Background and Purpose

- Research on study abroad from U.S. universities is highly multidisciplinary and published in journals in many fields.
- Extant reviews of the literature and meta-analyses are focused on specific outcomes, methodologies, or subsets of participants (see prior reviews and meta-analyses, below).

Prior Reviews and Meta-Analyses

- Twombly et al. (2012) broadly examined the literature to answer “who studies abroad and what are their outcomes?” They found female participant was higher than male, and that there was a base of support for academic, intercultural competence, and language learning outcomes.
- Miller-Perrin and Thompson (2014) reviewed factors influencing external and internal outcomes of study abroad. They identified duration, program structure, and frequency of contact with individuals of the host country as key factors promoting positive outcomes.
- Varela (2017) conducted a meta-analysis of 72 quantitative studies focused on three learning outcomes of study abroad: cognitive/language acquisition, affective or multicultural attitudes, and behavioral/intercultural adaptation. Students typically experienced large effect size gains in language proficiency, especially those in host countries. Students experienced moderate effect sizes for multicultural attitudes, and medium-to-large effect size gains in behavioral adaptation.
- Smolcic and Katunich (2017) conducted a systematic review of 25 studies of teachers’ cross-border cultural immersion, many of which meet our definition of study abroad below. They identified seven key areas for growth for pre-service teachers: cultural knowledge, awareness of culture in education, cultural and societal awareness, sociopolitical awareness and critical consciousness, importance of the language learning process, intercultural attitudes and skills, and personal growth.
- Isabella-Garcia et al. (2018) reviewed language learning outcomes of study abroad and found strong support for speaking, communication competence, grammatical competence, and sociolinguistic competence, and identified gaps with respect to reading, writing, and listening comprehension.

Research Questions

1. How many studies meeting inclusion criteria were published between 2001 and August 2021?
2. What is the publishing rate of articles meeting inclusion criteria?
3. What participant, program, and methodological information is commonly reported?
4. What are the gaps in the current knowledge base on study abroad that require additional research?

Inclusion Criteria

1. Include participants attending U.S. colleges or universities who study abroad in a different country on university-sanctioned credit-bearing programs
2. Represent empirical research meeting guidelines for methodological detail
3. Include analyses of at least one outcome of interest (academic, career, intercultural competence, and wellbeing)
4. Published between January 2002 and August 2021 in peer-reviewed journal

Method

- Search electronic databases for inclusion criteria
  - Field 1: U.S.A. OR USA OR “United States” OR American
  - Field 2: “study abroad” OR (sojourner AND student) OR “educat* abroad”
  - Field 3: college OR university
- Two team members code titles/abstracts
- Any article which can’t be excluded is downloaded and the full text is coded by two team members
- Consensus decision made for any coding disagreements
- Reference lists of included articles reviewed for additional potential articles (ancestral review)
- Included articles’ relevant information coded by one team member and made reliable by another

Results

- Conduct a systematic literature review of qualitative and quantitative studies of U.S.-originated study abroad to:
  - Map the knowledge base in study abroad
  - Identify key strengths and gaps in the knowledge base
  - Support generation of focused literature reviews to provide direction and coalescence for a multidisciplinary field
  - Accelerate identification of relevant literature for all researchers and practitioners

Accessing and Using the Database

- Center for Research on Abroad and International Student Engagement (RAISE Center) | https://raisecenter@wfu.edu | @RAISECenterWFU