisors of these offices. It is important that the OIE continue and expand its relationship with colleagues from those offices, sharing information on its resources and program, and receiving feedback and suggestions on any processes. For example, both advisors from LEP and DSP were not aware of the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas, and therefore did not advise any students to use it. This recommendation is in line with the literature on access to study abroad, which encourages that multiple university staff be involved in discussing, encouraging and supporting students in their journey to study abroad (Johnson, 2000; Holben & Ozel, 2015). These conversations with colleagues may provide other suggestions to the OIE staff, such as advice on the adjustment or creation of new materials or processes on information

sharing; feedback on how students have used old and new content; and other information for their benefit.

Annual meetings provide a simple and inexpensive way to engage with colleagues. The OIE staff may benefit from scheduling a meeting during the summer term, to inform on new information and processes that begin in the subsequent Fall quarter. Furthermore, it may also schedule another conversation at the end of Winter quarter, to receive feedback on the usage of resources from students who applied for study abroad. When discussing this recommendation with the primary users of the evaluation, their suggestion was to frame the interaction alongside the intentionality of the collaborative work on improving access to study abroad and within the goals of the DU 2025 Strategic Plan. The goals are part of the Transformative Directions One (under SI 2) and Two (under SI 3), mentioned to "encourage and strengthen study abroad" and "expand study, research and work abroad opportunities." (University of Denver, 2017b).

The OIE might also pursue community-wide educational efforts by participating in division-specific meetings or training sessions. For example, the Division of Campus Life & Inclusive Excellence hosts monthly staff meetings with their staff. The meeting would be an opportunity to present major points about study abroad. Finally, it will also be important to celebrate accomplishment and progress on collaborative work. For example, the OIE and DSP collaborated on developing and funding a training workshop during the DU's 2018 Internationalization Summit in the topic of disability and study abroad (Office of Internationalization, 2018). This example should be shared within internal and external newsletters and websites as to encourage other collaborations.

Peer-to-peer interaction focused on affinity groups. Participants of the focus groups mentioned they would benefit learning from the experience of previous program participants. The OIE currently provides contact information of students who have completed study abroad and volunteered to serve as resources for future study abroad participants. The feedback from students and families requested opportunities for them to interact directly with study abroad program alumni and alumnae, or to have opportunities to watch videos or hear audios on the experiences of these students. The study abroad literature encourages this interaction, especially for students of color, LGBTQ community members, students with disabilities (Van Der Meid, 2003) and first-generation college students (Hamir & Gozik, 2018). The possibility of knowing that students who are "like them" have participated in study abroad, and their experience, successes and failures, may aid their application for study abroad. It would also be important for the OIE to work closely with the DSP, LEP and CME in creating other opportunities for student interaction with study abroad alumni. Some of these opportunities might be during panels or roundtable conversations. Videos or audios recordings of previous participants might also benefit students and family members who are not able to attend a panel or sharing session. The partner offices of DSP, LEP and CME might provide a suggestion on how this engagement might occur with their specific student population.

The creation of audio or video resources is a low cost but time intensive option that could yield positive returns. The OIE might utilize recording resources available to be borrowed for free from the Anderson Academic Commons lending desk. Furthermore, a unit of the DU Library Services, called Digital Media Services, provides detailed

information on the usage of recording devices and is also available to be hired to conduct such services. The OIE staff mentioned that this is a time intensive option as it may be difficult to find students who will volunteer to record previous information and experiences. During the Winter and Spring quarter of 2018, the OIE worked on the creation of videos to discuss the experience of students participating in homestays during their study abroad experience. These videos will be available for the students who prepare and apply to study abroad for the Fall of 2019.

A starting point for the OIE might be with groups of students associated with the Center for Multicultural Excellence that have a track record of study abroad participation. For example, the members of Sigma Lambda Beta Latino Fraternity were part of the focus group for the students who are supported by CME. They shared that various of their brothers have participated in study abroad and they frequently encourage each other to learn about their experience and apply. The OIE should identify other existing groups and networks.

Availability of OIE Advisors in the main campus. The location of the OIE office is a barrier to access to information and advisor meetings. From a comparison utilizing the website Google Maps, the office is located 0.5 miles from the core of DU campus, as opposed to all other resources which are located within 100 to 200 feet from the core of the campus. The students interested in learning about study abroad would benefit from accessibility to advisors, similar to the math tutoring or the writing center, both located in the Anderson Academic Commons (AAC). The opportunity for permanent, drop-in hours, in a campus location that is central to students would increase the access of advising to all students, and not to just those who are underrepresented in

study abroad programs. Further availability of advising staff in the Katherine Ruffato Hall (KRH), where the DSP and LEP are located, would improve access to students who receive support from those offices.

In a conversation with the OIE staff on March 16th, 2018, I learned that they have already investigated the availability of an advising spot in the Anderson Academic Commons. Collaboration with the administration and scheduling of the AAC and KRH will be necessary to achieve these goals. Currently, the booking of space in these buildings is done by the tool 25Live and governed by the AAC building management staff. One benefit of this discussion is that it is aligned with the Library's statement of inclusive excellence (University Libraries, 2018). The OIE might also need to invest in mobile computers and other technology to support remote work. Furthermore, the possibility of staff adjusting the work location for a few hours a week may need to be discussed with other OIE senior administrators and planned accordingly.

In supporting accessibility to advisors, the OIE might also explore the use of internet tools such as Skype or other messaging systems. All DU students have access to Skype via their Office 365 e-mail tool and could communicate via chat messages with OIE staff. Other recommendations include utilizing cell phone text messages to remind students of deadline for the study abroad application and information sessions.

Handbook redesign. The OIE would benefit from a redesign of their Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas. The overall feedback from student and families was that the content currently in Canvas is large and has lead most users to feel overwhelmed and not to engage with all its content. The OIE staff might need to review content with teaching specialists, such as colleagues from the OTL. Data reports such as the one in

Appendix H, which lists the most visited pages in Canvas, should be downloaded frequently by the OIE staff, particularly in the summer of 2018, to support the adjustment of content. Assessment of the pages by students and families via focus groups might also provide further benefits to guide the overall redesign process.

The adjustment of content should not be a one-time effort, but an annual practice that ensures its format and information are current. The OIE staff might need to dedicate several staff hours annually to this process. The data from the Canvas analytics may support the creation of different sections, for example, based on application process phase or the pre-departure phase to study abroad. Based on current data from Canvas and discussed in the Findings section, the students and families only engaged with the Handbook content that was on the preparation and application to the study abroad process. The data on those most visited pages might provide a starting point for the OIE staff to reorganize content in Canvas, or at least to provide information to content users on the most visited pages during Fall 2017.

Accessibility check of OIE content. Alongside the content redesign, the OIE staff might benefit from an accessibility check of all its online and printed content. I performed an online accessibility check with a free internet tool called WAVE, which standards for web accessibility evaluation tool (WebAIM, 2017). After the test, I found that various of the links and descriptions in the current Canvas platform were not supportive with tools such as text-to-audio, for individuals with low vision, or someone using a website translation tool. Collaboration with the colleagues in Disability Support Programs, Learning Effectiveness Program and the Office of Teaching & Learning might be beneficial to conduct this accessibility check.

The accessible check process is part of frequent assessment of the information the OIE provides to students and families and should not only encompass websites. Specific accessibility checks might suggest that videos should include captioning and printed transcripts, or that webpages should be upgraded to be viewed in mobile devices. Ensuring that this is a practice of any content development process is essential to maintain focus on increasing accessibility. Furthermore, the accessibility check process should be aligned with other university-wide accessibility efforts, as to ensure alignment and possibly cost-saving due to the large-scale accessibility efforts.

Printed checklist. Students and staff mentioned that it would be beneficial to have a printed resource with a checklist and deadlines for the study abroad program application. This checklist could have the format of a small bookmark for easiness of transport and cost of production, or simply the possibility of being printed via the OIE website. This resource would also be beneficial for advisors in CME, LEP, DSP for a quick reference to program information.

While this may seem as a very simple and achievable activity, the creation of a checklist should consider not only the perspective of the preferred user, but concepts that are linked to increasing access. The OIE staff informed that during the 2018-2019 school year, their Passport website will support a program application checklist tool. This tool will provide a reminder to students for various deadlines of document submission.

Handbook prints available. A small number of students suggested having the Study Abroad Handbook in printed format. In my discussions of the findings and suggestions with the OIE staff, it was identified that the Canvas content could be downloaded into an Adobe Acrobat format and made available as a printed copy in the

DU Bookstore. This would allow for students to request a printed and bound copy of the Handbook if needed. The OIE staff could develop a partnership with the Bookstore to subsidize the cost of printing the handbook. Based on the cost provided by the QuickCopy website (Student Copy Services, 2018), the cost of each printed Handbook would be of approximate $20.

Resources in Spanish. Students whose families speak Spanish mentioned that they would benefit from a summary of the study abroad experience in the Spanish language, along with contact information for Spanish-speaking staff. The students discussed that their families would appreciate receiving general concepts such as the costs of the programs, discussions on safety and security, and the best ways to communicate with students during an emergency.

The creation of resources in Spanish, and the availability of staff to provide Spanish-speaking support may involve financial investment and administrative coordination with the OIE. While there are several staff who speak Spanish, the possibility of them providing support in another language may not be written in their job description and may require different compensation. A consultation with DU Human Resources might be beneficial. Furthermore, the creation of Spanish content should be confirmed by a language specialist, which may also involve extra cost. During a conversation with the OIE staff on March 16, 2018, they informed that they had already assessed all languages spoken by their staff and were editing their website and documents to inform on the various languages available in their office.

Supporting infrastructure

During the sharing of the findings and recommendations with the OIE, a critical concern was described. The primary users of the evaluation discussed that while they appreciated the recommendations from this evaluation and agreed with these items, they were concerned for the extra work that would be incurred as they try to achieve these goals. The plea for extra staffing was repeated many times. In my discussions with Denise Cope, the Director of the OIE, she mentioned having a job description for a new staff member to support issues of access to study abroad. The staffing discussion was also evident in the needs for assessment and evaluation. The OIE staff inquired about the possibility of future doctoral students from the Higher Education Department to support the creation of their theory of change and a continual program evaluation process.

Recommendations Reviewed

The following table (Table 3) was requested by the primary users of the evaluation and provides a review of the recommendations, alongside a short sentence on the next step to support its completion. Each row also provides information on the frequency of the recommendation. A further detailed table is listed in Appendix X.

Table 3

Review of recommendations

What?	**Summary of immediate next steps**	**Frequency?**
Theory of Change	Schedule summer retreat. Research theory of change development. Assign staff or facilitator.	On going

Meetings with DSP, LEP, CME	Schedule meeting with different offices and identify agenda items.	Annual or Bi-Annual
Peer-peer interactions	Identify number of videos/audios to be accomplished during 2018-2019 and lay out timeline.	Annual plan in stages
Advisors on main campus	Meet with AAC staff to identify possible locations of drop-in advising.	One-time
Handbook redesign	Review data from program evaluation on most and least visited pages and determine timeline to adjust content.	Annual
Accessibility check of content	Communicate with DSP and OTL on resources for accessibility check of Canvas content.	Annual
Printed checklist	Create deadlines within DU Passport system.	Annual
Printed handbook	Check with DU Bookstore/QuickCopy on process to set up printed resource “on demand.”	Annual
Resources in Spanish and other languages	Edit website to include information on staff members and languages spoken.	On going

Implications for Research and Practice

During this program evaluation, I investigated the use of the Canvas tool by students at the University of Denver as they prepared to apply to study abroad. This research project identified various findings about the usage of Canvas, the concerns of the users and their suggestions for improvement. This evaluation was only conducted with a subsect of the total number of students applying to study abroad at the University of Denver, and therefore should not be considered a generalization on the behavior of all students interested in study abroad in higher education. However, during the analysis of the data of this project, several suggestions for practice and future research were identified, both regarding the use of learning management systems and on the function of information on the decision of students to apply to study abroad.

Learning management systems. The usage of a learning management system outside of academic coursework was discussed various times during this doctoral research project and suggests possibilities for future research and implications for practice. First, the choice for Canvas was unearthed in the conversations with the colleagues of the Office of International Education. Their decision was linked to suggestions from the Office of Teaching & Learning to centralize all their online content. Secondly, the purpose of Canvas was also explored with the interviews with the staff members of the Office of Teaching and Learning, who informed that the core focus of Canvas is to support faculty as they teach academic coursework. The aspect of purpose or aim of use of Canvas as an active learning tool, focused on faculty and student benefits, was also corroborated by the LMS literature (Naveh, Tubin & Pliskin, 2010). The

contrasting issue of purpose and actual use is one that requires attention by researchers and university administrators. In the practice perspective, university managers should consider the purpose of the tool and the intended goals that are being sought, as to make the most purposeful impact. The framework of Disability Media Studies would be used alongside this choice process, to ensure that multiple avenues of information are being discussed to ensure maximum access (Ellcessor, 2016).

An implication for future research on the use of LMS for non-academic use is regarding its interests and reasons. During the interviews, one colleague from the Learning Effectiveness Program alluded being interested in exploring Canvas to share their office's content due to Canvas being an effective tool to captive students' attention. An examination of this topic might inform on the perspective of university staff and the reasons for non-academic uses of Canvas, as well as a comparison of the financial costs of using Canvas versus traditional websites. Finally, the impact of the increased usage of learning management systems and its impact in content accessibility might also be explored. In line with the Disability Media Studies framework and the concept of the preferred user (Ellcessor 2016), it would be important to assess the impact of the increased usage of learning management systems by universities and students' concerns for hinderances or increases in information accessibility.

Cultural capital. Another implication for future research and practice is on the concept of cultural capital. Simon and Ainsworth (2012) discussed how students' "background, knowledge, experiences, disposition, and skills" support their study abroad participation (p. 3). In the focus groups and interviews at DU, several students and parents mentioned knowing about study abroad prior to their arrival to DU, and some

during a campus tour, while a small number of students informed not having any prior information. To further understand the information and support services needed to increase access to study abroad it is necessary to understand the amount of exposure individuals and families have with study abroad prior to their start at a university. A research opportunity for DU and other universities might be to investigate what their students know about study abroad before they arrive on campus. Are they coming to attend university because of the study abroad component? This data collection and analysis might support the creation of a baseline of the concepts, each unique to their own university, that can be used to realign the work and staff time, specially of colleagues in the study abroad office.

Furthermore, in a suggestion for practice, for both DU and other universities, it may be beneficial to reevaluate the traditional university campus tour. It is known that campus tours are a vessel for the sharing of rituals, concepts, traditions and are critical in sharing the expected campus experience (Magolda, 2001). A suggestion would be for study abroad offices to work alongside their university's admissions offices to reframe the information and dialogue about study abroad shared during a campus tours. Information on the accessibility of the study abroad opportunities might be highlighted, or myths might be clarified that could support increased access for underrepresented students.

Conclusion

This doctoral research project sought to evaluate the usage of the learning management system Canvas as used by students and families interested in learning about the study abroad opportunities provided by the Office of International Education at DU.

The specific focus of the research questions was on understanding how populations use Canvas, and more importantly, their suggestions for the improvement of the tool and other information systems of the OIE. The data supported the creation of formative findings for the primary users of the evaluation, and recommendations for the improvement of their content sharing processes and tools. The recommendations of this doctoral research project are action-focused and support an advancement of the interests of the OIE in alignment with DU's focus on inclusive excellence, continuing its search to provide equity in all its opportunities. The implications and suggestions for future research and practice were aligned with unique findings, and with literature recently published that encourage multi-pronged efforts to support an inclusive campus (Hamir & Gozik, 2018).

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Appendix A

Canvas Analytics

Date	Page Views	Actions Taken
1/18/2018	437	0
1/17/2018	390	0
1/16/2018	347	0
1/15/2018	157	0
1/14/2018	106	0
1/13/2018	107	0
1/12/2018	161	3
1/11/2018	125	0
1/10/2018	264	1
1/9/2018	258	9
1/8/2018	184	0
1/7/2018	22	0
1/6/2018	50	0
1/5/2018	159	1

1/4/2018	155	2
1/3/2018	175	0
1/2/2018	49	0
1/1/2018	11	0
12/31/2017	7	0
12/30/2017	7	0
12/29/2017	12	0
12/28/2017	11	0
12/27/2017	19	0
12/26/2017	26	0
12/24/2017	3	0
12/23/2017	3	0
12/22/2017	120	7
12/21/2017	20	0
12/20/2017	69	2
12/19/2017	9	0
12/18/2017	44	0

12/17/2017	4	0
12/16/2017	28	0
12/15/2017	120	0
12/14/2017	219	0
12/13/2017	579	58
12/12/2017	166	8
12/11/2017	46	0
12/10/2017	62	0
12/9/2017	46	0
12/8/2017	142	7
12/7/2017	86	0
12/6/2017	353	19
12/5/2017	281	0
12/4/2017	81	0
12/3/2017	54	0
12/2/2017	78	0
12/1/2017	87	0

11/30/2017	122	0
11/29/2017	246	0
11/28/2017	304	2
11/27/2017	151	0
11/26/2017	29	0
11/25/2017	11	0
11/24/2017	27	0
11/23/2017	27	0
11/22/2017	14	0
11/21/2017	39	
11/20/2017	39	0
11/19/2017	4	0
11/18/2017	19	0
11/17/2017	40	0
11/16/2017	55	1
11/15/2017	66	0
11/14/2017	127	0

11/13/2017	210	0
11/12/2017	17	0
11/11/2017	20	0
11/10/2017	59	0
11/9/2017	141	2
11/8/2017	135	0
11/7/2017	137	4
11/6/2017	79	0
11/5/2017	37	0
11/4/2017	20	0
11/3/2017	78	0
11/2/2017	75	1
11/1/2017	209	2
10/31/2017	90	0
10/30/2017	112	0
10/29/2017	37	0
10/28/2017	4	0

10/27/2017	71	1
10/26/2017	131	0
10/25/2017	251	5
10/24/2017	142	6
10/23/2017	61	0
10/22/2017	26	
10/21/2017	17	0
10/20/2017	44	2
10/19/2017	128	2
10/18/2017	141	0
10/17/2017	77	0
10/16/2017	145	7
10/15/2017	42	0
10/14/2017	20	0
10/13/2017	82	0
10/12/2017	107	0
10/11/2017	71	0

10/10/2017	80	0
10/9/2017	85	0
10/8/2017	48	0
10/7/2017	10	0
10/6/2017	100	0
10/5/2017	67	0
10/4/2017	104	8
10/3/2017	123	1
10/2/2017	67	0
10/1/2017	33	0
9/30/2017	22	0
9/29/2017	33	0
9/28/2017	113	7
9/27/2017	57	0
9/26/2017	23	0
9/25/2017	21	0
9/24/2017	15	0

9/23/2017	40	0
9/22/2017	43	
9/21/2017	23	0
9/20/2017	49	0
9/19/2017	160	0
9/18/2017	54	0
9/17/2017	2	0
9/16/2017	5	0
9/15/2017	33	0
9/14/2017	41	1
9/13/2017	51	1
9/12/2017	42	4
9/11/2017	44	0
9/10/2017	18	0
9/9/2017	3	0
9/8/2017	121	8
9/7/2017	99	8

9/6/2017	468	62
9/5/2017	390	50
AVERAGE	96.01481481	2.287878788
MODE	20	0

Appendix B

Recruitment Emails

Dear student -

I would like to invite you to volunteer to take part in a focus group on Friday, January 5th, from 12 noon to 1pm, in the Anderson Academic Commons (Library) Room 184. The goal of the focus group is to learn about your perspectives on DU's study abroad information provided on Canvas. If you participate in the focus group, you will be entered a raffle to win a $30 Amazon Gift Card.

I am interested in your experience using the Canvas site to learn about study abroad opportunities offered by the University of Denver. I would like to know if and how you have used the Canvas system to learn about study abroad; any challenges you faced and your suggestions for improvement. At the end of the focus group, I will ask for the contact information of your parents and family members, to also understand their experiences learning about the study abroad program content in Canvas. I will not share any information provided by you during the focus group to your family members.

More background information will be sent to those confirming attendance before the focus group. Your observations will be used to help the Office of International Education understand how students are using their information to learn and make decisions about study abroad. Furthermore, this project is part of my doctoral research project and has been approved by IRB (1153030-1).

If you would like to take part in the focus group on Friday, January 5th, please let me know by replying to this e-mail at Christopher.silva@du.edu

I sincerely appreciate your support - happy winter break -

Chris

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Christopher.silva@du.edu

Dear student -

I would like to invite you to volunteer to take part in a focus group on Friday, January 5th, from 12 noon to 1pm, in the Anderson Academic Commons (Library) Room 184. The goal of the focus group is to learn about your perspectives on DU's study abroad information provided on Canvas. If you participate in the focus group, you will be entered a raffle to win a $30 Amazon Gift Card.

I am interested in your experience using the Canvas site to learn about study abroad opportunities offered by the University of Denver. I would like to know if and how you have used the Canvas system to learn about study abroad; any challenges you faced and your suggestions for improvement. At the end of the focus group, I will ask for the contact information of your parents and family members, to also understand their experiences learning about the study abroad program content in Canvas. I will not share any information provided by you during the focus group to your family members.

More background information will be sent to those confirming attendance before the focus group. Your observations will be used to help the Office of International Education understand how students are using their information to learn and make decisions about study abroad. Furthermore, this project is part of my doctoral research project and has been approved by IRB (1153030-1).

If you would like to take part in the focus group on Friday, January 5th, please let me know by replying to this e-mail at Christopher.silva@du.edu

I sincerely appreciate your support - happy winter break -

Chris

Christopher Silva
Doctoral Candidate
Higher Education Administration
Morgridge College of Education
University of Denver
Christopher.silva@du.edu

Dear student -

I would like to invite you to volunteer to take part in a focus group on ***Friday, January 5th , from 11am to 12 noon****, in the Anderson Academic Commons (Library) Room 184. The goal of the focus group is to learn about your perspectives on DU's study abroad information provided on Canvas.*

I am interested in your experience using the Canvas site to learn about study abroad opportunities offered by the University of Denver. I would like to know if and how you have used the Canvas system to learn about study abroad; any challenges you faced and your suggestions for improvement. ***At the end of the focus group, I will ask for the contact information of your parents and family members, to also understand their experiences learning about the study abroad program content in Canvas****. I will not share any information provided by you during the focus group to your family members.*

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study abroad. Furthermore, this project is part of my doctoral research project and has been approved by IRB (1153030-1).

If you would like to take part in the focus group on Friday, January 5 th, please let me know by replying to this e-mail at Christopher.silva@du.edu

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Appendix C

Focus Group Protocol

Name tags will be available. Participants will be asked to only share first names and last initial.

1) Welcome

2) Introduction and then thanking of all participants.

3) Handing out the consent forms and requesting for participants to read, review and ask questions. I will inform participants they can keep the consent forms if they would like.

4) Overview of the project and goals for the focus group.

"This focus group is to learn your experiences utilizing Canvas to learn about study abroad opportunities at DU. The results of this doctoral research project will be shared with the colleagues from the Office of International Education to help them improve how they share information about their programs.

5) Information given about breaks, bathrooms, etc.

6) Guidelines:

i."If you feel uncomfortable during the meeting, you have the right to leave or to pass on any question. There is no consequence for leaving. Being here is voluntary. "

ii. "Keep personal stories in the room; do not share the identity of the attendees or what anybody else said outside of the meeting. e. Everyone's ideas will be respected. Do not comment on or make judgments about what someone else says, and do not offer advice."

iii. "One person talks at a time."

iv. “It’s okay to take a break if needed”

v. “Everyone has the right to talk. I may ask someone who is talking a lot to step back and give others a chance to talk and may ask a person who isn’t talking if he or she has anything to share”.

vi. “Everybody has the right to pass on a question.”

vii. “There are no right or wrong answers.

b. Clarifications/Questions

c. Information on audio recording, notes, and non-identifiable information.

d. Information on volunteering parent information to conduct parent focus groups.

7) Begin questions.

8) Inform when reaching last question.

9) Thank all for participating and pass sheet to obtain parent contact information for parent focus groups.

Developed based on Sample Focus Group Protocol from the Office of Justice Programs. Retrieved from https://ojp.gov/ovc/pubs/victimswithdisabilities/pdf/ProtocolforInterviewsGroupsandMeetings.pdf

Appendix D

Focus Group Questions

1. What are your thoughts about study abroad in general?
2. Do you have plans to participate in study abroad?
3. How much do you know about the study abroad program at DU?
4. How familiar are you with the DU study abroad content in Canvas?
    a. If students are not familiar with Canvas, show them the site and the content.
5. How and when have you used Canvas to learn about study abroad?
6. What is most useful to you about the study abroad content in Canvas?
7. What are challenges you have had using the study abroad content in Canvas?
8. Suppose you could have the study abroad content in any form you like, what would that look like?
9. Of all that has been talked about, what is important to you to support your or your students' decision in studying abroad?

Appendix E

Interview questions

1. What was your original intent in seeking the evaluation of the program?
2. What are the programs strengths? What areas can it be improved?
3. Why was Canvas chosen as the tool to share information about study abroad programs? What was the decision-making process?
4. What challenges have you faced in using Canvas in your goal to improve knowledge of study abroad by students and families?

Appendix F

Content Analysis

Landing Page	Welcome information	Number and Name of Sections	Pages	Links to external content? If so, which one?	Parent Notes?
	Links to Sections	Modules DU Passport Searching for programs OIE website Make Appointment		Yes, all except Modules	
	Information for e-readers				
Modules	Main Heading				
	Welcome	Intro Welcome from OIE Director OIE & Contacts	3	OIE Website Policies PDF Multiples Websites Passport	Yes

	Choosing a Program & Applying	Steps to Study Abroad OIE Advisors Finding a Program that Meets Your Goals & Needs Apply for a DU nomination Family & Parents	15	Prezi PioneerWeb Passport Appointment Site PDF File DU Websites YouTube	Yes
	Academics	Choosing a Program & Staying on Track Academic Differences Around the World Internationalization Courses	16		

		& Intercultural Global Studies Course Approvals Registration Credit & Grade Transfer			
	Finances	Program Costs & Billing Cherrington Global Scholars Financial Aid Scholarships Budgeting	21		
	Health & Safety	Choosing a Program DU's Commitment to Health & Safety Checklist	28		

		In the Event of An Emergency Insurance Coverage Health Considerations Safety & Security Considerations Identify and Diversity Abroad Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment and Violence Additional Resources			
	Travel Logistics	Passports Immigration Travel Tips & Resources	15		

		Sustainable Study Abroad			
	Culture, Adapting & Inclusivity Abroad	Culture & Adapting Abroad Inclusiveness & Diversity Abroad	9		
	While You Are Abroad	Voting Culture & Adapting Housing Abroad Changing the Length of the Program Income Tax Return Travelling Communication	9		

	When You Return	Planning for your Return Logistics Cultural Readjustment Ongoing Intercultural & Global Engagement at Home Marketing Your Experience Abroad Additional Ways to Go Abroad Returnee Resources for Friends and Family	13		

	Policies & Resources	DU Study Abroad Policies Withdrawal & Deferral Forms Other Resources	7		
TOTAL	10	49	136		

Appendix G

Coding

Main research questions	**Level 1 open coding**	**Level 2 axial Coding**	**Level 3 selective coding / recommendations**
1.How did students and families interact with the Canvas content during the Fall 2017 quarter?	Did not know about Canvas.	Concerns and challenges about the Study Abroad Hand book in Canvas	Importance of the set up and the distribution of the Study Abroad Handbook and its impact on access to information.
	Mentioned concerns about Canvas content being overwhelming.		
	Mentioned benefits on the comprehensiveness and convenience of content being placed in Canvas.	Benefits of Canvas	Explains how students used the Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas during Fall 2017
	Used Canvas to prepare for the application.		
	Used Canvas to obtain general study		

	abroad information.		
	Used Canvas to learn about financial information.		
	Used Canvas as jumping point to other sites.		
2.What adjustments can be made to content in Canvas to support students with marginalized identities to participate in study abroad?	Summarizing or Re-Organizing.	Informing users on how learning is organized. Organizing content for maximum learning.	Recommendation for the creation of a theory of learning/change for OIE with all of its content and resources.
	Summary of Canvas and how it is organized.		
	Non-Electronic Resources.	Other ways of learning.	
	Learning from Experiences of Previous Participants.	Peer information and mentoring.	Maximizing the involvement of previous program participants in the mentoring, advising and sharing of
	Program Reviews.		

			experiences of future participants.
	Resources in Other Languages.	Improving access to underrepresented populations.	Improving access to higher education information to Spanish-speaking families.
	Other Electronic Resources.	Other suggestions.	Recommendations for future research.
	Financial Information.		

Appendix H

Study Abroad Handbook in Canvas Total Page Views

Page Title	Total Page Views
Application Essays	472
Steps to DU Nomination	442
Getting Study Abroad Courses Approved	343
DU Passport (Link to Passport Site)	321
Additional Application Requirements	318
The Basics	253
Dates & Deadlines	236
11 Questions You Need to Ask	229
Search Programs (Link to Passport Site)	194
Steps to Study Abroad - Timeline 2018-19.png	187
Steps to Acceptance Abroad	167
Required Study Abroad Courses: INTZ 2501 & 2502	162
Steps after Nomination - Timeline 2018-2019.png	158
Intro to Study Abroad at DU	139

How to Use CGS Benefits	132
CGS Application & Timeline	116
Program Types: DUPP, AUP & UPP	116
CGS Eligibility	111
Individual Appointments	108
OIE Website (Link to OIE website)	106
What is CGS?	103
OIE & University Contacts	100
Academic Considerations	88
Welcome from OIE Director	82
CGS Benefits	80
Drop-in Advising	76
Studying Abroad as a Senior & Graduation Ceremony Participation	72
DU Partner Program (DUPP) Costs	68
Staying on Track to Graduate	67
Spanish	65

Other Ways to Go Abroad	62
Booking Your Travel	56
Visas/ Residence Permits	55
FERPA Release for Study Abroad	55
Make Appt	54
Credit & Grade Transfer Policies	52
Open an Application in DU Passport	49
Financial Aid on DUPPs	45
Housing Upon Return to DU	43
Registration for the Term You're Abroad	42
What to Expect	42
DU Department Scholarships	41
Passports Q&A	40
Intercultural Global Studies (IGS) Minor	39
Learning Differences & Academic Accommodations	39
National Scholarships	38
Registration for the Term You Return to DU	38

Region/Program-Specific Scholarships	37
Family's Role in the Study Abroad Process	36
FAQs â€“ Health Insurance	36
Lamont Music Majors (BA or BM)	35
Italian	34
Unaffiliated Program (AUP/UPP) Costs	31
Study Abroad Scholarship Resources	28
Petitions: Yearlong & Back-to-Back Programs	28
Financing Study Abroad	25
Choosing a Program - An Important Health and Safety Decision	24
Cost Planning Worksheets	24
Student Responsibilities	24
Additional Study Abroad Expenses	24
Course Approval Info for Faculty & Advisors	24
When Are Fees Due?	23
Study Abroad Withdrawal & Deferral	23

Abroad Transcripts	22
Alcohol Consumption	21
Tracking Side Travel While Abroad	21
Common Costs	20
DU Study Abroad Policies	20
LGBTIQA Travelers	20
Front Page	19
DU Green Passport Pledge	19
Unaffiliated (AUP/UPP) Forms	19
Student Discounts	18
Packing Tips	18
Prescription Medications	18
Before You Go: Being Informed	17
Financial Aid on AUP/UPPs	17
Scholarships	16
Options for Going Abroad (Again)	16
Registration for the Quarter You Return to DU	16

Exchange Rates	15
Jet Lag Tips	15
Leaving For the Airport	15
Stages of Culture Shock 2.jpg	14
Culture Shock	14
Emergency Steps & Contacts	14
Health and Safety Checklist - Do Before You Go	14
Student Conduct: The DU Honor Code Abroad	14
Women Travelers	14
Customs	13
DU's Commitment to Health and Safety	13
Psychological and Emotional Wellness	13
Transcripts & Graduation	13
LGBTIQA Students Abroad	12
Parents/Family Visiting Your Student	12
Time Zones	12
Working Abroad Legally	12

Communicating While Abroad	12
FAQs â€“ Evacuation and Repatriation	12
Persons of Color	12
Online Resources	11
Pre-Departure Check-Ups	11
Students of Color Abroad	11
US Department of State and STEP	11
Global Reveal!	11
Conduct Abroad	11
Food and Water Safety	10
Obeying Local Laws While Abroad	10
Transportation	10
Communications	10
Culture of Safety	10
Inclusiveness & Diversity Abroad	10
Lamont Music Forms	10
Pre-departure Health & Wellness Preparations Checklist	10

Anti-Americanism	9
Fire Safety	9
International SOS (ISOS)	9
Short-term Study Abroad through DU	9
Water Activities	9
Service, Internships & Work Abroad	9
Carbon Offset Donation & DU Tree Project	8
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	8
Routine Care While Abroad	8
Travelers with Disabilites	8
What Does All This Mean?	8
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Students	7
Disabilities and Learning Differences	7
Resources for Victims	7
Tools for Dealing with Culture Shock	7
Shortening Your Study	7
Housing Tips and Reminders While Abroad	6

Lengthening Your Study	6
Reverse Culture Shock & Adjusting to Life Back Home	5
Engage with the Denver Community	3
Graduate Studies Abroad	3
Helping Your Returnee Adapt to Life Back Home	3
Incorporating Study Abroad in Your Job Search	3
Strategies & Resources for Adapting When You Return	3
Useful Tips on Communicating	3
ISOS LGBT Flyer - Europe - 2017.10.17.pdf	2
Engage with the OIE & DU	2
ISOS LGBT Flyer - Americas - 2017.10.17.pdf	1
ISOS LGBT Flyer - MENA - 2017.10.17.pdf	1

Appendix I

Resources on Theory of Change

W. K. Kellogg	https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resource/2007/07/spark-theory-of-change
GrantCraft	http://www.grantcraft.org/assets/content/resources/theory_change.pdf
The Aspen Instiute	http://www.theoryofchange.org/pdf/tocII_final4.pdf
Development Impact & You	http://diytoolkit.org/media/Theory-of-Change-Size-A4.pdf

Appendix J

Detailed Recommendations

Number	Recommendation	When to be achieved	"ROI"	Type
1	Creation of a printed application checklist to be provided to students and colleagues from various offices	Summer of 2018	High	Media creation
2	Increase presence of OIE staff/information in Transfer student orientation	2018-2019 school year	Mid	Policy and practice
3	Study Abroad Handbook content redesign	2018-2019 school year	Mid	Media creation
4	Making Study Abroad Handbook printed version available in the DU Bookstore	Summer of 2018	High	Media creation
5	Availability of OIE advisors in AAC, MCE and Driscoll for drop-in advising and private sessions	Summer of 2018	High	Policy and practice

6	Development of a learning plan/theory of change for all study abroad content/experience	2019-2020	Mid	Policy
7	Hiring of a staff member to support underrepresented populations	Ongoing	High	Staffing
8	Creation of videos/audios/sessions for peer-to-peer interaction focus on affinity groups	2018-2019	High	Media creation
9	Creation of information sheet/content in Spanish on the general concepts of study abroad	Summer 2018	Mid	Media creation
10	Developing bi-annual calendar of meetings with colleagues from LEP, DSP, CME to inform on all resources available to students. Provide Checklist and infographic on	Summer 2018	High	

	these resources/experiences.			
11	Moving the OIE Office to a central campus location	Ongoing	Mid	
12	After learning plan is developed, create a rubric for assessment that is reviewed yearly with new program evaluations	Ongoing	Mid	
13	Conduct an accessibility check of all OIE content	Summer 2018	Mid	Practice
14	Develop on-going assessment practice focused on number of students from underrepresented groups	Summer 2018	High	Policy and Practice

Appendix K

Log of Meetings with Office of International Education

Date	Type of meeting	Attendees (in addition to Christopher Silva)	Topics, Adjustment and UFE stage utilized
04/11/2017	In-person	Denise Cope	Discussion of research and evaluation opportunities for the OIE. Clarification of Doctoral Research Project requirements and deadlines. Investigation of timeline for evaluation and report usage by primary users. UFE Process: Assessing readiness; engaging primary users; situational analysis; prioritizing evaluation questions; (Patton, 2012).
07/31/2017	In-person	Denise Cope, Stephanie Roberts, Mari Xu, Jennifer Bohn, Sarah Catanzarite, Kathleen Hohr, Casey Dingler	Explanation of project idea to primary users and feedback for clarification. Information on the number of websites, date of launching of Canvas and confirmation of phone call with Mary Xu to obtain data on Canvas content. Primary users detail possible benefits of evaluation and possible implementation ideas. UFE Process: Engaging primary users; situational analysis (Patton, 2012).
08/14/2017	Phone	Mary Xu	Clarification on the initial implementation of Canvas, the distribution of content and sharing of the 2016-2017 OIE annual report. Adjustment: Removal of TerraDota system as part of the evaluation due to that program having different implementation timeline and focus. UFE Process: Engaging primary users; checking fundamental issues; focusing intended process uses (Patton, 2012).

12/12/2017	Skype	Stephanie Roberts, Jennifer Bohn	Discussion on the specific use of the evaluation, "what if" analysis, format of the final report (timing, content, brevity), suggestions for improvement. Explanation on IRB approval, focus groups, interviews and request to send e-mail to students for focus group recruitment. Adjustment: Focus group recruitment message; timeline of data comparison in Canvas; scheduling meeting with primary users for 01/05 to share initial findings. UFE Process: UFE Process: Engaging primary users; checking fundamental issues; focusing intended process uses; theory of change work (Patton, 2012).
01/05/2018	In-person	Stephanie Roberts, Mari Xu, Jennifer Bohn, Benjamin Kozol	Initial sharing of the findings after the focus groups. Adjustment: Investigation of other avenues to recruit focus group participants; inclusion of more information on Canvas creation and implementation; identification of topics of political concern. UFE Process: Engaging primary users; gather data with on-going attention to use; simulate usage of findings (Patton 2012).
02/23/2018	Zoom conference	Stephanie Roberts, Mari Xu, Jennifer Bohn, Benjamin Kozol	Detailed sharing of the findings after analysis and discussion of initial recommendations. Adjustment: Further investigation of Canvas data to increase primary user confidence. Clarification on the type of recommendation list would be beneficial for primary users.

			UFE Process: Engaging primary users; simulate usage of findings (Patton 2012).
03/17/2018	Zoom conference	Stephanie Roberts, Mari Xu, Jennifer Bohn, Benjamin Kozol	Detailed sharing of the recommendations and feedback. Adjustment: Recommendations were fined-tuned to include any items whose implementation was already underway. UFE Process: Engaging primary users; simulate usage of findings and recommendations (Patton 2012).
03/20/2018	Zoom conference	Denise Cope	Detailed sharing of the process, findings and recommendations with the Director of the OIE. Adjustment: Addition of information to support increased staffing needs of the OIE. UFE Process: Engaging primary users; simulate usage of findings and recommendations (Patton 2012).
05/07/2018	In-person	Denise Cope, Stephanie Roberts	Presentation of the report and research paper to Higher Education committee and the OIE main stakeholders. Adjustment: Statements in the final report were adjusted according to political and organizational alignment requested by the Director of the OIE. UFE Process: Engaging primary users; simulate usage of findings and recommendations (Patton 2012).
06/07/2018	In-person	Denise Cope, Stephanie Roberts, Mari Xu, Jennifer Bohn, Benjamin Kozol	Presentation of the report and research paper to all OIE stakeholders. Adjustment: To be determined. UFE Process: Engaging primary users; simulate usage of findings and recommendations (Patton 2012).