

# Reflections from study abroad students to Japan post-reopening the borders: High school exchange student voices

国境開放後に来日した交換留学生の生活体験を振り返って  
— 高校生の声

John Andras Molnar

## **Abstract:**

Study abroad (SA) is a common way for students learning a L2 to expand their knowledge about their target language and other cultures. But has SA changed after the pandemic? This study examines one of the first groups of long-term high school SA exchange students to come to Japan after the reopening of the border after the spread of COVID-19. The present study investigates reflections of exchange students after the first month of their sojourn regarding several parts of their SA experience: a one-day educational excursion to a Japanese university, short-term student goals, and their high school life. Results show that reactions to the university excursion were extremely positive as it allowed the students to interact with new groups of people outside their high schools (e.g. university students), learn explicit communication skills (in class), and spend time with each-other. This experience paralleled objectives from their short-term goals of ‘making friends’ and ‘language learning’. Exchange student goals focused on their high school experience with the students indicating that they were seeking communication opportunities in-class and during open periods to develop relationships with Japanese high school students and language skills. No mention of discomfort or inconvenience due to COVID-19 were mentioned in the surveys. Implications are discussed at the end of the paper.

## **Key Words:**

Study Abroad, Second Language Learning, High School Exchange, Culture, Goal Setting

## **Introduction:**

For decades, study abroad (SA) has been a popular way for young people to travel and see the world. Previous research has found that SA can impact L2 proficiency (Freed, 1995), intercultural competence (Terzuolo, 2018), willingness to communicate (WTC) (Yashima, et al., 2004), and L2 confidence (Molnar, 2020). But with the advent of COVID-19, traditional face-to-face SA effectively stopped between 2020 and 2022. Swanson & Duncan (2021) raise the possibility that post-COVID SA could exist in a state of a “new normal” where “... uncertainty would be an inescapable aspect of pandemic life. From the beginning, though, we have viewed our new normal as temporary—a transition period to the *real* “new normal” that will crystallize after the COVID-19 pandemic recedes.” This suggests that SA will be in flux until a true end to the pandemic arrives, and the impact of that on SA students remains unknown.

In the case of Japan, while innovative solutions such as online study abroad programs have been offered as a substitute during the height of the pandemic, face-to-face SA has finally resumed (as of August, 2022 with relaxed border restrictions) where SA students are again able to arrive in Japan and experience school life and homestays. Research into the current form of SA and concerns of students and other stakeholders is critical at this time to uncover the “new normal”, and track how it progresses.

The current research investigates the first group of high school (HS) SA exchange students post-reopening the Japanese border after one month at the start of a year-long study abroad. The group included eleven HS SA students from North America and Europe. Reflections from the HS SA students are taken on a micro level after a one-day excursion to a Japanese university, and also on a macro level regarding their short-term goals and high school life. The research questions (RQs) for the present study are as follows:

RQ1: What are HS SA students’ reactions to attending a Japanese university?

RQ2: What are goals and objectives for HS SA students at the beginning of a one-year homestay in Japan?

RQ3: What is HS life like for SA students after the spread of COVID-19?

## **Review of Literature**

### **Benefits of a study abroad**

SA is a widely accepted as a highly desirable experience for students. It is an opportunity to not only to develop linguistic ability, but also additional skills such as cross-cultural understanding (e.g. intercultural competence) and affective skills (e.g. WTC). While SA is acknowledged as an idiosyncratic experience with gains not guaranteed (Segalowitz & Freed, 2004), many researchers have found that SA has advantages when compared to language-classroom only L2 development. SA students generally progress faster with spoken proficiency as compared to stay-at-home counterparts (Diaz-Campos, 2004; Freed, 1995), and can also have more gains with lexical and narrative development (Collentine, 2004; Lafford, 2006)

Outside the language domain, intercultural competence and WTC can also be enhanced during SA.

Intercultural competence, or “a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics, that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts” (J. M. Bennett, 2015, p. xxiii) can also facilitate communication. Using the Intercultural Development Inventory, Terzuolo (2018) looked at intercultural competency development among 173 students from the USA. He found that intercultural competence developed to a greater statistically significant degree among SA students compared to a control group.

WTC or “the intention to initiate communication, given a choice” (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrod, 2001, p. 369), is important during study abroad for making connections and L2 practice. Yashima & Tanaka (2001) found that students were more satisfied with their SA experience if they were able to communicate with locals and share their thoughts and feelings. Additional studies found that SA could have an impact on WTC. Survey results in Yashima & Zenuk-Nishide (2008) showed that students who did a SA had superior WTC scores, and Kang (2014) found that Korean university students were able to develop their WTC, speaking abilities, and participation in classroom interaction after an 8-week SA. Therefore, SA can impact many aspects of language development.

### **SA Skills and Support**

SA can also be a highly idiosyncratic experience (Kang, 2014; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004), as well as having emotional highs and lows at different times throughout the sojourn (Diao, et al., 2011). With training, it is hypothesized that students could overcome potential problems given the right skills (Izuma, 2019). Making local friends can also require time. Jin (2014) found that SA students tend to explore the new SA environment as a large group with other SA students at first, but slowly transition to making local friends and venturing out as individuals as they become more comfortable with the new environment. She also found that this transition is not universal among all students though, and that some SA students never feel comfortable leaving their comfort zone.

Many resources have been created to help students prepare for their SA experience. Paige et al., (2009) has extensive pre-, during- and post-SA awareness raising exercises that include the ‘Iceberg Model’ to have students realize that some aspects of culture are obvious on the surface of society (e.g. architecture, gestures) yet others parts of culture (e.g. religious beliefs or rules of politeness) are not readily visible yet critical knowledge. During a SA program in Jordan, Benlab et al. (2015) found that a technique providing small talk topics for SA students called ‘FORTE’ (small talk topics: family, occupation, recreation, travel, education) greatly enhanced students ability to interact with locals by structuring their talking with pre-determined topics. In another study, Izuma (2019) concluded that targeted TBLT speaking tasks based on student needs analyses have potential to improve SA student experiences.

## **The Study**

### **Participants and research context**

Participants in this study were 11 HS SA students studying at several high schools across an area of central Japan on a one-year study abroad sojourn. Their ages ranged from 15 to 18 years old, with a mean

age of 16.6 years old. In total, there were one gender-neutral, four male, and six female students from seven different countries: one in North American and six European. In one case, three participants attended the same high school, but otherwise each participant attended a separate high school. All the SA students were living with Japanese host families and belonged to a non-profit organization that oversaw the program, advising and assisting students with designated counselors and monthly orientations. All participants arrived in Japan in August, 2022 and were scheduled to finish in July 2023. The European participants had a variety of L1s, but could communicate in English with little issue (CEFR B1 or above). The North American student was a native English speaker. With regard to the target language, Japanese, most were beginners learning Hiragana and Katakana for the first time. Three participants had more advanced speaking skills, but their kanji knowledge was limited to a beginner level.

For the context of the first research question, the participants were asked about their perspectives on visiting a Japanese university in central Japan. This was a one-day educational excursion organized by the researcher and the non-profit host organization. At the university, the participants were accompanied by the researcher and four chaperones from the non-profit organization. They attended two classes, ate lunch in the cafeteria, and had a university student led campus tour. One of the classes was about modern Japanese culture with 24 university students, and the second was an English communication class with eleven university students. In the first class, the participants were assigned to groups of three or four students, and prompted to discuss topics such as stereotypes about their home countries and Japan, difficulties with small talk, and goals for their time in Japan. The university students shared their own thoughts and experiences on the subjects. For the second class, each participant was paired individually with a university student, and they discussed cultural differences between Japan and their home countries. Each class was 90 minutes, and all the students communicated using both Japanese and English.

The second and third research questions regarded the participants daily lives in Japan. The second RQ focused on short-term goals (approximately 1-month) for SA, and the third RQ focused on HS life. All participants had different contexts, but all participants attend traditional, 3 year-Japanese high schools. Regardless of age, some participants were placed as first years or second years at their high schools, and all began their schools mid-way through the Japanese academic year (August start). Some were placed in more English focused courses (i.e. English heavy course load), but some were placed in regular courses. All the participants joined afterschool club activities, for example volleyball and basketball. As for homestays, each situation was different. Some participants had host siblings, some did not. Each participant was living with separate Japanese host families that changed approximately every 3 to 4 months, so no two participants were in the same home.

## **Methodology**

A three-page questionnaire based on the research questions was developed for the purpose of this study. The breakdown of the number of questions and question types can be found in Table 1. A 6-point Likert scale was used for the quantitative questionnaire. The questions prompted the participants to rate their feelings about the university (section 1) and about their host family and school life (section 2). The

open-ended questions prompted the participants to explain a bit more about their feelings (e.g. when I went to the university, something I enjoyed was ...), goals for being in Japan, and their study abroad in general.

Table 1: *Questionnaire Format*

	Likert-scale questions	Open-ended questions	Narrative frame blanks
Part 1: University experience	3	3	N/A
Part 2: Goals and HS life	4	5	N/A
Part 3: An average day in your life	N/A	N/A	10

For section 3 of the questionnaire (see Table 1), narrative frames (Barkhuizen, 2014) were used to collect data about an average day in the participants' lives. Narrative frames are explained as the following:

A written story template consisting of a series of incomplete sentences and blank spaces of varying lengths. It is structured as a story in skeletal form. The aim is for participants to produce a coherent story by filling in the spaces according to their own experiences and their reflections on these" (Barkhuizen, 2011, p. 402).

This method was chosen to help guide the participants express their thoughts coherently about specific topics in leu of an interview. A complete version of the narrative frames used in the questionnaire is available in Appendix 1. In short, topics covered aspects of school they liked and disliked, aspects of how they spent their time and interacted with their host families.

## Procedure

The participants completed the survey four days after they visited the university in late September, 2022. The survey was administered to the participants with their consent and the approval of the overseeing non-profit organization. It was made clear to the participants that the survey was not mandatory, and they could skip questions if they did not feel comfortable answering them. The surveys were completed anonymously so that the data could not be tied to specific individuals.

After receiving the completed questionnaires, quantitative and qualitative analysis were completed on the data. Due to a small participant size, standard deviations of Likert scale responses were used to describe the student experience. For the qualitative data, the researcher synthesized the participant answers, and categorized them thematically.

## Results

The results are presented in three sections, representative of the different sections of the survey. The results section of this paper covers quantitative results and qualitative points of interest with general categorizations of the responses.

For the first section of the survey related to their "university experience", the results can be seen in Table 2. Question A3 had the lowest mean and highest standard deviation (SD) indicating higher variation among the scores, yet is still above the average (3.5) indicating an overall positive experience.

Table 2: *Quantitative Results for 'University Experience' Section*

Survey prompt (Likert-scale)	Mean (Max: 6.00)	SD
A1. I had a good experience at the university.	5.55	0.52
A2. I enjoyed my time at the university.	5.64	0.67
A3. I would like to go to the university again.	4.82	1.54

Additionally, there were three open-response questions. Three of the questions are displayed in Table 3. The responses were summarized and categorized by the researcher into general categories. Please note that not every open-ended question had 11 responses (the total number of participants). Some responses were deemed unrelated or were left intentionally blank by the participants. Additionally, some participants had multiple answers to a question.

Table 3: *Qualitative Open-ended Results for 'University Experience' Section*

Survey prompt (Open-ended questions)	times mentioned
<b>A4. When I went to the university, something I learned was ...</b>	
small/talk and conversation skills	2
FORTE (specific skill mentioned)	2
size and convenience of Japanese university campus	1
Japanese culture	1
blank	3
<b>A5. When I went to the university, something I enjoyed was ...</b>	
time with university students	5
meeting new people	2
cafeteria	2
meeting the other high school exchange students	1
unrelated	1
<b>A6. When I was at the university, something I didn't like was...</b>	
cafeteria food	2
school layout ... finding a bathroom	1
long lesson	1
blank	5

The second section of the survey focused on the participants' life in Japan. Questions were related to short-term goals and perceptions of 'difficulty' and 'ease'. The quantitative survey prompts and results (means and SD) can be seen in Table 4. Question B2 became a point of interest in this research as the lowest mean score.

Table 4: *Quantitative Results for 'First Month in Japan' Section*

Survey prompt	Mean (Max: 6.00)	SD
B1. I am happy with my host family.	5.55	0.82
B2. I am happy with my language ability.	3.27	1.27
B3. I am happy with my school life.	4.64	0.92
B4. I am happy to be in Japan.	5.64	0.67

The responses to the qualitative open-ended survey questions can be found in Table 5. Similar to Table 3, some responses were listed as “I don't know” or left intentionally blank by the participants. The responses to the questions were summarized and categorized by the researcher into general topics.

Table 5: *Qualitative Results for ‘First Month in Japan’ Section*

Survey prompt (Open-ended questions)	times mentioned
<b>B5. What do you want to be able to do by the end of the month (October)?</b>	
make friends at school	5
travel	3
language skills	3
food	1
become braver	1
I don't know	1
<b>B6. What was something difficult for you recently? Something I found difficult was...</b>	
getting used to school	4
sleep	3
host family	2
personal life	2
anxiety (making mistakes)	1
blank	1
<b>B7. What was something easy for you recently? Something I found easy was...</b>	
school	4
language	3
host family integration	2
adapting to life in Japan	2
food	1
blank	1

Finally, section 3 was the narrative frames section. The current study will focused on ‘school life’ as an area of inquiry from the narrative frames section. Each prompt had a primary focus, plus ‘because’ follow-up to invite more explanation to the prompt. General categories related to the primary focus prompt can be found in Table 6.

Table 6: *Narrative Frame Results About ‘School Life’*

Narrative Frames	times mentioned
<b>C1. During the school day, something I <u>don't</u> look forward to is ...</b>	
class	8
exams	1
break time and free time	1
unrelated	1
<b>C2. During the school day, something I <u>look forward to</u> is ...</b>	
class	5
lunch	4
after school sports	2

## Discussion

### RQ1: What are HS SA students' reactions to attending a Japanese university?

The responses to the survey displayed in Table 1 suggest that the participants enjoyed their time at the university. Responses to A1 regarding a good experience at the university and A2 related to enjoying time at the university both had high mean scores (A1: 5.55; A2: 5.64) with small SDs. A3 is of interest (I would like to go to the university again.) because the mean score was lower than A1 and A2 at 4.82, though it was still above average. One explanation for this lower number could be in an unprompted note on the side of the paper survey written by a participant. The participant that responded the lowest on the question with a response of 2 out of 6 wrote, "It isn't that I didn't like it, I just don't need to go back." This implies that one time was enough, and could have been the opinion of some other participants too.

Regarding what participants learned at the university (A4), four participants had "communication related" responses. This connects to their "goals and objectives" as many participants were interested in making friends at their high schools. Two participants mentioned "FORTE" (Benlab et al., 2015) specifically as a guide to make small talk (this was introduced as a communication skill during the Japanese culture class by the researcher). This could mean that they are seeking L2 communication techniques and could therefore benefit from targeted L2 instruction (Izuma, 2019) to engage with people around them in their L2, and students are open to or actively seeking guidance.

This point also connects with how participants answered A5 (what they enjoyed at the university). Participants indicated that they enjoyed their time with Japanese students (5 participants) and 'meeting new people' (2) the most. Likely, as newly arrived HS students, they are eager to practice and improve their ability to integrate and understand their new society. Also, one interesting response 'meeting the other HS exchange students' indicates that it was a relief to have face time with other people who could understand their experience and a more comfortable lingua franca (English). This is consistent with research by Jin (2014), where she concluded that there are levels of societal integration that SA students go through over their sojourn, and having close access to peers can be supportive. Jin (2014) also concluded that with specific knowledge and tools, it is likely that well-prepared students will integrate faster into the community.

Finally, in A6 (what participants didn't like about the university experience), five blank answers is telling that overall the experience was enjoyable. The most mentioned negative experience was about the cafeteria food (2 participants), but this seems minor to the overall objectives of the day. Therefore, given the responses in this section, it is reasonable to deduce that university visits are positive and meaningful experiences for new HS SA students. They seemed to have no issue communicating with university students, and the experience could provide knowledge about useful skills to help them better integrate in their HSs and host families, and aid their SA.



RQ2: What are goals and objectives for HS SA students at the beginning of a one-year homestay in Japan?

The two top goals for participants during their first month of SA were ‘making friends at school’ (5 participants) and ‘language skills’ (3 participants). This objective was most clearly stated in an open-ended response question by S7: “I want to speak some easy Japanese sentences and I want to go out with my friends.” Both ‘making friends’ and ‘language skills’ are intertwined as L2 skills are the means by which participants would go about making friends. With these stated goals, support for communication could help them make progress toward WTC and learning intercultural skills.

In a follow-up question asking how the participants intended to go about fulfilling their goal, some interesting variation arose. Among the 5 participants that mentioned ‘making friends at school’ as their main objective, two participants (S3, S7) mentioned ‘study’ (academic), S1 mentioned ‘talking’ (interaction) as a means, S2 mentioned ‘stepping out of my comfort zone’ (confidence; WTC), and S11 mentioned ‘the gym’ (situational). The concept of making friends and language development are in line with traditional SA objectives and expected outcome of SA such as improved language skills (Freed, 1995) and intercultural competence (Terzuolo, 2018). Yet, these different, idiosyncratic means of achieving the same goal among so few participants was unexpected. This shows that different students react differently to their surroundings and challenges, and that they need space and guidance to find a means of integration best suited for them.

The idea of confidence voiced by S2 is in line with Yashima & Zenuk-Nishide’s (2008) WTC research, and was voiced by an additional participant as well. S9’s response to the question about short-term goals was “I would like to become more brave and positive in general.” Though that statement likely related in a broader sense to the SA environment as a whole (e.g. new food, new places, new culture, high school, host family), the sentence is directly related to ‘confidence’. Similar to S2 mentioning stepping out of their comfort zone by making friends, S9 said they plan to “challenge myself, ask more questions and ask for help.” Both these participants echo Yashima & Zenuk-Nishide’s (2008) that SA students can be apprehensive at the start of their sojourn. Also, S2 mentioned separately in another question that something difficult for them was “making a lot of mistakes and feeling guilty; getting used to school.” In the cases of S2 and S9, both seem to have a healthy outlook and intention to overcome their sense of anxiety, yet in S2’s case at least, additional scaffolding and support would help them overcome their anxiety.

RQ3: What is HS life like for SA students after the spread of COVID-19?

To start, COVID-19 was not mentioned once in the survey. Though the researcher anticipated some commentary about Japan’s relatively strict mask policy (must wear masks in-doors), it is telling that this was not mentioned. It can be concluded that COVID-19 measures are either taken as a normal part of life, or accepted as a cost of SA in Japan.

Quite interestingly, the part of school life that participants most and least looked forward to was class. Talking first about what aspects of class participants didn’t like, the basic answer was that participants

found the classes boring for multiple reasons. One reason was linguistic as some classes with high linguistic need (Physics and Biology) were likely difficult for the participants to understand (e.g. difficult vocabulary and written characters). Other participants had little interest in the classes, and also found them mentally exhausting. Likely the lecture-based class format in Japan where students generally do not ask questions was also different from what many Western students were used to. One class looked forward to by participants was English though, as they found they could understand it, could participate, and had a chance to interact with their classmates.

P.E. class was a point of contention. On one hand, two participants did not look forward to P.E. mentioning that it was boring and repetitious. On the other hand, four participants greatly looked forward to P.E. because they could “perform like I used to at home” and could have a chance to interact with other students. P.E. is of course not a favorite subject of every student, but it is an opportunity for participants to perform normally outside the constraints of language and supplies chances for friend making and interaction.

Besides class and after school sports (presumably like P.E., another chance for interaction and performance as they did in their home country), ‘lunch’ was also something participants looked forward to. Reasons for this were that they could interact with other students, and that they could enjoy the bento box packed by their host family. As an unstructured period of time, and considering their objectives to make friends, this makes sense that they were seeking out times in their schedule to talk. S2, who mentioned feeling guilty about making mistakes in the previous section, said break time was not appealing because “I find existing without an objective tiring.” Some training could benefit all the SA students with how to target and use their time effectively.

Considering that participants reported to most enjoy periods of interaction, tried to seek opportunities to make friends, and wanted to avoid courses they do not understand, training on how to best use class and break time could be meaningful for them. If HSs are unable to accommodate schedules that are more hands-on class focused (P.E., cooking, art) for the SA students, targeted Japanese practice assignments (something akin to TBLT as suggested by Izuma, 2019) could help them to focus their free time. With assigned tasks at their L2 level (e.g. interviews of classmates or team captains, data collection surveys), they could potentially progress faster. This could also potentially alleviate concerns and anxiety of students like S2 who crave more direction.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the HS SA experience seems to be unaffected by COVID-19, and what would be expected from a normal pre-COVID SA seems to be the same post-COVID. A ‘new normal’ may be more applicable to university SA than HS.

Regarding RQ1, visiting the university was a positive experience for the HS SA students, and had potential to serve their SA goals. It exposed them to a side of culture different than what they would experience normally as HS students, but more importantly, it gave them a chance to interact with a fresh

group of people in the target L2 (e.g. people outside their host families and high schools). Many participants seemed genuinely happy to meet new people, and L2 development speaking, this may have been liberating as it gave them a chance to succeed (and fail) with reduced anxiety as it was a one-off experience. Moreover, in the communication classes, the HS exchange students were exposed to language skills (such as FORTE) which they seemed to crave as many were searching for ways to integrate into their HSs and make new friends. Training or at the least awareness raising tools could therefore be beneficial to HS SA students to help scaffold their L2 learning.

In addition to chances for L2 practice and skill acquisition, the university also provided a chance for the HS students to come together as a group and share their exchange experiences. As Jin (2014) implies, group sessions are important especially at the beginning of a SA. As students are generally on their own at different high schools, this opportunity was a chance for anxiety release and sharing personal experiences with other peers their age who could fully understand what they are going through.

Finally, more scaffolding tasks at school and training would benefit the SA experience. For RQ2, the participants indicated that their short-term goal was to make friends, so facilitating this is key. HSs could help SA students by giving them language focused tasks (Izumi, 2019) to help them make effective use of open periods. Some students did seem to have anxiety about school life, so structure could help them. Less structured classes (e.g. PE) and lunch time were indicated as times participants looked forward to in RQ3, and therefore these times should be maximized. As the participants seemed stifled by more linguistically heavy classes (e.g. science), developing schedules with more chances to interact with peers would be beneficial.

The limitations of the present research include the sample size and time length. More longitudinal data points on how HS SA students naturally develop their confidence and communication skills over time would be worthwhile to investigate. Follow-up interviews to elaborate more on participant experience would also greatly supplement the narrative frames.

## References

- Barkhuizen, G. (2011). Narrative Knowledgeing in *TESOL*. *TESOL Quarterly*, 45(3), 391-414. <https://doi.org/10.5054/tq.2011.261888>
- Barkhuizen, G. (2014). Narrative research in language teaching and learning. *Language Teaching*, 47(4), 450-466. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444814000172>
- Benlap, R. K., Bown, J., Dean, E., Dewey, D., Schouten, L., Smith, A., ... Smith, R. (2015). Project Perseverance and Arabic Study Abroad. *Al-'Arabiyya: Journal of the American Association of Teachers of Arabic*, 48, 1-21.
- Bennett, J. M. (2015). Introduction. In J. M. Bennett (Ed.). *The sage encyclopedia of intercultural competence* (pp. xxiii-xxvii). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Collentine, J. (2004). The effects of learning contexts on morphosyntactic and lexical development. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 26(02). <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0272263104262040>

- Díaz-Campos, M. (2004). Context of learning in the acquisition of Spanish second language phonology. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 26(02). <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0272263104262052>
- Diao, W., Freed, B., & Smith, L. (2011). Confirmed Beliefs or False Assumptions? A Study of Home Stay Experiences in the French Study Abroad Context. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 21(1), 109-142. <https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v21i1.306>
- Freed, B. F. (1995). What makes us think that students who study abroad become Fluent? In B. F. Freed (Ed.). *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 123-148). Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Iizuka, T. (2019). Task-based needs analysis: Identifying communicative needs for study abroad students in Japan. *System*, 80, 134-142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2018.11.005>
- Jin, L. (2014). Peer/Group interaction in a mandarin Chinese study abroad context. In Z. -H. Han (Ed.) *Studies in Second Language Acquisition of Chinese* (pp. 57-79). Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Kang, D.-M. (2014). The effects of study-abroad experiences on EFL learners' willingness to communicate, speaking abilities, and participation in classroom interaction. *System*, 42, 319-332. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2013.12.025>
- Lafford, B. (2006). The Effects of Study Abroad vs. Classroom Contexts on Spanish SLA: Old Assumptions, New Insights and Future Research Directions. In C. Klee & T. Face (Eds.) *Selected Proceedings of the 7th Conference on the Acquisition of Spanish and Portuguese as First and Second Languages* (pp. 1-25). Somerville: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- MacIntyre, P. D., Baker, S. C., Clément, R., & Conrod, S. (2001). Willingness to communicate, social support, and language-learning orientation of immersion students. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 23(3), 369-388. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0272263101003035>
- Molnar, J.A. (2020). Impact of a Short Foreign Sojourn on Willingness to Communicate and Confidence of Japanese University Students. *金城学院大学論集. 人文科学編*, 17(1), 57-66.
- Paige, R. M., Cohen, A., Kappler, B., Chi, J., and Lassegard, J. (2009). *Maximizing study abroad: A student's guide to strategies for language and culture learning and use*. Minneapolis: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota.
- Segalowitz, N., & Freed, B. F. (2004). Context, contact, and cognition in oral fluency acquisition: Learning Spanish in at home and study abroad contexts. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 26(02). <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0272263104262027>
- Swanson, N. W. & Duncan, N. T. (2019). Understanding the "New Normal": The internationalization of education and study abroad during the COVID-19 era. *Susan Bulkeley Butler Center for Leadership Excellence and ADVANCE Purdue Center for Faculty Success Working Paper Series 4(1) Special Issue*: 33-55.
- Terzuolo, E. R. (2018). Intercultural development in study abroad: Influence of student and program characteristics. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 65, 86-95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2018.05.001>
- Yashima, T., & Tanaka, T. (2001). Roles of Social Support and Social Skills in the Intercultural Adjustment

of Japanese Adolescent Sojourners in the USA. *Psychological Reports*, 88(3), 1201-1210. <https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.2001.88.3c.1201>

Yashima, T., Zenuk-Nishide, L., & Shimizu, K. (2004). The Influence of Attitudes and Affect on Willingness to Communicate and Second Language Communication. *Language Learning*, 54(1), 119-152. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2004.00250.x>

Yashima, T., & Zenuk-Nishide, L. (2008). The impact of learning contexts on proficiency, attitudes, and L2 communication: Creating an imagined international community. *System*, 36(4), 566-585. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2008.03.006>

## Appendix 1: Narrative frame portion of questionnaire

### An average day in your life

Please complete the open spaces. You can leave the space blank if you like, but try to answer.

When I wake up in the morning on a school day (Mon.-Fri), the first thing I do is

\_\_\_\_\_ . After I get to school, the first thing I do is

\_\_\_\_\_ .

During the school day, something I don't look forward to is \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_ . During the school

day, something I look forward to is \_\_\_\_\_ because

\_\_\_\_\_ .

When I come home to my host family, I like to \_\_\_\_\_ .

If I don't understand something my host family says to me I \_\_\_\_\_ .

To relax at my host family, \_\_\_\_\_ .

Something I do to have a good relationship with my host family is \_\_\_\_\_ .

Thank you very much!

Do you have any additional comments or something you want to share?

\_\_\_\_\_