

Reflections on Student Interns’ Cultural Awareness Developed through a Short-Term International Internship

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The study-abroad internship option for students is one example of a transformational learning opportunity (TLO) that is becoming increasingly popular in programs offered by colleges and universities in the United States (Alfaro, 2008; Cushner & Mahon, 2002). These TLOs often have the potential to broaden, enrich, or augment student learning and personal development. International study abroad opportunities are recognized in the literature as having the power to provide significant positive benefits by impacting a student’s personal growth and maturity

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and further increase appreciation for diversity and language differences (Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Toncar & Cudmore, 2000). Chieffo and Griffiths (2004) report that there has been an increase in short-term study abroad programs (less than eight weeks) in American universities. While there has been debate in the literature about the overall long-term merits of short-term study abroad programs (Arenson, 2003; Freinberg, 2004; Zamastil-Vondrova, 2005), universities are encouraging students to participate in them. This is evidenced by data provided by Opendoors online (2004) which indicate that 50% of all American stu-

dents who have studied abroad participated in short-term programs of eight weeks or less rather than the traditional academic year semester abroad. Penington and Wildermuth (2005) assert that these short-term programs have several advantages; they are less expensive to run, are less disruptive to student employment at home, bring students back to their families in less time, and often are designed as cohort or group models which eliminate the fear of traveling alone. Additionally, many short-term study abroad experiences include the support of home faculty members who accompany students for the duration of the experience. Zamastil-Vondrova concludes that as a result of short-term study abroad experiences, students begin to learn to engage and work with peoples of other cultures, and gain insight into a world larger than their own.

Short-Term Student Teaching International Internships

For students who are preparing to be teachers, the benefits of a short-term international student teaching internship may be even more critical. Cushner and Mahon (2002) suggest that an overseas student teaching experience is one which prepares teachers to “address the realities of changing demography and increasing intercultural interdependence in their classrooms” (p. 3). Villegas and Lucas (2002) state that international student teaching internships are excellent vehicles for increasing the knowledge and skill sets of pre-service teachers who gain a better understanding of cultural similarities and differences because of the active engagement that is found in field-based experiences outside of the college classroom.

For the past four years, qualified teacher education majors at the University of North Florida (UNF) who are completing their final student teaching internship have had the opportunity to participate in a short-term three-week student teaching internship in schools in Plymouth, England. This experience has been designed with the focus on completing an international internship involving four stages that are common to any academic endeavor: preparation, experience, reflection, and evaluation (Woolf, 2006). As a result of planning, implementing, and supervising the internship for four years, we have recognized that an additional emphasis on developing culturally aware, if not culturally competent individuals, was worthy of attention.

The faculty team leaders involved in this transformational learning experience have witnessed the student teachers becoming active participants in their own transformations through their experiences in the English classrooms, university relationships, and in the diverse British culture. We found that the students' experiences while in the United Kingdom did not have to be viewed as better or worse, but as familiar or different and, as Brindley, Quinn, and Morton (2009) have pointed out, their discomfort could act as a means to extend their personal and cultural flexibility and openness. Initially, students may simply gain perspective on their own strengths and weaknesses, their ability to live and work in unfamiliar circumstances, and their adaptation to challenging situations away from the support of family and

friends, but the elation and sense of accomplishment that they bring back is just the beginning of possible internal changes that may occur. Global connections that they have made personally and professionally, including their knowledge of the parallels and dissimilarities between the school systems in England and the United States, may not be fully operational until they begin to teach in their own classrooms, but the excitement and external transformation in their attitudes are usually immediate.

In our role as faculty trip leaders, we have observed that classroom activities and life experiences should, whenever possible, extend beyond conventional curriculum (Lupi & Batey, 2009). Our students learn very personal messages about their identity and place in the world through their experiences in both the American and the British cultures. We have found that, although students carry deep cultural attributes of American customs with them, they discover many differences in the surface and deep cultures of the British, some of which they are not always prepared to deal with. As a result, our purpose in the present study was to explore the participants' response to the study abroad experience to determine whether they identified connections to surface and deep cultural issues of the host country and its people. We continue to be interested in the transformative nature of this short-term international student teaching experience and have provided an organizational framework in which to analyze representative reflective statements made by students as evidence of their insights and perceived personal and professional growth.

Defining Surface and Deep Culture

Holtzman (2000) identified two levels of culture, surface and deep. Surface culture is characterized by easily identified cultural norms. Deep culture focuses on cultural norms that are not easily recognized unless one spends an extended amount of time living abroad. According to Holtzman (2000), culture can be compared to a tree in which surface culture is the visible trunk, limbs, and leaves of the tree and deep culture is the invisible, but valuable roots beneath the surface. The tree is recognizable by the superficial leaves and limbs, but the identity and structure of the tree are supported and sustained by the roots below the ground. Surface culture refers to the tangible things that relate to and are unique to a group of people (Gonzales, 1978), including the customs and practices associated with a particular people such as the arts and crafts, intellectual achievements, historical events, spirituality, daily living, and race. Food, holidays, clothing, and folklore are often included in generalizations of ethnic groups. Every cultural group has undergone, and is undergoing, processes of acculturation and assimilation; however, every cultural group maintains certain customs that are unique to that group. These customs and practices become associated with the group until it is difficult to think of one without the other (Gonzales, 1978).

Elements of deep culture deal with the feelings and attitudes that people learn by being members of particular ethnic groups. Individual cultures expect certain behaviors that are to be followed in particular situations and promote particular

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attitudes. Ceremonies, esthetics, ethics, and family relationships are embedded in deep culture (Pappamihiel, 2004). Forms of nonverbal communication or reinforced speech, such as the use of the eyes, the body, or hand gestures, are meaning specific to many cultures. Deep culture also reflects less observable values, beliefs, and customs and includes child rearing practices, rules about courtship and marriage, treatment of elders, and proxemics: the physical distance from which conversation and other interaction feels most comfortable (Holtzman, 2000). There are usually historically significant events that shape the experiences of a group in ways that contribute to both individual and cultural identity. Many groups wish to maintain the food, music, and language of their culture and proudly display them as symbols of their distinct heritage. Although there are those for whom the quest for equality means that the desired endpoint of cultural understanding is an attitude of cultural neutrality, or a place where everyone is the same and difference does not matter, in many cultures, color, racial identity, and ethnicity are sources of pride that represent personal identity and heritage that are treasured and respected.

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. Because "children are children the world over" (Brindley, Quinn, & Morton, 2009, p. 531), culturally competent individuals are not required to know everything about other cultures, but rather to have willingness and commitment to learning about customs other than their own (Holtzman, 2000).

The International Teaching Internship in Plymouth, England

Forty-two students from the College of Education and Human Services at UNF have completed the three-week short-term internship in Plymouth, England since March 2007. Faculty trip leaders have designed and conducted a rigorous pre-application, application, and preparation procedure for students selected for the opportunity. Student participants were selected based on the serious nature of sending pre-service teachers into Plymouth schools to teach, an enormous responsibility in any country. Host faculty at the University College, Plymouth (UCP) has helped with establishing relationships and placing the American students in local schools. UNF faculty trip leaders have crafted a comprehensive process for planning and conducting the trip which include marketing the trip, the application process, trip preparation meetings, on-site supervision, reflection, post-trip responsibilities, and evaluation.

Selection and Preparation

Students were eligible to apply for the international internship the semester before their final teaching internship in the College of Education. Applicants were asked

to submit essays which address their expectations and qualifications to participate in the internship, and 30-minute personal interviews were conducted for selected students. A 3.0 grade point average and three references were additionally required. Typically, six to 10 students were selected to participate. Selected students received a Transformational Learning Scholarship from the university which provided partial funding support and helped offset their cost. Students successfully completed 10 weeks of internship in their home placement and agreed to meet for five trip preparation meetings prior to leaving for England. This often meant that demonstration of performance based skills needed to be accelerated and communication between the faculty trip leaders and college internship supervisors was paramount.

Following successful completion of their local internships and the required trip preparation meetings, students traveled as a group to Plymouth, England. They were housed together in small townhouses on the edge of campus at UCP. School selection for placement of the American interns in Plymouth was a collaborative process with the university's liaison at UCP based on grade equivalents to their Jacksonville internships, further increasing the opportunity to compare and contrast learning and achievement levels of the students. Originally, we placed interns in three primary schools; however, in spring 2009, we added a secondary and a special needs school. Head Teachers (principals) select the directing teachers. One UNF faculty trip leader traveled over with the students to help them adjust to the living accommodations, get settled in their school placements, and identify possible problems. During the third week of internship, the second faculty leader traveled to Plymouth to evaluate the students' teaching and return with them. Overall, the American students have been very successful in taking on British lessons and adjusting to the classroom culture. Upon returning to the United States, students are required to discuss their Plymouth experiences through a reflective paper and post trip seminar.

Purpose

The present study developed as a result of emerging patterns in the attitudes, behavior, and reflections of the American students before, during, and after the international internship. After reviewing the literature associated with transformation and growth during study abroad practice teaching internships, and using their own observations and collective reflective discussions on previous internship groups, faculty trip leaders began to focus on behavioral changes that they had observed in the students' reactions to cultural similarities and differences. Patterns emerged in the students' reflection papers which pointed to the participants' perceptions regarding surface and deep cultural issues. We subsequently decided to move forward in investigating the potential surface and deep cultural issues addressed in the student comments that could be possible as a result of student participation in this internship. The methods, procedures, and discussion sections will share data and report on findings from the student reflection papers.

Methods

Participants

This study had as its participants 16 students from the March and November 2009 cohort. All of the students were undergraduate education majors (with the exception of one who completed a sport management internship) at the UNF. All but the sport management major were in the process of completing their final internship semester leading to Florida teacher certification. Interns ranged in age from 22 to 39 years old. Participants in this study included 13 female, and three male students (12 White, three Black, and one Hispanic). Seven elementary majors, three pre-kindergarten primary, three special education, and two secondary education students completed the trip as well as the one sport management major.

Procedures

A decision was made to use the scales that comprise the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) (Kelley & Meyers, 1995), as a way to organize and analyze the qualitative data from the students' reflection papers. The CCAI was developed to determine and inform of an individual's readiness to interact in another culture. The inventory is culture-general, the assumption being that all who adapt to another culture will share commonalities in their perceptions and feelings, regardless of their own cultural background. The inventory contains four Scales—Emotional Resilience, Flexibility and Openness, Perceptual Acuity, and Personal Autonomy. The four Scales and their component subheadings and items provide a viable framework for organizing students' responses to their international experience. A brief summary of each of the four key scales of cross-cultural adaptability follows.

Emotional resilience. Culture shock, often considered to be inherent in the cross cultural experience, generally includes some negative affect. An individual's capacity to modulate and deal effectively with this reaction is very important. Guthrie (1975) observed that an effective cross cultural experience requires "some humility about one's own social competence and enough self-confidence to keep on trying" (p.99).

Flexibility and openness. Cognitive flexibility—the ability to be broad minded—is listed as an important attribute by Detweiler (1978). Similarly, an 'interpersonal orientation' that embodies respect and curiosity towards others (Hawes & Kealey, 1981) is an essential characteristic of people ready to listen to others, become acquainted with them, and seek to understand their viewpoint.

Perceptual acuity. Perceptiveness and receptiveness, as well as the capacity for action derived from understanding, are essential elements in successfully acquiring cultural empathy. In an intercultural experience, empathy can involve a shift in cultural world view. The ability to comprehend verbal and nonverbal cues within the context of social relationship is important not only as language proficiency, but also underscores that communication competence is necessary to effectively converse across cultures (Cui & Van den Berg, 1991).

Personal autonomy. Self-esteem, self-concept, or personal identity is necessary for confident interaction with a host culture (Hawes & Kealey, 1981). The relationship of the self to the new culture is paramount to cross-cultural interaction in order for a person to remain open to experiencing local people and cultures without feeling threatened by one's own loss of identity.

The decision to use the items and subheadings in the CCAI was based on its close similarity to our observation of response pattern categories that were evident after reviewing the students' written reflection papers. For purposes of this study, the inventory was not used to predict student success in the internship nor was it scored for providing quantitative analyses of students' readiness to participate. Instead, the content of the items was used to provide a "nomological network" (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955) of the major categories of cross-cultural adaptability as expressed in students' responses as a means of organizing the data. Representative quotes and responses from students' reflection papers have been aligned with the appropriate inventory subheadings. We use these quotes to discuss student recognition and subsequent insight into surface and deep culture in the discussion section. In sum, we chose to use the CCAI to assist us in exploring and identifying evidence of increased awareness of student cultural transformations and their ability to recognize levels of surface and deep culture.

Data Collection

Reflection papers were collected from the 16 students within two weeks of their return to the United States and serve as the primary resource from which data were gathered for purposes of this study. It is to be noted that a post-trip seminar was conducted to further discuss student insight about their experience. The guidelines students received in preparation for writing the reflection papers are provided below.

1. What were their observations of cultural differences in Plymouth and England, especially in the university and city communities as a result of this experience and what were their responses to those differences?
2. What were their responses or first impressions and observations in their school assignment site and how did those responses change during the three week internship?
3. How did the (international) experience assist them in expanding their viewpoint about people, schools, and teaching including their relationships with the UK teachers, staff, and administration?
4. What did they learn about themselves as part of a larger group and as individuals away from friends and family?
5. How did the experience impact their future teaching? How did the experience affect them personally?

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6. What recommendations would they make to future participants?

7. What recommendations would they suggest to the trip leaders both from UNF and University College at Plymouth?

The reflection papers were reviewed by three graduate research assistants who were asked to identify specific response patterns that were present in the comments and narratives within the student papers. Inter-rater reliability was addressed through approved definitions of “surface” and “deep” cultural levels and raters coded responses independently. Following further discussion of possible coding methods it was decided that the data would be coded based on specific subheading component items from the CCAI that accurately were reflected in the students’ responses.

Results

The results of this study are presented in both narrative and table form and center around the four scales (sections) and component subheadings and items of the CCAI. These scales are used as a framework for presenting our students’ responses to the experience in each specific domain. Summations of the key items are included in table format at the end of each CCAI category discussion.

Emotional Resilience (ER)

This is the largest of the four CCAI scales and endeavors to measure an individual’s capacity to modulate and deal effectively with aspects of the cross-cultural experience that may be stressful for them. This scale appropriately provides a framework to look at our students’ responses to being away from family and friends, using new and different forms of transportation, trying new foods, and in general, “living outside their comfort zone.” Our students’ responses ranged from a minimal amount of discomfort to clearly feeling uncomfortable being in the new surroundings and expressing culture shock. Student comments included, “Being away from the ‘familiar’ was beyond difficult” and “never did I expect the reality check I would encounter.” On the other hand, some students indicated that the friendliness of the people made them feel more at ease and that helped them to adapt to their new environment. One student wrote,

Everywhere I went, I met such nice people; many people were very engaged with us and wanted to know everything they could. I found that to be very exciting and different from the way that people in the states react to people from different countries.

Additionally, we discovered that students generally commented only when their experience with food was negative, such as

...the food was an experience to itself. Not only did they have different names for common foods in the U.S., but it didn’t taste the same as it did here...

Also, traveling to and from the store, cooking in small ovens and dealing with tiny

refrigerators seemed to make an impression on our students “grocery shopping was also quite an ordeal because we had to use public transportation, time the buses right, and figure out which bus would actually take us back where we needed to go (often times we were on the wrong bus).” We observed that the students appeared to demonstrate emotional resilience particularly in relation to items dealing with stress and ambiguity. One intern commented, “I am now more confident in my ability to change and adapt to my environment” and “this experience helped me to see that I am a strong person and I can live on my own without my family and friends. I pushed myself to move outside my comfort zone.” Additional representative statements from the students are found in Table 1.

Flexibility/Openness (FO)

Flexibility and openness, or cognitive flexibility, is defined as the ability to be broad minded, as well as to present an ‘interpersonal orientation’ that embodies respect and curiosity towards others (Hawes & Kealey, 1981). In this area, our students clearly demonstrated through their writing that they responded positively to the people in Plymouth:

. . . as a visitor in a new country, you pay careful details to the people, places, and the environment which you are emerged [sic] in. I observed kindness, hospitality, and a great sense of welcome.

In particular, their responses supported the FO subheading “Liking for, openness toward, interest in and desire to learn from unfamiliar people and ideas.” UNF students often embraced the differences they perceived, particularly when it came to family time, traveling, and friends. They spoke of the observed willingness of the people they met to make time for them, and many of the students were invited out by school staff to family dinners and outings. They also reveled in their own cultural identities, with comments like,

I discovered that I enjoyed getting to know others, educate people on what America was really like (some have the wrong impression of America), and learning about a different culture and history of where everything came from. I learned so much about America through learning about Britain and England.

Several students viewed the transportation issues as an opportunity to “take the time to talk to a stranger and get to know something about their life.” One student explained that,

taking a bus or a cab from point A to point B has been a major lifestyle shift for me. Yet, the conversations I had waiting for the buses and in the cabs will stay with me for a lifetime.

Additional representative statements from the students are found in Table 2..

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Table I
CCAI Section: Emotional Resilience

<i>Component Subheadings</i>	<i>Representative Student Responses</i>
Coping, especially with stress and ambiguity	<p>"It's just an experience I have to go into with an open mind and be up for everything, it's a once in a lifetime opportunity that you have to go into headfirst."</p> <p>"I was worried I could not adapt to a place different from the United States. I am now more confident in my ability to change and adapt to my environment."</p> <p>"This experience helped me to see that I am a strong person and I can live on my own without my family and friends. I pushed myself to move outside my comfort zone."</p> <p>"There have been many occasions where we have been location challenged and the bus drivers and residents within Plymouth have been angels in disguise."</p>
Accepting/rebounding from imperfections and mistakes	<p>"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."</p> <p>"Prior to this trip, I thought the cold weather would be the largest obstacle I would face. Looking back I was naïve and quickly learned the rule of layering clothing."</p> <p>"In my personal life, I have not been too good of a listener... I am going to be more patient. I will make myself more available for people to talk and discuss their needs and desires with me."</p>
Trying new things and experiences	<p>"I feel that the best way to learn about something is to experience it first-hand."</p> <p>"...the food was an experience in itself. Not only did they have different names for common foods in the U.S., but it didn't taste the same as it did here. Although I never got quite used to all the new flavors, I eventually became used to the idea of having large pieces of rare meat for breakfast, dinner for lunch, and tea for dinner."</p> <p>"I have never been away from my family for this long and have never traveled out of the country. This was the first time I have taken a taxi or ridden in a city bus."</p> <p>"What I learned about myself being in a new setting ... is that I'm actually more compromising and willing to try new outings and food."</p>
Interacting with people in new or unfamiliar situations	<p>"Everywhere I went, I met such nice people; I never have met people who are very interested in people from a different country, many people were very engaged in us and wanted to know everything they could. I found that to be very exciting and different from the way that people in the States react to people from different countries."</p> <p>"I learned that I could meet people of a different culture and find things we have in common and things that make us different but see how we still get along and learn from each other."</p> <p>"Taking a bus or a cab from Point A to Point B has been one major lifestyle shift for me. Yet, the conversations I had waiting for the buses and in the cabs will stay with me for a lifetime."</p>

Table 2
CCAI Section: Flexibility and Openness

<i>Component Subheadings</i>	<i>Representative Student Responses</i>
Liking for, openness toward, interest in, and desire to learn from unfamiliar people and ideas	<p>"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."</p> <p>"I learned that I could meet people of a different culture and find things we have in common and things that make us different but see how we still get along and learn from each other."</p> <p>"The conversations I had waiting for the buses and in the cabs will stay with me or a lifetime. For example, one afternoon while waiting for my bus to go home, there were a handful of elderly ladies which I had conversations with about politics, the history of Plymouth, and of England."</p>
Tolerance, nonjudgmentalness, and understanding toward others who are different from oneself	<p>"We can never truly understand someone until we've walked a mile in their shoes, but interacting with people of another culture has brought me closer to understanding. My interactions...helped me to get a better understanding of the central values and ideals that drive the people in Plymouth."</p> <p>"I discovered that their (English) culture is very accommodating (to Americans and to each other), they enjoy spending time with people, it also seemed as though they didn't really care who had what but instead they valued the relationships with other people."</p> <p>"I feel the people in Plymouth are more modest and appreciate the more important things in life, like family time, traveling, and friends."</p> <p>"One major difference in culture that I observed was a more open view on sexuality...sexuality is a topic that is much more regulated here [in the U.S.] than in England. I was taken aback by the openness, but I also wanted to learn more about how this affected the children."</p>
Flexibility with regard to experiences	<p>"It's just an experience you have to go into with an open mind and be up for everything, it's a once in a lifetime opportunity that you have to go into head first."</p> <p>"I was impressed by the freedom the teachers have to teach throughout the day but felt very uncomfortable with the lack of structure in the classroom and their schedule. I became more comfortable as I worked with them..."</p> <p>"I always enjoy experiencing new cultures and travelling by bus, although it was tough due to my long commute, [it] was something that I enjoyed. I enjoyed riding into, through, and outside of town on a daily basis, watching the world pass by and not having to worry about which side of the road I am on or when I need to turn."</p> <p>"Although I never got quite used to all the new flavors, I eventually became used to the idea of having large pieces of rare meat for breakfast, dinner as lunch, and tea for dinner."</p>

Perceptual Acuity (PAC)

This scale of the CCAI focuses on the importance of communication. People who are perceptually acute are “attentive to verbal and non-verbal behavior, exhibit sensitivity and understanding, or show themselves to be empathic.” In an intercultural experience, good perceptual acuity helps to minimize the possibility of misinterpretation of another’s behavior. This is extremely important in international internships as many unfamiliar interactions can involve a shift in cultural world view. *Perceptual acuity* is achieved through successfully acquiring *cultural empathy* which requires perceptiveness and receptiveness, as well as the capacity for possible action. During conversation, a person must learn to pay attention to the thoughts and feelings of others and to the meaning of those thoughts and feelings. Attention to thoughts requires attention to language; attention to feelings requires attention to body language and other nonverbal cues.

Associated with perceptual acuity is a valuing of other cultures and a willingness to suspend judgment of others. The item, *I believe that all cultures have something worthwhile to offer*, focuses on receptivity to other cultures. It indicates an expectation of benefits to be derived from interaction with people of other cultures. UNF students were overwhelming positive in their comments about their ability to accept the differences in the school culture they experienced,

I feel I have expanded my view on people, schools, and teaching. We can never truly understand someone until we’ve walked a mile in their shoes, but interacting with people of another culture has brought me closer to understanding....I learned that not everything is what it seems and that it is important to take a deeper look.

The interns also expressed awareness of how they may be viewed by others with comments such as, “I learned a lot from the people I interacted with and hope they felt the same way about me.” At the same time students also commented on distinct differences in perceived cultural behaviors affecting communication “I had to remind myself that I am no longer in the South [in the U.S.] where people have that ‘southern hospitality’ that I am so accustomed to.”

Students were particularly sensitive to some of the differences in the school setting,

My patience has definitely increased being here. The students in my school are not accustomed to walking in lines and silence in the hallway. It took until the last week for me to truly realize that sometimes that is not always required. It is more of a ‘looks’ thing for the teacher.

Some of the student growth emanated from membership in their cohort, and the living arrangements at the host university. In fact, the scale item “*I consider the impact my actions have on others*” aligned well with many student comments on their personal struggles with group living, and to their ability to make sense of feedback from others and adapt successfully. Students wrote in their reflection papers comments such as, “I learned how patient I can be when placed with a group

of eight completely different people and recognize their personal weaknesses” and “when interacting with people, I have learned that I am sometimes very critical. I can rub people the wrong way to.” Additional representative statements from the students are found in Table 3.

Table 3
CCAI Component: Perceptual Acuity

<i>Component Subheadings</i>	<i>Representative Student Responses</i>
Item 3: I try to understand people's thoughts and feelings when I talk to them.	"As a person, I am going to be more patient. I will make myself more available for people to talk and discuss their needs and desires with me." "Understand that the people you are traveling with do not come from the same background as you, they do not always think the same way as you do, they may not have the same social, cultural expectations that you may, and that you may not get along with everyone."
Item 24: I believe that all cultures have something worthwhile to offer.	"Learning about other cultures is an important aspect of teaching, especially in our culturally shifting society." "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." "Having the opportunity of teaching in a different setting has shown me...although teaching varies from county to county, state to state, and country to country, students are students and they still need a nurturing, caring, and informative environment."
Item 33: I consider the impact my actions have on others.	"When interacting with people, I have learned that I am sometimes very critical. I can rub people the wrong way." "Most of the people we met from Marjon and the city of Plymouth had never even met Americans before me. This was unexpected, but a cultural experience nonetheless. It made it even more important to represent America in a proud yet dignified way." "You are there representing yourself, the UNF staff who sent you, and the United States." "I loved being a part of the team dynamic that evolved while we were in England. During the trip I played a back seat role going with the flow and then stepping up when no one else could make a decision."
Item 44: When I am in a new or strange environment, I keep an open mind.	"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'. "It's just an experience you have to go into with an open mind and be up for everything; it's a once in a lifetime opportunity that you have to go into head first."

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Personal Autonomy (PA)

The Personal Autonomy (PA) Items on the CCAI provide a framework for reporting on the awareness of possible changes or insight the students had on their personal identity, values, and beliefs in relation to living and interning in an unfamiliar environment. Personal autonomy is evidenced by confident interaction with a host culture (Hawes & Kealey, 1981). Positive self-esteem, self-concept, or personal identity are necessary in order for a person to remain open to experiencing local people and cultures without feeling threatened by their own loss of identity in cross-cultural interactions. Generally speaking, our students' reflections indicated a range of levels of confidence in interacting with unfamiliar people, some of which was determined by the age, status, and context of the interaction (e.g. teacher v. host country college student) as well as a good sense of respect for others and their value systems. They also showed respect and interest in the value system they observed in the school settings,

My teacher was very inviting and excited to have me. She has been to America many times before but still had loads of questions! This allowed me to warm up to her, easing my anticipation and stress of entering the unknown.

and,

. . . the point for me is that they do things differently. The English have found a system that works for them.

Our students often found their own personal values challenged in their cohort living situation. They dealt with their American peers in much the same way as they were with new British friends; "understand that the people you are traveling with do not come from the same background as you, they do not always think the same way as you do, they may not have the same cultural expectations that you may, and that you may not get along with everyone." Two items in the PA scale, *I feel free to maintain my personal values, even among those who do not share them* and *I prefer to decide from my own values, even when those around me have different values*, were used to explore our students' confidence in and comfort with his or her personal values. Some responses to these items included,

People are not perfect and everyone is not always going to get along, especially living in close quarters...it is important to put a stop to gossiping and talking behind people's backs and just confront the situation.

An additional item, *I prefer to decide from my own values, even when those around me have different values*, asks students to respond to decision making based on personal values. One student stated that she adjusted slowly and chose to wait before acting on her personal values. Other UNF students made their values clear from the beginning and held to them for the duration, and emphasized their sense of ownership for their own beliefs. Selected student responses can be found in Table 4.

Table 4
CCAI Component: Personal Autonomy

<i>Component Subheadings</i>	<i>Representative Student Responses</i>
Item 6: I believe that I can accomplish what I set out to do, even in unfamiliar settings.	<p>"I learned that I am a very independent person; I knew I was before but going to a new country and figuring my way around there has definitely made me believe I can get around anywhere."</p> <p>"I was worried I could not adapt to a place different from the United States. I am now more confident in my ability to change and adapt to my environment."</p> <p>"This trip taught me a lot about myself as an individual. I learned that I could travel to another country and explore."</p> <p>"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."</p>
Item 25: I feel free to maintain my personal values, even among those who do not share them.	<p>"People are not perfect and everyone is not always going to get along, especially living in close quarters."</p> <p>"I learned that I could meet people of a different culture and find things that we have in common and things that make us different but see how we still get along and learn from each other."</p> <p>"Understand that the people you are traveling with do not come from the same background as you, they do not always think the same way as you do, they may not have the same cultural expectations that you may, and that you may not get along with everyone."</p>
Item 35: I prefer to decide from my own values, even when those around me have different values.	<p>"With most of the social and cultural observances I made, I tried to stay on the sidelines... as time went on and I began to understand how the system worked I was able to find a way for me to fit."</p> <p>"During the trip, I played a back seat role, going with the flow and then stepping up when no one else could make a decision which is contrary to that before I went on this trip."</p>
Item 41: My personal value system is based on my own beliefs, not on conformity to other people's standards.	<p>"Most of the students that I met partake in a drinking circle and that is all they wanted the American students to partake in. To be honest, I told them I didn't want to die and would not partake in their drinking games."</p> <p>"I realized on this trip that I shouldn't worry about pleasing everyone else because this was a once in a lifetime experience and I wanted to get everything out of it that I could."</p>

Discussion

Our investigation of the student responses as shared in their individual reflection papers resulted in some interesting and compelling observations and discoveries. Using the Cross Cultural Adaptability Inventory allowed us to develop a perspective on our students' progress towards greater cultural awareness and appreciation,

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self-growth and maturation, and openness to values and systems (social and educational). We feel confident that there does exist clear evidence of increased student awareness in these areas, and a beginning knowledge of the levels of surface and deep culture that help to define the cross-cultural experience international internship experience. We believe this despite the relative brevity of the study abroad experience. We found that perception of a cultural act or behavior varied by student. That is, what one student perceived as surface culture was experienced and expressed as deep culture by another.

For example, some students commented that businesses and stores closed early without making a connection to noted 'family values' and spending time together while others mentioned this connection. Students also commented on non-materialistic aspects of the English culture citing that cars were smaller, homes were smaller, and that many people used public transportation, even in the outskirts of the city of Plymouth. In most reflections, food was addressed as a surface issue (e.g., strange names and acquired tastes) and students spoke of jumping in their cars and picking up fast food at home, something they did not witness very much during their stay in Plymouth. The time involved in planning, shopping, and preparing meals appeared to be so foreign to the interns that they failed to link it to the deeper cultural issues surrounding how people communicate through hospitality and shared dining customs. Conversely, faculty observed that the intern groups who planned and shared meals communally in their residences tended to also communicate and resolve conflicts among themselves more effectively.

Religion, which is generally considered to address deep culture, has become a hot button issue in the United States. The interns were surprised to find that religious education (RE) is taught in every school at all grade levels in England. We also observed that in a couple of instances, tolerance for other trip participants' religious beliefs became an issue. Additionally, some students expressed an expectation for their fellow Americans' behavior while abroad based on their own personal values (e.g., drinking habits) but they did not seem to apply the same standards to the people they met in Plymouth. We believe that in this case, our students demonstrated positive behaviors illustrative of Personal Autonomy (CCAI), as they did not let the values of others affect their own judgment.

As noted by Stachowski and Brantmeier (2002), many of our students clearly "began a journey into another culture," but in a short-time began to recognize their relationship to their own "American" culture, including the American school culture. Having a clearer sense of one's own ethnic and cultural identity, according to Zeichner (as cited in Stachowski & Brantmeier, 2002) is an important characteristic for teachers to have when teaching in culturally diverse settings.

In response to the reflection prompt asking for recommendations to future trip participants, the interns were quick to give advice about the differences in transportation, i.e., "they need to know that there is a lot of walking and climbing up and down hills. They need to know that things are not available that are

crucial [to Americans'] needs and that they are used to...they also need to know that their transportation is not at their beck and call." However, several students recognized that the surface issue of using public transportation could address deep culture issues of communication. They made observations about English mothers with their children and young adults, in groups and pairs, interacting verbally and through body language in familiar and unfamiliar ways. The Plymouth residents were friendly and curious about the Americans' southern accents and consistently expressed eagerness to hear them talk which pleased and surprised the students. Perceptual Acuity was demonstrated in several reflection papers through comments about an increased understanding of how it feels to be different or out of your comfort zone. Statements on how this experience will shape them as teachers who will need to connect to their culturally and linguistically different students in their U.S. classrooms were also common.

Conclusion

It is interesting to note the variance in the way the interns approached the cultural experience as a whole. Many of the participants plowed ahead, addressing their challenges and human encounters head-on, clearly driven by all of their personal values and expectations, positive and negative; while others commented on "hanging back," watching and absorbing the culture before diving in. In the end, we found that both groups were able to meet the challenges with Emotional Resistance, Flexibility and Openness, Perceptual Acuity, and Personal Autonomy. They overwhelmingly expressed positive summations of the trip. Given the variables of former life experiences, personality, and prior cultural competence that the participants bring with them, it is gratifying to observe that, even the more reticent student interns commented on the positive impact of the trip in their confidence in and comfort with their ability to address new situations effectively. Not a single student failed to recommend the trip to future participants.

Long term impact on career advancement and personal accomplishment has also been associated with study abroad. Student teachers who participate in an international internship return with a greater desire to share their knowledge and experience with others, as well as a new sense of authority. Students have greater academic prestige because of their participation and are more likely to apply and be selected for additional opportunities for international travel and study (Martens, 1991). The experience abroad offers the individual a unique opportunity for intercultural development, both surface and deep, as it involves physical and psychological transitions that engage the cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains. This experience occurs twice—once during entry into the host culture and again upon reentry into the home culture (Cushner, 2007). Intercultural sensitivity, increased autonomy, and openness to cultural diversity are also enhanced as a result of study abroad (Pfnister, 1972). Participants may also develop a more positive, but criti-

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cal, attitude toward their home country than those who remain at home. Cushner and Mahon (2002) supported the concept that student teachers return from study abroad more globally minded and with an increased cultural awareness particularly in their professional development.

In conversations with trip alumni, UNF faculty team leaders have observed an increase in their self-confidence, adaptability, flexibility, and positive outlook on their future as teachers. For some of the participants, the international internship experience sets a new direction and focus for their teaching careers. More than ever, there is the need for pre-service teachers to have significant cross-cultural experiences that enable them to teach with, work with, and continue to learn from people different from themselves. The lived intercultural experience is the key to gaining a meaningful understanding of other cultures as well as one's own place in an interconnected world (Cushner, 2007). In speaking to trip alumni, we found that, even years after the international experience, they continue to have a greater understanding of the intellectual life and traditions of the British in addition to an increased awareness of American culture. The present study of the short-term internship in Plymouth demonstrates the value of the international experience as a way to expand cross-cultural knowledge and to develop a global perspective in student teachers. It highlights that the experience not only impacts on a generalized recognition of surface culture, but creates an overt and subtle awareness of deep culture. It is our hope that the international internship alumni have utilized the social, emotional, and cognitive knowledge gained by participating in the experience to affect positive responsiveness to cultural differences in their current classrooms.

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