My Passion for Identity-Based Learning & Intercultural Competency Facilitation

To be born into white Western privilege is one thing, but to be *adopted* into it from a developing country presented me with a constant identity crisis. Although I had the privilege of attending private K-12 education, I never consciously understood *why* I felt out of place amongst my white upper-class classmates and teachers— I just *experienced* the out-of-placeness, feeling ashamed of telling others I was Chinese *and* adopted; the presence of people who didn't look like me; the questions I get while abroad when telling locals I am American; and the dominating narratives that surround transnational adoptees and what 'family' meant made me battle my own internalized racism.

My unique story is the core for why I want to understand the systemic and sociocultural challenges that people of different identities face, but more importantly, I want to encourage a space where stories can be shared and from them, solutions can be enacted.

My Commitment

My passion to create a space that uplifts every dimension of one's identity and culture and to challenge my own biases is rooted in my work. Some highlights include:

- Highlighting my approach to supporting denied/waitlisted first-year Gen-Z students abroad with my own **framework for Human-Centered** support.
- Embedding necessary **intercultural competency development** and critical identity-based reflection into our pre-departure orientations, practicing the constant process of iteration.
- Designing a **virtual exchange program** to **unite transracial Chinese adoptees** all over the world to discuss race and identity illustrates research, storytelling, data, and clear **curriculum design.**
- Creatively designing ESL lessons that avoid stereotypes of American culture and represent different identities, strategically bringing awareness to underrepresented groups that respect the host country's norms and ideologies surrounding different identities.
- Appropriately responding to **inclusive housing needs** of students by developing a survey to find an ideal rooming match.
- Leveraging the virtual Zoom "waiting room" feature and designing a virtual inclusive study abroad office that encourages a welcoming space for underrepresented students.
- Developing a first iteration of a framework for CEA CAPA Education Abroad to make its organization and onsite locations more accessible to students with disabilities.
- Leveling up in my intercultural competency training taking a 12-week intensive course on facilitating intercultural competencies, including completion of the IDI assessment and creating a plan to work through my gaps.
- Conducting research on black identity abroad and how black American Spanish learners acquire and make choices in Spanish to present their identity in a second language.
- Supporting K-8 ESL educators and families in delivering accessible tools to their bilingual Spanish-English students.
- Volunteering at the **Forum on Education Abroad**, presenting at **Diversity Abroad**, participating in the **NAFSA Region I Mentorship** program, and being a member of the **World Council on Intercultural and Global Competence** to keep up with the trends and challenges facing EDI in the field.

I am ready to take on new challenges and celebrate small achievements in making educational experiences more accessible, safe, inclusive, and equitable to the students I serve. The best way to continue advancing is to learn from and work with organizations whose mission prioritizes EDI in every facet of their work.

Rachel Bornstein