

Fall 2008 Study Abroad

Overview.

In the Study Abroad Survey, three open-ended questions were formulated in order to have a better picture of the benefits of the program, the questions were:

- Indicate how a particular experience while in this study abroad program has changed your attitudes, values or behaviors.
- Why did you decide to participate in a study abroad program?
- Upon reflection, what would you tell another student at USF who is considering participating in a study abroad experience as to what they can expect from such an experience?

Each of these questions was analyzed separately, and different categories were created to explain the students' perspective on each of them. The categories described below, and the corresponding graphs showing the relationship among these categories, are the result of collapsing 22 responses obtained in the survey. Five categories were created for the first question, four for the second, and three categories for the last question, in order to explain students' responses. The categories are related among themselves, and the category analyzed is represented by the largest number of responses (circle) and shows its relative proportion to the rest of the other categories.

In general, students enjoyed their experience abroad and found it useful. The most common opinion was the personal growth students achieved, although most of them found it very challenging, too.

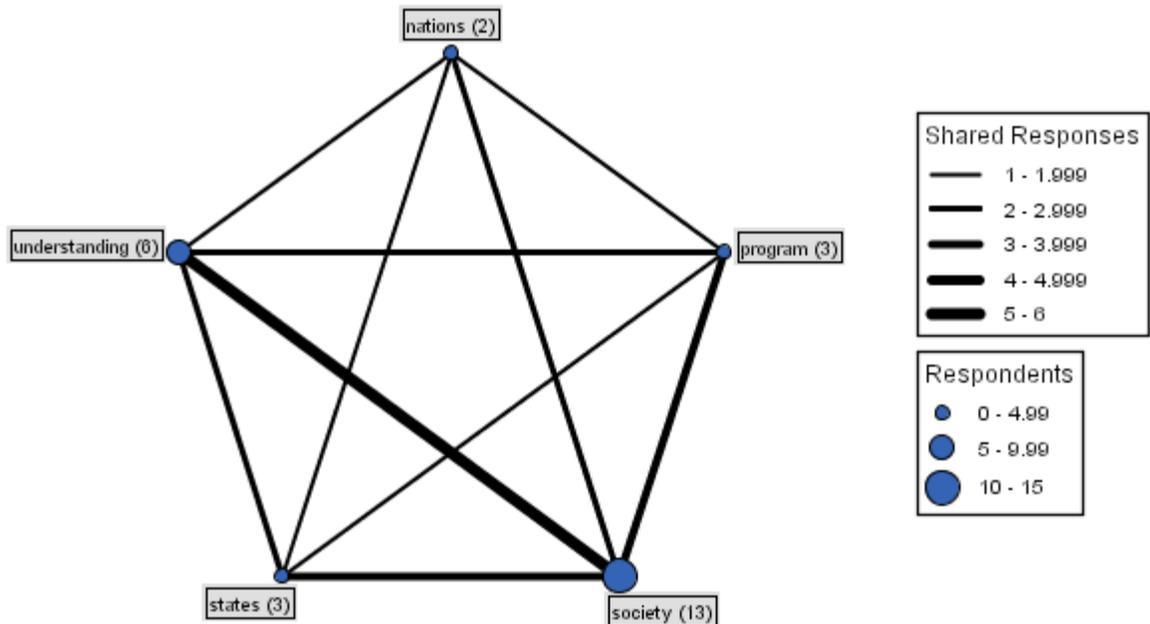
Indicate how a particular experience while in his/her study abroad program has changed his/her attitudes, values or behaviors

In this specific question, most of the student saw a personal growth more than a change in them due to their experience away from home. The categories were defined as following:

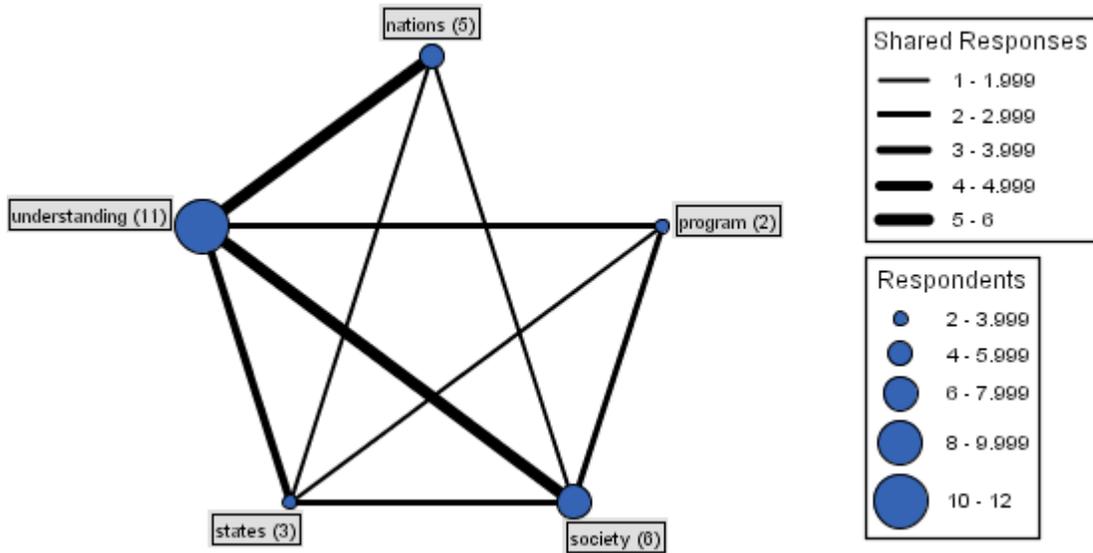
1. *Society* represents all the opinions students have from the societies they were part of, other human beings they met, and even their own societies.
2. *Understanding*, this category is related to the better understanding, and in some cases tolerance, students developed toward different situations they faced during their study abroad experience.
3. *Nation* represents all the responses that enclosed specific places where the students went and acquired some knowledge about these places, and how they affected their personal experiences.
4. *States* encloses students' responses that relate their experience overseas with the United States.
5. *Program* includes opinions of how the study abroad program gave them the opportunity to change, or at least shaped in some way, their attitudes, values or behaviors.

The relationship among these five categories was analyzed as following:

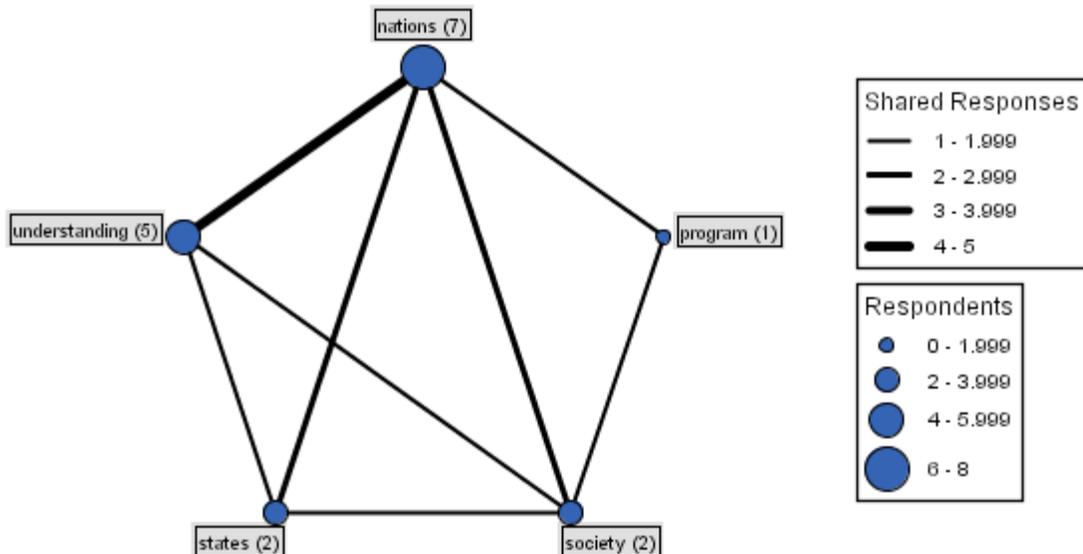
1. *Society*. This category represents the largest category in this question with 13 responses out of 22. The most frequent opinion and relationship were with the *understanding* category, where six students (46% of the responses) affirm that the experience itself help them to understand better other societies, their own society, and even themselves. In some cases, students found and achieved new perspective of their own environment by being away from it. Additionally, three students (23%) emphasized how the United States (*states category*) is seen in other societies; while other three responses (23%) related the how the study abroad program (*program category*) gave them the opportunity to immerse in other societies.



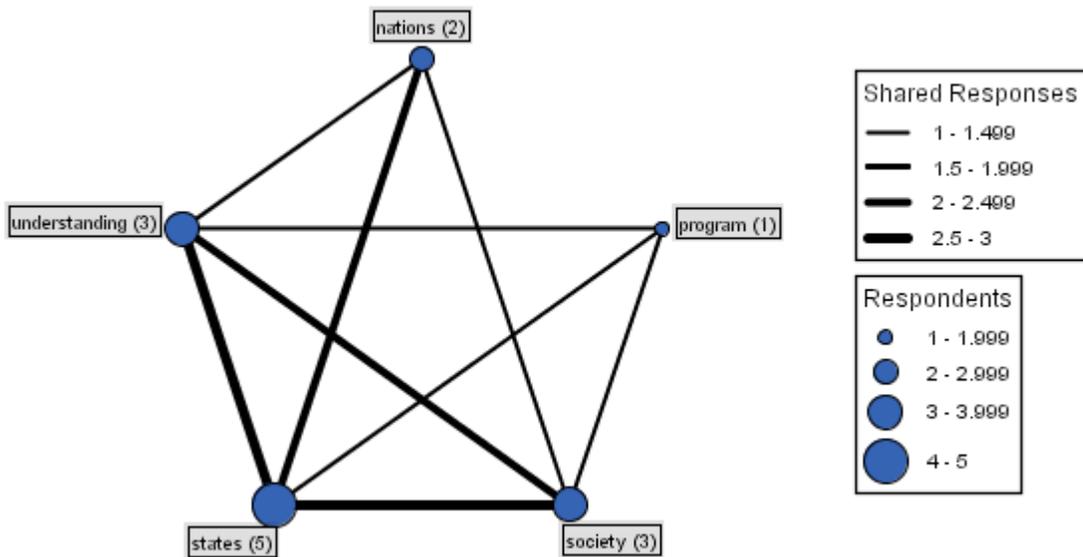
2. *Understanding*. From the eleven responses related to this category, six of them (55%) were related to the *society category* establishing that their study abroad experience helped them to understand and to deal with the societies they were part of. Another strong relationship was with the *nations category* where five responses (45%) asserted that being part of a country helped to understand it in a better way. Moreover, three responses (27%) showed that these students valued and to understood better the United States (*states category*) by being far away from it.



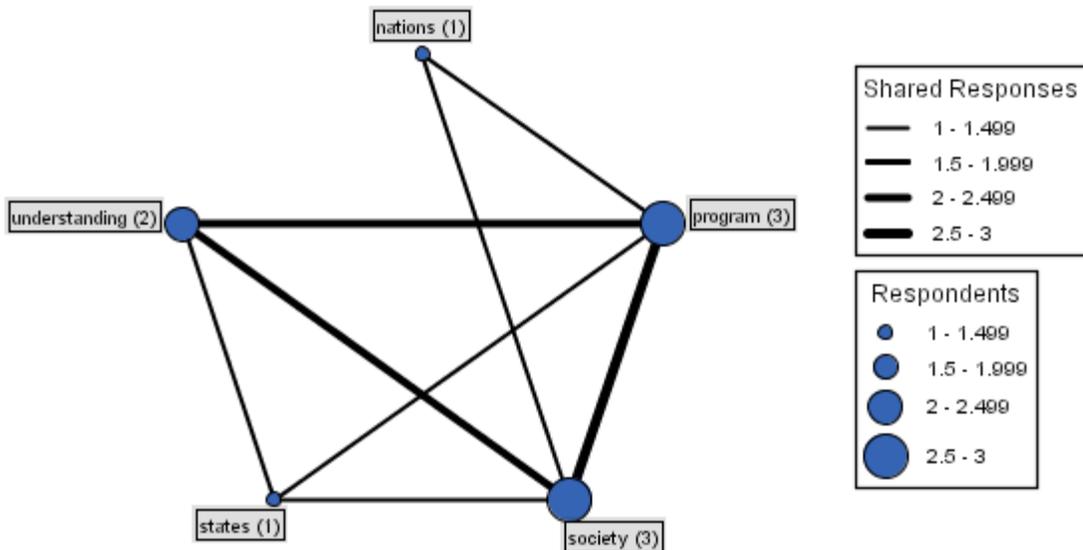
3. *Nation*. From the seven responses in this category, the strongest relationship was with the *understanding category*, where five responses (71%) established that the study abroad experience had a big impact in understanding countries with different point of views to their own country. The *states* and *society category* shows two responses (29%) related to this category, where the two responses in each connection explained how they were able to understand the U.S. and a different society by being in other country.



4. *States*. From the five responses in this category, three of them (60%) overlapped with the *understanding* and *society* category. These responses established that the study abroad helped these students to understand better the United States, as well as other societies.



5. *Program*. This category with only three responses show that students found that by participating in the study abroad program, it helped them to understand how societies developed, the country they were in, as well their own country .



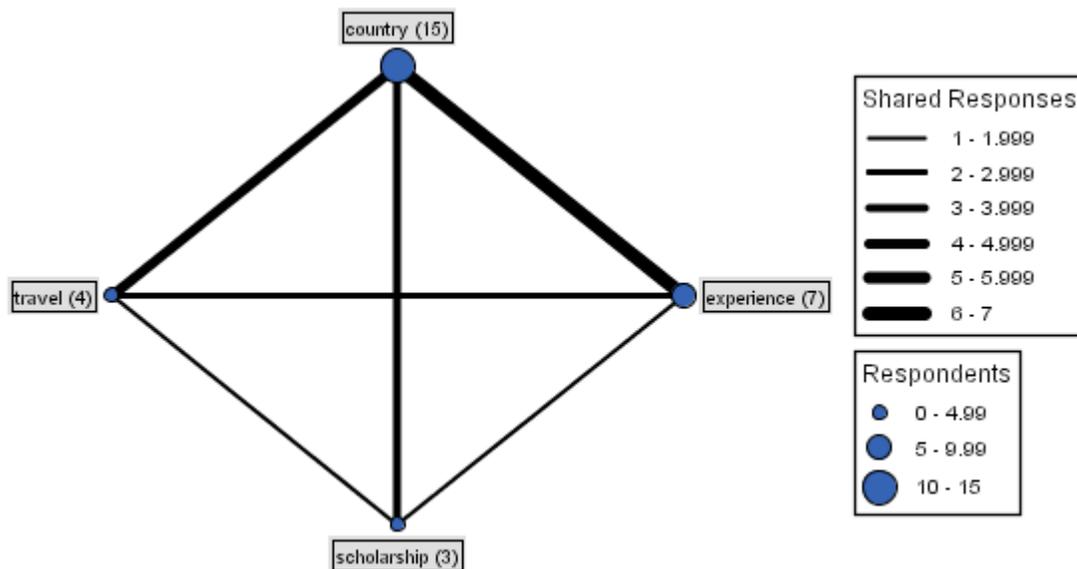
Why did you decide to participate in a study abroad program?

In this question, most of the student saw an opportunity to be in a different environment to their own, and to take advantage of the experience for personal growth. The categories were defined as following:

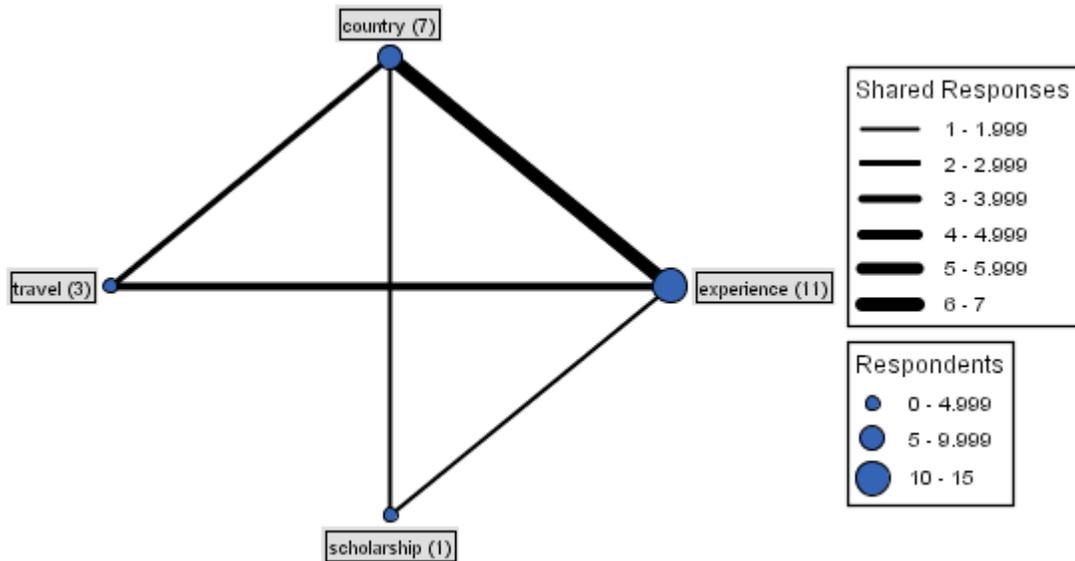
1. *Country* encloses all the responses that explained students participated in the student abroad program due to their interest in living in a different country.
2. *Experience*, this category is related with the students' objective of experiencing being far away from home.
3. *Travel* mentions that the reason students enrolled in the study abroad program was due to their interest in travelling.
4. *Scholarship*, this last category encloses the responses that show that students could enroll in a study abroad program because their scholarships allow them to.

The relationship among these four categories was analyzed as following:

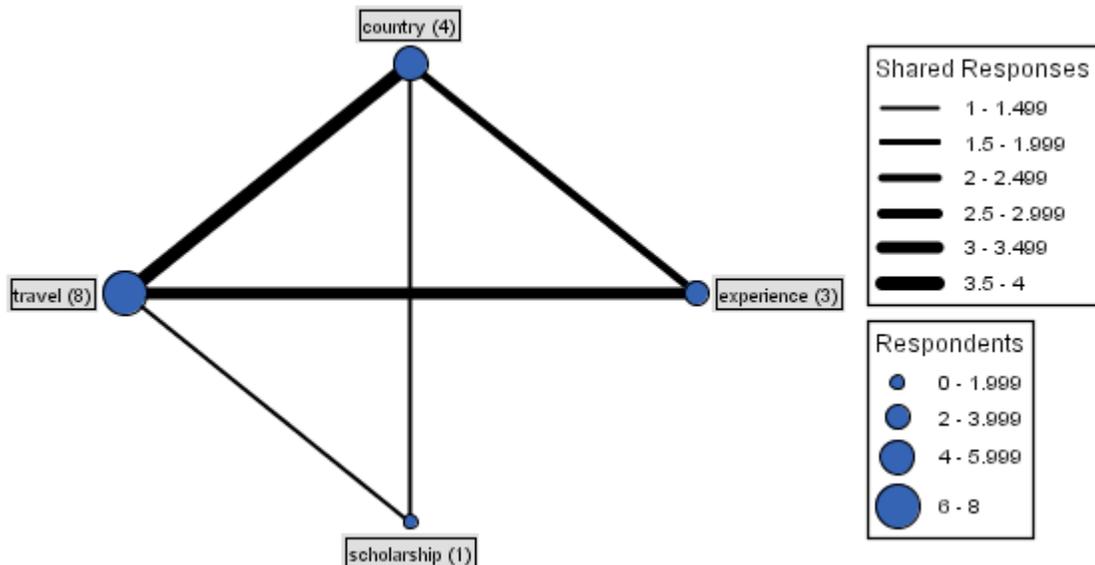
1. *Country*. This category was the strongest issue in this question with 15 responses out of 22. Students mentioned that the principal reason they decided to go to study abroad was the interest in going to other country. Some responses showed that some students had already targeted some specific countries. The strongest relationship of this category was with *experience* where seven responses (47%) showed that living in a different country for a period of time could turn be a good experience for students. Additionally, four responses (27%) show that the idea of a living in another country goes along with their interest in traveling. Finally, other two responses (20%) also show a relationship with their scholarships in allowing them to live in a foreign country.



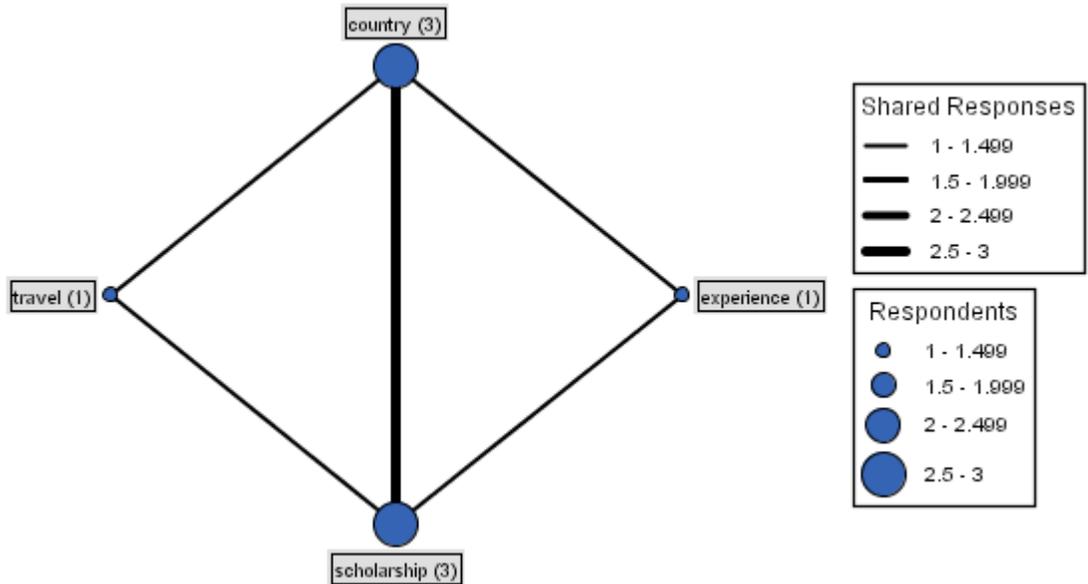
2. *Experience.* With 11 responses in this category, students established that their interest in participating in a study abroad program was to experience and to gain some personal growth by living in their own in a different country. From the 11 responses, seven (64%) of them emphasized that living in another country could be a very rewarding experience. Three responses (27%) maintained that traveling is a great experience; and finally, one response maintained that he/she was able to live this experience thanks to his/her scholarship.



3. *Travel.* In this category, eight students maintained that the main reason to enroll in a study abroad program was their interest in travelling. This category was strongly related to the *country* category, where four responses (50%) maintained that the interest of the student in traveling and living in a foreign country were the determinants to enrolled in the program. Moreover, three responses (38%) affirmed that the program gave them the opportunity to live new experiences by travelling. And finally, one response maintained that it was his/her scholarship that allowed him/her to travel abroad.



4. *Scholarship*. This last category is compounded by three responses, where students affirmed that they could enroll in the study abroad program thanks to their scholarships. The strongest relationship is with the *country* category, where the three responses (100%) maintained that they were able to live in a different country due to their financial aid. Finally, one response (33%) in each category, *experience* and *travel*, established that it was their scholarship that allowed them to live new experiences and to travel abroad.



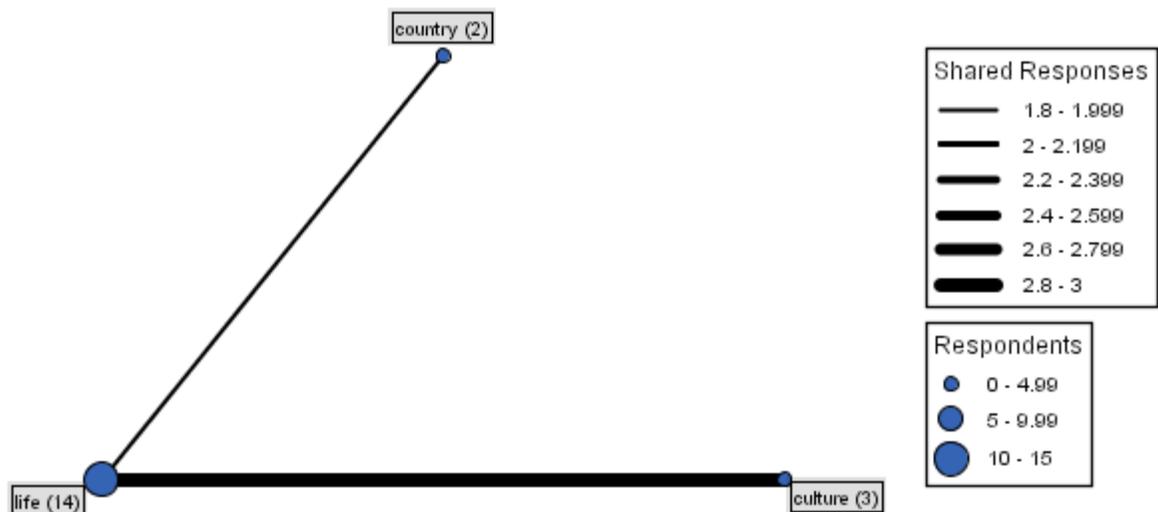
Upon reflection, what would you tell another student at USF who is considering participating in a study abroad experience as to what they can expect from such an experience?

In this question, most of the student advised that whereas it is a challenging experience, it is totally worth it, and other students should take advantage if they have the opportunity. The categories were defined as following:

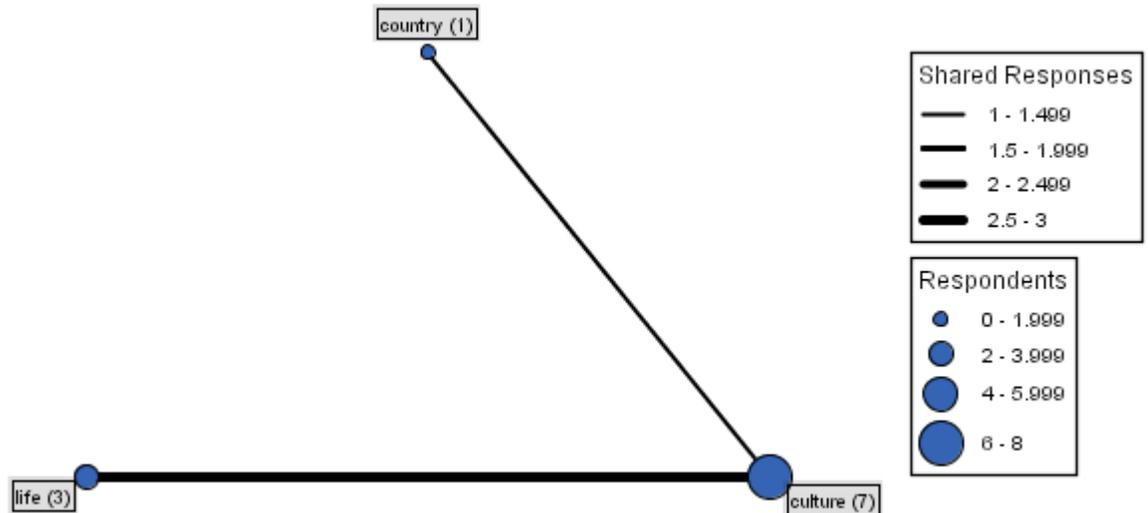
1. *Life* will have all the responses where students advise that the study abroad program is a good experience which will help to develop the personal life of any other student that participates in the program.
2. *Culture* is the category that will highlight the benefits of sharing and living in a different culture, and what are the advantages and disadvantages that other students should expect.
3. *Country* encloses all the responses that will emphasize the experience of living in a different country, some responses give some suggestions about the country the student went, as well as, general insights about living abroad.

The relationship among these three categories was analyzed as following:

1. *Life*. From the 22 responses of the survey, 14 of them enclosed in this category refer to some advices that students would give to other students regarding their study abroad experience. All of the responses highly recommend going to study overseas. Whether, several students warned that it is challenging being in a new and different environment, all of them agreed that at the end, the personal growth achieved made this experience worth it. The advices given in the responses are diverse, and it can be seen by the low relationship with the other categories. Three responses (21%) related that the personal growth one can achieve is by interacting with other cultures. At the same time, two responses (15%) related the country with the gains they experienced.



2. *Culture*. In this category, seven responses mentioned how they dealt and responded to some situations in different cultures they were. Three responses (43%) related with the *life* category, where student mentioned that it was how they learn to interact with different cultures which helped them make the most of studying abroad.



3. *Country*. In this category, the responses mentioned different aspect or compared the countries they were with their own countries. Two responses (50%) were related with the *life* category, as how the personal growth experienced had a relationship with the country they went to.

