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Evaluation of Pre-Departure Training for Study Abroad by Adapting Kirkpatrick's Model

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Study abroad outcomes are complex and not easy to obtain. In the midst of these challenges, evaluation of pre-departure training for study abroad is needed, yet little is researched. How can we evaluate the effectiveness of pre-departure training when study abroad outcomes are intricate? In this study, by employing Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model and designing pre-departure training to promote training transfer, we evaluated training impact on study abroad outcomes in a Japanese institution. For evaluation, we employed both qualitative and quantitative measures, such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), showcase portfolios, and surveys. The findings suggested that training designed for training transfer enhanced the attainment of our study abroad learning outcomes. Furthermore, our attempt indicates that Kirkpatrick's model is an applicable framework to evaluate pre-departure training for study abroad outcomes.

Keywords: Instructional design, Intercultural competence, Outcome assessment, Showcase portfolios, Training transfer

Introduction

Issues of evaluating pre-departure training in SA

International education for students to live and collaborate with people across countries is needed more than before in this interconnected global society. For such needs, higher education has been expanding opportunities for students to study abroad (SA). In the field of SA, however, merely sending students overseas is not enough for intercultural learning, and intentional intervention plays an important role (Jackson, 2020; Vande Berg et at. 2012; Jackson & Oguro, 2017). It has been reported that students who are studying abroad have limited meaningful interaction with local students (Jackson & Oguro, 2017; Mahon & Cushner, 2020) and even when intercultural contact broadens, one's bias may increase due to unpleasant experiences (Yashiro et al. 2009; Jackson, 2019). Some sojourners also feel barriers and cannot utilize their local affordances (Paige et al., 2004; Jackson, 2019). An intentional intervention, such as pre-departure training, and its discussion are therefore crucial for sojourners' intercultural learning. Pre-departure training is considered to develop knowledge, skills, and confidence to deal with cultural confusion, build meaningful cross-cultural relationships, and maximize the study abroad environment (Jackson, 2020, p.450).

Despite the criticality of pre-departure training for study abroad, its research is underdeveloped (Halenko & Jones, 2017; Shaheen, 2004; Hockersmith & Newfields, 2016) and even provision of pre-departure training is lacking (Goldstein, 2017). Evaluating the impact of the training, however, is difficult especially when SA learning outcomes are complex. According to Deardorff (2015), SA learning outcomes, such as intercultural competence, are experiential, developmental, and complicated in nature and therefore assessment should be learner-centered and process-oriented with authentic evidence in multiple approaches. Deardorff (2015) states that surveys and pre-post tests conducted by many institutions are not adequate and ePortfolios have emerged as a useful tool to collect holistic learning evidence. However, discussions on how to assess SA learning outcomes by collecting authentic evidence are scarce and no

design or model exists to evaluate the impact of pre-departure training on complex SA learning outcomes. As Lou, et al. (2012) report, pre-departure training is fundamentally needed but there is no one-fits-all method considering the diversity of SA programs.

Adapting Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model for pre-departure training

To tackle this critical issue, Cutting et al. (2020; 2021) discussed evaluation design of pre-departure training by applying Kirkpatrick's model with various instructional design (ID) theories and used ePortfolios for evaluation. Kirkpatrick's model has been the de facto standard in the field of training evaluation and consists of four phases in evaluating: Level 1: *reaction*, Level 2: *learning*, Level 3: *behavior*, and Level 4: *results* (Suzuki, 2015). The significance of this model is its emphasis on evaluation *after* training. In addition to evaluating trainees' reactions and learning of the training, the model proposes to examine the application of learning after training and analyze the result of training, such as organizational impact. To evaluate pre-departure training, it is indispensable to investigate its impact on students' SA experiences *after* training. Hence, this model can give a framework for evaluating pre-departure training.

Although Level 3 is called *behavior* in this model, Alliger et al. (1997) proposed to call it *transfer* based on their meta-analysis. Transfer of training has been researched over decades, and according to Baldwin et al. (2009, pp.41-42), positive training transfer is "the extent to which the learning that results from training experience transfers to the job and leads to meaningful changes in work performance." To evaluate such training impact, it is crucial to identify a few *critical behaviors* (CB) when designing training. Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick (2009) define CB as "specific, observable, measurable behaviors the training graduates should perform" that will likely lead to expected results, emphasizing the criticality of bridging training to behavioral change *after* training. The importance of targeting the specific behaviors in evaluation is also pointed out in SA research. In order to deal with the complex and developmental nature of learning outcomes such as in intercultural competence, Deardorff (2015) and Fantini (2012) suggest to focus on specific elements of learning outcomes and monitor the development.

Cutting et al. (2020) evaluated Level 3 (behavior) after pre-departure training by utilizing ePortfolios in SA. The expected learning outcomes in the study were *perspective development* and the target CB for the outcomes was to *ask cultural questions to people during SA in English*. They investigated whether the CB was transferred to SA settings after training by analyzing sojourners' daily learning reflections documented in ePortfolios. After their initial training, which did not assure students' attainment of the CB, they found training transfer was weak (Cutting, et al., 2020). Then, in the following year, they redesigned training to promote training transfer by assuring every student's attainment of the behavior during training. Cutting et al. (2021) expanded their Level 3 evaluation and utilized the evidence of training transfer including transfer issues to improve training.

Although these studies evaluated Level 3 (behavior) and found that the new training promoted training transfer in SA, it is not yet discussed if the training impacted the attainment of the learning outcomes in SA. Since SA learning outcomes are complex, evaluation requires multi-layered components. This study, therefore, is to evaluate training impact on SA learning outcomes through multidimensional evaluation methods. Through our research, we also aim to propose evaluation methods of pre-departure training.

Research Design & Methods

Even though pre-departure training is considered integral, it lacks evaluation research. Furthermore, evaluating training impact is especially difficult when SA learning outcomes are experiential and complex and thus multi-dimensional assessment with authentic evidence is desirable. The field of SA, therefore, needs discussion of pre-departure training design and its evaluation. This research tackles this critical issue in SA and attempts to evaluate training impact on complex SA learning outcomes in multi-faceted methods. The target pre-departure training is developed by Cutting et al. (2020), which incorporated Kirkpatrick's model and focused on training transfer.

Our research question is as follows:

RQ: *Does pre-departure training designed to enhance training transfer bring out expected SA learning outcomes?*

For diversification of the evaluation methods, we employ showcase portfolios, Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), and surveys. For evaluation of showcase portfolios and IDI, we will compare two different training styles to see the effect of training design. One training is the initial training which did not consider training transfer and did not assure the attainment of the target CB in training, which we call *Non-Transfer-focused training*. The other is the redesigned training which focused on promoting training transfer, which we call *Transfer-focused training* here. Based on the results, we will propose effective pre-departure training design and evaluation methods in the discussion. Figure 1 indicates the overall research framework, and the standpoint of this study is highlighted.

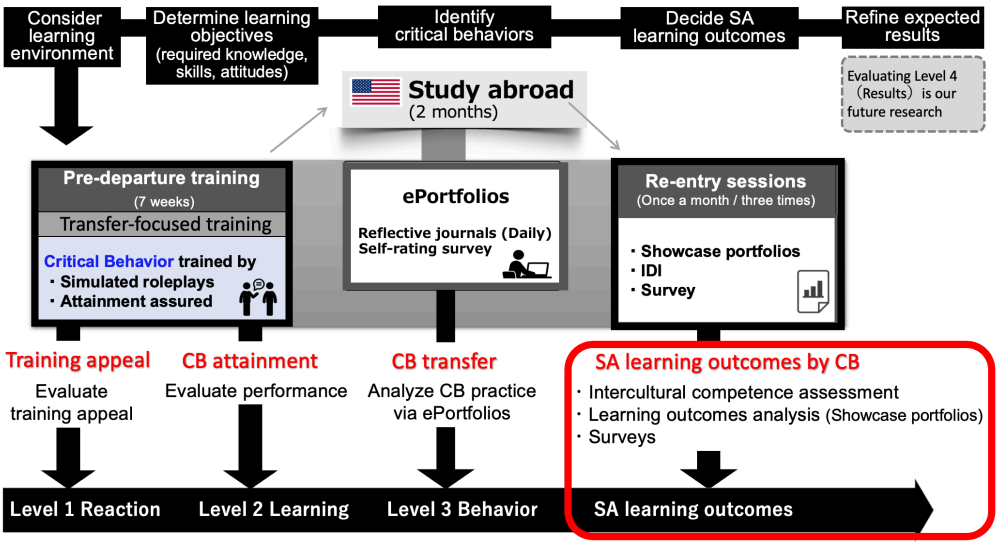

Figure 1. Research framework.
Adapted Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick (2009) to pre-departure training.
(Level 4 in Kirkpatrick's model is our future study and not included here)

Program background

Pre-departure training for study abroad. The study abroad program in this research is operated by a Japanese private university which sends a group of Japanese students to a US institution for 2 months to take credit-bearing classes. The program aims to prepare students to work in a global society according to the mission of the institution. To maximize study abroad experiences, pre-departure training (7 weeks, 14 class hours), as well as re-entry sessions (3 times-monthly, 6 class hours), are offered. The participants in *Non-Transfer-focused* training are 22 students (7 male and 15 female, 2nd and 3rd year), and those in the redesigned *Transfer-focused training* are 15 students (4 male and 11 female, 2nd and 3rd year). All of them provided written and verbal consent to participate in this study. Participants are required to have completed an intermediate English course offered at the institution and their English levels range from TOEFL ITP 460 to 500.

Adapting Kirkpatrick's evaluation model. We designed pre-departure training evaluation by following Kirkpatrick's model as in Cutting et al. (2020; 2021). According to Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick (2009), evaluation can be designed by using the following steps: Identify organizational needs and refine Level 4 (results), which is often an organizational impact such as ROI. Then design Level 3 (behavior) to yield the expected results by identifying a few CB which training graduates should perform after training. Then choose what trainees need to learn in training (Level 2) and consider reaction of training (Level 1).

In this study, Level 4 (results) is a part of the university mission, which is to contribute to the world by fostering students' global competence. Our SA program was created under this mission and university needs, which possesses the following learning outcomes: English communication skills, self-expression skills in English, intercultural communication skills, and perspective development (Cutting et al., 2020; 2021). Among these, our study target is to examine training impact on the *perspective taking* outcome (Cutting et al., 2020; 2021). *Perspective taking* is defined as suspending one's own judgment of others and seeking others' viewpoints (Cutting et al., 2020) to broaden perspectives as well as having meaningful interactions with local people. This outcome was refined through previous research (Cutting, et al., 2020) and employs the theory of DMIC (Developmental Model of Intercultural Competence) by Bennet (1986), which explains people's perspective shifts from ethnocentric views to more ethnorelative views in intercultural competence (Hammer, 2011). Based on DMIS, a validated inventory called the *Intercultural Development Inventory* (IDI) was created. Thus, we use IDI to assess our learning outcomes. This outcome has a CB, which is *asking questions in English about culture, such as cultural differences and surprises* and this cultural inquisitiveness is considered integral in various intercultural theories and models (Cutting et al., 2020; 2021). Table 1 lists the target SA learning outcomes and the CB in this study.

Table 1

Target SA learning outcome and critical behavior (CB)

SA learning outcomes	*Perspective development by suspending one's judgment and seeking others' perspective s.*
Critical behavior (CB)	*Students ask questions in English about culture, such as cultural differences and su rprises.*

Cutting et al. (2020) focused on this outcome and CB and evaluated the attainment of the CB during training (Level 2) as well as training transfer after training (Level 3). As Level 1 (reaction), training appeal was considered by using Keller's ARCS model. The ARCS model synthesizes motivational concepts into four categories of Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction, and we employed this model for Level 1 because this can be used to create motivational tactics (Keller, 2000) to affect trainees' reaction.

Pre-departure training was designed to enhance training transfer and assured the attainment of the goal by all participants by providing performance tests repeatedly through roleplays in simulated settings (Cutting et al., 2020; 2021). ePortfolio systems are used throughout the program to enhance, document, and evaluate students' learning (Cutting et al., 2021).

Methodologies: Evaluation of SA outcomes

SA learning outcomes need to be assessed with multiple approaches to capture authentic, learner-centered evidence. Therefore, we employ multi-faceted methodologies to evaluate the impact of pre-departure training on SA learning outcomes, such as Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), surveys, and showcase portfolios. The methodologies are listed in Table 2.

Table 2
SA learning outcomes and evaluation methods

Evaluation tools	Multiple methodologies
IDI (Inventory)*	Measured pre/post increase
Showcase portfolios*	Analyzed if CB led to SA learning outcomes
Surveys	Analyzed perceived impact of training CB

-In IDI and Showcase portfolios, the results were compared between two trainings.

IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory). As aforementioned, we use *The Intercultural Development Inventory* (IDI) to assess the target learning outcome. Based on the DMIS theory, which our learning outcome originated from, IDI is a 50-item questionnaire to assess developmental stages in people's worldviews towards differences. To see the impact of training design, we compared the results between *Non-transfer-focused training* and *Transfer-focused training*.

Showcase portfolios. Since inventory does not indicate the causes of the results, we analyzed students' *showcase portfolios* in which they wrote about their attainment of SA learning outcomes and investigated if training of the CB led to SA outcomes. Barret (2010) explains that in most showcase portfolios, students reflect on their achievement of learning goals by thinking over their selected evidence and write about their learning, its significance, and next learning goals. Our students created showcase portfolios in the re-entry sessions by reflecting on, selecting, and exhibiting their learning outcomes as well as their next goals. In their showcase portfolios, we looked into how they developed their perspectives and examined the effect of the CB.

We analyzed students' descriptions following the deductive coding approach by Sato (2008) and examined whether outcomes were attained by the CB. Then, we compared the results between *Transfer-focused training* and *Non-Transfer-focused training*. Figure 2 shows a sample of students' showcase portfolios.

Figure 2. An example of students' showcase portfolios of study abroad learning outcomes

Surveys. To bolster our data, we conducted *surveys* to investigate if training of the CB led to SA learning outcomes. To evaluate the training of the CB, the questions were created for each stage; Level 2, Level 3, and SA learning outcomes. The questions to evaluate Level 2 asked about the attainment of the CB in training. Evaluation of Level 3 asked about the implementation of the CB after training. To evaluate SA learning outcomes, the questions inquired about the attainment of the expected learning outcomes. There are nine questions in total. Questions were a 4-point Likert scale from 4 (Strongly agree) to 1 (Strongly disagree). We conducted closed questions as well as open-ended questions. In open-ended questions, we asked about the impact of CB training. We analyzed their free comments and coded the perceived impact of training CB. The survey, which was anonymous and consented upon, was given to all the participants in the *Transfer-focused training* 6 months after their return through online formats. A limitation of this study is that the survey was created after *Transfer-focused training* was designed and therefore we only presented the results of *Transfer-focused training*.

Results

IDI results

To understand training impact on SA learning outcomes, we conducted IDI before and after study abroad for students in *Transfer-focused training* and *Non-Transfer-focused training*. In Non-Transfer focused training, 21 out of 22 students (95%) and in *Transfer-focused training*, 15 out of 16 students (94%) completed pre-posttests. T-tests indicated IDI increase in both trainings. In order to compare the training effect on the post-test by eliminating the effect of the pre-test, we conducted ANCOVA to perform pre-posttest analysis where the pre-test is used as a covariate, the training types as an independent variable, and the post-test as a dependent variable. There is a significant effect of training type on the post-test after controlling for the pre-test, (F [1, 33] $=4.29$, $p<0.05$) and students in Transfer-focus training had statistically higher increase in post-test. Also 87% of students had an increase in IDI in *Transfer-focused training*, whereas, 57% of students had an increase in the *Non-Transfer-focused training*. Table 3 indicates these results.

Table 3
Results of IDI (Comparison of Non-Transfer-focused training and Transfer-focused training)

IDI	Pre		Post		*t*	*p*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Non-Transfer-focused training (n=21)	85.28	(13.39)	90.51	(13.68)	-2.32	<.031*
Transfer-focused training (n=15)	84.33	(11.51)	96.70	(12.82)	-4.72	<.0003**

IDI	Non-Transfer-focused training		Transfer-focused training		ANCOVA
	Pre (SD)	*Post (SD)*	*Pre (SD)*	*Post (SD)*	F (1,33)=4.29, p=0.046
	85.28(13.39)	90.51(13.68)	84.33(11.51)	96.70(12.82)	

IDI	*Increase*	*Decrease*	*Increase*
Non-Transfer focused training (n=21)	12	9	57%
Transfer-focused training (n=15)	13	2	87%

$*p<.05$ $**p<.01$

Showcase portfolio results

Showcase portfolios were submitted by 21 out of 22 students (95%) in *Non-Transfer-focused training* and 16 out of 16 students (100%) in *Transfer-focused training*. In *Non-Transfer-focused trainees'* showcase, there was no evidence of CB, which is asking questions to seek others' perspectives (Table 4). For example, this student explained his/her perspective development not from CB, but from observation: *Something I was able to notice as visible differences as, for example, some labor workers seemed to be black people, but I did not see such difference among students*. On the other hand, 8 *Transfer-focus trainees* out of 16 (50 %) indicated their perspective change by seeking others' viewpoints by asking questions as CB. Table 4 contains the results of the showcase portfolio analysis.

Table 4
Results of showcase portfolio analysis: Evidence of SA learning outcomes obtained by the critical behavior

	Extracted descriptions of goal attainment in showcase portfolios
Non-Transfer-focused training	
	None
Transfer-focused training	
Student A	When I encountered something different from myself or Japanese people, instead of feeling strange, I could accept it as a difference. And I gained an attitude to **ask and search** why there's such a difference.
Student B	I **tried to ask questions** when I didn't understand or was curious. Well, mostly about music. **At the beginning, I was not asking questions much**, so I was often listening to others' questions. But what I am curious about is not necessarily what others want to know, so **I thought it is myself who needs to ask. I think my questions to teachers increased recently. Self-solution and solution by friends decreased, I think.**
Student C	I was feeling these volunteers (at the volunteer center) were volunteering as part of a school requirement. But **when I asked for reasons** why they were coming, I heard lots of voices which surprised me such as, 'because it is fun,' 'because I can meet and ta lk with lots of people.'
Student D	I told M that we learned about slavery systems in Japan like this and **asked him 'how is it really?'** Since I was naturally interested in other cultures, I think I was able to ask questions. But I was not as aware of my own culture as I thought, so when I was asked about my own culture, I looked into it.
Student E	When I visited my buddy's house, his/her parents were saying they like sushi. **When I asked what kinds they like**, I was surprised that the mother said she likes sea urchins, since I saw on TV that foreign people do not eat sea urchins much. So, I was tempted to say, 'foreign people do not eat sea urchins, so you don't like them, do you?' But then **this question is from my assumption.** So instead, **I asked, do people here eat sea urchins?** Then she said, 'not so much.'
Student F	I was curious about American food, since I did not want to gain weight. I often hear people say that American food makes people fat. **But when I actually asked people about it**, healthy food tends to cost more than unhealthy junk food, and because of that reason, many people buy junk food. When I went to the supermarket, salads were indeed expensive.
Student G	By going to America, I was able to change my stereotypes greatly (finding various views of policies and regulations, etc.) … By recognizing this, **I was able to ask questions with care** and to share my culture and values.
Student H	I was talking (with a dorm resident) about how history is taught in each country. After listening to his explanation, **I asked about** the case of the Hiroshima atomic bomb. I was shocked at what he said and felt "What? Really?" After that, I researched to see if it was true. Then I found…

-Bold type shows identified segments that indicate when students sought others' perspectives by asking questions.

Survey results

11 students (68%) completed the survey and the result is shown in Table 5. Questions (1) to (2) asked about the attainment of CB and confidence by training; the mean was 3.45. Questions (3) to (5) asked about their behaviors after training; the mean ranged from 3.45 to 3.90. Questions (6) to (9) asked about the impact of CB; the mean of perceived effectiveness of training CB ranged from 3.45 to 3.90. The means were highly positive in all questions.

Table 5
Results of surveys: effectiveness of training critical behavior (4-point Likert scale)

Practice of critical behavior led me to… (n=11)	*M*	*SD*	*Positive responses*
Level 2 learning			
(1) Acquired the skill to ask questions about cultures	3.45	.50	100%
(2) Become confident to ask questions about cultures	3.45	.50	100%
Level 3 behavior in study abroad			
(3) Become more conscious to ask cultural questions	3.82	.39	100%
(4) Ask cultural questions during study abroad	3.45	.50	100%
(5) Use English more	3.90	.29	100%
Study abroad learning outcomes			
(6) Broaden my perspectives	3.90	.29	100%
(7) Learn new cultures with curiosity	3.82	.39	100%
(8) Deeply communicate with local people	3.45	.66	87.5%
(9) Mutually understand in a host country	3.65	.48	100%

Next, we analyzed students' free comments in the same survey, by identifying and highlighting the perceived impact of training CB and giving codes (Table 6). Through open-coding, we found that CB training had an impact on *perspective development* (n=4), *suspending judgment* (n=5), *promoting CB* (n=4), *considering others* (n=2), and *arousing interest* (n=2). Table 7 summarized the frequency of the coded impact and its sample descriptions.

Table 6
Students' comments in surveys: effectiveness of training critical behavior

n=10	Students' comments about impact of critical behavior training	Coded impact
Student a	By asking and learning about cultures, **my views broadened.**	Perspective development
Student b	Through question practice, I became aware that I was often making my own judgement unconsciously. Because of the awareness, **now I can deal with things doubting my views** in a positive way and **thinking "what if…"**	Suspend judgement, Perspective development (attempt)
Student c	After study abroad, I came to think of ways to talk to each other **in a considerate manner for others. I really stopped feeling "no way!" or "that's weird,"** but instead, **I started questioning "why" and deepening my cultural understanding**. Not only cultural things, I can see my persona change.	Consideration for others, Suspend judgement, Perspective development
Student d	I was able to **ask questions smoothly** during study abroad.	Promote critical behavior
Student e	By learning how to ask questions, I became **not hesitant to ask questions** to others.	Promote critical behavior
Student f	I was able to become **interested in cultures**, especially America and American nationality as a multi-ethnic country, and was able to **ask questions proactively**.	Arouse interest Promote critical behavior
Student g	Instead of making judgement only through my bias, **I think first before making judgement** to view things.	Suspend judgement
Student h	I stopped my self-conclusion. I **stopped my self-centered interpretation such as "maybe that's that,** and **started asking questions even about a small thing.**	Suspend judgement, Promote critical behavior
Student i	I became more **curious about other cultures**.	Arouse interest
Student j	Casual things can be totally different, so I **decided to be careful** of talking about it and started thinking that I want to learn how to **talk without leading to bias or prejudice**.	Consideration for others, Suspend judgement

Table 7

The frequency of coded impact and its sample descriptions

Coded impact	frequency	Sample descriptions
Perspective development	n=4	Because of the awareness, **now I can deal with things doubting my views** in a positive way and **thinking "what if…"**
Suspending judgment	n=4	**I really stopped feeling "no way!" or "that's weird,"** but instead, **I started questioning "why" and deepening my cultural understanding**.
Promoting critical behavior	n=4	By learning how to ask questions, I became **not hesitant to ask questions** to others.
Consideration for others	n=2	After study abroad, I came to think of ways to talk to each other **in a considerate manner for others.**
Arousing interest	n=2	I became more **curious about other cultures**.

Discussion

In the field of SA, pre-departure training is considered essential, yet its training design and evaluation are rarely discussed. Evaluating training impact is especially difficult due to the experiential and complex nature of SA learning outcomes, which require multi-dimensional assessment with authentic evidence. Our study investigated if pre-departure training designed to enhance training transfer brings out expected SA learning outcomes. The training employed Kirkpatrick's framework to evaluate training impact *after* training and incorporated ePortfolios for collecting holistic learning evidence of SA. We targeted the CB as *asking cultural questions in English*, then examined if training of CB led to the expected SA learning outcomes, which is *perspective development through suspending judgment and seeking others' views by asking questions*. Since multi-faceted approaches are necessary to assess holistic SA learning outcomes, we

evaluated training impact on SA learning outcomes using multiple methods, such as the *Intercultural Development Inventory* (IDI), showcase portfolio analysis, and surveys. To identify the effect of our training design, we compared the results of IDI and showcase portfolio analysis. We also examined the impact of CB training through surveys.

IDI results showed *that Transfer-focused training* had a significantly higher impact on the attainment of SA learning outcomes than *Non-Transfer-focused training*. Moreover, in showcase portfolios, 50% of *Transfer-focused trainees* indicated their attainment of outcomes by CB, whereas *Non-Transfer-focused trainees* showed no evidence of practicing CB for the outcomes. The survey after *Transfer-focused training* indicated a positive perception of training impact on SA learning outcomes. Lastly, open-ended responses revealed that *Transfer-focused training* produced various perceived outcomes such as considering others and arousing interest, in addition to the expected outcomes. Through this qualitative and quantitative analysis, we can say that pre-departure training designed to promote transfer led to expected SA learning outcomes. Furthermore, our attempt indicates that Kirkpatrick's model was applicable to evaluate pre-departure training for SA learning outcomes.

Our findings provide the following implications for designing and evaluating pre-departure training. The below points ① to ④ are indicated in Figure 3.

① Kirkpatrick's framework can be adapted to evaluate pre-departure training. We implemented this through the identification of CBs which lead to expected results and learning outcomes when designing training. This was followed by evaluation of the attainment of CBs during training (Level 2), transfer of CBs in SA (Level 3), and effects of CBs after SA (SA learning outcomes).

② Transfer-focused training may bring out expected SA learning outcomes. Our pre-departure training promoted training transfer by assuring students' attainment of CBs through simulated practice and evaluation in training.

③ To analyze training transfer, ePortfolios can be employed to capture students' use of CBs during SA.

④ To evaluate the impact of pre-departure training on complex SA learning outcomes, multi-faceted evaluation methods are needed. In our study, we evaluated the training impact through a validated inventory that is relevant to expected SA learning outcomes, surveys about the impact of training the CB, and showcase portfolios that captured authentic evidence of the CB and its effect.

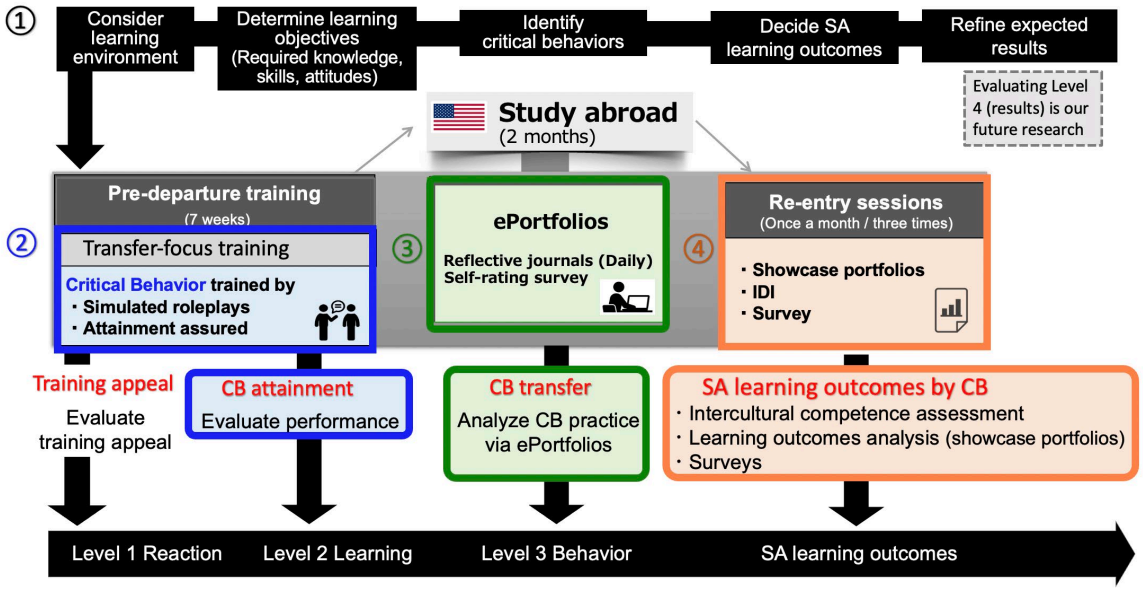

Figure 3. Evaluation framework of pre-departure training in our study
Adapted Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick (2009) to pre-departure training.

The limitation of this study was its narrow focus on learning outcomes, but this was to manage the complexity of SA learning outcomes and trace learning evidence (Cutting et al., 2021). Moreover, Level 4 in the Kirkpatrick model was

not examined, which involves organizational impact. Thus, future research is needed to understand training effectiveness in wider contexts. Despite the fact that our study is limited in its scope, our adaptation of Kirkpatrick's model in pre-departure training gave us a pathway to evaluate the training impact of study abroad outcomes.

Conclusion

Providing pre-departure training is essential for students' intercultural learning in SA. Nonetheless, research on pre-departure training and its effectiveness is underdeveloped. Moreover, SA learning outcomes are multi-dimensional and intricate, thus it is not straightforward to examine the impact of pre-departure training on such complex outcomes. Our study approached this issue by employing Kirkpatrick's framework and evaluated the impact of pre-departure training on SA learning outcomes. The findings from qualitative and quantitative analysis using different evaluation methods suggest our *Transfer-focused training* impacted the attainment of expected outcomes. Furthermore, we conclude Kirkpatrick's model is applicable in evaluating training impact on study abroad. The limitation of our study was its narrow scope, targeting a particular CB to monitor and evaluate its impact, which was done because of the complexity of SA learning outcomes. Thus, expansion of CBs in training and evaluation will be our next step. Furthermore, evaluating the organizational impact of training as Level 4 should be conducted as a long-term study. In our study, we evaluated training effectiveness by adapting Kirkpatrick's model with ePortfolio systems and by promoting a CB and analyzing its impact. We suggest that future studies utilize this evaluation model and examine its applicability in other study abroad settings and beyond, such as field trips, teaching internships, and other programs which send students to a real-world experience after training.

Note: This paper is a part of the dissertation submitted by the first author (Cutting, 2022) to the Graduate School of Instructional Systems, Kumamoto University, Japan, under the supervision of the co-authors. An earlier version of this paper was presented at ICOME 2021 (Cutting, et al, 2021).

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