Introduction:
- Study abroad is commonly viewed as an experience that fosters maturity and personal growth. Previous findings are contradictory.
- Findings supporting study abroad as a catalyst for growth find that:
  - Personal growth is a main motivation for studying abroad (Pope, Sánchez, Lehnert, & Schmid, 2014).
  - Studying abroad promotes international political concern, cross-cultural interest, and self-confidence (Carlson & Widaman, 1988).
- Findings doubting the studying abroad effect on growth find that:
  - Studying abroad facilitates the creation of a third-culture, rather than promoting intercultural awareness and perspective-taking (Citron, 2002).

Hypotheses:
- **H1:** Growth Narratives: An empathic experience where there is a merging between the self and the other (Skoe, 2010).
- **H2:** Empathic Concern: An other-oriented emotion that is felt when another is in need (Block-Learner, et al., 2007).
- **H3:** Non-Prejudice: Is "habitual open mindedness" and a diminished need to organize people within categories (Phillips & Ziller, 1997, p. 420).

Method:
- **Longitudinal design with data collection in 3 waves.**
  - Only data from T1 and T3 analyzed for this thesis.
  - Studied students who were abroad and students who were studying on campus at UD in the summer of 2014.
- **Data Collection:**
  - Measured perspective-taking, empathic concern, non-prejudice through questionnaires.
  - Perspective-Taking and Empathic Concern Scale.
  - Universal Orientation Scale.
- **Results:**
  - At T1: 26 P in study abroad group/ 40 P in study on campus group.
  - At T3: 17 P in study abroad group/ 18 P in campus group.

Significance of Narratives:
- More growth mentioned in the narratives of students studying abroad than on campus, regardless of stability in personality from T1 to T3.
- Examples of narratives:
  - T3: "My summer study allowed me to get to know members of the math department better, which has helped me realize that I really like linear algebra as an area of study."

Hypotheses:
- **H1:** Study abroad group will have increased levels of relevant personality characteristics than the study on campus group from T1 to T3.
- **H2:** Perspective-taking, empathic concern, and non-prejudice will predict increases in growth narratives from T1 to T3.
- **H3:** Growth narratives at T1 will predict increases in perspective-taking, empathic concern, and non-prejudice from T1 to T3.
- **Exploration:** I will test for interactions between the two groups and each of the three characteristics at T1 in predicting increases in growth narratives from T1 to T3. Also, I will test for interactions between the two groups and growth narratives at T1 predicting changes over time in the three personality characteristics.

Results:
- **H1:** The study abroad group did not show increased rates of these personality characteristics from T1 to T3, as compared to the study on campus group.
- **H2:** Levels of personal growth in narratives at T1 did not predict growth at T3.
- **H3:** The growth-orientation of participants at T1 found in narratives was not predictive of increases in the personality characteristics of interest.

Growth Narratives at T1:

<table>
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<th>Non-Growth</th>
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<tr>
<td>Study on Campus Group</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Growth Narratives at T3:

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<td>Study on Campus Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>34</td>
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</table>

Conclusions and Implications:
- Has implications for better understanding the benefits of studying abroad.
- Further research should be performed to find how the studying abroad impacts individuals and their outlooks if these benefits do not lie in the promotion of personality development.
- Currently, we are creating a round 4 containing similar questionnaires and narrative prompts to find if study abroad has an impact over a longer span of time.

References: