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A Global Interdisciplinary Service-Learning Project to Develop Cultural Humility in Educators of Children with Autism and Developmental Disabilities

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Abstract

A four-week global interdisciplinary service-learning project to Botswana, was developed to increase cultural humility and cross-cultural communication skills in 12 current and future educators of children with autism and developmental disabilities. Participants worked alongside peer educators in eight different special education units across different regions of Botswana to create curricular activities that can be used in classrooms in both countries. Instruction in Botswana education, culture, language, history, and traditions was provided along with immersion in daily Botswana life. The present study examines the impact of these experiences on participant growth of cultural humility and cross-cultural communication skills. Results indicated increases in cultural humility for all participants, with the greatest increases for the stages of integration and intercultural communication. Individual growth varied based on factors such as previous experiences, chronological age, and flexibility. In this paper, we discuss details of the project, results, limitations, and implications for practice.

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Abstract in Setswana

Lenaneo la beke tse nne go ya Botswana, le le akaretsang mafatshefatshe, ebile ele la dikitso tse di farologanyeng, le ne la bopiwa go oketsa kitso ka ngwao ya Setswana le ka ha go buisanwang ka teng mo ngwaong. Kitso tse tsa ngwao, di ne di itebagantse le barutabana bale lesome le bobedi. Barutabana ba, ene ele ba jaanong le ba isago, ba ruta bana ba ba nang le autism le bogole jo bo farologaneng. Batsaya karolo ba ne ba bereka le barutabana mo makalaneng a a farologanyeng a le boroba bobedi ko Botswana, a a lebaganeng le dithuto tsa autism le bana ba ba nang le bogole. Ba dira jaana go bopa ditsamaiso tsa thuto tse di ka dirisiwang mo dikolong tsa mafatshe oo mabedi. Batsaya karolo ba ne ba tlhatlhelelwa ka tsamaiso ya thuto, ngwao, puo, ditso le tumelo mo Botswana, le gore di amana jang le matshelo a Batswana a tsatsi le letsatsi. Dipatlisiso tse di leka go kala maduo a phetogo maikutlo a batsaakarolo mo go godiseng kitso ka ngwao le dipuisano ka yone mo Botswana. Maduo a dipatlisiso a supile fa barutabana ba nnile le kgolo mo go tlhaloganyeng ngwao, go gola mo go tona e nnile go tlhaloganya dingwao tsa mafatshe ka bobedi. Se se raya gore lenaneo le, le nnile botlhokwa thata mo go bone. Go gola ga barutabana ka bongwe ka bongwe go ne go ikaegile thata ka maitemogelo a bone pele ga ba ya Botswana, dingwaga tsa bone le ka ha ba amogelang diemo tse di farologanyeng ka teng. Mo mokwalong o, re ala ka botlalo ka ha lenaneo le tsamaileng ka teng, maduo le ditlhaelo/dikgwetlho le ka fa lenaneo le ka dirisiwang ka teng go ya pele.

Keywords:

Global interdisciplinary service-learning, cultural humility, special education, speech-language pathology, autism, and developmental disabilities

Introduction

Botswana is a mid-sized country located in Southern Africa with a population of approximately two million people. Since gaining independence from Britain in 1966, Botswana has had impressive economic growth while striving to meet the educational needs of the nation and prepare all students for the job market, including learners with special needs (Denbow & Thebe, 2006; Mangope et al., 2018; Masimolole, 2011; Siphambe, 2000). Since 2015, The College of Health and Human Sciences and the College of Education and Allied Professions at a public university in the southern United States has established a collaborative relationship with Botswana's special education system (Botswana's Ministry of Education), with reciprocal visits by participants from each country. This relationship has focused on meeting the educational needs of children with disabilities, and more specifically children with autism. There

are almost 240 million children with disabilities worldwide, with estimates of autism representing one out of every 100 children (UNICEF, 2021; World Health Organization, 2019). The number of children in the US with a diagnosis of autism is staggering at 1 out of 44 (CDC, 2020), and in Botswana, autism is one of the most diagnosed disabilities in children five to nine years of age (Olashore, 2017). Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech, and nonverbal communication (What Are the Symptoms of autism, n.d.). Children with autism in Africa tend to be diagnosed around age 8, about four years later, on average, than their American counterparts. In the United States, the largest diagnostic increases over the past few decades have been on the milder end of the spectrum of autism (Zeliadt, 2017). More than half of African children with autism are also diagnosed with intellectual disability, compared with about one-third of American children on the spectrum. This suggests that only the most severely affected children are identified. Those who are diagnosed often speak few or no words and require substantial help with everyday tasks such as eating or going to the bathroom. Children with severe disabilities include individuals with developmental disabilities who have a moderate to severe intellectual disability (i.e., IQ < 40); those on the autism spectrum with co-occurring moderate to severe intellectual disability; and those having an intellectual disability and multiple additional disabilities, such as sensory or physical disabilities. Students with severe disabilities constitute a "low incidence" disability defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) to include "… a significant cognitive impairment; or any impairment for which a small number of personnel with highly specialized skills and knowledge are needed in order for children with that impairment to receive… a free appropriate public education" (IDEA, 20 U.S.C. § 1462(c)).

Preparing professionals to meet the unique needs of learners with autism and intellectual disabilities requires much more than preparing a general education teacher. General education teachers typically teach fairly homogeneous groups of students working toward similar academic goals, whereas special education teachers provide individualized instruction to students with a greater range of academic and behavioral characteristics; collaborate with other teachers and related services professionals; work in various instructional environments; and are often responsible for outcomes

other than academic improvements (Brownell et al., 2014; Holdheide, 2013; Jones & Brownell, 2014).

The current project extends and builds upon the established interdisciplinary partnership with a four-week intensive study abroad program in Botswana for 12 graduate students and professionals in Special Education and Communication Sciences and Disorders. Participants worked side-by-side with Botswana special education teachers and speech-language pathologists in eight different special education units to develop and share curricular activities and communication strategies. The primary purpose of this project was to develop participants' cultural humility and cross-cultural communication skills with Setswana language instruction, content seminars, visits to eight different regional schools with special education units, and cultural site visits. The theoretical framework was designed to encourage student and professional growth by incorporating the high impact educational practices of global learning, service-learning, internships/field experiences, and collaborative projects.

High Impact Practices, Cultural Humility, and Global Service-Learning

High Impact Practices

In 2008, the Association of American Colleges and Universities submitted a report titled "High Impact Educational Practices" to increase positive education results for students from widely varying backgrounds (Kuh, 2008). Evidence to support the initial 10 High Impact Practices (HIPs) came from data collected through the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) which suggested that purposeful, systematic, and active learning processes increase rates of student retention and engagement. There are currently 11 HIPs, including First-Year Seminars and Experiences, Common Intellectual Experiences, Learning Communities, Writing Intensive Courses, Collaborative Assignments and Projects, Undergraduate Research, Diversity/Global Learning, Service-learning/Community Based Learning, Internships/Field Experiences, Capstone Courses and Projects, and ePortfolios (Kuh, 2008; Watson et al., 2016). For purposes of this project, the HIPs of Collaborative Assignments and Projects (promotes self-understanding and appreciation of alternative views), Diversity/Global Learning (increases understanding and appreciation of human differences), Service-learning/Community Based Learning (allows for

structured reflection about how classroom learning informs community practice and vice versa), and Internships/Field Experiences (provides direct experience in a setting typically related to current career interests) are addressed (Kuh et al., 2017).

Cultural Humility

Cultural competence is defined as encompassing knowledge about diverse people and their needs, possessing attitudes that recognize and value difference, and having flexible skills to provide appropriate and sensitive care to diverse populations (Cross et al., 1989; Kools et al., 2015). The term "cultural humility" expands the idea of cultural competence as it considers that we can never be truly adept in understanding difference and that it is an ongoing process of self-evaluation and self-critique (Hunt, 2019; Kools et al., 2015; Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). For future and current professionals in the field of education, including special educators and speech-language pathologists, developing cultural humility is a critical priority. Professionals need to use the skills of cultural humility to meet the complex needs of children and their families. As the diversity of our student population increases, educators need to find ways to serve those at risk for disabilities (Taylor, 2010). Teacher education programs need to infuse "culturally responsive pedagogical training and practices" for all students to have the opportunity to reach their full potential (Kea & Utley,1998; Taylor, 2010). Professionals need to be able to understand the unique needs and diverse cultural backgrounds of the children and families that they serve, especially the differences in interpersonal and social behaviors, and how disability may be interpreted (Rogers-Adkinson et al., 2003).

Global Service-Learning

While a traditional approach to service-learning places the emphasis primarily on the "service" component, a more critical approach extends learning by developing experiences with a greater focus on equality and shared power between all participants (Mitchell, 2008). The consideration of power and privilege is one of the ways that global service-learning (GSL) stands apart from domestic or traditional service-learning activities (Hartman & Kiely, 2014). Additionally, GSL projects typically focus on student intercultural competence development, take place within a global marketization of volunteerism, is typically immersive, and engages the critical global civic and moral imagination (Hartman & Kiely, 2014).

For example, Nickols et al. (2013) used high impact practices on a four-week interdisciplinary global service-learning project for nine participants to a remote area of Tanzania. They describe international service-learning as a "unique pedagogy" which offers students a complex cluster of educational opportunities that include cultural competency acquisition combined with professional development. During the project, participants shared their experiences through journal reflections and focus groups with four themes emerging: personal apprehension and challenges; intra-group relationships and processes; reciprocity with community participants; self-confidence and competence. The authors recommend preparing not only for program logistics but also for processing personal and intra-group challenges and incorporating them as part of the international service-learning experience.

The development of cultural humility in the context of global service-learning is supported by the contributions of Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984; Morris, 2020; Sugarman, 1984). Sugarman (1984) stresses the importance of gaining knowledge by "grasping and transforming the experience" through abstract conceptualization, concrete experience, active experimentation, and reflective observation. Concrete experience is defined by Morris (2020) with five themes; learners are involved, active, participants; knowledge is situated in place and time; learners are exposed to novel experiences, which involves risk; learning demands inquiry to specific real-world problems; and critical reflection acts as a mediator of meaningful learning.

The present study expands the existing literature by examining the growth of cultural humility and cross-cultural communication skills in a group of future and current special education teachers and speech-language pathologists who face an increasingly diverse and global population in their schools and classrooms. The study examined the effects of a four-week global service-learning project for educators of students with autism and developmental disabilities on cultural humility and cross-cultural communication skills.

Method

Participants

A total of twelve participants who professionally support students with severe disabilities and autism were in this study. There were two males and ten

females. The average age of the participants was 38 with a range of 24 to 56. Seven of the participants were 31 years of age or over and five participants were 30 years of age or younger. Seven of the participants were first time international travelers. Six of the participants were professionals working in the public-school system, three were speech and language pathologists and three were special education teachers. The remaining six participants were graduate students, all of them pursuing Master's degree, three in Communication and Science Disorders and the other three in Special Education.

Teacher participants and teacher candidates were selected based on the following criteria: 1) commitment to program objectives; 2) desire to integrate African culture and language instruction into K-12 area studies; 3) experiences in curriculum activity design; 4) readiness and need for international experiences, with preferences given to those who have not had the opportunity to study or teach abroad; 5) 3.5 or higher grade point average; and 6) support from their school administrators to participate in the program. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. The institutional review board (IRB) determined this project is exempt from IRB review under categories #1 and #2 according to federal regulations.

In Botswana, the participants were classroom teachers, teacher assistants and administrators from special education units within eight schools, a professor from a local university, a former Director from the Department of Special Support Services, the President of Autism Botswana, and the only Speech and Language Pathologist for the Ministry of Education.

Setting

A small rural public university in the southern United States with more than 115 undergraduate majors and concentrations and more than 60 graduate programs is where the pre-departure phase of the project occurred. The student body is comprised of more than 11,034 students, 55% women, 45% men, and more than 16 percent of students self-identifying as part of a racial minority group.

The in-country phase of the study took place in Botswana. Botswana, officially the Republic of Botswana, is a country located in Southern Africa that is rich in both culture and language. According to the Worldometer (n.d.), the population of Botswana is 2,448,875 with 10% of the population living in the capital city of Gaborone. Roughly half of the population lives in rural areas.

Almost 80% of the population are Batswana speaking and the language is called Setswana (Bagwasi, 2003). The country's official business language is English, the main spoken language is Setswana, and there are over 20 additional spoken languages. Educationally, Botswana is striving to meet the needs of the nation and prepare students for the job market with about 755 primary schools and a Revised National Policy on Education (Botswana Government, 1994) stating that the government is committed to the education of all children, including those with disabilities. There is an increasing awareness about the importance of identification and need for specialized services for individuals with severe disabilities and autism. A reciprocal relationship addressing special education needs has been established between program leaders in Botswana and a State located in the southern United States (Rose et al., 2021). This partnership began in 2014 and is supported by the State's Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, the State Board of Education, and the Department of Special Support Services, Ministry of Education in Botswana (Rose et al., 2021; Rose & Cooper-Duffy, 2021).

The first part of the trip took place in and around the capital city of Gaborone. Next, participants visited Francistown which is the second city in Botswana. Third, participants visited Maun, the tourism town of Botswana with a rural atmosphere along the banks of the Thamalakane River. During trips to these other regions of Botswana, participants visited villages, schools and learning centers that offer specialized educational support and services which enhanced understanding of the Botswana educational system, tradition, language, and culture.

Measures and Data Collection

Two assessment instruments were administered to the 12 participants in the project. The quantitative measures include the Intercultural Sensitivity Survey (Appendix A), and the Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric (Appendix B). Both measures consider aspects of cultural humility and cross-cultural communication skills. Paine et al. (2016) note that humility and intercultural competence appear to be compatible virtues with evidence suggesting that "those with intercultural skills display humility in their understanding of difference" (p. 16). In Page's (2021) chapter titled Pathways of Intercultural Development, cultural humility is described as emphasizing "the understanding that forms within genuine intercultural dialogue with unique individuals."

The Intercultural Sensitivity Survey was chosen as it has been used to assess the development of intercultural sensitivity in short-term study abroad programs and includes measures of levels of global competency as well as stages of intercultural sensitivity (denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration) (Olsen & Kroeger, 2001). Each of the stages of intercultural sensitivity are defined in Bennet's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (2004; see this source for additional details). This instrument consists of 48 questions self-rated using a 5-point Likert scale as well as several objective questions necessary for obtaining demographic information. Students rated themselves on each item as 1= Never Describes Me, 2= Seldom Describes Me, 3= Describes Me Some of the Time, 4=Describes Me Well, or 5=Describes Me Extremely Well. Each participant scanned the QR code from the researcher to access the survey. The survey was generated and analyzed in Qualtrics. The survey was administered at three different phases: a pre-departure phase, a week before leaving country; a mid-overseas phase, two weeks after being in country; and a post-overseas phase, a week after returning to the United States (see Figure 1).

The Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric (Bennett, 2008) was chosen to be used during the post-departure phase as a tool to measure "cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts." This rubric contains six indicators, **Knowledge**: cultural self-awareness, **Knowledge**: cultural worldview framework, **Skills**: empathy, **Skills**: verbal and nonverbal communication, **Attitudes**: curiosity, and **Attitudes**: openness. According to Rhodes and Finley (2013), each indicator is rated with the following four performance criteria: 1= benchmark (describes the starting point for learning exhibited by entering students), 2 & 3= milestones (simply represent progressively more sophisticated or accomplished performance as students move from benchmark to capstone), and 4= capstone (describe the culminating level of achievement). Faculty rated the participants on a scale of 1-4 at the end of the project using journal entries (daily description of the events of the day with a self-critical response of the activities), direct observations (were based on the 6 indicators during school visits, seminars and daily activities), and curriculum projects (comprehensive unit/lesson plans; see Rose & Cooper-Duffy (2021) for details) (Appendix C).

Design

A mixed methods design was used for this study, including both quantitative and qualitative analysis. For quantitative analysis, a one-group pre-, mid-, and post-test quasi-experimental design was used (Shadish et al., 2002). This design lacks a comparison or control group, and thus threats to internal validity are possible. The design was used because all students in the Botswana project indicated a desire to participate, leaving none to form a comparison group. The use of the Intercultural Sensitivity Survey allowed the results from the pre, mid, and post-departure surveys to be analyzed to determine the overall impact of the short-term study abroad program on producing cultural humility and cross-cultural communication skills. The qualitative analysis used constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2009). Charmaz (2009) points out that constructivist grounded theory rests on social constructions, which are influenced by the researcher's positions, perspectives, privileges, interactions, and geographical locations, all of which the authors acknowledge were present in the service-learning program in Botswana. The array of experiences was filtered through participant reflections and then filtered again through the authors' efforts to make meaning of the students' experiences using the Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric.

Procedures

Phase 1: Eight-Week Pre-Departure Instruction

There were eight pre-departure sessions, held once a week online using Blackboard®[1], a learning management system designed for online teaching. This site contains an email system, a discussion board, a place to post important websites, and a grade book where participants monitored their progress in the course. In addition, there was an option for web conferences embedded within Blackboard®, known as Collaborate®. This online conference tool was used to allow the researchers and participants to see and talk with each other while showing their computer screens in real-time.[1] In this format, participants were offered synchronous sessions with the researchers.

The online course contained eight weekly modules. In each module, the researchers provided participants with written directions, reading materials, an assignment, video and web links, and an agenda for the online meeting.

[1] http://www.blackboard.com/about-us/index.html

Participants were given access to the module a week before the online meeting. During the online meeting the agenda and session, materials were reviewed, assignments given, and participant questions answered. The content in the eight modules explored pre-travel instruction, Setswana language instruction (Easy Languages, 2008). Botswana culture lessons, team building (Dettmer et al., 2009), intercultural sensitivity model (Bennet, 2004), history of partnership with Botswana (Denbow, & Thebe 2006), Universal Design for Learning (The IRIS Center, 2009), and general traveling information (Botswana International Travel Information, 2022). There were three guest speakers from Botswana who shared information on the language, culture and in-country travel information.

The last session was a full day workshop that took place on campus. Pre-travel information was shared, and the participants were divided into work teams of three participants and one researcher. Each work team included a heterogenous combination of a special education and speech and language professionals as well as graduate students. One researcher was assigned to each team. These teams were set and stayed in place for the duration of the trip.

Phase 2: Four-Week Study Abroad in The Country of Botswana

During the four weeks in country phase, the 12 participants and three researchers went to Botswana. Students engaged in cultural humility and cross-cultural communication skill development through activities reinforced by experiential learning theory. Throughout the four weeks, four different structured activities were implemented: (a) work in eight different schools with students who have severe disabilities (including autism), and their teachers, (b) instruction in Setswana language and culture of Botswana by local special education professionals, (c) daily experience of the culture, and (d) exploration of cultural activities.

Work in Schools

The participants visited eight different schools across the country. There were two schools for children who were deaf or hearing impaired and had intellectual disabilities, four schools with self-contained classes for students who had severe disabilities (including autism), one school with all students included in general education classes, and one private school (non-governmental organization) for students with autism. While at each school, the participants were greeted by the administrators of the school with a traditional welcome ceremony that included formal introductions, tea, demonstration of

the children's talents (e.g., dancing, selecting names for the guests, presentation of art created by the children) and a description of their school. Each work team went to an assigned classroom where they observed a lesson, worked with a student with severe disabilities and exchanged information with the classroom teacher. The participants asked questions about the observation and the participants answered questions from the classroom teacher about strategies for working with students who have severe disabilities and autism.

Culture and Language Seminars

Participants engaged in six sessions (18 hours) of instruction focusing on the learning of conversational Setswana, verbal and non-verbal communication strategies and Setswana cultural norms. These language sessions allowed participants to experience the learning of Setswana language and culture, enhance participants' knowledge of the complicated language system used in Botswana, and development of basic conversational skills in Setswana.

Participants engaged in four seminars (12 hours) that provide in-depth discussions on Botswana history, culture, traditions, and their connections with Botswana, including the development of the education system. Seminars on specialized education services engaged participants in discussions on cultural comparisons and ways to differentiate instruction for learners with various needs. Participants learned about the instructional practices and curriculum activities in K-12 settings that embraced Botswana's language system and culture.

Daily Experience of Culture

Each day the participants had the opportunity to interact with the people of Botswana. Participants ate traditional Botswana meals, shopped in grocery stores, explored open markets, and navigated their way through everyday activities. Participants were encouraged to use the language they learned from the seminars and experience a day in the life in Botswana.

Exploration of Cultural Activities

The participants experienced five different safaris across the country. They also visited a cultural village, Gaborone Game Reserve, Three Chiefs' Statue and historic tour, Mokolodi Game Reserve, Victoria Falls, Chobe National Park, Okavango Delta, Bushman Crafts, Botswana Craft, etc. Participants were immersed in the culture of Botswana.

Phase 3: Post-Overseas Phase

During phase 3, a week after returning to the United States, a debriefing session was conducted to talk with participants about the impact of their experiences in Botswana. Each participant shared their feelings about the general experience and about specific experiences that had a profound impact on the participant. Discussions occurred with participants regarding their experiences and confusing ideas. For example, graduate students asked questions about why there were so few services for children with disabilities and why there was only one speech and language pathologist for the whole country when in the U.S. there are thousands of SLPs. Over the following week each participant submitted a journal they kept while in Botswana, and the team project.

Results

The Intercultural Sensitivity Survey was used to assess the development of intercultural sensitivity (denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration). In Figure (1), the average scores for all 12 participants for each category pre-departure, mid-overseas, and post-overseas were calculated for the four-week study abroad course. The average scores for the participants were low for the denial stage pre-departure 1.9, mid-overseas 2.3, and post-overseas 2.2, with an increase of 0.3. The defense stage had the lowest average scores of pre-departure 1.3, mid-overseas 1.5 and post-departure 1.4 with an increase of 0.1. In the minimization stage the participants rated the pre-departure 3.0, mid-overseas 3.3 and post-departure 3.2, with an increase of 0.3 for the mid-overseas and 0.2 for post-departure. In the acceptance stage the participants had the highest average scores pre-departure 4.3, mid-overseas 4.5 and post-departure 4.6, with an increase of 0.3. In the adaptation stage the participants had high average scores of pre-departure 4.0, mid-overseas 4.0 and post departure 4.4, with a high increase of 0.4. The average scores in the integration phase were pre-departure 3.1, mid-overseas 3.2 and post-departure 3.6, with the highest increase of 0.5. The average scores in the substantive knowledge stage were pre-departure 2.6, mid-overseas 3.0 and post-departure 3.0, with a high increase of 0.4. The average scores in the perceptual understanding stage were high with a pre-departure 4.2, mid-overseas 4.2 and post-departure 4.3, with an increase of 0.1. The average scores of the intercultural communication stage were pre-departure 3.3, mid-overseas 3.9 and post-departure 3.7 with the highest increase of .6 at mid-overseas and 0.4 at

post-departure. The growth for the in-country rating or mid-overseas showed higher growth than the post trip scores for minimization and intercultural communication stages.

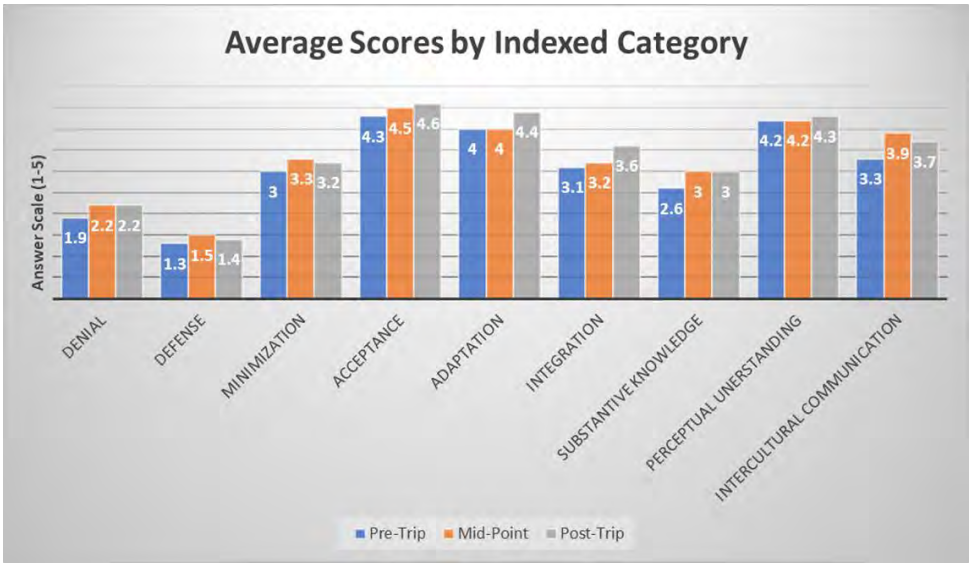

FIGURE (1): PARTICIPANT AVERAGE SCORES ON THE INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY SURVEY

In Figure (2), there were five questions in the survey that showed the greatest increase from pre-departure, mid-overseas and post-departure. In Question 18 participants were asked to rate themselves on *I have added to my own cultural skills new verbal and nonverbal communication skills that are appropriate in another culture*. The average scores were pre-departure 3.4, mid-overseas 4.3 and post-departure 4.4, with a large growth of 1.0. The average responses to this question show one of the highest levels of growth for one question. For Question 26, participants were asked to rate themselves on *I have substantive knowledge about at least one other culture outside the United States*, and *I apply this knowledge with confidence in my professional work*. The average scores were pre-departure 2.8, mid-overseas 3.8, and post-departure 3.6, with an increase of 1.0 by mid-overseas and an increase of 0.8 by post-departure. Responses to this question showed more growth in country than upon return to the United States. Collecting the data while in country showed the importance of this in country experience. For Question 41, participants were asked to rate themselves on *I have learned how to produce work with people from other places in the globe*. The average scores were pre-departure 3.1, mid-overseas 3.8, and post-departure 4.1, with an increase of 1.0. For Question 43, participants were asked to rate themselves on *I have lived abroad and experienced intense*

interaction with a variety of people from this other culture. The average scores were pre-departure 2.3, mid-overseas 3.5, and post-departure 3.3, with an increase of 1.2 by mid-overseas and an increase of 1.0 by post-departure. Average responses to this question showed the highest growth in country than upon return to the United States. For Question 44, participants were asked to rate themselves on *I have long-term friendships with several people from other cultures*. The average scores were pre-departure 2.9, mid-overseas 3.8, and post-departure 3.9, with an increase of 1.0.

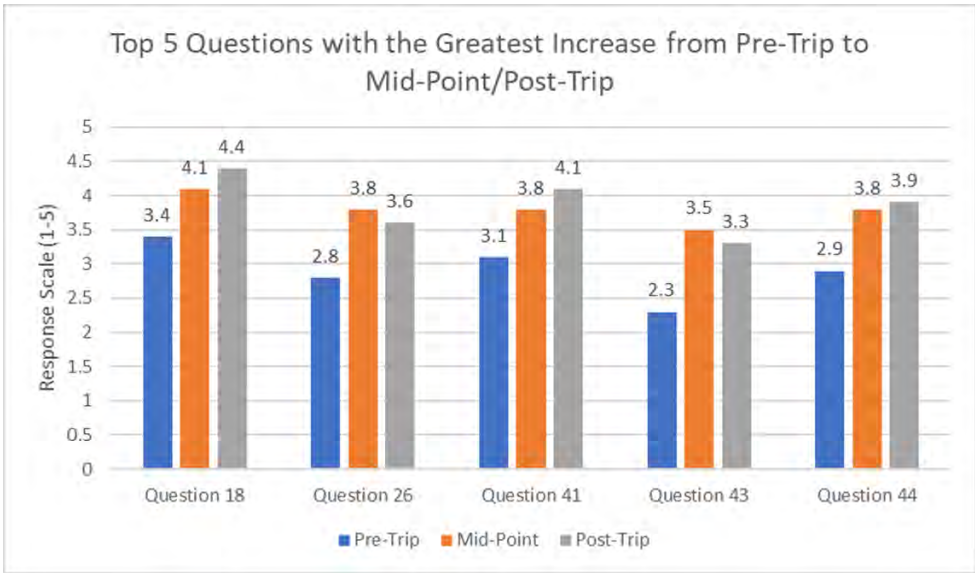

FIGURE (2): TOP FIVE QUESTIONS FROM THE INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY SURVEY WITH THE GREATEST INCREASE ACROSS PROBES

On the Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric which was completed in the post-departure phase using an array of participant reflections and experiences (Appendix C), participant scores were variable with some participants scoring at the "benchmark" level and others at the "capstone" level. Previous international experience, chronological age, openness, and flexibility may have contributed to these results. In Figure (3), the scores from the Intercultural Knowledge, and Competence Value Rubric are presented with post-departure scores. For the indicator Knowledge (cultural self-awareness) one participant was rated at benchmark, eight were rated at milestone, and three were rated at capstone. For the indicator Knowledge (cultural worldview framework) one participant was rated at benchmark, eight were rated at milestone, and three were rated at capstone. For the indicator Skills (empathy) one participant was rated at benchmark, five were rated at milestone, and six

were rated at capstone. For indicator Skills (verbal and nonverbal communication) four participants were rated at benchmark, three were rated at milestone, and five were rated at capstone. For the indicator Attitudes (curiosity) two participants were rated at benchmark, five were rated at milestone, and five were rated at capstone. For the indicator Attitudes (openness) two participants were rated at benchmark, three were rated at milestone, and seven were rated at capstone.

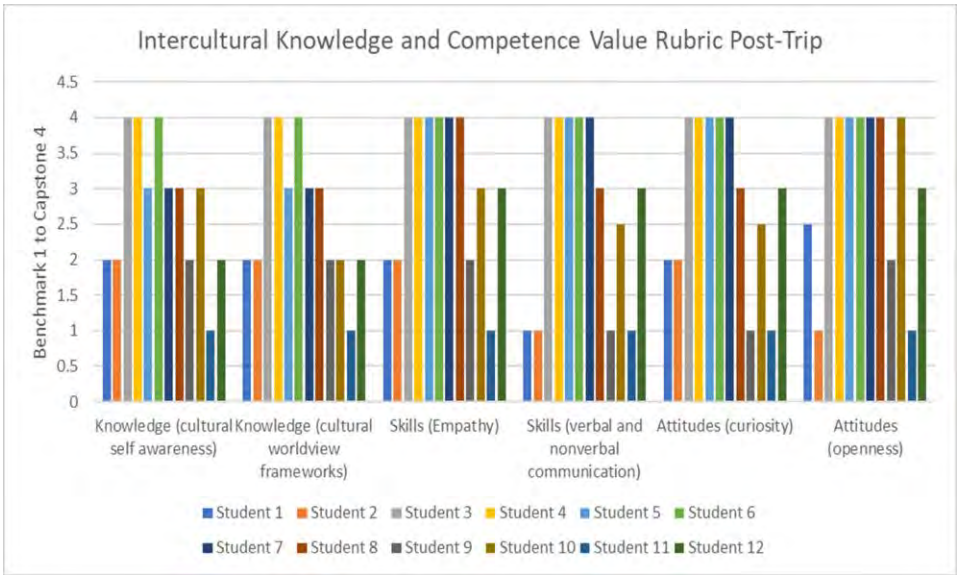

FIGURE (3): POST DEPARTURE RATINGS PER PARTICIPANT ON THE INTERCULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCE VALUE RUBRIC

Discussion

The results suggest that four weeks engaged in global service-learning activities is beneficial for increasing cultural humility and cross-cultural communication skills in a group of 12 current and future special education teachers and speech-language pathologists. Individual growth varied based on factors such as previous experiences, chronological age, and flexibility. It may be that individuals with previous international experience had already established some skills related to cultural humility and cross-cultural communication. Students who have previous opportunities to study abroad or travel internationally have multiple experience with people of other cultures. These students may start with higher ratings on the Intercultural Sensitivity Survey and end with overall higher ratings than students who do not have any travel experiences. The importance of pre-departure planning for Phase I was critical for laying a foundation for success of the project, with considerable

thought given to time and content of weekly modules and interactions. The early exposure to concepts such as intercultural sensitivity and global competency combined with some pre-learning about Botswana's educational system, culture, history, traditions, and Setswana language helped prepare participants for challenges experienced during Phase II (overseas phase) of the project. During debriefing sessions and in daily journals, participants frequently reflected on the Phase I learning activities as they processed new information.

Using a variety of formats for measurement of cultural humility and cross-cultural communication skills provided a more accurate representation of individual growth. Specifically, the use of surveys, questionnaires, daily journals, and debriefing sessions gave participants quantitative and qualitative ways to express what they were learning at different time points of the project. The combination of self-report measures and rubrics summarizing participant learning and participation provided for a more comprehensive analysis of skill acquisition. The authors found it helpful to gather data while in country in addition to pre-departure and post-departure probes as in-country data was significant. Completing the survey while experiencing the other culture appears to have shown the powerful impact of in-country interactions on the participants. Additionally, reflecting on specific questions from the surveys in addition to the average index scores was helpful when measuring project impact.

Project participants demonstrated growth across all stages of intercultural sensitivity from pre-trip to mid-point to post-trip with the greatest increases noted in the categories of integration and intercultural communication. The top five questions with the greatest score increases were in the categories of intercultural communication, adaptation, and substantive knowledge. While in country, participants were exposed daily to the unique needs of children with special needs along with their families, caregivers, and teachers. Participants learned that stakeholders in Botswana are trying to remove the stigma of disability and autism by increasing awareness and knowledge across the country (Lotterine-Kokabi, 2019; Zeliadt, 2017). Differences in interpersonal and social behaviors, including the importance of elders in the decision-making process, formal introductions, and meetings, and adjusting to differences in time management quickly became part of the daily routine (Denbow, & Thebe, 2006).

Limitations, Future Research and Conclusions

This study had several limitations. First, the sample size and geographic area limits generalization of findings. These findings are specific to the country of Botswana and professionals from special education and speech and language pathology in a state in the Southeast United States. It is unknown if these findings can be generalized to additional international settings and professions. Second, data collected using the Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric was only collected in the post-departure phase, a more significant impact on these skills could have been made if data were also collected in the pre-departure phase. This data was collected to identify where the students were on these skills at the end of the project. This confirmed the variability of the student's skills in cultural humility and cross-cultural communication skills. Third, the heterogeneous nature of the participant group which contained both professionals and graduate students as well as special education and speech and language pathologists is another limitation which may account for the variability within the data.

Implications for Practice

Global Service-Learning is a high impact practice which should be increasingly employed by higher education programs (Lough & Tom, 2017; Mohtar & Dare, 2012), including programs in special education and communication sciences and disorders. Educators of children with autism and intellectual disabilities are facing an increasingly diverse population in their classrooms where development of cultural humility is critical. Throughout the planning and execution of this project, the researchers noted several implications for practice.

When providing global service-learning opportunities, it is important to provide a variety of experiences that include language seminars taught both at home and abroad, cultural content seminars taught both at home and abroad, experiential cultural opportunities, and time to communicate and spend with people from the host country. The richness and purposefulness of activities is significant in facilitating cultural humility and cross-cultural communication skills (e.g., creating lessons for children to learn about Botswana).

The researchers found that providing pre-departure information, such as information about the Botswana culture and learning some key Setswana phrases proved helpful to participants. Additionally, creating opportunities for

participants to interact directly with people from Botswana through a video platform was positively received. They could ask questions about what to wear, what to expect, how to greet others, and about specific needs experienced by children with autism and developmental disabilities along with their families and teachers. Clearly stating goals prior to leaving the country and revisiting these goals throughout the project activities in Botswana helped to keep participants focused and engaged. The researchers found that sharing the Bennett's (2004) Model of Intercultural Sensitivity stages during the pre-departure phase helped participants know what to expect while experiencing a new culture and being far away from the comforts of home.

Team building was a component of the project that was emphasized from the beginning to the end of the project. During the pre-departure phase, teams were formed, and participants worked on team-building skills using a step-by-step team-building process that included goal setting, role assignment, steps planning to reach goals, types of communication, and strategies to evaluate effectiveness. This process was referred to throughout the overseas phase as participants worked in teams to create curricular projects and activities.

Finally, the researchers cannot overstate the importance of the partnership created with educators and administrators in the host country and the support provided by the grant. Many of the participants would not have had the opportunity for an international experience without grant funding. Partners in the host country took the lead in preparing for school visits, accommodations, transportation, meetings, and cultural activities. Additionally, several of our host country partners accompanied our group throughout the trip and assisted with navigating any challenges that arose. This close partnership facilitated participant growth in cultural humility and communication.

Conclusion

Cultural humility and cross-cultural communication are strengthened through global service-learning experiences (Lough & Tom, 2017) with countries who share similar professional goals such as improving services for individuals with severe disabilities and autism. For example, professionals from both countries are working to identify and implement evidence-based practices. Upon returning to the United States, participants apply their cultural humility and cross-cultural communication skills in their daily work with students,

families, and other professionals (Putman & Byker, 2021; Woodland, 2021). Specifically, the participants were able to implement a lesson with their students in the US that they collaboratively created with resources, instruction strategies and content from teachers in Botswana. Also, the participants were able to empathize with the students in the US class who were non-English speakers. The participants were impacted both professionally and personally by the global-service-learning experience (Lough & Tom, 2017). This experience led to relationships with ongoing collaboration and communication between the participants and professionals in Botswana which is impacting services for children with autism and severe disabilities. In this experience, the Botswana teachers and the US participants returned to their classrooms and implemented the collaborative lesson plans. The teachers and participants contact each other to problem solve issues with the lessons, share positive experiences and in some cases share additional materials as well as create new lessons.

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Appendix A: Intercultural Sensitivity Survey

The following are survey questions 1-48, based on the Intercultural Sensitivity Index (ISI) (adapted from Olson et al. 2001).

Rate yourself on the following items:

	"Never Describes Me" (1)	"Seldom Describes Me" (2)	"Describes Me Some of the Time" (3)	"Describes Me Well (4)	"Describes Me Extremely Well" (5)
1) I do not really notice cultural differences. (1)	o	o	o	o	o
2) I think that cultural diversity really only exists in other places. (2)	o	o	o	o	o
3) I feel most comfortable living and working in a community where people look and act like me. (3)	o	o	o	o	o
4) I have intentionally sought to live in a racially or culturally distinct community. (4)	o	o	o	o	o
5) I am surrounded by culturally diverse people, and feel like my cultural values are threatened. (5)	o	o	o	o	o
6) I sometimes find myself thinking derogatory things about people who look or act differently from me. (6)	o	o	o	o	o
7) I believe that aid to developing countries should be targeted to those efforts that help these countries evolve toward the types of social, economic, and political systems that exist in the United States. (7)	o	o	o	o	o

8) I believe that certain groups of people are very troublesome and do not deserve to be treated well. (8)	o	o	o	o	o
9) I have lived for at least 2 years in another country and believe that American Society should embrace the values of this culture in order to address the problems of contemporary American Society. (9)	o	o	o	o	o
10) I understand that differences exist but believe that we should focus on similarities. We are all human. (10)	o	o	o	o	o
11) I think that most human behavior can be understood as manifestations of instinctual behavior like territoriality and sex. (11)	o	o	o	o	o
12) I think that all human beings are subject to the same historical forces, economic and political laws, or psychological principles. These principles are invariable across cultures. (12)	o	o	o	o	o
13) I believe that physical displays of human emotion are universally recognizable: A smile wherever you go. (13)	o	o	o	o	o
14) I acknowledge and respect cultural difference. Cultural diversity is a preferable human condition. (14)	o	o	o	o	o

15) I believe that verbal and nonverbal behavior varies across cultures and all forms of such behavior are worthy of respect. (15)	o	o	o	o	o
16) I think that cultural variations in behavior spring from different worldview assumptions. (16)	o	o	o	o	o
17) I believe that my worldview is one of many equally valid worldviews. (17)	o	o	o	o	o
18) I have added to my own cultural skills new verbal and nonverbal communication skills that are appropriate in another culture. (18)	o	o	o	o	o
19) I believe that culture is a process. One does not have culture: one engages in culture. (19)	o	o	o	o	o
20) I am able to temporarily give up my own worldview to participate in another worldview. (20)	o	o	o	o	o
21) I have two or more cultural frames of reference, and I feel positive about cultural differences. (21)	o	o	o	o	o
22) I feel culturally marginal or on the periphery of two or more cultures. (22)	o	o	o	o	o
23) I am able to analyze and evaluate situations from one or more chosen cultural perspectives. (23)	o	o	o	o	o
24) When faced with a choice about how I am going to respond to a given situation, I am	o	o	o	o	o

able to shift between two or more cultural perspectives and consciously make a choice to act from one of these cultural context. (24)					
25) I believe the world has become economically, environmentally, and politically interdependent. (25)	o	o	o	o	o
26) I have substantive knowledge about at least one other culture outside the United States, and I apply this knowledge with confidence in my professional work. (26)	o	o	o	o	o
27) I am linguistically and culturally competent in at least one language and culture other than my own. (27)	o	o	o	o	o
28) I use a language other than my native language at least 25% of the time. (28)	o	o	o	o	o
29) I am interested and spend considerable time working on global issues. (29)	o	o	o	o	o
30) I have substantive competence in analyzing global issues and a working knowledge of concepts and methods that can describe, explain and predict changes in global systems. (30)	o	o	o	o	o
31) I think the choice one makes at home have relevance for	o	o	o	o	o

other countries and vice versa. (31)					
32) I appreciate how people from other cultures are different from me. (32)	o	o	o	o	o
33) I am conscious of my own perspectives and culture. (33)	o	o	o	o	o
34) I want to continue to learn about the world's peoples, cultures, and issues. (34)	o	o	o	o	o
35) I question my own prejudices as well as all national and cultural stereotypes. (35)	o	o	o	o	o
36) I recognize that my worldview is not universal. (36)	o	o	o	o	o
37) I find people from other places exotic and unusual. (37)	o	o	o	o	o
38) I feel uncomfortable when I am with people who are speaking a language I do not know. (38)	o	o	o	o	o
39) I try to learn about people from other cultures so that we can work and socialize together. (39)	o	o	o	o	o
40) I incorporate the attractive aspects of other cultures into my own way of doing things. (40)	o	o	o	o	o
41) I have learned how to produce work with people from other places in the globe. (41)	o	o	o	o	o
42) I feel self-confident and comfortable	o	o	o	o	o

socializing with people from other cultures. (42)					
43) I have lived abroad and experienced intense interaction with a variety of people from this other culture. (43)	o	o	o	o	o
44) I have long-term friendships with several people from other cultures. (44)	o	o	o	o	o
45) I am currently engaged in professional work with at least three people in other countries. (45)	o	o	o	o	o
46) I have the ability to deal flexibly with and adjust to new people, places and situations. (46)	o	o	o	o	o
47) I have the ability to psychologically put myself into another person's shoes. (47)	o	o	o	o	o
48) I can act as a cultural mediator and service as a bridge between people of different cultures. (48)	o	o	o	o	o

Appendix B: Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric

INTERCULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCE VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

Association of American Colleges and Universities

Definition

Intercultural Knowledge and Competence is "a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts." (Bennett, J. M. 2008. Transformative training: Designing programs for culture learning. In *Contemporary leadership and intercultural competence: Understanding and utilizing cultural diversity to build successful organizations*, ed. M. A. Moodian, 95-110. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.)

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	Milestones 3	Milestones 2	Benchmark 1
Knowledge *Cultural self- awareness*	Articulates insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g. seeking complexity; aware of how her/his experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description.)	Recognizes new perspectives about own cultural rules and biases (e.g. not looking for sameness; comfortable with the complexities that new perspectives offer.)	Identifies own cultural rules and biases (e.g. with a strong preference for those rules shared with own cultural group and seeks the same in others.)	Shows minimal awareness of own cultural rules and biases (even those shared with own cultural group(s)) (e.g. uncomfortable with identifying possible cultural differences with others.)
Knowledge *Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks*	Demonstrates sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates adequate understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates partial understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates surface understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.
Skills *Empathy*	Interprets intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview and demonstrates ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group.	Recognizes intellectual and emotional dimensions of more than one worldview and sometimes uses more than one worldview in interactions.	Identifies components of other cultural perspectives but responds in all situations with own worldview.	Views the experience of others but does so through own cultural worldview.
Skills *Verbal and nonverbal communication*	Articulates a complex understanding of cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication (e.g., demonstrates understanding of the degree to which people use physical contact while communicating in different cultures or use direct/indirect and explicit/implicit meanings) and is able to skillfully negotiate a shared understanding based on those differences.	Recognizes and participates in cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication and begins to negotiate a shared understanding based on those differences.	Identifies some cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication and is aware that misunderstandings can occur based on those differences but is still unable to negotiate a shared understanding.	Has a minimal level of understanding of cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication; is unable to negotiate a shared understanding.
Attitudes *Curiosity*	Asks complex questions about other cultures, seeks out and articulates answers to these questions that reflect multiple cultural perspectives.	Asks deeper questions about other cultures and seeks out answers to these questions.	Asks simple or surface questions about other cultures.	States minimal interest in learning more about other cultures.
Attitudes *Openness*	Initiates and develops interactions with culturally different others. Suspends judgment in valuing her/his interactions with culturally different others.	Begins to initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others. Begins to suspend judgment in valuing her/his interactions with culturally different others.	Expresses openness to most, if not all, interactions with culturally different others. Has difficulty suspending any judgment in her/his interactions with culturally different others, and is aware of own judgment and expresses a willingness to change.	Receptive to interacting with culturally different others. Has difficulty suspending any judgment in her/his interactions with culturally different others, but is unaware of own judgment.

INTERCULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCE VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

Definition

Intercultural Knowledge and Competence is "a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts." (Bennett, J. M. 2008. Transformative training: Designing programs for culture learning. In *Contemporary leadership and intercultural competence: Understanding and utilizing cultural diversity to build successful organizations*, ed. M. A. Moodian, 95-110. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.)

Framing Language

The call to integrate intercultural knowledge and competence into the heart of education is an imperative born of seeing ourselves as members of a world community, knowing that we share the future with others. Beyond mere exposure to culturally different others, the campus community requires the capacity to: meaningfully engage those others, place social justice in historical and political context, and put culture at the core of transformative learning. The intercultural knowledge and competence rubric suggests a systematic way to measure our capacity to identify our own cultural patterns, compare and contrast them with others, and adapt empathically and flexibly to unfamiliar ways of being.

The levels of this rubric are informed in part by M. Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, M.J. 1993. Towards ethnorelativism: A developmental model of intercultural sensitity. In *Education for the intercultural experience*, ed. R. M. Paige, 22-71. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press). In addition, the criteria in this rubric are informed in part by D.K. Deardorff's intercultural framework which is the first research-based consensus model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, D.K. 2006. The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education* 10(3): 241-266). It is also important to understand that intercultural knowledge and competence is more complex than what is reflected in this rubric. This rubric identifies six of the key components of intercultural knowledge and competence, but there are other components as identified in the Deardorff model and in other research.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- Culture: All knowledge and values shared by a group.
- Cultural rules and biases: Boundaries within which an individual operates in order to feel a sense of belonging to a society or group, based on the values shared by that society or group.
- Empathy: "Empathy is the imaginary participation in another person's experience, including emotional and intellectual dimensions, by imagining his or her perspective (not by assuming the person's position)". Bennett, J. 1998. Transition shock: Putting culture shock in perspective. In *Basic concepts of intercultural communication*, ed. M. Bennett, 215-224. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Intercultural experience: The experience of an interaction with an individual or groups of people whose culture is different from your own.
- Intercultural/cultural differences: The differences in rules, behaviors, communication and biases, based on cultural values that are different from one's own culture.
- Suspends judgment in valuing their interactions with culturally different others: Postpones assessment or evaluation (positive or negative) of interactions with people culturally different from one self. Disconnecting from the process of automatic judgment and taking time to reflect on possibly multiple meanings.
- Worldview: Worldview is the cognitive and affective lens through which people construe their experiences and make sense of the world around them.

Appendix C: Project Objectives and Project Activities for The Study Abroad Course

Project Objectives	Project Activities		
	Phase I – Predeparture USA, 8 weeks April to May	Phase II – In country Botswana, 4 weeks June	Phase III- Post Overseas USA- 1 week July
1. Enhance participants knowledge of Botswana history, culture and language	• Blackboard activities and assignments • Video-conferencing sessions • Pre-departure full day workshop • Setswana language instruction. • Botswana cultural instruction • Travel information	• Setswana Language Class • Content Seminars • School Visits • Cultural Site Visits • Interaction with Botswana teachers and students • Daily experiential learning of Botswana culture	• Incorporation of Botswana history, culture, and language in K-12 curricular activities • Presentation of curricular activities at local, regional, national, and international conferences • Debriefing of the Botswana experience
2. Develop participants intercultural competence and cross-cultural communication skills	• Blackboard activities and assignments • Video-conferencing sessions • Pre-departure full day workshop • Intercultural sensitivity model • History of Botswana partnership	• Setswana Language Class • Content Seminars • School Visits • Cultural Site Visits • Interaction with Botswana teachers and students	• Application of newly learned skills across various settings and people • Reflective journal
3. Strengthen Botswana and US teacher collaboration	• Video-conferencing session during full-day workshop • Team building content and activities • Universal Design for Learning	• Collaborative half-day curriculum planning meetings with peer teachers • School visits	• Ongoing feedback and collaboration with Botswana peer teachers
4. Develop accessible curriculum activities to integrate Botswana culture and language	• Pre-Departure Orientation Course – group discussion board and group meetings during full-day workshop	• Curriculum development with peer teachers during school visits • Presentation of curriculum projects during final week in Botswana	• Finalize curriculum project. • Implement activities in K-12 curriculum • Present activities at conferences and through LiveBinder and program website.

5. Measures	• Intercultural Sensitivity survey	• Intercultural Sensitivity survey	• Intercultural Sensitivity survey, • Intercultural knowledge and competence value rubric.

Author Biography

Dr. Amy J. Rose is an Associate Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Western Carolina University. She has over 30 years of clinical experience serving children and adults with communication disorders. Her teaching and research interests include social skills and friendship development in individuals with autism spectrum disorders and developmental disabilities. Additional interests include implementation of competency-based educational strategies; development of interprofessional collaboration in higher education; and international service learning, most recently in Botswana.

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Bontle Pauline Molefe is the Former Director of Special Support Services Department, Ministry of Basic Education in Botswana; Chairperson of Botswana Society for the Deaf; and member of Southern African Association for Learning and Educational Differences (SAALED). She has also worked as curriculum developer and also with teachers of both primary and secondary schools.