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Uncovering the Potential Learning in Short-Term Study Abroad

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Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify the facets of intercultural learning that might be achievable through faculty-led, short-term study abroad. Exploring changes in various facets of students' intercultural competence pre- to post-study abroad, we found that the largest gains were in the cultural knowledge domain. Findings also point to vast differences in how individual students do, and do not, show gains across multiple measures of intercultural competence after studying abroad.

Campus internationalization and global learning have increasingly becoming priorities at U.S. higher education institutions (Helms & Brajkovic, 2017); in 2016, almost half of institutions surveyed by the American Council on Education (ACE) “included internationalization or related activities among the top five priorities in their strategic plans” (Helms & Brajkovic, 2017, p. 8) and almost two-thirds

Published in *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* (2022)

doi:10.1080/19496591.2021.1997758

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Published 28 February 2022.

articulated “specific international or global student learning outcomes” (p. 15). Alongside these institutional trends, internationalization has increasingly become a focus within the field of student affairs, with student affairs educators being called on to work with international students, develop cocurricular programming to promote intercultural competence development, and provide developmental programming for students before and after study abroad (Ward, 2016). In fact, in their *Internationalization in Action* series, ACE identified “the contributions of student affairs professionals [as] essential for moving the internationalization of higher education from vision to reality” (Ward, 2016, p. 3).

Within that broader array of internationalization initiatives, study abroad, and in particular short-term study abroad, is one of the most prolific (Helms & Brajkovic, 2017; Institute of International Education, 2017; Stearns, 2009). In their 2017 report on comprehensive internationalization in the United States, ACE found that increasing study abroad opportunities for U.S. students was the top priority across many institutions (Helms & Brajkovic, 2017). Although there may be many reasons for this emphasis, study abroad is overwhelmingly viewed as a mechanism for facilitating growth in students’ intercultural competence (Braskamp et al., 2009; Paige & Vande Berg, 2012; Stearns, 2009), an outcome that student affairs educators are uniquely positioned to support through their expertise in supporting the educational mission of the institution and emphasis on student development (Mazon, 2010; Sandeen, 2011).

Yet, a significant barrier to supporting students’ intercultural competence development after study abroad are the mixed findings of research on the intercultural learning that may happen through study abroad, and in particular short-term study abroad (e.g., Anderson et al., 2006; Gaia, 2015; Kehl & Morris, 2007; Vande Berg et al., 2009). Some tout the great potential of short-term study abroad to democratize access to this high-impact learning experience (e.g., Spencer & Tuma, 2007) and promote intercultural learning (e.g., Anderson et al., 2006; R. Engle & Crowne, 2014), while others critique short-term programs as consumerist cultural tourism (e.g., Kortegast & Kupo, 2017) that fails to achieve intercultural learning objectives (e.g., Woolf, 2007). This lack of clarity around short-term study abroad’s contribution to students’ intercultural learning makes it difficult for those

working to integrate short-term study abroad into the broader curriculum and co-curriculum, including student affairs educators, to appropriately support students' learning and development before and after these experiences.

Given the important role that study abroad plays in broader internationalization efforts, and the need for student affairs educators to understand how these experiences are and are not contributing to students' intercultural learning, the purpose of this study was to identify the potential of short-term study abroad to facilitate various facets of intercultural learning. In particular, we address the following research question: To what extent do measures of students' intercultural knowledge, attitudes, and/or behaviors change after participating in a short-term study abroad course? In other words, is there potential for short-term study abroad to contribute to student's intercultural competence development, or not?

Theoretical Framework: Deardorff's Framework of Intercultural Competence

One of the challenges with assessing intercultural learning in study abroad is a lack of clarity and agreement on what intercultural competence is and how to measure it. The scholarly literature uses over 30 different terms to refer to the broad idea of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2016); there are also a wide array of models of intercultural competence development and many assessment tools focusing on different aspects of intercultural competence (Fantini, 2009). With studies using different terminology, theoretical models, and assessment tools, it is difficult to gain a good understanding of students' intercultural learning in short-term study abroad. Therefore, it is important to first establish what we mean by intercultural competence, and to provide a foundation for understanding the multiple interrelated dimensions of intercultural competence that exist.

For this study we drew from Deardorff's (2011, 2016) research-based framework of intercultural competence. Deardorff's model is one of the first trying to create some agreement among leading intercultural experts on how to define intercultural competence and was created to provide guidance on how to assess the nebulous concept

of intercultural competence, making it ideal for a study like ours that strives to understand the potential for various facets of intercultural learning to occur in short-term study abroad. In this model, Deardorff defined intercultural competence as “*effective and appropriate* behavior and communication in intercultural situations” (p. 66, emphasis in original). In this paper, we also use the term “intercultural learning” to refer to the learning or development needed to move toward and achieve intercultural competence.

Deardorff’s (2016) model identifies knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for intercultural competence, as well as how these lead to both internal and external intercultural competence behavioral outcomes. Attitudes, which are the basis for all other intercultural learning, include respect for others, openness to other perspectives, and curiosity about other cultures and perspectives. Knowledge includes awareness of one’s own culture, knowledge of a specific culture or cultures, sociolinguistic awareness, and an understanding of other worldviews. Finally, skills include “observing, listening, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, and relating” (p. 250), or broadly, the skills needed to process intercultural knowledge. Developing this knowledge and these attitudes and skills leads to internal outcomes, such as “flexibility, adaptability, an ethnorelative perspective, and empathy” (p. 250), as well as the external outcome of “*effective and appropriate* behavior and communication in intercultural situations” (p. 250, emphasis in original). Drawing on Deardorff’s (2016) framework, in this study we measured changes in different areas of intercultural competence for students who participated in a short-term study abroad course in order to identify how these experiences might contribute to the development of intercultural competence.

Review of the Literature: Mixed Results on the Learning in Short-Term Study Abroad

The lack of clarity regarding a definition of intercultural competence and the wide range of assessment tools utilized in study abroad research may be one of the reasons for the mixed results on short-term study abroad. Most studies focus on only one or a few of the facets of intercultural competence that Deardorff’s (2011, 2016) model

identifies. Thus, when reviewing the existing literature on short-term study abroad, it is important to not only ask whether studies found growth in intercultural competence for participants but also what type(s) of intercultural learning those studies measured. In the following, we describe the conflicting findings on intercultural learning during short-term study abroad, while also highlighting how different studies focus on different facets of intercultural learning identified in Deardorff's model.

Some studies claim that no significant intercultural learning occurs in short-term study abroad, while others argue the opposite. These studies, however, typically do not focus on all aspects of intercultural competence, thus the different findings may be due to what aspects of intercultural competence the researchers explored. For example, utilizing the Global Mindedness Scale (GMS), which focuses on attitudes and internal outcomes, Kehl and Morris (2007) found no significant difference in global mindedness between students who had participated in short-term courses and those who intended to study abroad. Utilizing students' pre- and posttest scores on the Cultural Intelligence (CQ) scale, which focuses on knowledge, attitudes, and external outcomes such as culturally appropriate behaviors and communication, R. Engle and Crowne (2014) found statistically significant growth in intercultural competence for students who participated in short-term study abroad. Since the studies explored different aspects of intercultural competence, one explanation for the contrary claims could be that there is intercultural learning related to knowledge and external outcomes as backed by R. Engle and Crowne (2014), while there is no growth related to internal outcomes as Kehl and Morris (2007) found. Both studies explored changes in attitudes and in this area, their findings contradict each other.

Rather than making overarching claims about the intercultural learning that occurs in short-term study abroad, some studies indicate that these courses lead to growth related to some but not all aspects of intercultural competence. Studies, however, do not all identify the same aspects of intercultural competence as the areas where growth occurs.

Several studies utilizing a variety of assessment tools including Gaia's (2015) study using the Global Perspectives Inventory, Nguyen's (2017) study using the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES),

and R. Engle and Crowne's (2014) study using the CQ scale indicated that learning occurs related to knowledge such as understanding and awareness of other cultures, knowledge of other languages, and self-awareness. Knowledge seems to be the only area where there is some consensus among researchers that short-term study abroad can promote learning. Findings are mixed related to attitudes such as respect and acceptance of differing cultural perspectives, having a global mind-set, and taking pleasure in exploring other cultures. For example, Nguyen's (2017) study, R. Engle and Crowne's (2014) study, as well as Anderson et al.'s (2006) study, which utilized the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), and LeCrom et al.'s (2015) study, which utilized the Global Mindedness Scale (GMS), found significant gains in this area. Contradicting these findings, Gaia's (2015) study as well as Kehl and Morris's (2007) study, which utilized the GMS like LeCrom et al. (2015), found no significant changes related to attitudes pre- and post- short-term study abroad. Studies have similar contradictory findings for internal outcomes such as emotional resilience, concerns for people around the world, and an awareness and appreciation of the interrelatedness of all peoples and nations. For example, Anderson et al. (2006) and Mapp (2012), who utilized the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Scale (CCAS) found significant gains related to internal outcomes while Kehl and Morris (2007), LeCrom et al. (2015), and Nguyen (2017) found no changes in internal outcomes. Findings are also mixed related to external outcomes such as culturally appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication with, for example, R. Engle and Crowne (2014) finding significant gains and Gaia (2015) finding no changes. Such mixed findings make it difficult to draw specific conclusions about whether or not short-term study abroad can reliably foster growth related to these aspects of intercultural competence.

Besides having contradictory findings related to some aspects of intercultural learning, drawing clear conclusions about the learning that occurs in short-term study abroad is hindered by the limited sample sizes and methodological shortcomings of existing studies. Many studies have a small number of participants or only focus on one or a few short-term courses (e.g., Anderson et al., 2006, with 16 participants in one course). Other studies have methodological shortcomings that could affect the findings. For example, LeCrom et al. (2015) surveyed alumni who participated in short-term study abroad and compared

their levels of global mindedness to those of peers who had not studied abroad. The study, thus, could not rule out other explanations for the differences in global mindedness between the two groups, such as differences in global mindedness prior to participation in study abroad. A few studies also point out the difficulty in measuring growth in intercultural learning by highlighting how, even when overall group means show a significant increase, some participants may experience no growth or even a decline (e.g., Anderson et al., 2006). Considering the limitations of existing literature and its contradictory findings, more research is needed to explore the potential of short-term study abroad in fostering intercultural learning.

Methods

To identify the various facets of intercultural learning that might be achievable through faculty-led short-term study abroad courses, we studied changes in students' intercultural competence across a wide array of courses and using multiple different intercultural competence assessments. We approached this study as educators interested in better understanding ways in which we as faculty or higher education and student affairs professionals can foster intercultural learning. The primary investigator has taught multiple faculty-led study abroad courses, conducts research on short-term study abroad, and has served as a member of their college and university's internationalization committees. The second author had seven years of student affairs experience, including overseeing a living learning community geared toward students who were interested in study abroad or had returned from study abroad, before switching to academic affairs and a faculty career. As White, cisgender women, we in many ways reflect the "typical" study abroad participant (Institute of International Education, 2019) and our personal experiences are often represented in the study abroad literature. Yet, as educators we have observed how students' experiences are not monolithic. Thus our personal and professional experiences have shaped our interest in study abroad generally, and in the complexities of students' experiences specifically.

Data Collection

Data for this study came from surveys of 398 students who participated in 46 short-term study abroad courses at seven higher education institutions: two doctoral universities, three master's colleges/universities, and two associate's colleges. We selected the seven higher education institutions to represent a broad range of institution types (large research institutions, regional comprehensive institutions, community colleges). Institutions also represented a range of participation levels in study abroad, from having just a few short-term faculty-led programs each year to having a wide range of offerings including faculty-led courses, long-term exchange programs, international internships, and third-party affiliate programs. We included two institutions in the first wave of data collection and all seven in the second wave. All institutions were located in a single state in the Midwest/Great Plains region.

Students completed both a pre- and post-course survey. We collected data over a two-year period, 2017–2018. Students who studied abroad during the first year of data collection, during the summer of 2017, completed the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS; Van Dyne et al., 2012) as part of both the pre- and post-survey. We chose the CQS as our primary measure as it covers several dimensions of Deardorff's (2016) framework of intercultural competence, specifically attitudes, knowledge, and external outcomes. For the second year of data collection, during the winter, spring, and summer terms of 2018, we added the Global Mindedness Scale (GMS; Hett, 1993) for participants in 15 courses (about half of the participants of the second wave) to see if that instrument could provide additional important information, particularly related to internal outcomes, a domain not covered by the CQS. **Table 1** shows how each of these measures maps on to Deardorff's (2011, 2016) framework of intercultural competence. We were unable to identify an instrument that measured students' skill development, thus the skills domain of Deardorff's (2011, 2016) framework is not addressed in this study.

Both of our measures, the CQS and the GMS, have been used in the existing study abroad literature to measure students' intercultural competence (e.g., R. Engle & Crowne, 2014; Kehl & Morris, 2007; LeCrom et al., 2015), and one of the instruments, the CQS is available to

Table 1 Measuring the Dimensions of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2016)

<p>Knowledge: awareness of own culture, knowledge of specific culture/ cultures, sociolinguistic awareness, understanding of other worldviews</p>	<p>CQ Knowledge, Context General: having a macro understanding of cultural similarities and differences</p> <p>CQ Knowledge, Context Specific: understanding how culture influences your effectiveness in specific domains (e.g., being a global leader in business vs. a leader of a multicultural university)</p> <p>CQ Strategy, Awareness: knowing about one's existing cultural knowledge</p>
<p>Attitudes: respect for others, openness to other perspectives, and curiosity about other cultures and perspectives</p>	<p>CQ Drive, Intrinsic Motivation: deriving enjoyment and sense of satisfaction from culturally diverse experiences</p> <p>CQ Drive, External Motivation: gaining benefits from culturally diverse experiences</p> <p>CQ Drive, Self-Efficacy: having the confidence to be effective in culturally diverse setting</p> <p>GMS Cultural Pluralism: an appreciation of the diversity of cultures in the world and belief that all have something of value to offer. This is accompanied by taking pleasure in exploring and trying to understand other cultural frameworks</p> <p>GMS Efficacy: a belief that an individual's actions can make a difference and that involvement in national and international issues is important</p>
<p>Internal Outcomes: "flexibility, adaptability, an ethnorelative perspective, and empathy" (p. 250)</p>	<p>GMS Responsibility: a deep personal concern for people in all parts of the world; which surfaces as a sense of moral responsibility to try and improve conditions in some way</p> <p>GMS Globalcentrism: thinking in terms of what is good for the global community, not just what will benefit one's own country. A willingness to make judgments based on global rather than ethnocentric standards</p> <p>GMS Interconnectedness: an awareness and appreciation of the interrelatedness of all peoples and nations which results in a sense of global belonging or kinship with the "human family"</p>
<p>External Outcomes: "effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations" (p. 250)</p>	<p>CQ Strategy, Checking: checking assumptions and adjusting mental maps when actual experiences differ from expectations</p> <p>CQ Strategy, Planning: strategizing before a culturally diverse encounter</p> <p>CQ Action, Verbal Behavior: having and using a flexible range of culturally appropriate verbal behaviors (e.g., accent, tone)</p> <p>CQ Action, Non-Verbal Behavior: having and using a flexible range of culturally appropriate non-verbal behaviors (e.g., body language, physical gestures, facial expressions)</p>

* Neither of the instruments measured skills, thus the skills dimension is not included in this table.

educators to use for program assessment through fee-based services (e.g., Cultural Intelligence Center, 2019). Prior research has established the validity and reliability of both of these instruments (Hett, 1993; Van Dyne et al., 2012). In our study, all sub-scales on these instruments showed acceptable to good reliability; Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.761 to 0.933 for all sub-scales on the CQS, and from 0.539 to 0.778 for all sub-scales on the GMS.

Participants

At each institution, we invited all faculty members teaching short-term study abroad courses to participate in the study. Faculty members for 46 total courses during the two waves of data collection agreed to do so. We invited all students from the 46 courses, 223 during the first wave of data collection and 428 during the second wave, to participate in the online surveys via e-mail after their instructor or the primary investigator introduced the study to them. Many course instructors required students to complete the surveys as part of course requirements or gave students time to complete the surveys during a class session; students could choose whether or not their data were used for the purposes of this research project. We secured human subjects research approval from the Institutional Review Board of the primary investigator's institution.

Of the 651 students from the two waves of data collection, 398 completed the CQS (a response rate of 61%). Since we included the GMS only during the second wave of data collection and only sent it to about half of the participants, the total number of students invited to complete the GMS was 208. Of those, 143 responded (a response rate of 69%). While we have far fewer responses to the GMS, we decided to still include it in our analysis because it measures important components of intercultural learning that are not measured in the CQS, particularly related to internal outcomes.

Our participants were diverse with regard to gender, race/ethnicity, class status, and major. As is common in study abroad (Institute of International Education, 2019; Stearns, 2009), more women than men participated (69.8% and 29.9, respectively) and White students made up over two-thirds of participants (84.7%). Participants represented a

Table 2 Participant Demographics

		<i>N</i>	%
Gender	Man	119	29.9
	Woman	278	69.8
	Other	1	0.3
Race/Ethnicity*	African American (not Hispanic)	15	3.8
	Asian or Pacific Islander	24	6.0
	American Indian or Alaskan Native	9	2.3
	Hispanic/Latino	23	5.8
	White/Caucasian (not Hispanic)	337	84.7
	Bi- or Multi-racial	7	1.8
	Other	3	0.8
Class Level	First Year	52	13.1
	Sophomore	89	22.4
	Junior	127	31.9
	Senior	82	20.6
	Graduate student	39	9.8
	Other	9	2.3
Major	Agriculture and Natural Resources	59	15.2
	Architecture	8	2.1
	Area, Ethnic, Cultural, and/or Gender Studies	1	0.3
	Biological Sciences	24	6.2
	Business Administration	67	17.3
	Communications, Journalism, Broadcasting	12	3.1
	Computer Science and Technology	1	0.3
	Criminal Justice	1	0.3
	Education	30	7.8
	Engineering	8	2.1
	Fine Arts	5	1.3
	Global Studies	2	0.5
	Health Professions	51	13.2
	Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism Management	23	5.9
	Human Sciences	20	5.2
	Humanities	12	3.1
	Interdisciplinary Studies	1	0.3
	International Studies	2	0.5
	Law	2	0.5
	Mathematics and Statistics	4	1.0
	Physical Sciences and Sports Management	7	1.8
	Political Science	2	0.5
	Psychology	2	0.5
	Social Sciences	23	5.9
	Speech-Language Pathology	10	2.6
	Visual and Performing Arts	4	1.0
Other	6	1.6	

* Students were able to select multiple racial or ethnic categories, thus the total does not add up to 100%.

wide variety of majors with Business Administration making up the majority (17.3%) followed by Agriculture and Natural Resources (15.2%) and Health Professions (13.2). See **Table 2** for participant demographics.

Data Analysis

To get the most nuanced perspective on changes in students' intercultural competence, we examined pre- and posttest changes in students' scores for each of the sub-scales contained in the two measures at three levels: the entire sample, within each course, and for each individual student. As Niehaus and Nyunt (2020) and Anderson et al. (2006) found, only examining group-level changes might mask substantial individual variation in intercultural competence development in short-term study abroad. For the *entire sample* and within *individual courses*, we used paired sample t-tests to identify significant changes in mean scores on each subscale. For the whole sample we also calculated effect sizes using Cohen's d and the average standard deviation (d_{av}), and at the course level we determined where significant differences pre/post reflected increases or decreases in average scores.

At the *student level*, we employed the standard error of measurement (SEM; Niehaus & Nyunt, 2020; Wyrwich et al., 1999; Wyrwich & Wolinsky, 2000) to identify meaningful intra-individual change. The SEM is an estimate of measurement error for each subscale that is calculated by multiplying the standard deviation on the pretest of that subscale by the square root of one minus the sub-scale reliability. Research in the health fields identified that anything greater than a one-SEM change in an individual's score between a pre- and posttest measure can be considered meaningful individual-level change (Wyrwich & Wolinsky, 2000). Conceptually, a greater than one-SEM change puts the posttest score outside of the error range of the pretest score. We calculated individual difference scores for each student on each subscale and then compared those to the SEM for that subscale, identifying how many individual students had a meaningful (> 1 SEM) change on each. As a different number of students and courses completed each of the four measures, we standardized the course and individual change counts by representing each as a percentage of the overall number of courses or individuals that completed that measure. Due to the nature of our analyses, we had to exclude students who did not answer all of the questions on individual sub-scales from the analysis of that subscale. However, we had very little missing data; for each sub-scale, the number of students excluded ranged from 0 to 9, so it is unlikely that this substantially biased our results.

Results

The full results can be found in **Table 3**. Overall, across the entire sample, the largest significant differences pre/post were in gains in the knowledge domain of Deardorff's (2011, 2016) model, specifically in the areas of Culture-General Knowledge ($d_{av} = 0.44$) and Context-Specific Knowledge ($d_{av} = 0.37$) as measured by the CQS; these are the only outcomes for which the effect size could be considered in the "medium" range. The next largest effects, falling in the range generally considered "small," were the domain of external outcomes (CQ Planning, $d_{av} = 0.24$; CQ Speech Acts, $d_{av} = 0.23$), attitudes (CQ Extrinsic Motivation, $d_{av} = 0.24$; CQ Intrinsic Motivation, $d_{av} = 0.20$), and then internal outcomes (GMS Interconnectedness, $d_{av} = 0.20$). Although there were significant differences in pre/post scores for other dimensions, the effect sizes were all very small (< 0.20), raising questions about the practical significance of these differences. The course- and individual-level results generally followed the same pattern as the effect size measures, with the most courses and individuals showing significant or meaningful gains in knowledge, followed by external outcomes and attitudes.

Individual-Level Results

The individual-level results provide much greater insight into the complexity of students' intercultural learning in short-term study abroad than is offered by the whole-sample findings alone. For example, there are outcomes for which a substantial portion of individual students ($> 30\%$) demonstrated meaningful gains, but yet there were no significant mean differences for the overall sample. This included three outcomes in the attitudes domain (GMS Cultural Pluralism, 38.0%; CQ Self-Efficacy, 34.3%; GMS Efficacy, 32.4%). By looking only at group mean differences, we may be missing some of the potential of short-term study abroad to contribute to meaningful gains in intercultural competence for a large number of students.

One reason these intra-individual gains are masked by the group mean differences may be the fact that there is also a substantial portion of students who showed meaningful *declines* in various

Table 3 Pre-Post Differences in Intercultural Competence

	All Courses				Courses with significant differences pre- post at $p < 0.05$				Individuals with differences pre- post (cutoff value: pre-post difference/SEM > 1)				
	Pre-test:		Post-test:		Cohen's D (d_o)	Decrease		Increase		Decrease		Increase	
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Attitudes													
CQ Extrinsic Motivation ($n = 395$ in 46 courses)	4.88 (1.348)	5.19 (1.265)	0.307***	0.24	0	0	3	6.5	91	23.0	169	42.8	
CQ Intrinsic Motivation ($n = 393$ in 46 courses)	5.13 (1.228)	5.37 (1.161)	0.237***	0.20	0	0	6	13.0	75	19.1	146	37.2	
GMS Efficacy ($n = 142$ in 15 courses)	3.77 (0.582)	3.83 (0.593)	0.052	0.09	0	0	1	6.7	31	21.8	46	32.4	
GMS Cultural Pluralism ($n = 137$ in 15 courses)	4.03 (0.462)	4.10 (0.451)	0.068	0.15	0	0	0	0	32	23.4	52	38.0	
CQ Self-Efficacy to Adjust ($n = 396$ in 46 courses)	5.50 (1.137)	5.59 (1.114)	0.093	0.08	2	4.3	2	4.3	109	27.5	136	34.3	
Knowledge													
CQ Culture General Knowledge ($n = 389$ in 46 courses)	4.13 (1.204)	4.63 (1.044)	0.501***	0.44	1	2.2	9	19.6	75	19.3	181	46.5	
CQ Context-Specific Knowledge ($n = 393$ in 46 courses)	3.65 (1.419)	4.16 (1.347)	0.510***	0.37	0	0	7	15.2	91	23.2	218	55.5	
CQ Awareness ($n = 393$ in 46 courses)	5.35 (1.148)	5.55 (1.075)	0.203**	0.18	0	0	5	10.9	90	22.9	141	35.9	
Internal Outcomes													
GMS Interconnectedness ($n = 142$ in 15 courses)	3.72 (0.584)	3.84 (0.576)	0.117**	0.20	0	0	1	6.7	23	16.2	52	36.6	
GMS Responsibility ($n = 141$ in 15 courses)	3.57 (0.611)	3.59 (0.580)	0.020	0.03	0	0	1	6.7	25	17.7	32	22.7	
GMS Globalcentrism ($n = 143$ in 15 courses)	3.28 (0.672)	3.25 (0.707)	-0.036	-0.05	0	0	0	0	44	30.8	40	28.0	
External Outcomes													
CQ Planning ($n = 395$ in 46 courses)	4.34 (1.273)	4.63 (1.270)	0.299***	0.24	0	0	5	10.9	105	26.4	168	42.2	
CQ Speech Acts ($n = 394$ in 46 courses)	4.86 (1.253)	5.13 (1.162)	0.273***	0.23	1	2.2	8	17.4	103	26.1	155	39.3	
CQ Verbal Behavior ($n = 396$ in 46 courses)	4.59 (1.364)	4.74 (1.289)	0.153*	0.12	0	0	5	10.9	120	30.3	151	38.1	
CQ Non-Verbal Behavior ($n = 398$ in 46 courses)	4.58 (1.433)	4.82 (1.361)	0.235**	0.17	0	0	4	8.7	116	29.1	166	41.7	
CQ Checking ($n = 395$ in 46 courses)	5.32 (1.087)	5.46 (1.053)	0.138*	0.13	1	2.2	5	10.9	94	23.8	139	35.2	

* Pre- and post-test difference significant at $p < 0.05$.

** Pre- and post-test difference significant at $p < 0.01$.

*** Pre- and post-test difference significant at $p < 0.001$.

dimensions of intercultural competence between the pre- and post-tests. Over a third of the outcomes measured in this study had more than 25% of students showing declines, and some of the outcomes for which the most students showed gains were also the ones where the most students showed declines (e.g., CQ Non-Verbal Behavior, 41.7% of students gaining and 29.1% of students declining; CQ Planning, 42.2% of students gaining and 26.4% of students declining).

Discussion and Implications for Practice

Does short-term study abroad have the potential to contribute to students' intercultural learning? The results of our study clearly point to the potential for short-term study abroad to contribute to students' intercultural knowledge development, but that these programs have much less potential to contribute to other facets of intercultural competence. This is both unsurprising and an important finding to guide practice. As Niehaus et al. (2019) found, the learning objectives for faculty-led, short-term study abroad courses overwhelmingly focus on knowledge dissemination rather than on developing students' attitudes and behaviors, and as discussed in the literature, intercultural knowledge development is the one outcome that has been consistently identified as an area of growth in prior research on short-term study abroad (e.g., R. Engle & Crowne, 2014; Gaia, 2015; Nguyen, 2017). Our study builds on this prior research, and makes a unique contribution in directly comparing knowledge acquisition to other domains of intercultural learning.

The finding that the greatest potential in short-term study abroad is in intercultural knowledge development has important implications for practice. Although study abroad is often seen as the primary, or sometimes the *only* strategy for internationalization (Braskamp et al., 2009; Helms & Brajkovic, 2017; Stearns, 2009), the limitations of short-term study abroad support efforts to consider study abroad as one aspect of a much broader, comprehensive internationalization approach (Helms & Brajkovic, 2017). As Deardorff (2016) argued, intercultural learning is a life-long process; short-term study abroad should be seen as one small part of this process for students, and knowing what students are likely to take away from this experience can

help student affairs professionals develop complimentary programming to round out other aspects of students' intercultural learning. As attitudes are a necessary precursor to the development of intercultural knowledge and skills (Deardorff, 2016), student affairs educators should look for ways to help students develop positive intercultural attitudes to provide a foundation for study abroad experiences. Student affairs educators can also build on students' knowledge acquisition through post-study abroad cocurricular intercultural development workshops, opportunities for students to interact with international students after they return from studying abroad, or resources for students returning from study abroad to continue to engage across cultures on campus and in the surrounding community. Across functional areas, there are opportunities for student affairs educators to help students returning from study abroad to integrate their new knowledge with other complementary experiences. Student affairs educators can also advocate for a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of intercultural competence development when working with other faculty and staff members on campus.

For those working closely with short-term study abroad courses, directly as instructors or more indirectly as administrators supporting these courses, the findings from this study can provide insight into course design and execution. The strong gains in students' intercultural knowledge in this study indicate that this may be a particularly effective domain of intercultural competence to focus on in short-term study abroad courses; those designing courses may want to emphasize knowledge in the course goals and activities in order to capitalize on this potential. On the other hand, while short-term study abroad may have the strongest potential in promoting intercultural knowledge, we also found many students reporting meaningful gains across *all* the dimensions of intercultural competence measured in this study, Deardorff's (2011, 2016) knowledge, attitude, internal outcomes, and external outcomes domains. If those working with short-term study abroad courses want to promote other forms of intercultural learning, they may need to intentionally emphasize activities designed to facilitate growth in students' skills, attitudes, or internal/external outcomes. For example, instructors and administrators might craft orientation and reentry courses focusing on specific aspects of intercultural learning (e.g., Bathurst & La Brack, 2012); incorporate strategies

such as experiential learning, targeted course assignments, and homestays to deepen students' immersion into the host culture (e.g., L. Engle & Engle, 2012; Hemming Lou & Bosley, 2012); and/or provide additional coursework in intercultural learning that students may pair with a study abroad course (e.g., Paige et al., 2012).

Even with intentional interventions, it is possible that for many students short-term study abroad may not be an effective way of promoting these other forms of intercultural competence. Consistent with Anderson et al. (2006), we also found that on every sub-scale many students reported no changes or even meaningful declines. These declines may be real (i.e., may reflect actual declines in students' motivation, knowledge, attitudes, etc.), or may be an artifact of students' increased awareness of their capabilities (i.e., students may have overstated their knowledge, positive regard for others, ability to plan for intercultural interactions, etc., prior to studying abroad, but after studying abroad may be more aware of how much room they have to grow in these areas; see, for example, Kishino & Takahashi, 2019). Regardless, this high level of individual-level variance in outcomes demonstrates that the potential of short-term study abroad likely varies from student to student, depending on what those students bring to the experience.

This finding of a high level of individual variance highlights the importance of considering that one size does not fit all; one approach to intercultural learning may not work for everyone. For educators teaching in short-term study abroad programs, this finding emphasizes the need to use different strategies and learning experiences in hopes of fostering the learning of the largest possible number of their students. Education abroad advisors who work with individual students in selecting a study abroad program need to consider students' motivations, interests, and developmental levels to find a program that will effectively foster the development of intercultural competence for this particular student. Similarly, student affairs professionals across functional areas need to work with students on an individual basis to help them identify the appropriate complimentary experiences that will foster their intercultural learning. For some students, short-term study abroad might be a perfect complement to other intercultural learning experiences; for others, it may not add much to students' overall intercultural development, particularly if they have not yet

developed the positive intercultural attitudes that Deardorff (2016) argued are the foundation for all other intercultural learning. As discussed previously, for all students, short-term study abroad should be seen as one of a much larger array of learning experiences.

Our study also highlights important implications for how student affairs educators and other professionals evaluate and make sense of existing study abroad literature. The individual-level variance we found in outcomes may explain some of the contradictory findings in previous research (e.g., Anderson et al., 2006; Gaia, 2015; Kehl & Morris, 2007; Vande Berg et al., 2009). Group means, which most previous research studies rely on, may be masking important individual differences. When these studies have small sample sizes (e.g., Anderson et al., 2006) or focus on a specific group of students (e.g., students at one small liberal arts college; Gaia, 2015), unique attributes of the students or course may substantially influence the findings, thus leading to contradictory findings with other research. Student affairs educators and others consulting research in study abroad (and in other areas of student engagement and development) can draw on the findings from this study to take a more critical eye toward research that fails to unpack individual-level variation.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

In addition to the implications for practice discussed previously, our study also points to a number of directions for future research. First, as noted previously, because we were not able to identify and access a measure for Deardorff's (2011, 2016) skills domain, our study is unable to provide insights into the potential for learning related to intercultural skills. In spite of this, our study covers many aspects of intercultural competence, specifically Deardorff's (2011, 2016) domains of knowledge, attitudes, internal, and external outcomes, thus providing valuable insights into the potential intercultural learning in short-term study abroad. Future studies should explore the potential for intercultural skill development in short-term study abroad. Second, we did not analyze learning by participant demographics, which could explain some of the differences in outcomes on the student level. Future research should consider how students' background experiences might

influence what and how they learn from short-term study abroad experiences. Third, although our study can explore the “what” of intercultural learning in short-term study abroad, including at the individual level, we did not examine the “how”—what is it in different short-term study abroad experiences that most effectively promotes students’ intercultural learning across the various facets identified in Deardorff’s (2011, 2016) model? Future research should examine not only what students are learning, but how.

Finally, the finding that at the individual level we saw both meaningful increases and decreases in students’ scores across many dimensions of intercultural competence also provides a number of critical implications for future research on study abroad and other student learning experiences. It is not enough to look only at group-level mean differences; researchers must look at individual outcomes in order to grasp the full complexity of these experiences and how they influence students’ intercultural competence. Few prior studies reported declines in students’ intercultural competence at the individual level (with Anderson et al., 2006, as one exception); researchers must go beyond whole-sample-level effects to understand what about particular courses affects which students’ intercultural development in which direction. Quantitatively, researchers should explore how different individual-level factors moderate the relationship between participation in short-term study abroad and intercultural competence outcomes. Qualitative research might be a particularly important tool in understanding the complexities of students’ intercultural learning and development, allowing researchers to explore the depth of students’ experiences in ways that just are not possible with quantitative measures.

Conclusions

Contradictory findings on intercultural learning in short-term study abroad have made it difficult to determine how students benefit from participating in this increasingly popular type of study abroad. Our findings indicate that, in their current form, much of the potential of short-term study abroad lies in fostering growth in the knowledge dimension of intercultural competence. This highlights a need

to create complimentary experiences that provide a foundation for and then build on the intercultural learning that occurs in short-term study abroad and focuses on the areas of intercultural competence that short-term study abroad does not address. Our student-level analysis also showed potential for learning in other areas, though currently only a small number of students seem to experience such growth, and a similarly substantial portion of participants seem to experience no growth or even decline. Thus, researchers, faculty, and student affairs educators need to spend more time reflecting on ways they can ensure that all students achieve the intended outcomes in that area, whether through different learning strategies utilized in the study abroad course or complimentary learning opportunities beyond study abroad.

Disclosure No potential conflict of interest is reported by the authors.

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