Qualitative and Quantitative Results from Study-Abroad Surveys

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Abstract

The Department of Global English conducts a study abroad program which is compulsory for students. Building on prior research, three surveys were administered to students in an attempt to assess the extent to which goals were achieved, and to identify weaknesses in the program. The three surveys were administered: one prior to departure, another immediately after the stay abroad, and a final one some months after returning. The results indicate a high level of satisfaction, and although there were some negative responses, they were not clearly attributable to any individual factors, suggesting that they represent stray outcomes rather than structural weaknesses. One identifiable trend is that academic and communicative outcomes appear to depend on student willingness to adapt to foreign cultures.

Introduction

Since its inception in 2007, the Department of Global English at Aichi Gakuin University has positioned its Study Abroad Program to be a distinctive and integral element of its four-year curriculum. The program, a complex of courses and activities centered on students’ three-week stay in Western Australia, has offered the authors and their colleagues ample research opportunities, all with the goal of improving the program for future participants. The following report will present findings related to surveys administered to participants in the program both before and after their time in Australia.

One of the distinctive features of the program is that it is compulsory: students must complete it with a passing grade in order to graduate. The program begins in the spring semester of each student’s second year. (The majority of participants are second-year students. Because they may, for a variety of reasons, opt out of participating in their second year, however, the fact that the program is compulsory means that a number of students from higher years participate each year.) The spring semester portion of the course, called Study Abroad, is a 15-week course taught for 90 minutes each week. During the following summer vacation, two roughly equal
groups of students attend classes at the University of Western Australia’s Centre for English Language Teaching (CELT) in Perth, Western Australia. While in Australia, students stay with homestay families. With very few exceptions, each homestay family has accepted a single student for the entire length of their stay. Evaluations for both the spring semester course in Japan and the CELT classes in Australia are done together and a single grade is issued for Study Abroad. Students earn four academic credits upon its successful completion.

Previous research concerns by the authors have focused on practical and pedagogical factors regarding the Study Abroad Program. Overarching goals of this research have been to pinpoint effective practices, recognize and anticipate problems in order to ensure that they don’t occur in subsequent years and assess activity choices and instruction with an eye to improving their overall effectiveness. For example, the results of a post-program survey (reported in Nakamura, Mason, Michizoe, & Rohe, 2013) suggested that while the program would benefit from closer coordination between instructors, the program nonetheless provided students with “significant experiences in both language learning and cross-cultural understanding.”

The research presented here focuses on the results of three surveys administered to participants in the Study Abroad Program at three different times before and after their time abroad. This is a descriptive study of the data garnered from these surveys. The first survey (referred to here as the “pre-departure survey”, reproduced in Appendix 1) was administered to students after the spring semester course had finished but prior to their departure for Australia. It presented them with open questions designed to elicit responses regarding their own perceived preparedness for the forthcoming trip. The subsequent surveys were, for the most part, the same survey (with minor adjustments) administered twice after leaving Australia: once immediately after leaving (referred to here as the “post-program survey”, reproduced in Appendix 2), while students’ impressions were assumed still to be fresh, and then again a number of months after the Study Abroad Program had finished (referred to here as the “delayed post-program survey”), when it could be assumed that students had had a sufficient amount of time to reflect on their experience. The second two surveys presented students with a number of statements designed to elicit Likert-scale responses in which they could evaluate their own development, within a number of variables, since studying abroad. The statements were designed to be bundled into larger evaluative groupings related to perceived development in those variables, namely development of cross-cultural awareness, academic ability, interpersonal communication skills, awareness of cultural origins, judgment and decision-making skills and international perspective.

Because the pre-program survey and the two post-program surveys are significantly different in design, purpose and scope, they will be analyzed separately.

After a brief review of pertinent literature regarding research related to studying abroad, this
paper will present an analysis and discussion of data generated from the three surveys introduced above. From that data the authors would like to extrapolate a number of conjectures and conclusions regarding students’ development, motivations and possible academic achievement after they have completed the Study Abroad Program and suggest a path forward for the program in the future.

**Literature review**

The case for the study abroad experience as a part of language education in Japanese universities has been made quite emphatically. It has been an integral part of the Japanese government’s attempts to encourage “internationalization” since the beginning of the Meiji Period – inevitably, since so much of the Japanese discourse of internationalization is bound up with trailblazers such as Iwakura (Nish, 1998). Today, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology itself presents a history of study abroad, with data on the numbers going to which countries (MEXT). On a more practical level, research such as that by Asaoka and Yano (2009) has explored characteristics of programs, attitudes to them, and means by which they can be made more effective, all based on a certainty that such programs are necessary, beneficial, and must be promoted. This work builds on the corpus of research since the 1960s establishing a definite link between studying abroad and target language proficiency (Carroll, 1967; Willis, Doble, Sankarayya, & Smithers, 1977; Coleman, Grotjahn, Klein-Braley, & Raatz, 1994).

Japan’s study abroad has its own distinctive features while nevertheless fitting into the global pattern of international/intercultural educational exchange. One key feature of most programs, however, which may derive from the historical background noted above, is that studying abroad has long been seen in Japan as an élite privilege. While the drastic reduction in cost has opened up studying abroad as a possibility for much of the population, the dominant approach is nevertheless still that it is a luxury available to those who prove themselves worthy of it. Another distinguishing characteristic of Japanese study abroad programs is the emphasis on safety. Perhaps because of the perceived gap between the level of safety in Japan and that abroad, Japanese students are given a high level of protection – in some cases almost reaching the level of insulation – from the target culture.

Inevitably, the bulk of the academic literature on study abroad programs comprises specific case studies, and those studies which do take a more overarching view of the topic are frequently practical in nature. An interesting point of departure is the mammoth *Maximizing Study Abroad* set of guides produced by the University of Minnesota (Cohen, et al., 2005). The utility of this set for the purposes of the project presented here has its limits, since it is designed for US students going to other countries. It nevertheless offers a useful, admirably comprehensive, basis for
comparison. The guide’s philosophy extends far beyond improving the linguistic competence of students:

We believe that teaching students strategies for language culture learning and use will provide them with skills that will help them be better world citizens – no matter where they go in their lives. (Cohen, et al., 2005)

Pedagogically, the guide has separate sections on language learning and culture learning, which it then synthesizes with a section on language and culture, preceded by some rumination on the validity of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Whorf, 1956). In this way it addresses the topic of sociolinguistic competence, as defined by Canale and Swain (1980). The guide’s very existence testifies to the importance its authors place on pre-departure preparation. Indeed, the guide repeatedly refers to students choosing to study abroad, this being the desired outcome of the course activities provided. In other words, although the guide is ostensibly aimed at preparing students to study in other countries, it may be equally accurate to suggest that it is pitched as a tool for producing a language course with the goal of persuading students to study abroad.

In this respect, the guide highlights one of the distinctive features of the present study. While most studying abroad undertaken by Japanese university students is an essentially voluntary activity, akin to that envisaged by the Maximizing Study Abroad guide authors, the Department of Global English study abroad program is compulsory. Naturally, there is an element of choice, in that students have chosen to enter the department, knowing that the study abroad program is a pre-requisite for graduation. Nevertheless, that is a choice at some remove: when it comes to participation in the program, there is no screening based on willingness or ability; all must go. In this respect, the program more closely resembles the approach taken by university language courses in Europe, where a period spent in a country where the target language is natively spoken is expected (Aspinall, 2012). On the other hand, the European approach works more often at the individual level of the student; the “group program” approach favored in Japan derives from the American model championed by the Maximizing Study Abroad guide (Coleman J. A., 1997).

The overwhelming majority of the cases reported in the literature on study abroad programs from Japanese universities are based on voluntary programs. Cox (1993) offers a very detailed account of a survey of student reactions to a study abroad program which resembles that of Aichi Gakuin University’s Department of Global English; the difference is that it is based on voluntary participation. Her survey offered inspiration for the present study, not least in her recognition that the survey should have been conducted prior to participation as well as after.

Nakayama, Sixian and Mann (2013) report on a program which also resembles that of the Department of Global English: the 24 students were mainly second-years, from a university in the same region of Japan as Aichi Gakuin University. The course attended ran for six weeks...
rather than three, and was in the UK rather than Australia, but these are relatively minor differences: more significant was the fact that the reported program was voluntary, rather than being an integral part of a degree course. Nakayama et al. argue “that most studies in OSP [overseas short programs] do not report tangible follow-up beyond limited assessment.” Even in the program they report, one problem arises from the lack of follow-up offered to students who had participated in the OSP. On their return they rejoined classes with students who had not gone abroad, and were both embarrassed to display what they had learned, and unable to build on it as they wished. (Nakayama, Sixian, & Mann, 2013, p. 24)

The present study represents an attempt to obtain a deeper insight into the functioning and value of the Department of Global English OSP through extensive follow-up. The above reported case suggests that one major advantage of this program is that because all students participate, there is nothing preventing the kind of OSP-specific follow-up desired by the OSP participant.

Izawa has reported on programs similar to those discussed above (1998), and has also explored the field in theory and practice. He has explored how pedagogic concerns impact on the experience in the form of objectives and instructional methods (1995), and constructed a model of the pattern of adjustment for students on such programs (1995). He observes that short programs “are considered, by international educators, generally, not to be so conducive to a great impact on personal development and intercultural learning in the students as compared with the generally fruitful outcomes found in sojourners staying abroad for more than six months.” (1994) But he qualifies this with the observation that this may not be the case when the short program is supported with extensive preparation and follow-up. It is also worth noting again that these comments apply to voluntary programs. In the case of the Department of Global English program, since it is compulsory, its nature is drastically altered from being a short, unconnected experience, to a central, guiding hub.

Research has also addressed the issue of student residence during their stay abroad. Even though it involves a large number of students (over 100), the present program places all participants in homestay accommodation. There have been mixed results regarding the benefits of homestay as against dormitory accommodation. Rivers (1998) suggested that language proficiency made greater leaps when students stayed in dormitories. On the other hand, it should be noted that this was in a situation when students were sharing with students from other countries, and thus in an immersive environment, as against staying with a predominantly same-language group. Moreover other studies have explored benefits of homestay extending beyond the linguistic, and into the realm of personal motivation (Stitsworth & Sugiyama, 1990; Ronson, 1998; Wilkinson, 1998). In particular, Tenhoff (2004) used journal entries completed by sojourning students to explore their areas of concern, and how these feelings changed over the
course of the experience: homestays were a major source of comments. Interestingly, Tenhoff discovered that while negative and positive comments were evenly matched in the early part of the homestay, by the end they had become predominantly positive. This suggests that the homestay experience transforms in a highly productive way during the course of the study abroad experience.

Method (Pre-Departure Survey)

Subjects
Ninety-one English majors participated in this survey. All had finished the compulsory 15-week Study Abroad preparatory course and were anticipating their stay in Australia.

Materials
The complete survey can be seen in Appendix 1. The survey consisted of 11 questions, four closed (Q1, 2, 3, 5) and seven open (Q4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11), all of which were written in Japanese. Questions were designed to elicit from students responses regarding their perceptions about: their own development over the previous 15 weeks, their preparedness, their personal objectives and expectations for the program in Australia, and their anxieties related to their impending stay. The survey further queried students about their knowledge of Australia and its culture, their own perceptions as to the meaning of cross-cultural understanding and their personal objectives toward experiencing foreign culture in Australia. (For the sake of conciseness in this paper, some questions are excluded from the following survey analysis.)

Procedure
A pre-departure survey was conducted at the mid-point of the Study Abroad Program. In other words, students had completed the 15-week preparatory course in Japan but had not yet been to Australia. Students were given sufficient time to complete the survey and encouraged to answer open questions fully and honestly.

Data analysis (Pre-Departure Survey)

Q1: As compared with the beginning of the spring semester, has your understanding of Australia improved through the pre-program study during the spring semester?

Results: Out of 91 papers completed by the students, 85 answered yes, and six answered no. This indicates that most students felt they had deepened their knowledge of Australia in some way or other during the spring semester. Specifically, students’ answers suggested that they had increased their geographical knowledge of Australia and Perth, as well as its sightseeing
Qualitative and Quantitative Results from Study-Abroad Surveys (Nakamura, Michizoe, Mason, Rohe)

spots, culture, customs, daily lifestyle, Australian English, Australian climate, in addition to sociopolitical and environmental realities that influence these factors, such as immigration practices and the shortage of water.

Q2: Has your understanding of different cultures improved?

Results: Seventy-five answered “yes” and 16 answered “no”. Most answers were identical to the answers given in Q1. A number of students mentioned Australia’s multiracial demographic, manners, and differences in way of thinking.

Q3: Have you done any preparatory research on your excursion project site?

Results: This question refers to an assignment requiring students to plan and go on a group excursion to a venue in or around Perth. Out of 91 students, 56 answered positively, while 31 answered that they had not done any preparatory research for their excursion project.

Q4: Where have you decided to go on your excursion project?

Results: Fifteen students selected Caversham Wildlife Park and 12, Perth Zoo, indicating that venues where students felt they could experience Australian wildlife were prominent. Seven students selected Fremantle Prison.

Q5: What do you plan to achieve during the study abroad program?

Results: As to specific goals for this program, most of the students mentioned brushing up their English ability (especially their speaking ability and communication in daily conversation) and a desire for a deeper understanding of different cultures. One student replied he/she would like to learn more about Australian nature and history.

Q6: What do you expect from the classes at CELT?

Results: Many students said that they would like to improve their English through the program at the CELT, with some indicating that they expected a different classroom style or curriculum from that of the current curriculum. This perhaps suggests that students felt that different teachers may give different lessons and that the change in the classroom environment between Japan and Australia would influence the overall effectiveness of the class.

Q8 and Q9: What images do you have of your host family and what do you expect from them?

Results: While some students may have had an image of a strict Australian family, most stated that they imagined kind and warm-hearted host mothers or fathers. Furthermore, they
indicated that they expected to have a number of opportunities for communicating with them while having a chance to experience daily Australian life and customs.

Q10: *What do you mean by cross-cultural understanding?*

Results: While some students mentioned that it means simply experiencing different cultures, others referred the perception that cross-cultural understanding meant understanding and mutually respecting the differences in cultures and customs between two countries. Many students have diverse views about this. One student mentioned that we should understand that our own culture is not always correct. Some placed importance on accepting foreign cultural values.

Q11: *Free description of worries and concerns*

Results: Some students expressed their concern about living with a host family, wondering whether they could communicate well in English, or whether food would be acceptable, etc. Some worried about restrictions on shower time. It is interesting to note that one student expressed his/her hope to visit Australia alone, not as a member of a group participating in a so-called “school excursion.” A few expressed dissatisfaction in the delay in knowing their host family’s name. It was requested that this information be provided earlier.

**Discussion (Pre-Departure Survey)**

From the survey above, we may conclude the following:

1. Pre-program study during the spring semester may not have attained the intended results; student awareness of experiencing different cultures remains superficial in the sense that their awareness tends to focus more on climate, water, and other daily concerns, than on deepened knowledge of cultural differences.

2. More time may be needed for them to do the preparatory research on their project site. What to explore at the project site may not be clear for many students.

3. Not a few students are worried whether their English is enough to spend days with host families. This may be especially true with lower ability students. But going together with lots of students may be a soothing factor, reducing their worries when they can share information with other students in Japanese, though this aspect is not specifically mentioned in their reply.

**Method (Post-Program and Delayed Post-Program Survey)**

**Subjects**
The survey was administered to students from the same group that participated in the pre-
Qualitative and Quantitative Results from Study-Abroad Surveys (Nakamura, Michizoe, Mason, Rohe)

departure survey, although for a number of reasons the same number of students did not participate in the post-program survey and the delayed post-program survey. Groupings reflect the division of students into two roughly equal groups that went to Australia: Group 1 in early August and Group 2 in late August and early September. Out of 99 students (Group 1: 47, Group 2: 52) to whom a questionnaire was administered, 73 effective responses were collected (effective response rate: 73.7%).

Materials
The complete survey can be seen in Appendix 2. It consists of two preliminary bio-data questions regarding recent test results (A) and prior experience abroad (B). These questions are followed by (C) 44 closed questions allowing students four possible Likert-scale responses (Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Agree = 3; Strongly Agree = 4). A final open question allowed students to comment freely about the program and their experiences participating in it. The 44 Likert-scale questions were directly modeled after a similar survey conducted for Soai University by Cox (1993).

IBM SPSS ver. 18 was used for this study. First, basic descriptive statistics of each variable were identified (see Table 1, below). The distributions of each variable grouping are shown. Then, the inter-rater reliability test was conducted to confirm the validity of the responses. Finally, an inter-variable correlation test was implemented to confirm which variable grouping results are mutually related.

Procedure
The post-program survey was administered to students participating in the 2013 program while they were flying back home from Perth, by the chaperons who accompanied them. The delayed post-program survey was administered to the same students three months later in their Oral Communication class. The two surveys were essentially the same with the exception that one question (Q22) was excluded from the post-program survey because it queried students on their experience after returning from their stay.

During the past 6-year history of the department’s Study Abroad Program, substantial input concerning the overall quality of the program, the level of satisfaction felt by the participants, possible effect on subsequent academic performance, etc. has been accumulated among the teachers who have chaperoned students during those years. We expect that the 2013 participants will have endorsed the interim assessment drawn in Nakamura et al. (2013) which concludes that

[T]he program provides many students with significant experiences in both language learning and cross-cultural understanding. Moreover, these experiences are distributed
across ability levels. In other words, the program is as beneficial for students of low
language levels as it is for those of greater ability. (p. 25)

Hence, our research purposes are as follows: We would like to understand how students’ degree of
cross-cultural awareness, awareness of cultural origins, interpersonal communication skills,
personal growth/judgment and decision-making skills developed during the program will affect
academic achievement. Moreover, we would like to consider how negative emotional responses
developed during the program as well whether an ethnocentric bias could be observed.

**Data analysis (Post-program / Delayed Post-Program surveys)**

*Post-Program Survey: Qualitative data*

The first post-program survey was conducted on board the plane back from Perth to Japan. The results should reflect the immediate impressions they had from their three-week stay in Perth. This qualitative assessment is made solely from the comments made on the survey sheet, since the comments should express their honest feelings about their recent experience, including English learning at CELT, living with the host family and interacting with different cultures in general.

Three students mentioned that school classes were boring and one mentioned that study at CELT needed improvement. It is interesting to note that these comments were made by those with lower TOEIC scores. Another student with a higher TOEIC score expressed the wish that he/she could stay longer to study for six months or a year, with financial support available to him/her in the same way as that offered by a neighboring university, allowing graduation within four years.

As for living with a host family, student responses were mostly favorable, except one student who would have preferred to stay in a dormitory, and another student who “wanted to have a native host family” (presumably of white European origin rather than an indigenous or recent immigrant household). Students with lower TOEIC scores seemed to have been more shocked by their insufficient level of English communicative ability than those with higher scores. They also initially had fears about staying with a host family as they feared being forced to speak and listen in English with their host family. They had difficulty during the first few days or so. By the end of the third week, however, with the help of their host families, many of their worries had gone. As a whole, the three week stay was regarded as appropriate or even a little short. One student mentioned difficulty in speaking with Australians without understanding their culture and customs. This student said that despite the difficulty, trying hard to communicate finally made both sides understand each other.

The presence of foreign students in the same family led to one student feeling strongly that
Qualitative and Quantitative Results from Study-Abroad Surveys (Nakamura, Michizoe, Mason, Rohe)

he/she needed to study English further as he/she found those students from China or Brazil spoke English fluently. One student said that he/she could make friends with his/her AGU classmates as he/she could meet with them almost every day.

General findings from the first post-program survey can be summarized as follows:
1. Despite initial fears regarding communication with their host family or at CELT, they were able to overcome the fears as days passed, and by the time of departure for Japan they were able to feel that they could enjoy their stay.
2. The lower the TOEIC scores, the more fear they had about communication in English. But the need to improve their English skills seems to be greater for them as compared with those with higher scores. This may even change their attitude toward life and encourage students to want to go abroad again.
3. Whether they can gain experience in a different culture deeply or not depends on the will of each student making an effort to communicate with their Australian host family or teachers. Those who tend to spend their days mostly with Japanese peers speaking in Japanese certainly miss a precious opportunity to experience foreign culture effectively.

Delayed Post-Program Survey: Qualitative data

The second survey (See Appendix 2) was conducted a few months after coming back from Perth. This survey aimed to assess how students evaluate their participation in the program in view of the passage of time, and efforts made during the fall semester. It is, however, difficult to assess accurately how things have changed over time between the first and second surveys as the survey was administered anonymously, and thus it is impossible to make connections between specific responses to the two surveys. Here we present some illustrative comments which should be self-explanatory.

I found this study abroad program valuable. I want to brush up my English and go abroad again.
I had a good time with my host family and friends. My view on my possible future job has changed.
I strongly felt I need to improve my English ability. It was good to learn about foreign culture.
The questionnaire preparation and presentation at CELT was very valuable to me.
In Australia I was able to learn things which I have never learned in Japan.
I had a wonderful family and was able to learn not only English but also foreign culture and customs.
This program was very good in the sense that I could study English and experience foreign
culture and customs. I want to make good use of this experience and go to another English-speaking country.

There were four nationalities in my host family: Icelandic, Thai, Chinese and Japanese and I could learn about many foreign cultures.

Influenced by students from Sweden and China staying with my host family, I felt I need to speak English as fluently as they. I want to go abroad again, communicating with foreign people and testing my English level.

The happiest time I had was when I made friends with some UWA students. I met them at the Japanese club. People who were in the club were interested in Japanese and Japanese culture. We could exchange ideas and asked questions to each other.

As mentioned in the findings in the first post-program survey, one student wrote vividly about how he/she became accustomed to the Australian way of life, overcoming the initial difficulty in communicating in English.

Initially I could not get used to life there and wanted very much to go back to Japan. I was very tired from speaking English with my host family and went to bed exhausted. However, toward the end of my stay, I began to enjoy staying there and wanted to stay longer. I gradually came to understand what my host family was saying, and I could make myself understood by them. I felt I was having valuable days. I want to go back to Australia again.

I could not convey my thoughts in English well, making mistakes several times. Though host family members spoke to me very slowly, yet sometimes I could not understand what they said. I learned a lesson from this – we should ask for repetition immediately when we don’t understand what they say.

Though the program has generally helped students improve their communication skills, one student mentioned the following:

I enjoyed studying and communicating with Australians. However, I don’t think my English ability has improved because I spent much of my time with my Japanese friends.

Summary

1. Most students still have a favorable impression of their experience in Perth and feel the necessity of continued efforts to improve English skills.

2. Students with higher TOEIC scores gave more detailed and concrete descriptions of what they had experienced in Perth than those with lower scores.

3. Memories of host families are generally favorable, except two students mentioning dissatisfaction with their unfriendliness and family member composition.

4. A few students referred to the development of friendly relations with AGU students cherished
Qualitative and Quantitative Results from Study-Abroad Surveys (Nakamura, Michizoe, Mason, Rohe) during the study and stay in Perth. This may be considered a good side effect of the program.

5. Communication with not only Australian family members but also other nationalities has a favorable effect on developing broadened understanding of foreign cultures and customs.

**Quantitative Evaluation (Post-program / Delayed Post-Program surveys)**

Table 1: Descriptive statistics: Post Program / Delayed Post-Program surveys

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The following survey questions are used as variables for the statistical analysis. The questions categorized into subsets one to six are the positive results or traits that our department hopes that students develop during and after the program, while subsets seven to nine are the negative emotional responses or ethnocentric biases that might inevitably arise from the compulsory nature of the program and therefore might affect the outcome negatively. Identification of these negative factors may help us review the program for further improvement.

**Evaluative topics**

Forty-six survey questions are categorized into the following 9 subsets:

1. Development of Cross-Cultural Awareness [DCCA]
2. Academic Development [AD]
3. Development of Interpersonal Communication Skills [DICS]
4. Development of Awareness of Cultural Origins [DACO]
6. Development of International Perspective [DIP]
7. Negative DCCA [NDCCA]
8. Negative DACO [NDACO]
9. Negative AD [NAD]

**Development of Cross-Cultural Awareness (DCCA)**

[Q3, 4, 13, 23, 29, 44]

This grouping of questions concerned students’ perceptions of the development of their awareness of cultural differences between Japan and Australia (Q29), overcoming initial anxiety concerning those differences (Q4), recognition and acceptance of cultural relativity (Q23), and eventual acceptance or even affinity toward some aspects of Australian culture (Q3, 13, 44).

**Academic Development (AD)**

[Q2, 9, 31, 32, 39, 41, 43]

This grouping of questions concerned students’ perceptions of their academic development as a result of participating in the study-abroad program, either in general (Q2), or as part of specific language-based skills (Q9, 32, 39, 41, 43), and the renewed sense of motivation and interest in studying English that the program engendered (Q9).
Qualitative and Quantitative Results from Study-Abroad Surveys (Nakamura, Michizoe, Mason, Rohe)

*Development of Interpersonal Communication Skills (DICS)*

[Q1, 5, 26, 28, 30, 33]

This grouping of questions concerned students’ perceptions of the development of skills and confidence that allowed them to communicate with people from a different cultural background (Q1, 5, 28), sharing perspectives on a level deeper than the superficial (Q26), with a variety of Australians (Q30, 33).

*Developed Awareness of Cultural Origins (DACO)*

[Q16, 17, 22, 36]

This grouping of questions concerned students’ perceptions of their developed awareness of their cultural origins (Q16), an interest in scrutinizing and evaluating their own cultural values (Q17, 22), as well as sharing aspects of their own culture (Q36).

*Personal Growth / Development of Judgment and Decision-Making Skills (PG/DJDMS)*

[Q7, 11, 12, 21, 34, 37]

This grouping of questions concerned students’ perceptions of the development of their personal autonomy (Q7, 11, 34), decision-making skills and sense of judgment (Q12), and potential for the future (Q21, 37).

*Development of International Perspective (DIP)*

This grouping of questions concerned students’ perceptions of the world and their interest in going abroad again (Q8, 19, 20), as well as the deepened awareness of international issues.

*Negative DCCA (NDCCA)*

[Q6, 14, 15, 27]

This grouping of questions concerned students’ negative perceptions of Australia (Q6, 14, 27) or the rest of the world (Q15).

*Negative DACO (NDACO)*

(Q8, 25, 35, 38)

This grouping of questions concerned students’ negative or neutral perceptions of Australian life, customs, values or behavior (Q8, 25, 35), or students’ inability to explain about Japanese culture (Q38).

*Negative AD (NAD)*

(168) 169
This grouping of questions concerned students’ evaluation of the study-abroad program (Q10), or the development of their English proficiency (Q24).

In the following section, the distributions of each variable grouping are shown in Figures 1 to 8, and the relevance of their results with regards to our initial research purpose is discussed.

Distribution of “Academic Development” Ratings. To question 9 “I started to feel more confident about communicating in English,” 82.1% of respondents replied “Strongly Agree” and “Agree,” while 73.9% were affirmative to question 32 “I feel my English speaking ability has improved.” Some (65.7%) agreed to question 41, “I feel that my ability to hear and understand English has improved.” The results suggest that the majority of participants considered that the program had brought about a positive outcome in their English language proficiency.

Distribution of “Development of Cross-Cultural Awareness” Ratings. To question 4 “When I first arrived in Australia, I felt a little scared, but I overcame my fears,” 84.9% of the respondents replied “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” while 90.4% were affirmative to question 23 “People in different countries have different values, and those values are OK
Qualitative and Quantitative Results from Study-Abroad Surveys (Nakamura, Michizoe, Mason, Rohe)

for that country.” Overwhelmingly, 97.2% agreed to question 44, “I enjoyed learning about Australian customs, food, music and ways of doing things.” The results suggest that the majority of participants successfully developed an awareness towards the different culture and managed to relate themselves to a new environment.

Figure 3: Development of Interpersonal Communication

Figure 3 shows the distribution of “Development of Interpersonal Communication Skills” Ratings. To question 1, “I learned to understand and relate to people from other cultural backgrounds than my own,” 94.5% of the respondents replied “Strongly Agree” or “Agree,” while 90.4% were affirmative to question 5, “I gained confidence in my ability to deal with people.” Again, overwhelmingly, 97.2% agreed to question 26, “I was able to understand Australians’ personal feeling and behavior.” Although it is difficult to differentiate the questions in this category from those in the category of DCCA, however, the authors decided to include them in the category of DIP because of the “interpersonal” factors in the questions. The results suggest that the majority of participants successfully developed skills to mingle with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Figure 4: Development of Awareness of Cultural Origins

Figure 4 shows the distribution of “Development of Awareness of Cultural Origin” Ratings. The
authors expect that students, while exposed to foreignness in the process, have also reflected on their own values and culture and try to reconcile the differences. To question 16, "I became more aware of my own values and culture by staying in Australia," 86.3% of respondents replied "Strongly Agree" or "Agree," while 90.4% were affirmative to question 17, "I came to look at my country and its people in a new way." However, only 61.0% agreed to question 36, "I enjoyed sharing Japanese culture with Australians." The authors speculate that the result of question 36 might not necessarily have been influenced by a lack of willingness so much as by an insufficiency in linguistic capability. The results suggest that the majority of participants successfully look back at their own culture and people and relate them to a newly acquired culture.

Figure 5: Personal Growth/Development of Judgment and Decision-Making Skills

Figure 5 shows the distribution of “Personal Growth/Development of Judgment and Decision-Making Skills” Ratings. The authors expect that the Study Abroad Program has contributed to not only the development of linguistic proficiency but personal growth. To question 7, "I learned how to deal with new and different situations," 94.5% of the respondents replied “Strongly Agree” and “Agree,” while 84.9% were affirmative to question 11, “This experience helped me to become a more independent person.” In addition, 95.8% agreed to question 12, “I learned how to make decisions and follow my own judgment.” The results suggest that the majority of participants felt that the program helped them think and act based on their own judgment.
Figure 6 shows the distribution of “Development of International Perspectives” Ratings. The authors expect the Study Abroad Program to have stimulated students' international perspectives. To question 19, “I’d like to go abroad again,” 95.8% of the respondents replied “Strongly Agree” and “Agree,” while 93.1%, or an equally large number of respondents, replied the same way to question 20, “I want to visit another English-speaking country.” While these two questions are more or less general questions and may not be regarded as a direct effect of the program, question 42 “I became more aware of politics and world issues” is a rather indirect question which may reveal whether students have widened their perspectives. The fact that 82% of respondents gave affirmative evaluations is a rather pleasant surprise. The results suggest that the majority of participants felt that the program helped widen their international perspectives.

Figure 7 shows the distribution of “Negative DCCA” Ratings. In previous iterations of the program, the authors identified some negative evaluations from participants. Extensive program reviews and modifications have been implemented to eliminate factors that might result in students’ negative assessments; however, a still sizable number of respondents replied that they developed somewhat negative feelings toward the program: 84.9% of the respondents replied
"Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to question 6, "I had some negative feelings about Australia after the study program." This is quite an unexpected evaluation, which, the authors believe, needs further scrutiny. To question 15, "I don’t want to go abroad again," 84.9% of the respondents replied "Strongly Disagree" or "Disagree," while 67.1% agreed to question 27, "I don’t want to live in Australia." Although this does not necessarily mean that the program promoted xenophobic sentiments, further scrutiny is needed.

Figure 8: Negative DACO

Figure 8 shows the distribution of "Negative DACO" Ratings. Question 8 "Japanese values and customs are the best for me" is a tricky question in that it can be interpreted both negatively and positively. A three-week program is not long enough for students to logically assess a newly acquired culture or cultural values compared to their own culture. If they encounter an unexpected, hard-to-swallow experience, it is easy to make a simple and conservative judgment. Therefore, in this paper, this question is interpreted as a negative attitude toward a different situation. Surprisingly, 84.9% of respondents chose "Strongly Agree" or "Agree." More than half (63.0%), of respondents replied "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to question 25, "Living in Australia was not really different from living in Japan," while 53% replied in the affirmative to question 35, "Life in Australia was just as I expected." These results also suggest a risk that a brief exposure to overseas may end up with a simple, easy conclusion, and again, needs further scrutiny.

Inter-rater reliabilities

Before analyzing the inter-variable correlations, the inter-rater reliabilities of responses for each category are considered.

In order to identify the inter-rater reliabilities of each variable category, the Cronbach’s alpha test was conducted. The following results were obtained: DCCA (α = 0.65), AD (α = 0.764), DICS (α = 0.553), DACO (α = 0.560), PG/DJDMS (α = 0.758), DIP (α = 0.563), NDCCA (α = 0.553), NDACO8 (α = 0.563), NDACOA25 (α = 0.563), NDACO35 (α = 0.563).
Qualitative and Quantitative Results from Study-Abroad Surveys (Nakamura, Michizoe, Mason, Rohe) = 0.450), NDACO (α = 0.297), NDA (α = -0.110). Findings suggest that the values of NDCCA, NDACO and NDA are not necessarily reliable; therefore, they are set aside in [] as tentative results in the subsequent analyses.

**Inter-variable correlations**

The inter-variable correlation test was conducted on the rest of the data sets. Statistical analysis revealed that a statistically significant correlation was found between the following variable combinations:

1. Development of Cross-Cultural Awareness (No. 23, av. = 3.20, SD = 0.64) and Academic Development (No. 32, av. = 3.02, SD = 0.78), r = 0.32, p<0.01

2. Development of Awareness of Cultural Origins (No. 36, av. = 3.27, SD = 0.55) and Development of Cross-Cultural Awareness (No. 44, av. = 3.64, SD = 0.53), r = 0.45, p<0.01

3. Personal Growth/Development of Decision-Making and Judgment (No. 11, av. = 3.27, SD = 0.75) and Academic Development (No. 9, av. = 3.08, SD = 0.77), r = 0.33, p<0.01

4. Development of International Perspectives (No. 19, av. = 3.68, SD = 0.39) and Development of Cross-Cultural Awareness (No. 44, av. = 3.64, SD = 0.53), r = 0.42, p<0.01

5. Development of International Perspectives (No. 20, av. = 3.63, SD = 0.09) and Development of Cross-Cultural Awareness (No. 44, av. = 3.64, SD = 0.53), r = 0.53, p<0.01

6. Negative Development of Awareness of Cultural Origins (No. 8, av. = 3.23, SD = 0.69) and Personal Growth/Development of Judgment and Decision-making (No. 12, av. = 3.2, SD = 0.59), r = 0.41, p<0.01

7. Negative Development of Awareness of Cultural Origins (No. 8, av. = 3.23, SD = 0.69) and Personal Growth/Development of Judgment and Decision-Making (No. 12, av. = 3.2, SD = 0.59), r = 0.41, p<0.01

8. Negative Development of Cross-Cultural Awareness (No. 27, av. = 1.94, SD = 1.02) and Academic Development (No. 41, av. = 3.0, SD = 0.78), r = -0.46, p<0.01)

**Summary**

It is reasonable to tentatively conclude that students evaluated that the program promoted their academic development, cross-cultural awareness, inter-personal communication skills, awareness of cultural origins, personal growth/judgment and decision-making skills, and international perspectives. The inter-variable correlation test reveals that personal growth/judgment and decision-making skills are correlated with academic development, tentatively suggesting that
those who perceived that the program had helped promote their personal growth/judgment skills as well as their decision-making skills seem to successfully develop over-all academic ability. In spite of the inter-rater reliability test results for No. 6 and No. 27, it is suggested that students who did not sufficiently cultivate cross-cultural awareness did not develop international perspectives, and they also failed to further their academic development, tentatively suggesting that ability to understand and accept different cultures, or in other words, whether our students can expect to improve their academic ability (for our students, English language ability) by a certain degree through this relatively short sojourn may be influenced by how much they can be open-minded to different cultures.

Results and discussion

This section will assess the pre-program survey as well as the post-program survey.

Assessment of the pre-program survey suggests that students may be insufficiently prepared in terms of where to visit as a project site, and what to find out prior to departure from Japan. Without a specific purpose for visiting a project site, the result may be insufficient to meet the original purpose. More time may be needed to allow students to browse internet sites regarding the project site they select. More time may be given for them to make preparations for presentations on their project.

Given that this study abroad program is mandatory for all students, they may regard the program as a sort of school excursion: all the students go together to the same place and spend their daytimes together. They may feel they can get the credit without making much effort to achieve the target set by the faculty of studying English and living in a foreign environment and culture, hence enhancing understanding of cross-cultural communication. Fundamental knowledge about living in Perth may be shared by all students prior to departure. In that sense, systematic lessons may be better prepared during the spring semester.

Students are aware of their English skill and the need to improve it before departure. Those who have lower TOEIC scores, especially, have worries about staying with a host family. In that sense, the objectives of participation in this mandatory program should be improving English ability and promoting cross-cultural understanding. The key to this program’s success depends on how well-prepared students are prior to their visit. Faculty members are suggested to review the contents of the spring semester program to make them more effective.

From the second post-program survey, it is difficult to assess how much effort students have made during the fall semester. It is assumed that students returned to Japan from Perth with a strong feeling of the need for further English study. Whether, and how long, this feeling persists during the fall semester is a question. What, specifically, do students do to improve their English
skills? The effectiveness of their efforts in terms of TOEIC score improvement is also a matter of interest. Analysis of the improvement of TOEIC scores or GPAs may be necessary, although of course these are far from flawless measures of overall English competence.

**Conclusion**

We may safely conclude from the results described here that the study abroad program does in some way or other affect students' way of thinking, by undergoing exposure to a foreign culture, also generating a need for improved communication skills in English. Broadening the views of the students towards the outside world can be seen as an essential step in helping them form flexible ways of thinking, which enhances adaptability to various working environments in the future.

Inevitably, however, in examining the results of a piece of research such as this the eye is drawn to dramatic negative results. While this is important to continue to identify and correct for weaknesses, it should not blind us to the many underlying positive elements. Although it resembles the programs – some mentioned in the literature review – which offered inspiration in its design, this program is in many ways a more radical proposition. For unlike those programs it is not a prize for high-achieving students, an opportunity for the well-off and able to make themselves more well-off and able. If some of the students return from their experience with some negative feelings towards Australia, and even towards language study, we should not immediately conclude that we have failed in comparison with more selective programs, and hurry towards selection ourselves. First, we should remember that some of the students who participate in this program have, by any reasonable measure, very low levels of English competence. If we then examine the results once more we may be surprised at what we discover.

To address one of the apparently negative results: a very high proportion of respondents reported some negative feelings towards Australia after the program. Significantly, however, an even higher percentage said they nevertheless wanted to go abroad again. The program is not an exercise in tourism nor, as some of the respondents interestingly characterized it, a school excursion, and thus it entailed students encountering something of the reality of the world outside Japan which, inevitably, has negative aspects. And yet this did not offer discouragement to many. A result such as this suggests that the program is providing students with an authentic experience.

This argument is supported by the massive proportion of students who reported that the program had contributed to their personal development. Again, the significance of this result lies in its juxtaposition with the various criticisms and problems reported. Despite the problems and frustrations encountered, almost all of the students felt that the program had contributed to both their personal and communicative development.
Interestingly, when academic development is examined, the results are far murkier. A lower proportion of students viewed the program as fully effective academically; there were also a number of critical comments on this topic. While this certainly demands that we look into ways of strengthening the academic impact of the program it does not necessarily constitute as great a criticism as it first appears. As noted in the literature review, there is skepticism among researchers regarding how effective an OSP can be in academic terms. Three weeks is a very different prospect to a half-year or one year sojourn.

Students with lower TOEIC scores expressed shock at the difficulty of communicating. They also expressed more dissatisfaction with the academic components of the program. However, these students appeared to benefit just as much as higher-scoring students from the immersive impact of the experience, reporting that they had managed to cope by the end of the three weeks. This is a remarkable result for students with relatively low confidence in their own English communicative ability. Moreover, it seems highly likely that the dissatisfaction with the academic elements arises from similar causes to their shock at meeting their host families. Low-level students are frustrated by classes in which they cannot understand the teacher. Precisely how this experience affects them is worth further consideration and effort.

The Study Abroad Program is a complex system. It cannot be tailored to a specific ability level of student, and the logistics involved in sending over a hundred students abroad constitute a set of financial, pedagogic and cultural balancing acts. This research project has demonstrated that there are rough areas. Some of these are inevitable consequences of the aforementioned balancing acts, while others can no doubt be smoothed out with further research and the continual refinement of the details of the program. However the research project has also demonstrated emphatically that the Study Abroad Program provides students with a genuinely educational experience. Buoyed up with the knowledge that we are providing students with the opportunity to make life-changing decisions, we should press on with this radical experiment, a program of which Aichi Gakuin University can be proud.

References


Qualitative and Quantitative Results from Study-Abroad Surveys (Nakamura, Michizoe, Mason, Rohe)


Appendix 1: Pre-Departure Survey

2013 Study Abroad 渡航前アンケート 当てはまる回答の□にチェック☑を入れて下さい。

1. 事前研修（授業）を終えて、研修前に比べてオーストラリアへの理解は深まったと思いますか？
   □ 1 いいえ □ 2 はい

2. 事前研修を終えて、研修前に比べて異文化への理解が深まったと思いますか？
   □ 1 いいえ □ 2 はい

3. グループで計画して出かけるプロジェクトについて事前に下調べをしましたか？
   □ 1 いいえ □ 2 はい

4. どこへ行くことにしましたか？
   __________________________

   あなたの役割は何ですか？
   __________________________

5. あなたは、UWA（CELT）の授業に何を期待しますか？（一つだけ）
   □ 1 特に期待はない □ 2 自分が英語を話すチャンスがたくさんある
   □ 3

6. あなたは、ホストファミリーに何を期待しますか？
   __________________________

7. あなたは、ホストファミリーから何を期待されていると思いますか？
   __________________________

8. あなたは、ホストファミリーにどんなイメージを抱いていますか？
   __________________________

9. あなたは、異文化理解とは、どのようなことだと思いますか？
   __________________________

10. この語学研修の、あなた自身の目標は何ですか？

不安や心配、疑問に思っていることがあれば、自由記述欄に記入してください。

______________________________

このアンケート結果が研究目的に使用されることに同意します。 □

(156) 181
Appendix 2: Post-Program / Delayed Post-Program Survey

This questionnaire is entirely anonymous. Please do not write your name on this sheet.

A. What was your score on the TOEIC the last time you took the test?
B. Have you been abroad before this? Where and how long?
C. Please read the following statements and write the appropriate number on the line depending on whether you agree or disagree with the statement.

① Strongly disagree  ② Disagree  ③ Agree  ④ Strongly Agree

1. I learned to understand and relate to people from other cultural backgrounds than my own.
2. The study abroad program gave me a chance to learn things that I wouldn’t have learned in Japan.
3. As a result of the study program, I came to like Australians better.
4. When I first arrived in Australia, I felt a little scared, but I overcame my fears.
5. I gained confidence in my ability to deal with people.
6. I had some negative feelings about Australia after the study program.
7. I learned how to deal with new and different situations.
8. Japanese values and customs are the best for me.
9. I started to feel more confident about communicating in English.
10. I did not feel that the study abroad program was challenging enough.
11. This experience helped me to become a more independent person.
12. I learned how to make decisions and follow my own judgment.
13. I was very attracted to some Australian values and some aspects of the Australian lifestyle.
14. Australian customs were difficult to understand.
15. I don’t want to go abroad again.
16. I became more aware of my own values and culture by staying in Australia.
17. I came to look at my country and its people in a new way.
18. I want to visit Australia again in the future.
19. I’d like to go abroad again.
20. I want to visit another English-speaking country.
21. I learned skills and information that will be useful later in my life.
22. After I returned to my country, I noticed things that I don’t like about it.
23. People in different countries have different values, and those values are OK for that country.
24. I was disappointed in my ability to communicate with Australians in English.
25. Living in Australia was not really different from living in Japan.
26. I was able to understand Australians’ personal feelings and behavior.
27. I don’t want to live in Australia.
28. I became interested in meeting new and different kinds of people.
29. The Japanese way of thinking is very different from the Australian way.
30. I felt I could share my true feelings with my homestay family.
31. I realized that I should study English more seriously.
32. I feel my English speaking ability has improved.
Qualitative and Quantitative Results from Study-Abroad Surveys (Nakamura, Michizoe, Mason, Rohe)

33. I spent more time with Australians than with members of the AGU group.
34. The next time I go abroad, I’d like to go by myself rather than with a group.
35. Life in Australia was just as I expected.
36. I enjoyed sharing Japanese culture with Australians.
37. This study program gave me new ideas for my future.
38. I was embarrassed when I couldn’t explain about Japanese culture to Australians.
39. I feel that my pronunciation of English has improved.
40. I think that I’ve become more understanding and tolerant of people in general.
41. I feel that my ability to hear and understand English has improved.
42. I became more aware of politics and world issues.
43. I feel that my writing ability in English has improved.
44. I enjoyed learning about Australian customs, food, music and ways of doing things.

D. Please feel free to write any comments you have about the study abroad program:

Appendix 3: Post-Program Survey: Qualitative Data

Comments are listed in ascending order of reported TOEIC score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School hours were too long. Need more time to spend with host family. Homestay was fun but school classes were boring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was fun to stay in Australia. But next time I want to stay at a dormitory. My English was so poor that I was shocked by it. I would like to try hard next time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before coming to Australia I disliked studying English. After going there I came to like English. I enjoyed staying with my host family. I appreciate the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt it was difficult to speak English. I want to go abroad again. I want to learn English harder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three weeks is too short. Speaking and writing abilities should be improved. If there is any program offered by AGU where we can study abroad for half a year or a year without breaking 4 year enrollment rule, that would be great. Please consider if this is possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CELT classes were boring. I enjoyed staying with my host family. It was a good experience and I want to see the family again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was very nervous before going to Australia, but I really enjoyed three weeks. I felt strongly that I need to improve my English further. I want to study English further and work overseas in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoyed studying in Australia. I learned a lot of different cultures there. I can’t speak English well, so I have to study English hard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was very impressed by the kindness of Australian people. I was shocked at my poor English ability, especially pronunciation and grammar. I could not make myself understood well. I now strongly feel I need to study English harder. If there is another chance to go there to study, I want to stay longer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned Australian culture and English. It was a good experience. I would like to go abroad again.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I had a great time! I want to go to Australia again.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I experienced a lot in Australia. On the very first day with my host family, I could not understand them at all and I felt miserable, but as days went on I came to understand their language. Often, however, I was unable to convey my thoughts to my family due to my poor ability at English. Chinese and Brazilian students studying at CELT spoke very good English and I thought as Japanese that we should study English harder and more seriously.</td>
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I enjoyed homestay, going to school, eating out with my friends and teachers, and visiting places. My biggest memory is sunset at a beach. It was very beautiful. I have to study English hard so that I may be able to speak English well.

The first impression I had was that foreigners speak too fast. My pronunciation was so bad that I could not make myself understood. I want to work hard after I return to Japan and I want to go abroad again in the future.

My host family was very kind to me. During the first week I dined with four other students, but during the remaining two weeks I talked a lot with my host family. Weekends were enjoyable with the help of my host family letting me know good spots for eating out with my friends.

I thought the class hours were too long and wished more free time had been allowed.

I learned a lot about Australian culture and food. What differs greatly from Japan is that they don’t wash clothes every day. At CELT, I had difficulty in communicating in English, but as time passed I got used to my life and I came to understand English better. Buses and trains were different from those in Japan. I had a very good time with my host family and enjoyed visiting places of interest. People in Perth were all kind and I want to go back again.

I had a precious experience in my life and look forward to going abroad again.

School classes could have been improved. Two chaperons came to school every day and checked the conditions of students. That encouraged me a lot.

Australian men are very handsome! My host mother was very kind to me. I want to visit Australia again.

UWA class was very boring.

As this was my first experience abroad, I was somewhat nervous before departure. But I had many precious experiences: studying English, Australian culture, food, and kindness of my host family. Overall my understanding and experience of foreign culture was great. At school I could deal with our project in cooperation with my classmates. My way of thinking was changed by this program and I strongly felt the importance of family relations. I want to go back to Australia again.

Except for the food, I enjoyed staying in Perth and learned a lot.

It was my first overseas experience. I felt strongly that my English ability was so poor; I could not express in English what I had in mind. Seiji, the tour guide, was very impressive and he really shone. I enjoyed everything including the good scenery - especially the Indian Ocean.

I realized that my English ability was very poor. My host family members were very kind and helped me express my feeling well. Three weeks was so short. I want to study English harder, especially spoken English.

I initially hated going to Australia, but after staying there I came to enjoy my life there.

I was initially very nervous, but the joy of being able to communicate in English overcame my nervousness and I even enjoyed speaking in English. If there is a will, there is a way.

Australian meals were not to my taste. I enjoyed shopping and sightseeing, though. I had difficulty in understanding what my teacher said in class. Three weeks was a little bit long.

My English ability was not improved after coming to Australia. I should have made friends with students from other countries to be able to speak English more fluently. I need to speak English more and more.

I really felt the difficulty in conveying my idea in English. I want to go abroad again just by myself or with my friends. I could not improve my English ability. I want to study English harder upon returning to Japan.

I wanted to have a native host family.

My listening skill improved. I want to study reading.

I could understand the customs of this country. I want to visit another English-speaking country.

Three weeks was very short. I enjoyed staying here. It was good for me to make friends with my classmates as we had enough time to spend together. I thought that I need to make more effort. If possible, I would like to study overseas for six months or a year. It may be too expensive, however. Some financial support is given by universities such as Nagoya University of Foreign Studies. I really hope that such a system will be available in AGU as well. If there were a chance of communicating with other students of different nationalities during our stay, it would be much better.

I spent precious time in Australia. I want to share my Australia stories with my family and friends.
Qualitative and Quantitative Results from Study-Abroad Surveys (Nakamura, Michizoe, Mason, Rohe)

I don’t think my English ability has improved because all is unfinished.

My host mother, Marie, is a busy woman, so I could not spend enough time with her. Although I couldn’t go out with her, I was so happy to cook dinner with Chinese international students, Sophia and Marie. I want to stay here again someday.

It is a little difficult to talk with Australian people without learning about Australian culture and customs. However, if we try hard to tell them, they understand us.

Appendix 4: Delayed Post-Program Survey: Qualitative Data

Comments are listed in ascending order of reported TOEIC score.

I enjoyed my stay in Australia very much. I feel my English ability came back to its former lower level after coming back to Japan. Next time I go abroad to study, it should be longer, say, 3 months or more.

It was fun and a good experience.

Though it was fun, I should have deepened my relationship with the Australians.

Super fun!

I enjoyed myself in Australia.

Special fun!

I enjoyed Australia, but I wanted to enjoy it more.

The Australian sea is very beautiful. I want to go back to Australia.

Australians were very kind. I was surprised at the high price of Japanese food.

I found this study abroad program valuable. I want to brush up my English and go abroad again.

It was a very important experience for me. I had a good time with my host family and friends. My view on my future job of preference has changed. I wanted to stay there as long as possible, experiencing English every day. On the other hand, there were some friends who had difficulty adjusting to foreign culture and could not enjoy their life. I felt that going abroad is not necessarily an enjoyable experience for some students. It depends on the person.

I want to go there again.

I had a very good time.

I enjoyed staying in Australia very much, especially going to various places with friends. The food was not tasty. I strongly felt that I need to brush up my English. It was good I could learn foreign culture. I wanted to study English harder and come to speak fluently.

Very exciting!

I learned a lot from my stay in Australia. I could experience things which I can’t do living in Japan. In this sense, the trip was very valuable.

I have a lot of pleasant memories of staying in Australia. I was very pleased that I had a wonderful family. I was able to learn not only English but also different culture and customs. It was a very memorable experience. And I want to make best use of this. I want to see my family again!

It was a very happy time for me. I was able to improve my English. My stay positively influenced my life; I made lots of friends and deepened our relationship. I saw beautiful scenery. My English should have improved! Questionnaire preparation and presentation at CELT was very valuable to me. I want to visit other countries too.

I studied English harder there than in Japan. It is nice.

The food did not go well with me and my health was not so good. I was able to learn things which I was lacking in. I felt the need to learn more spoken English.

I enjoyed studying in Australia. I want to go there again. I didn’t see a quokka. Next time I want to see a quokka.

The teachers there were not useful.
It was a very valuable experience for me. I want to go to Australia again.

My host family was not friendly. I was sad.

I want to study English and come to speak in English. I want to know more about living and working overseas.

I really enjoyed staying there.

I was able to learn Australian culture at least.

Initially I could not get used to life there and wanted very much to go back to Japan. I was very tired with speaking English with my host family and went to bed exhausted. However, toward the end of my stay, I began to enjoy staying there and wanted to stay longer. I gradually came to understand what my host family was saying, and I could make myself understood by them. I felt I was having valuable days. I want to go back to Australia again.

Australia is a very good country. I want to go abroad. I want to improve my English highly.

I enjoyed the program. I had a lot of valuable experiences there. I feel my English skill now is better than before going to Australia. I want to thank my host family, CELT teachers and AGU members. I want to go abroad again. I want to visit Perth again.

It would have been better if we could have a direct flight from Nagoya to Perth.

Studying abroad is really hard for me.

I feel my English ability has improved.

This program was good in that I could study English and improve communication skills with foreign people. I want to make good use of this experience in other countries. I came to know Australian customs, behavior and so on. It was an enjoyable three weeks. I am now saving money to go to either Australia or England.

I really enjoyed the program. I want to go to Australia or other countries. But it takes a lot of money, so I want to try working part-time.

Living in Australia was really fun! If I had a chance, I would like to visit again some day! I learned a lot from people in Australia like culture, customs, foods and so more. And my host family was really kind to me. I can’t thank them more!

That was awesome. But there were some differences in Australian houses like wi-fi, etc. Of course I know it cannot be helped. I want a wi-fi at home. Anyway it was good.

I enjoyed studying and communicating with Australians. However, I don’t think my English ability has improved because I spent much of my time with my Japanese friends.

The study abroad program was really good. I studied much more than I had expected. And it made me study harder.

I really think I had a valuable experience out of this program. Many thanks to my parents and teachers. It was a perfect group going there.

It was a very valuable experience for me. Influenced by students from Sweden and China staying with my host family, I felt I need to speak English as fluently as they. I want to go abroad again, communicating with foreign people and test my English level.

There wasn’t a wi-fi in my host family, so I couldn’t use my phone. However, I found that I could live without using my phone.

I could not convey my thought in English well, making mistakes several times. Though host family members spoke to us very slowly, yet sometimes I could not understand what they said. I learned a lesson from this; we should ask for repetition immediately when we don’t understand what they say.

Rottnest Island is beautiful. I want to return there.

I had fun studying abroad with the AGU group. I was able to talk to many different friends who I have never talked to before in school. The happiest thing I had was friends from UWA. I met them at the Japanese club. People who were in the club were interested in Japanese and Japanese culture. They asked me a lot of questions about Japanese culture. I also asked them, “How do you say this and that in English?” We became close friends.
Living in Perth under the program was the best that I’ve lived. I met nice people such as my host family, two Chinese girls and others. I felt any cultures were good. My host father was from Iceland and mother was from Thailand, and I lived with two Chinese girls. So my house had four cultures. And I saw many types of people in Perth. I was happy to see a lot of people. Now I exchange e-mails and play an online game with my host mother. I’m looking forward to meeting them again. I wanted to talk with more foreign people.

For the next time I want to go to another part of Australia, and I want to choose the family, because it was boring with no one to play with me. So I want a family which has children.

I wish I could have gone to the east coast of Australia.

I think this program is very nice.