

ADVANCES IN GLOBAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

# GLO CER '21

VOLUME 4

Editors:

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ISBN 978-1-955833-04-2

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# Intercultural Development in Preservice Teacher Study Abroad

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## Abstract

International teacher education study abroad programs have been proposed as a way to instill intercultural competence in pre-service teachers and help them consider their own cultural identity and the cultural identities of their students. Yet, questions remain about the effectiveness of these programs. This study aims to examine how international teacher education study abroad programs designers consider intercultural competence development. In this review, 14 studies centered on pre-service teacher education with a focus on international experiences for US students are analyzed in order to discover how international teacher education study abroad programs define, describe, and measure intercultural competence in their participants. Drawing on the Council of Europe's Competences for Democratic Citizenship Model, participant growth was examined in four areas: attitudes, values, skills, and knowledge and critical understandings. This study highlights the need for researchers to explicitly consider issues of culture and intercultural competence development along with carefully planned and scaffolded opportunities for critical reflection.

**Keywords:** intercultural competence, pre-service teacher study abroad, culture, international teacher education, global education

**Recommended Citation:** Simmons, J. (2021). Intercultural development in preservice teacher study abroad. In W. B. James, C. Cobanoglu, & M. Cavusoglu (Eds.), *Advances in global education and research* (Vol. 4, pp. 1–15). USF M3 Publishing.  
<https://www.doi.org/10.5038/9781955833042>

## Introduction

Despite changing classroom demographics, the majority of classroom teachers are monolingual, white, middle class females. Research suggests that pre-service teachers are unprepared to teach in diverse classrooms (Hodgkinson, 2002). Pre-service teachers imagine their future classrooms to be comprised of students that look, speak, and think like they do (Thapa, 2020). One's culture and worldview influence how they interact with others, notions of respect, ideas about collaboration, and much more. Yet, pre-service teachers are often unaware of their own cultural identities and the ways in which culture impacts learning and schools and they lack intercultural skills (Marx & Moss, 2016). Arthur (2020) notes that teachers bring their own cultural beliefs and values and experiences to their professional setting. Because pre-service teachers lack this awareness, they may unintentionally alienate or isolate students of diverse backgrounds, impose unfair policies, or reinforce historical and political systems of power and inequality, focusing on a deficit model of thinking about students of color (Utt & Tochluk, 2020). In order to support pre-service teachers' awareness of culture, universities have created programs that allow for cross-cultural immersion. International teacher education study abroad programs have been proposed as a way to build multicultural competencies and personal and professional growth (Cushner, 2007). During these

international experiences, pre-service teachers are immersed in a foreign culture and are deeply engaged in the study of culture, coming to understand their own cultural identity and develop necessary intercultural skills. Chen and Starosta (1999) consider intercultural competence as three interrelated aspects: Intercultural sensitivity, intercultural awareness, and intercultural adroitness. Intercultural sensitivity is an affective aspect characterized by a willingness to know and appreciate cultural differences. Intercultural awareness is a cognitive aspect representing understanding cultural practices and their influence on how people perceive the world. Intercultural adroitness is a behavioral aspect of skills needed for effective intercultural interactions. But questions remain about how effective are these programs at building intercultural competence in their participants? This study aims to examine how international teacher education study abroad programs designers consider intercultural competence development in their participants and if participants are aware of their own growth and intercultural competence.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Study Abroad Programs***

According to the 2019 Open Doors report, the 2017-2018 academic year saw a 2.7% increase in study abroad participation, with 341,751 US students studying abroad. Europe hosted 54.9% of all US study abroad students, with the majority sojourning in the United Kingdom (39,403), Italy (36,945), and Spain (32,411). 50,807 students traveled to Latin America and 38,408 to Asia. The majority were female (67%) and white (70%). 61% of study abroad students were juniors or seniors. 25.6% were pursuing STEM fields, 20.8% were business and management majors and 17.1% studied social sciences. Pre-service teachers are significantly underrepresented in study abroad with only 3.3% of all US study abroad students enrolled as education majors. Often complex licensure requirements and inflexible course progressions make study abroad difficult for education majors unless study abroad is intentionally built into their program and designed to support their development as preservice teachers.

Study abroad is often celebrated as a way for students to be exposed to different ideas and ways of life, opening pathways for participants to ask meaningful questions and examine different worldviews. Study abroad can facilitate personal growth and change students' worldviews (Clarke, 2009). Lee (2012) asserts that meaningful interaction with people of different cultures and critical reflection are key to examining worldviews and developing students' intercultural competence. Mitchell (2015) highlights a key challenge with achieving meaningful interaction with host nation individuals, because technology has made it easier to remain in close contact with your home community many participants did not seem to engage in the local community, inhibiting intercultural growth. These interactions and discussions about culture and its influence cannot be implicit in the experience, rather as Rommal and Byram (2018) note without carefully designed experiences, study abroad participants often form a circle of friends of their same nationality and only have surface interactions with those of different cultural backgrounds. Without these carefully designed experiences that allow students to engage in the host culture meaningfully, study abroad participants do not change their own worldview or develop intercultural competence (Aamaas et al., 2019).

## ***Culture Shock***

Often study abroad participants are faced with culture shock. Considered to have coined the term culture shock, Oberg (1960) defines culture shock as “the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse” (p. 177). Without these familiar signs and symbols people feel frustrated and they tend to reject the environment that is causing discomfort and assign immense importance to their home environment. Oberg conceptualized culture shock occurs in stages, beginning with the honeymoon stage where individuals are fascinated by the new environment. After the honeymoon phase, people enter a crisis where they experience the actual culture shock. They begin to reject the new environment. This is the critical moment for program designers. When participants enter crisis, they need intentionally designed experiences to help them understand the broader cultural context and begin to develop their intercultural competence. With these experiences and as time passes and people begin to feel more comfortable in the new environment, language skills improve and intercultural competence develops, they make connections within the country they enter the recovery stage. In recovery, people are aware of the problems but instead of focusing on the problems, they begin to consider solutions. Adjustment is the final stage of culture shock when the new environment is finally accepted and the feelings of anxiety vanish almost completely (Oberg, 1960).

Oberg considered culture shock almost like a disease, concentrating on the negative reactions to unfamiliar circumstances. Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001) present a different model, concentrating on the active process of managing change as a result of unfamiliar cultural environments. In their ABC (affective, behavioral, and cognitive) model, they explore affective, behavioral, and cognitive processes. Their affective component is most similar to Oberg’s understanding of culture shock, characterized by confusion and disorientation. However, Ward, Bochner, and Furnham pull from theories of stress and coping to emphasize factors that can reduce an individual’s stress and anxiety, including self-efficacy, emotional resilience, and social support. Their behavioral component concerns how people behave, and emphasizes cultural learning of the rules and conventions that guide interaction and communication in a culture. The cognitive component challenges individuals to redefine their own understanding of culture and how culture impacts the way we see the world, ourselves, and others (Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001). Program designers can follow Ward, Bochner, and Funham’s lead and plan for teaching the behavioral component. Goldstein and Keller (2015) found that students’ understanding of culture shock differed significantly from intercultural experts, with students more likely to be concerned with external factors, such as foreign language, environment, and a loss of familiar surroundings than internal factors, including stress and emotional regulation. Unless challenged, students attribute culture shock to external factors outside of their control, instead of following the path laid by Ward, Bochner, and Furnham. Students in an international setting, as temporary sojourners, face the added challenge of managing not only a transition to a new environment and lifestyle, but also a transition to a new learning environment (Arthur, 2004). This presents another opportunity for program designers to explicitly consider intercultural competence development, through leading students to consider the internal factors also. Shein (2015) suggests that the term culture shock, which has colloquially referred to differences in culture, must also include the “shock” of being forced to reconcile one’s own whiteness, one’s own identity and place within complex colonial histories and power relationships, and the not always flattering truth about one’s assumptions and beliefs. This powerful intellectual work is not easy or comfortable and without intentionally designed experiences to guide participants the full potential of study abroad is not

realized. There are many models and definitions of intercultural competence that program designers can consult to structure meaningful learning experiences for their participants. The next section will present a few models of intercultural competence.

### *Definitions of Intercultural Competence*

Milton J. Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) describes the perspectives and behaviors people adopt when faced with cultural differences (Bennett, 2004). The model outlines a continuum from ethnocentric to ethnorelative stages. People with an ethnocentric approach assume that their worldview is the only correct one and that it is central to all reality. The first ethnocentric stage is denial, characterized by isolation and separation. People in denial are uninterested in cultural differences, they may separate to protect themselves from different worldviews. The next ethnocentric stage is defense. In defense people begin to be able to recognize cultural differences but feel threatened by it. Minimization is a transition stage between ethnocentric and ethnorelative. Here cultural differences are minimized in favor of human universals and people promote ideas of universal humanity. Moving into the ethnorelative stages, people start at acceptance. People in acceptance are able to see and appreciate cultural differences and recognize that their way of life is just one of many equally complex worldviews. The next stage is adaptation, characterized by an ability to behave in culturally appropriate ways. The final ethnorelative stage is integration. People in integration are able to manipulate multiple cultural frames of reference to construct their own identity. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) is the validated instrument for measuring intercultural competence (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). The IDI is grounded in the DMIS and reflects five stages from Bennett's continuum: defense, denial, minimization as a transition phase, acceptance, adaptation. The IDI offers a perceived score, developmental score, and an individualized plan for continued intercultural growth.

Darla Deardorff's Intercultural Competence Model begins with required attitudes of respect, openness, and curiosity (2006). Deardorff asserts that these are fundamental if people are to develop intercultural competence. Once the requisite attitudes are in place people build knowledge including cultural self-awareness, sociolinguistic awareness, and a deep understanding of culture. At the same time as building this knowledge, they are honing their skills of listening, observing, and interpretation. The knowledge and skills lead to the internal outcome of adaptability and empathy and an ethnorelative worldview. Finally, the internal outcomes transmit to the desired external outcome which is effective communication and behavior based on one's intercultural knowledge.

The Council of Europe's Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) outlines a model with the desired skills, values, attitudes, knowledge and critical understanding which are necessary for people to live and interact peacefully in the diverse world (Barrett, 2016). The model prioritizes intercultural dialogue and recognizes that these competences are not automatically acquired, rather they are learned and practiced. In this, they turn to education and its potential to empower citizens, and recommend that the model inform educational decisions and curriculum planning. The CDC model considers culture as composed of three main aspects: material resources, social shared resources, and subjective resources of individual group members. Material resources might include food, tools, and clothing; socially shared resources are language and the unwritten rules of interaction; and subjective resources are values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices that individuals



employ in vastly different ways. Cultural groups are always internally heterogeneous and evolving. Additionally, individuals emphasize different cultural affiliations according to their social context. Barrett considers the internal process of evaluating and employing relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding in different contexts as essential to competence (2016).

## **Research Design and Methods**

The purpose of this study is twofold: first, to examine how international teacher education study abroad program designers consider intercultural development and second, to determine if students are aware of their own growth and learning. The first phase of analysis sought to discover how international teacher education study abroad programs define, describe, and measure intercultural competence in their participants. This project occurs within the context of a larger project examining multiple aspects of international teacher education study abroad programs. At the start of this larger project, a comprehensive initial database search was completed through available databases: ERIC, EBSCO Host, SCSU Library Consortium and UConn Library Consortium (multiple databases searched). The following terms were used to search: Teacher education, teacher training, teacher, pre-service teacher, preservice teachers, teacher candidate, school of education, international teacher education, global teacher education, study abroad, international experience, international field placement, international student teaching, cross-cultural field experience. This initial search found n=231 references, which were then examined to refine inclusion criteria. For this study, the inclusion criteria were: peer-reviewed studies published between 2009-2019, with full-texts available, centered on pre-service teacher education, with a focus on study abroad or international experience, with students from a US university or college. Dissertations, books or book chapters, conference papers and proceedings, and theoretical work were excluded. This study is a subset of a larger project examining n=37 studies, and given that this work occurs in tandem with additional work, the inclusion criteria is intentionally narrow. Thus, n=14 studies were reviewed. See Table 1 for a list of the studies reviewed in this project.

Analysis of the articles occurred in three phases to correspond to the three parts of the research question. Phase one examined how researchers define intercultural competence. The main questions include a) How often are researchers using the term “intercultural competence”? b) Where in their articles are researchers writing about intercultural competence? And c) What definitions of intercultural competence are being used by teacher education study abroad researchers? To determine this, a list of intercultural competence synonyms including terms like “cultural competence”, “intercultural growth”, “critical cultural awareness”, “and intercultural communication skills” was developed. Next each article was read and the researcher noted if and where they used intercultural competence or synonyms. By noting where the authors used intercultural competence, a broad understanding of how researchers approached intercultural competence was determined. Throughout phase 1, continual reevaluation of the synonym list and changes were made. Ultimately, mentions of culturally responsive teaching or global/cultural awareness were excluded. Although it is worth noting that these terms are often used in conjunction with intercultural competence. However, through the process of defining competence, the researcher concluded that awareness was not the same idea as competence. Competence, in this view, includes ideas of skills and values that awareness did not address.

**Table 1. Articles Reviewed and Publication Information**

Article Title	Author(s)	Journal and Year of Publication
A Window of Opportunity: Perspectives of preservice teachers from the United States on the customs and practices of teaching in primary schools in England	Suzanne M. Flannery Quinn, Mary Lou Morton, Roger Brindley	Teacher Development (2011)
Coming Home: Intercultural learning during the re-entry semester following a study abroad experience	Helen Marx, David M. Moss	Journal of International Studies (2016)
Comparative Education in European Contexts: A study of student perspectives	Thomas Misco, James M. Shiveley	International Education (2014)
Conversations in a Pub: Positioning the critical friend as “peer relief” in the supervision of a teacher education study abroad experience	Jennifer Schneider, Audra Parker	The Qualitative Report (2013)
Developing Culturally Competent Teachers: An international student teaching field experience	Michelle Salmona, Margaret Partlo, Dan Kaczynski, Simon N. Leonard	Australian Journal of Teacher Education (2015)
Examining the Practice of Critical Reflection for Developing Pre-Service Teachers’ Multicultural Competencies: Findings from a study abroad program in Honduras	Suniti Sharma, JoAnn Phillion, Erik Malewski	Issues in Teacher Education (2011)
How Preservice Teachers Engage in the Process of (De)Colonization: Findings from an international field experience in Honduras	Suniti Sharma, Jubin Rahatzad, JoAnn Phillion	Interchange (2013)
How Preservice Teachers’ Study Abroad Experiences Lead to Changes in their Perceptions of English Language Learners	Adriana L. Medina, Jennifer I. Hathaway, Paola Pilonieta	The Forum on Education Abroad (2015)
“I Didn’t Know of a Better way to Prepare to Teach”: A case study of paired student teaching abroad	Stephanie Behm Cross, Alyssa Hadley Dunn	Teacher Education Quarterly (2016)
Please Mind the Culture Gap: Intercultural development during a teacher education study abroad program	Helen Marx, David M. Moss	Journal of Teacher Education (2011)
Reflections on Student Interns’ Cultural Awareness Developed Through a Short-Term International Internship	Jacqueline J. Batey, Marsha H. Lupi	Teacher Education Quarterly (2012)
Short-Term Study Abroad for Texas Preservice Teachers: On the road from empathy to critical awareness	Deborah K. Palmer, Julia Menard-Warwick	Multicultural Education (2012)
Transformative Learning of Pre-service Teachers During Study Abroad in Reggio Emilia Italy: A case study	Angela Vatalaro, Judit Szenté, Judith Levin	Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (2015)
US Elementary Preservice Teachers’ Experiences while Teaching Students in Taiwan	Hsiu-Lien Lu, Lina Soares	Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (2014)

Phase two addressed how researchers describe intercultural competence. At the end of phase one there was a sense of the broad landscape of intercultural competence in preservice teacher study abroad but questions remained about how researchers connected intercultural competence to their participants. The goal of phase two was to understand if participants were aware of their own learning and growth and how they were interacting with people from different cultures. “If we all participate in multiple cultures, but we each participate in a unique constellation of cultures, then every interpersonal situation is potentially an intercultural situation” (Barrett, 2016, p. 20). In phase two codes derived from the CDC model of competence described above were derived and then the findings section of each article was analyzed and coded for the four components of competence: values, skills, attitudes, knowledge and critical understanding. The CDC model has a dynamic view of culture. Codes included both student statements and statements made by the researchers about the cohort. Some of the statements were hard to code into just one competence, so these statements were included in both competences. For example, the statement, “I am now more confident in my ability to change and adapt to my environment” (Batey & Lupi, 2012, p. 33) showed evidence of multiple competences, thus it was included with skills because it demonstrated flexibility and adaptability, but also included in attitudes because it demonstrated self-efficacy. Phase three focused on how researchers assessed growth in their participants through examining the methods section of each article and noting their procedures. Combined, the three phases of analysis allowed me to understand how researchers define, describe, and measure intercultural competence.

## Findings

### Definitions

Through phase one, there were 186 mentions of intercultural competence or synonyms over 13 articles. 103 mentions were found in the introduction, literature review, and conclusions sections. 79 mentions were found in the methodology, findings, and discussion sections. Of the 14 papers reviewed, only four research questions included intercultural competence. There was significant variation within the articles: two articles made no mention of intercultural competence, while the top three articles had 50, 39, and 37 mentions respectively. Of 186 total mentions, 126 came from just three articles. It is interesting to note that the same authors wrote both the article with 50 mentions and the article with 37 mentions. After removing the top and bottom three articles, the remaining 60 mentions were spread across seven articles. Table 2 shows the spread of usage across different sections of the articles.

**Table 2.** Intercultural Competence Mentions by Section of Paper

Number of Mentions of Intercultural Competence	Section of Paper
4	Title
4	Research Questions
28	Introduction
49	Literature Review
20	Methodology
25	Findings
34	Discussion
26	Conclusion

Now that we have an overall picture of intercultural competence mentions in study abroad literature, let's turn to the first part of my research question: how is intercultural competence defined in teacher education study abroad literature? Of the articles read only three articles seemed to offer a clear definition of intercultural competence. Palmer and Menard-Warwick (2012) offer this definition from Byram (1997), "an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (p.19). Vatalaro, Szente, and Levin (2015) offered this comprehensive definition from the National Education Association:

NEA operationally defines global competence as "...the acquisition of in-depth knowledge and understanding of international issues, an appreciation of and ability to learn and work with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, proficiency in a foreign language, and skills to function productively in an interdependent world community" (2010, p. 1). NEA further breaks this definition of global competence down into four components: (1) international awareness; (2) appreciation of cultural diversity; (3) proficiency in foreign languages; and (4) competitive skills (p.43).

As this definition notes, competence is enhanced through experiences that are outside of one's comfort zone. This is a central goal of all preservice teacher study abroad programs. The NEA connects competence to the classroom through 21st century skills, a current educational trend. In their 2012 study, Batey and Lupi offer this definition of a culturally competent individual:

Culturally competent individuals are actively committed to understanding students in other cultures by reading, studying, asking questions, attending cultural events, and interacting with the people they come into contact with through international internships. They understand the difference between surface and deep culture and do not assume that one interaction makes them an expert on the culture. (p. 28).

Most authors define intercultural competence as a description of skills and attitudes that a teacher should possess. Sharma, Phillion, and Malewski (2011) offer this explanation of competence, “the ability to question their own beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions; identify practices that are biased; and change their perceptions of self and other” (pp. 10-11). This definition, “an ongoing process of improving knowledge and skills which enhance professional interaction in cross-cultural situations” comes from Salmons et. al (2015, p. 37). Often these skills-based definitions are connected to teacher education, such as demonstrated by Marx and Moss (2016) who note that, “teachers must be able to teach within culturally diverse schools and educate youth for lives in an increasingly interconnected global world. Interculturally competent teachers are culturally responsive, socially just, and globally minded” (p. 39). Flannery Quinn, Morton and Brindley (2011) add, “(inter)cultural awareness, knowledge, sensitivity, and competence, as well as their ability to understand, respect, engage with, and ultimately teach diverse cultural groups” (p. 74).

Many authors connect intercultural competence and study abroad. Cross and Dunn (2016) state that, “Research has shown the positive benefits of completing student teaching abroad including increased cultural sensitivity and competence, confidence, and global awareness” (p. 71). Marx and Moss (2011) highlight international internships and experiences, “as an innovative way to influence preservice teachers’ intercultural development and prepare them for teaching culturally diverse student populations” (p. 35). Some authors connect intercultural competence directly to a course that students are engaged in while abroad, with carefully planned opportunities “to develop preservice teachers’ multicultural competencies by questioning their beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives, and encouraging critical reflection on the implications of their perceptions for classroom practice” (Sharma, Rahatzad & Phillion, 2013, p. 368).

Given the frequency of intercultural competence mentioned in the introduction, literature review, and conclusion sections, it is clear that researchers are connecting the ideas of intercultural competence to study abroad. However, many did not offer a clear definition, and the term was used in different ways. The next section will explore phase two analysis, which sought to see how researchers described intercultural competence.

### *Descriptions*

Drawing on codes from the CDC model of competence, evidence of participant growth was found in all of the articles reviewed. In all of the articles except for one, evidence of three or more of the competences was present. Attitudes has the most coded statements with 65 statements. 45 statements described gains in skills. Knowledge and critical understanding was described 36 times. Finally, 25 statements demonstrated values.

### *Attitudes*

Attitudes included ideas of openness to cultural otherness, respect, self-efficacy, and tolerance of ambiguity. Across all the articles, evidence of growth in this area centered on confidence, engaging in diverse contexts, exploring new pedagogies, and creativity. Participants frequently mentioned feeling like they had gained more confidence and self-efficacy (Cross & Dunn, 2016; Medina, Hathaway & Pilonieta, 2015; Batey & Lupi, 2012; Lu & Soares, 2014). A participant from Cross and Dunn summed it up nicely, “My mom said I was a different person over there. I changed, not in a bad way. She just said that ‘you’re more confident in yourself . . . very assertive” (2016, p.

84). Batey and Lupi reported, “I discovered that I am much more confident and outgoing than I allow myself to be at home...This experience helped me to see that I am a strong person and I can live on my own.” (2012, p. 39). Participants noted that they were able to learn to figure out the public transportation systems, how to communicate in a new language, and try new and unfamiliar foods. It is important to note that participants felt they gained professional confidence as well. Through exposure to different methods and pedagogies and working with teachers who had been trained differently than they had, participants were able to try new roles in schools and gain confidence in their professional abilities. Cross and Dunn (2016) note that “they expressed new levels of confidence in themselves and their teaching methods (p.79) and “[they] believed that their classroom management strategies improved” (p. 83). Lu and Soares (2104) report that “they believed the program had prepared them to teach culturally diverse students” (p.6).

Exploring different pedagogies and contexts allowed participants to reflect on American schools. Participants noted creativity in host nation schools and began to consider what role creativity might have in their future classroom. At times they reflected on the creativity required by working collaboratively (Cross & Dunn, 2016) and at times they noted international teachers encouraging creative expression in the classroom (Flannery Quinn, Morton & Brindley, 2011). Students noted different relationships between teachers and students than they were accustomed to in the US, in particular they “identified the atmosphere in the schools and the interactions and behaviours of teachers and children as overall more ‘relaxed’ in England than in the US” (Flannery Quinn, Morton & Brindley, 2011, p.44). This led to participants feeling that, “European teachers “trust their students to accomplish understanding of all the material” whereas in the U.S. “students are known for misbehavior” (Misco & Shively, 2014, p. 49). Students also came to appreciate student independence, “in the U.S. we rely on teachers to give us directions, start us off, and check on us. I think it's great that students in Europe are learning independence so young” (Misco & Shively, 2014, p. 49). For participants studying in the United Kingdom, they frequently noted pedagogical and curricular differences relating to religious education and an emphasis on health and wellness. Exploring these different pedagogies allowed them to reflect on the nature of education and question the US education system. Students saw “a variety of alternative pedagogies, including project-based learning with assessments like videos, papers, and speeches, options that [they] had not witnessed in U.S. schools because of the increased testing at home” (Cross & Dunn, 2016, p. 81). “In the course of studying abroad, many pre-service teachers questioned personal and professional knowledge, reduced biases, and began to think about equity, privilege, and deprivation” (Sharma, Phillion & Malewski, 2011, p. 19). As Cushner (2007) suggests, education abroad allows students to question previously unexamined areas of their home culture.

### *Skills*

Increased empathy was the most commonly noted change in this dimension of competence. Development of empathy often began by noticing how people in the host culture spoke to one another. “None of the kids made fun of her and she never cried or complained ... I have never seen children be so kind or caring. It was amazing” (Flannery Quinn, Morton & Brindley, 2011, p. 45). They also noted how people were willing to help them (Batey & Lupi, 2012; Lu & Soares, 2014). Participants experienced frustration when they didn’t know the cultural rules and norms of the host country, but these frustrating and uncomfortable experiences helped develop empathy (Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012). This triggered a change in participants, who “after a few weeks of struggling to interpret local behaviours... began to empathize with others they encountered

experiencing an unfamiliar situation” (p.47). Participants helped other travelers navigate the bus system, gave directions, and offered advice (Salmona et al., 2015). Participants then began to connect empathy to a professional context, considering the experiences of immigrants, English language learners (ELLs), and students. “In Germany, the people I encountered had to have patience with me while trying to communicate with me since I did not speak their language. This will be the same for me one day in my classroom when I am trying to teach my ELL students. I will have to remember to be patient with them and to try to help them to find the best ways to communicate” (Medina, Hathaway & Pilonieta, 2015, p. 84). They began to see beyond the frustration felt when communicating with someone who doesn’t know their language. “Before I left for my trip I would get so frustrated when I encountered a person who did not speak my language and didn’t even attempt to communicate to me in English, now having been in their shoes I can relate and understand the difficulties they face by being a minority. I have learned to be more accepting of people who are different from me and believe that this change is 100% due to my experiences and encounters abroad” (Medina, Hathaway & Pilonieta, 2015, p. 84). Their increased empathy allowed them to reconsider judgement, “There is a reason for everything and...I feel like I can’t judge those people until I know their story” (Sharma, Rahatzad & Phillion, 2013, p. 373).

Other themes included flexibility and adaptability, and communication and problem-solving skills. One participant summarized growth in flexibility and adaptability by saying, “The ways of life that I have grown accustomed to had to be put on hold when I stepped on that plane...I had to ‘roll with the punches’.” (Batey & Lupi, 2012, p.37). Working in school placements with host nation teachers required participants to develop new skills. Often this school context “stimulated my own brain and [has] challenged me to become a more creative and critical thinker” (Vatalaro, Szente & Levin, 2015, p. 49). Through their work in schools, they “were able to engage in the required planning and teaching but had the added bonus of doing so collaboratively, a skill critically important for [preservice teachers]” (Cross & Dunn, 2016, p. 80).

### ***Knowledge and Critical Understanding***

Through their experiences participants began to ask questions and think critically about the world around them. This was most frequently documented when students questioned their own “taken-for-granted assumptions that students in Honduras might not be the “smartest” or that “a poor country” implies poor academic performance” (Sharma, Phillion & Malewski, 2011, p. 17). Through “developing richer and more complex cultural constructs, exploring [their] own cultural identity, accepting and recognizing fundamental cultural differences in [themselves] and others, and actively seeking out intercultural experiences” (p. 40) participants began to “question the validity of [their] own cultural values within this different cultural context” (Marx & Moss, 2011, p.41). Ultimately they came “to realize that multicultural competency is not about changing the other but about challenging their own certainties and transforming their understanding of the other rather than transforming the other” (Sharma, Phillion & Malewski, 2011, pp.18-19).

Reflection was a key tool in developing knowledge and critical understanding of the self. Reflection occurred in many different ways; peer reflection (Cross & Dunn, 2016), in collaboration with an “intercultural guide” (Marx & Moss, 2011), or through journals (Flannery Quinn, Morton & Brindley, 2011; Misco & Shiveley, 2014; Medina, Hathaway & Pilonieta, 2015; Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012). Reflections on school and classroom differences allowed participants “to reflect on [their] classroom beliefs, pushing [them] past those beliefs to suggest the broader

implications of how content is organized and the politics of teaching objectives and choices” (Sharma, Phillion & Malewski, 2011, p.19). One student noted, “I was very narrow minded going on this trip. There were certain things that did not occur to me until I arrived in England. It let me realize that there is a lot I do not know” (Batey & Lupi, 2012, p.34). Reflections on broad cultural differences helped students develop knowledge and critical understanding of the world. They questioned business and politics, “I never realized the effect that businesses have on schools. Why aren't things different? Education is for society and to learn how to be good people; why is it so difficult to obtain?” (Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012, p. 23). They also began to feel differently about the United States. “I learned so much about America through learning about Britain and England. I found that I was intrigued by the history, something that I never valued prior to this trip.” (Batey & Lupi, 2012, p. 37). Not all of these views were positive, “participants realized that Americans were different and had more privileges, which resulted in negative feelings about Americans and the American school system” (Vatalaro, Szente & Levin, 2015, p.50). Whether positive or negative, it is important to note that participants “began to consider for the first time the larger dominant cultural context in which [they] had been raised and the ways culture impacts teaching and learning domestically... something that [they] had not done prior to going overseas” (Marx & Moss, 2011, p. 45).

### *Values*

Students were able to identify different cultural values, particularly related to language. “Understanding languages is more valued in Europe, students suggested, “because they see the need to be culturally proficient” (Misco & Shiveley, 2014, p.48). Some participants connected these different values to a school context. One noted, “After experiencing a new culture, I developed a larger sense of importance and need for more language and cultural programs within the public school system” (Vatalaro, Szente & Levin, 2015, p.49). Participants came to not only recognize cultural values, but many noted a new found appreciation for them. “Learning about their different culture was interesting. I am looking forward to continuing my worldly travels and learning even more about different cultures around the globe” (Batey & Lupi, 2012, p. 35). Another noted, “I had never placed such an importance on opening myself up to different cultural experiences and truly pushing myself out of my comfort zone. Now I want to continue to travel and learn about different cultures, religions, and ways of living” (Vatalaro, Szente & Levin, 2015, p.50). Many credited their participation in the program with this change. “[P]reservice teachers perceived an additional benefit from the experience was that they became “more open to diversity” and “more understanding of diverse needs and to students from different cultures” (Lu & Soares, 2014, p. 64).

### *Measurement of Intercultural Competence*

The final component of my research question sought to discover how researchers measured any intercultural competence gains of participants and if participants were aware of their own growth. As noted in Table 2, few researchers explicitly attended to intercultural competence through their research questions. This study revealed that few researchers use a conceptual frame or empirical instruments to understand participant growth. Marx and Moss (2011, 2016) conceptualized intercultural competence through the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (Bennett, 2004). As described earlier, the DMIS outlines a continuum of ethnocentric to ethnorelative worldviews. It is accompanied by the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)

(Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003) which when administered pre and post experience allows researchers to assess growth. Vatalaro, Szente and Levin (2015) used a model designed at their university, the Profile of the University of Central Florida Globally Competent Student (2010). Developed by the Office of International Studies, this instrument outlines learning outcomes for study abroad programs including: basic knowledge of the place visited, self-awareness and self-reliance, and language development outcomes. Given both pre and post, this instrument captures student growth. Medina, Hathaway and Pilonieta used a questionnaire designed to capture preservice teachers' knowledge and understanding of best practices for ELL instruction (2015). This questionnaire was administered pre and post experience. Those four papers were the only papers reviewed that used empirical data to show intercultural competence development. A few researchers used a conceptual frame to understand growth but did not have an instrument to assess it. Misco and Shiveley (2014) used Hanvey's (1976) Attainable Global Perspective. This frame provides five dimensions of a global perspective: 1) Perspective Consciousness, 2) "State of the Planet" Awareness, 3) Cross-Cultural Awareness, 4) Knowledge of Global Dynamics, and 5) Awareness of Human Choices. Batey and Lupi (2012) employed the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory, which is comprised of four scales: emotional resilience, flexibility and openness, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy (Kelley & Myers, 1995). For both of these research teams, these frameworks aided the researchers in organizing and analyzing the qualitative data from participants.

Given that only a handful of researchers clearly articulated an instrument or conceptual frame, it was necessary to explore how the rest of the researchers measured student growth. There were two methods that were by far the most widely used to capture student growth - journaling/written reflection and interviews (both individual and focus group). Through journaling and interviews it is clear that participants are aware of their increased confidence (Cross & Dunn, 2016; Medina, Hathaway & Pilonieta, 2015; Batey & Lupi, 2012; Lu & Soares, 2014). However, it is unclear if students are aware of their growth in other areas. Participants were able to articulate differences between cultures and school systems, but there is insufficient evidence to suggest that participants moved beyond observing differences to consider the cultural context responsible for these differences.

## **Discussion and Implications**

The findings of this study illuminate the immense potential of study abroad to develop intercultural competence in preservice teachers. However, this study also reveals some challenges that program designers and facilitators must consider and address if they want to maximize the transformative potential of this experience.

Researchers approach intercultural competence in a myriad of ways, illuminated by the phase one results. From the 14 papers reviewed, two made no mention of intercultural competence and 126 of the 186 total mentions came from just three papers. This indicates that some researchers (Marx & Moss, 2011; 2016; Vatalaro, Szente & Levin, 2015) are very focused on intercultural competence development while others are not. Hopefully, researchers and program designers have defined intercultural competence for themselves as they consider the aims of their program, clear definitions were often absent in the studies reviewed. The majority of mentions of intercultural competence are found in the introduction, literature review, and conclusion sections. This suggests that authors acknowledge the importance of intercultural competence and use it to set the stage for



the importance of preservice teacher study abroad programs. However, intercultural competence holds significant potential to impact participants and the students they will interact with and deserves further exploration. Only four research questions include intercultural competence, further supporting that it is not a focus for many researchers. Researchers establish that international experiences enhance intercultural competence and preservice teachers' ability to interact with diverse populations, but they do not further explore how this important work occurs. Instead, they turn to different research aims. In this study alone, we saw a wide range of foci, with researchers looking at decolonization, comparing multiple countries' education systems, empathy, neoliberal ideas, pedagogy and teaching practices, ELL language development, preservice teachers as language learners, and more. Without clearer understanding of how preservice teachers develop intercultural competence, claims about intercultural competence development lack weight. This study illuminates a need for researchers to include research questions exploring intercultural competence, participant's experiences, and their changing conceptions of themselves, their cultural identity, and their role as teachers.

Further, what seems missing from most of the articles reviewed is a sense of if the participants understand their own growth or recognize themselves as cultural beings and understand how they see the world. How can we expect teachers to foster intercultural competence in their pupils without understanding how preservice teachers understand intercultural competence? Few studies used an instrument to capture intercultural competence development, instead many relied solely on self-report through interviews and journaling. Self-report has its own challenges, but one that is particularly linked to intercultural competence development may be that students are not able to understand their own growth. Much of this growth is not instant, it takes time and reflection for participants to understand their experiences and their reactions to these complex international experiences. Making participants aware of their own learning and progress is essential if that progress is to become part of their identity in ways that allow them to activate it later on, which is an essential goal of study abroad. There is a need for explicit planning of reflection activities, journaling, and discussions that allow participants to think about how they are changing during their time abroad and how to apply those changes to the US school context. These moments for critical reflection are essential to making intercultural learning explicit during a pre-service teacher international experience. It is clear that program designers must explicitly plan learning experiences for their participants. Intercultural competence development does not happen automatically just from being in a foreign context, it must be planned for and scaffolded by program elements.

The wide variety of terms used as synonyms of intercultural competence further complicates research. It is important to ask if these terms are truly synonyms or not. It may be that researchers don't clearly define intercultural competence because the field of intercultural competence offers many different definitions and approaches. Social scientists, historians, educators, linguists, psychologists, and more all use ideas of intercultural competence but apply them to their work in vastly different ways. Given that higher education institutions tend to work in silos, it is difficult for an interdisciplinary field, like intercultural competence, to reach its full potential. Moving forward, there is a need for academics across a variety of disciplines to collaborate to understand intercultural competence development and share their knowledge about intercultural competence.

## Conclusion

From this study it is clear that there is no one size fits all model for preservice teacher study abroad. This study began with the idea that study abroad for preservice teachers increases intercultural competence development. And it found that there are a multitude of factors that influence development. This research set out to discover how programs defined, described, and measured intercultural competence. It is clear from this study that not enough programs offer a clear definition of intercultural competence. Researchers are aware of intercultural competence but aren't clear in the ways that it impacts teacher learning. Considering a major goal of preservice teacher study abroad is to create teachers who are prepared to teach in the diverse classrooms we see in every school, it is important that this experience helps develop intercultural competence in preservice teachers. This powerful learning does not happen simply by being in an overseas context, rather it must be explicitly planned for and scaffolded. Despite lacking clear definitions, many of the ideas underpinning intercultural competence appeared in this study. Participants showed evidence of growth in skills, attitudes, values, knowledge and critical understanding, all of which are components of intercultural competence. This study has outlined and explored some of the challenges facing measurement of intercultural competence. To address those challenges, use of a conceptual frame and an instrument may aid researchers in understanding participant development. Finally, it is clear that there are many different ways study abroad programs are designed. In order for preservice teacher study abroad programs to instill intercultural competence in their participants, it is important for program designers to clearly define the goals of their program, intentionally include critical reflection opportunities about intercultural competence, and evaluate what elements best serve these goals.

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