

Coming Home: Continuing Intercultural Learning during the Re-Entry Semester Following a Study Abroad Experience

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Abstract: International experiences through structured study abroad programs are proposed as a powerful way to impact pre-service teachers' intercultural understandings and competence. In recent years attention has been placed on the nature of such study abroad programs, seeking to illuminate design elements that might enhance intercultural learning prior to, during, and after such programs. Though acknowledged as a vital component to such experiences, the literature lacks exploration of the nature of program design once students return to their home university, termed the *re-entry* phase. This article presents findings from a case study of a pre-service teacher during the semester following a study abroad program, illuminating programmatic elements of the re-entry semester that provided the student with the support needed to leverage intercultural learning begun during the international experience once she returned to their home university. The findings provide insight into the importance of providing purposefully designed re-entry programs that support students' continued intercultural learning, particularly in helping students learn to look at themselves, U.S. schools, and domestic diversity through a critical cultural lens.

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Introduction

Teacher education in general, and social studies teacher education in particular, are called to prepare teachers who are interculturally competent; such teachers must be able to teach within culturally diverse schools and educate youth for lives in an increasing interconnected global world. Interculturally competent teachers are culturally responsive, socially just, and globally minded (Apple, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2006). However, research suggests that many pre-service teachers, the majority of whom, in the United States at least, are white, European-Americans, lack intercultural skills, are often unaware of their own cultural identities, have limited intercultural experiences, and limited knowledge about the role culture, ethnicity, and race play in schooling, teaching and learning (Hodgkinson, 2002; Howard & Aleman, 2008; Nieto, 2004). Teacher educators have sought ways to help pre-service teachers increase their intercultural competence, often creating programs that included internships and other experiential components where pre-service teachers enter into cross-cultural settings. International experiences, such as teacher education study abroad experiences that include the opportunity to work in a foreign school context have been proposed as a potentially powerful vehicle to promote pre-service teachers' intercultural competence (Cushner & Brennan, 2007; Mahon & Cushner, 2002, 2007; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Marx & Moss, 2011, Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011).

Much of the research on study abroad programs within teacher education has focused on the nature of the international experience itself and the program design elements during this phase of a study abroad program (Peckenpaugh, 2014). However, there is general consensus about the need to support intercultural learning prior to such a program and, perhaps more importantly, upon return to the home university, termed the re-entry phase (Szkudlarek, 2010; Vande Berg, Paige, & Hemming Lou, 2012). For pre-service teachers, the ability to transfer intercultural understanding and intercultural communication skills learned in an international, cross-cultural experience to domestic, cross-cultural educational contexts is crucial (Mahon & Cushner, 2007; Marx & Moss, 2011). We argue that the re-entry phase of teacher education study abroad programs must be explicitly and purposefully designed to leverage the gains in intercultural learning made overseas.

While there has been increased research over the last 10 years on the design of the international phase of teacher education study abroad programs (Cushner & Brennan, 2007), there is a scarcity of studies that investigate the programmatic elements of the re-entry phase of teacher education study abroad programs (Peckenpaugh, 2014; Szkudlarek, 2010). Tang and Choi (2004) conducted a qualitative multi-case study of four pre-service teachers involved in a study abroad student teaching program within the Teacher Education Institution in Hong Kong. While they found evidence of intercultural growth, a discouraging finding in this study was the tendency of the participants to "regard the international field experience as an isolated piece of professional learning experience, without much direct linkage to their learning-to-teach experience in the Hong Kong school context" (Tang & Choi, 2004, p. 60). The study suggests that more focus needs to be placed on issues of re-entry, that is, how to best leverage the intense but isolated international experience once students return home, a finding also discussed in the general research on study abroad (Martin & Harwell, 2004; Peckenpaugh, 2014).

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This article reports on the program elements during a re-entry semester, illuminating how a program leverages the intercultural learning begun during a semester abroad once the student returned home. It discusses findings from a case study of a single participant and describes the program elements that influenced her intercultural learning after she returned home from a teacher education study abroad semester in London. Erickson (1984) reminds us that the goal in such qualitative research is an in-depth understanding of a particular instance of a case to deepen our understanding of complex social phenomenon. These findings are offered with the conviction that carefully considering one person's unique experiences can inform our understanding of the dynamic and complex process of intercultural development during the re-entry stage of a study abroad experience.

Methodology

Context

This article presents findings from a case study of one student, Ana (pseudonym used), in the semester after she returned from a teacher education study abroad program in London, United Kingdom, called the London Program. The design of the re-entry coursework within this program is considered a vital component of the London Program. The students involved in the London Program are enrolled in a 5-year integrated bachelor's/master's teacher education program offered by a large, land-grant university in New England. The London Program takes place during the final year of the program after the pre-service teachers have completed their full-time student teaching experience in domestic school placements. In the fall of this final year of their program, the students spend 15 weeks in London, engaged in an intensive internship (20 hours per week) working in a British school and taking courses in the evenings. They then return to campus for the spring semester, the focus of this study, where they take a full course load, including a required research focused seminar and a multicultural education course, and complete a 20 hour a week internship in a U.S. school. The required seminar, open only to the students from the London Program, is intentionally designed to help students make sense of their study abroad experiences and facilitate their growing intercultural competence. This extended year teacher education program requires six semesters of clinic placements over 3 years, with student teaching occurring in the 4th semester of the program. This international teacher education program takes place in the following fall (5th semester in the program) and the re-entry semester is their final semester before graduation and certification as teachers.

Data Collection

This article reports on one phase of a larger qualitative case study (see, Marx & Moss, 2011). Within the larger study, data was collected in three stages over the course of a calendar year, following a cohort of 10 students during their pre-departure coursework, over the course of their semester-long study abroad experience, and in their re-entry semester. The study involved two primary data collection methods: participant observation and in-depth interviews. Given the emergent nature of qualitative research, data sources were identified on an on-going basis during the study and collection methods were modified as needed. Referred to as chain source sampling methodology (Merriam, 1998), this allowed for data sources and collection methodologies to be informed by the data as it was collected and

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analyzed. The methodology and findings reported here are specific to the third phase of the research study, encompassing the re-entry semester of the study abroad program.

The lead author was a participant observer during the study; the second author was a faculty member leading the re-entry seminar. The participant observation periods allowed for a deep exploration of the context of the case participant's experiences and provided occasions for conversations and interactions that yielded insights not possible through less authentic communication styles (Patton, 2002). Additionally, five in-depth, open-ended interviews were conducted with the case participant, Ana, over the course of the study seeking to specifically explore her growing intercultural development. The first interview was conducted prior to her departure; the second and third interviews were conducted during the study abroad semester in London; the fourth interview was conducted two days after returning to the United States from London, and the final interview was conducted 5 months after the study abroad experience ended—near the completion of the re-entry semester. This final interview focused on issues of re-entry, particularly on how the experience was impacting Ana's understandings of the socio-cultural nature of schooling. Consistent with ethnographic methodology, all interviews were audiotaped, transcribed, and supported by field notes taken during the participant observation periods in London. Secondary data sources, such as student coursework, student written journals, and program documents, were used to corroborate and complement the primary data sources.

Data Analysis

A constant comparative approach was used for data analysis with a three-step coding process of open, axial and selective coding (Merriam, 1998). This analysis included all qualitative data sources, including interview, participant observation data, and secondary data sources. The software program, QSR NVivo 7, was used for data analysis. The first phase in data analysis took place throughout the data collection phases of the study. An initial, organizational coding scheme was developed to keep track of the multiple data sources that allowed for ease of data retrieval during subsequent phases of data analysis. Intensive data analysis began after all data had been collected, transcribed and uploaded into NVivo, and initially coded. In the first stage of open coding analysis, the data was approached in a holistic and open way, seeking to identify, name, describe and categorize events and phenomenon found in the data and guided by the research questions. An initial reading of all data was conducted and notes were taken seeking to identify emerging categories and themes. During a second pass, data was coded into distinctive chronological codes related to the stages of the study: pre-departure, during study abroad and re-entry. This overarching chronological coding scheme allowed for the evolution of the case participant's intercultural development to emerge throughout the next phase of analysis. On a third pass of the data, framed within these chronological codes, a descriptive coding scheme emerged that was then refined into a selective coding scheme through reiterative readings. The process of reiterative and comparative readings of data allowed the coding scheme to be refined, challenged, modified and expanded as the research questions were illuminated.

Findings

In this section of the article we present findings from the case study of Ana's intercultural learning upon return to her home campus after spending a semester taking education courses and interning in a school in London, United Kingdom. However, while the re-entry phase is often thought of as beginning once a student returns home from a study abroad experience, we found that re-entry actually began for Ana in the last weeks of her study abroad program as she and her classmates began to prepare for their spring semester back on their home campus. Though Ana was not looking forward to returning to campus in the spring, feeling that nothing would compare to the excitement of her time in London, she was anticipating that she would enter her spring internship in a U.S. school with different ideas about teaching and schools. She explained this in an interview while still in London:

I'm really looking forward to going home and seeing what happens. That, I think, will be very different for me personally and how I see things at home . . . cause sometimes you get in the mode, I know I was in the mode of, OK, well I am aware of these other places and these other things, and how people tend to live their lives. But I never really turned the tables and looked at it, at me, and then the States, and I think that is what I am kind of really looking forward to. I want to. . . . When I first start to teach, how, I really think that this will change the way that, I don't know, change the way I teach. (Ana, November 15, 2006)

At this point she was not exactly sure what would change in relation to her teaching, but she did feel that much of what she was learning during her experience would become apparent to her once she was back home and she could compare and consider what she had learned about herself and culture in London.

Ana's return to campus that spring was a harder transition than she had anticipated, as is often the case with study abroad students. After the intensity of the fall study abroad semester and the challenges and intensity of her school internship placement in London, the start of her spring semester on her home campus seemed dull and uneventful. Once back on campus in January, Ana and the others in the London Program cohort re-united within their weekly seminar and in other education coursework. They also all began internships in local U.S. schools. Talking to Ana in January, it was clear that she was feeling let down to be back on campus, feeling that the semester was something she needed to get through in order to graduate so she could head off on her next challenge—finding a teaching job. While much of her spring semester was focused on thinking about her future career, she also found that London was often on her mind. In April, I asked her how often she thought about London and, without hesitating, she said “almost on a daily basis.” (Ana, April 3, 2007) Her life as a student in the States felt *normal* to her; not a feeling she was happy about.

Though she missed the excitement of living and working in London and often felt let down by her re-entry semester, findings from this case study reveal that it was during this semester that she began to use the intercultural learning begun in London to look anew at culture within U.S. schools and about her own cultural identity. This phase of the case study sought to explore the ways the intentionally designed

re-entry portions of her study abroad program influenced her continued cultural learning, specifically the seminar and school internship.

Seminar: Staying Connected to London through an Inquiry Project

One way Ana stayed connected to her experiences abroad and to the others who had been part of the London Program was through the completion of a required inquiry project as part of a seminar class. The 10 students framed their own research questions before leaving for London after doing extensive research on the U.K. educational institution and reading past London Program inquiry projects. The project continued during their time in London, where they fine-tuned their questions, research methodology, and engaged in data gathering in their London placement schools. Back on campus in the spring, the London Program students used time in their seminar to compile the data they had gathered in London and to co-write an 80-page inquiry paper.

The focus of their project was on student anxiety regarding national testing in the United Kingdom. In their conception of the project they proposed that the United States might learn a great deal from what has happened in the United Kingdom, where the push for testing and accountability has been in place for a much longer time. The group had collected data while in London; some conducted interviews with students and others designed and administered a survey to students. Ana was in the interview group and was able to interview five students about test anxiety from her London placement during the fall semester. In January, Ana discussed how committed she had become to this research project:

I have a vested interest in it. . . . I am not looking just because someone said it might be interesting. I really care about it. I want to know. We have been working hard because it's our own. It means nothing if somebody else tells you to do something. You have to really want to do it . . . being given the freedom to do what we want was great. We can't wait to see what is going to happen. We keep talking about what are the implications. What are we finding? To really care that much about your own work. I always saw college as jumping through hoops. I don't see that right now, cause I want to do it. It is not because I have to do it. It is because I want to. I think that's something that has changed. (Ana, January 5, 2007)

The experience of designing, conducting and writing up this research inquiry project was intense, and, in important ways, provided Ana and her peers with a research lens that helped them consider the cultural contexts of educational systems. For Ana, this inquiry project was a significant part of her London Program experience and helped her bridge her learning between London and her spring semester on campus.

While we watched the 10 negotiate the difficulties of conducting research with nine other people, we were interested if the work they were doing was adding to their intercultural growth. Ana was asked directly in April if she saw the project as impacting her intercultural learning:

I think so. Cause we are specifically looking at the testing (in the United Kingdom). . . . I can sympathize and I can see the pressure on the teachers to be, to not be failing teachers, to not be part of a failing school. I can't imagine the pressure that that must put on the teachers. That is a

pretty stressful thing to have that responsibility handed over to you. A first year teacher going into this... (I wonder) What is that going to be like? Oh, I don't know. I don't know if I could handle it. (Ana, November 15, 2006)

Watching Ana and her fellow students present this inquiry project at a regional educational research association conference the following fall, we came to see that the research project offered a way for London Program students to stay connected to their study abroad experience and continue to look back on their experience as they headed into their first year of teaching. A concrete product that bore witness to their time in London, the inquiry project proved an important avenue for their continued connections between their study abroad experience and their re-entry back into U.S. schools. The project built on the power of comparison between cultures as an avenue for inquiry.

Internship: Continued Learning in Domestic, Multicultural School Contexts

During this re-entry semester, and in addition to her other education courses and the inquiry project, Ana spent 20 hours a week in a school-based internship. This school internship proved a powerful opportunity for Ana to continue her intercultural learning and reaffirm her commitment to working within culturally diverse school contexts. Ana was very excited to have the opportunity to work in urban schools during her internship because she was eager to compare her experience teaching in city schools in London to teaching in a city in the United States. Ana anticipated that her U.S. urban placement would allow her to make more sense of her U.K. experience, as she explained:

I will be looking for, to see if I do experience things like I did in London. Just the way they treat students; it is what really interests me. Are they as up front with students and where they are in the classroom, where they are intellectually, as they are in London? I know that part of that is cultural difference. (Ana, Interview, Jan. 5, 2007)

In her spring internship she found herself comparing the teaching she saw in her U.S. city school to what she had previously witnessed. What struck Ana upon her return was the way the U.S. teachers managed their classroom, or more precisely, how *managed* the students were. When I asked her what her colleagues from London might think of U.S. schools, she answered without hesitating: "I think the quietness of the classrooms, the absurd politeness." (Ana, April 3, 2007) This contrast caused her to consider further that there was an *American* way of teaching, one that she now felt she needed to understand in order to better serve all her students.

Ana came home from London feeling interested in culture and seeking opportunities where she would be able to interact with people who were "not just like me" (Ana, January 5, 2007) As she talked about her work in U.S. schools, she began to talk about how she could create a classroom environment where everyone's differences, personal and cultural, were openly discussed:

Your background, your culture, that's a big part of who you are . . . and I envision my classroom, the first few weeks getting to know the kids, and part of getting to know the kids is getting to know their cultures and their backgrounds and things like that. And I'd have to share my cultural background and my experiences with the kids too, so we can all be closer to the same page with

where we are coming from and what's important to me, what's important to them, what do we want to get out of this. I don't believe that that's possible to do without acknowledging that we are different, we come from different areas. And this, you may see this as being very important, or this as being respectful or rude. I may not know that you consider it rude when I do x, y, or z. And now I know. And now I'll try not to do that. But you have to know that if I do mess up and I do do that, it's not because I am trying to be rude. . . . it's because I don't, I, for me, that's not an unacceptable thing to do. (Ana, April 3, 2007)

Creating a space for open dialogue about culture and cultural difference was becoming part of her personal teaching philosophy. Ana is beginning to express the very attitudes necessary for culturally responsive teaching; she understood that her own and her students' cultural perspectives must become an explicit part of the culture they create in the classroom.

Ana's desire to seek work in schools that serve a culturally diverse population was strong, a commitment that had bloomed in London and was spurred further by her spring internship. She had a strong sense that teaching in a school with a diverse student population would allow her to continue to explore her own *cultural-ness* and also be around students of many cultures. In her last interview she explained why she was so excited to work within culturally diverse schools:

It will remind me everyday that my own culture is important and so is theirs [the students']. . . . I feel like I'm missing things if I don't incorporate their cultures into my life and if I don't help incorporate things from my culture into their lives. So I feel like it needs to go both ways. We need to share. (Ana, April 3, 2007)

In our final interview Ana talked about how she was only looking for jobs in schools that served a diverse student population:

When I am looking for schools, and places that I want to work, the first thing I am looking for is a diverse classroom. . . . I loved working in the classrooms in London, and the ones that I am in now, I really like the students that are there. It, for me, it's, it's a break from where I grew up and it's different. And that's part of what I want. I like the differences that come out of it, and the conversations that you can have. (Ana, April 3, 2007)

Ana was seeking out cultural difference; it challenged her and intrigued her. Ana's intense desire to learn and grow—aspects of her nature that were clear before she left for London—were now clearly directed towards cultural learning. She wanted to learn from cultural difference and she had some confidence that she had begun to learn how to do this. In June she wrote an excited email; she had taken a position at a charter school in the regional city with a curriculum that that was explicitly focused on multiculturalism and whose student population was predominantly African-American.

Upon her return home from London, Ana was looking at her life in the United States through a newly developed cultural lens; this was something that she had not done prior to going overseas (Marx & Moss, 2011). Once home, Ana began to consider for the first time the larger dominant cultural context in which she had been raised and the ways culture impacts teaching and learning domestically. The

seminar and inquiry project carried out within her re-entry semester provided Ana with structured opportunities that supported her intercultural development, particularly her ability to engage in cultural reflection and cross-cultural comparisons. Ana's internship within a school that served a diverse student population encouraged her emerging intercultural sensitivity and a culturally responsive approach to learning. As she looked to her future, she anticipated making culture and cultural difference—her own and her students'—an explicit part of the culture of the classroom.

Discussion and Implications

Though students often regard their flight home from an overseas experience as the end of their international experience, re-entry should be considered a vital aspect in the process of intercultural development and a formal element of study abroad (Peckenpaugh, 2014; Szkudlarek, 2010). Over 20 years ago Wilson (1988) drew attention to the importance of this aspect of a study abroad experience, stating:

Reentry deserves more than a mere mention as the last stage on a chart or even the last chapter in a book because, as the word itself implies, reentry is not only the end of the cross-cultural experience of an exchange student or study-abroad student but the beginning of interpreting that experiences to others and using the experience at home. (p. 197)

In the months after they have settled back into life on campus, students need to continue to hear echoes of their overseas experiences as they integrate their intercultural learning into new understandings regarding culture and cultural difference in their domestic cultural context.

We believe that the re-entry phase is a vital component of such programs and should be intentionally designed to influence students' intercultural learning. A re-entry phase of a program offers unique opportunity to support students as they reflect upon the contrast of cultures between their *home* culture and the *host* culture where they had lived within for a period of time. During this time of re-entry, students often experience what has been called "reverse culture shock" (Gaw, 2000, p.83) which, if supported, can provide the type of disorienting experience that leads to transformative growth (Taylor, 1994). This study highlights the need for structured avenues to bridge the learning begun during a study abroad experience to the student's educational experiences upon return to their home country. This study also provides some cautionary insight into the importance, and difficulty, of providing a safe and supportive environment for the difficult work of critical cultural self-exploration. It also highlights the ways that domestic internships after an international experience can challenge students' growing understandings of the socio-cultural dimensions of schooling and commitments to culturally responsive teaching.

Need for Structured Avenues to Support Cultural Reflection

For Ana, her intercultural development had only begun in London and this study points to the need to continue to provide structured avenues for purposeful and explicit support for such intercultural development upon re-entry to the home culture. In the spring semester—at home, on campus, and in the schools—Ana continually compared what she was experiencing in the United States to what she had

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experienced in London. Through these comparisons she was exploring cultural differences and cultural contexts in new ways. Ana continued to hear echoes of her experience in London as she worked with the London Program cohort on her inquiry project. She also continually used her reflections of teaching in London as a catalyst for cultural reflection within her school placement. Ana found that she was looking at her own culture and the cultural context that she had been raised in with new understandings. Far from having reached the core understandings of her cultural identity, Ana had just begun to think about herself as cultural. Significantly, Ana was seeking out intercultural experiences and, in particular, wanted to work in a school that served a culturally diverse student population. Ana had returned home from London with increased cultural sensitivity and, within her work with students, she was exploring culture differences and the ways her own and her students' culture might impact their relationship.

Educational research demonstrates the vital role cultural reflection plays in learning from cross-cultural experiences, both domestically and internationally (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Howard, 2003; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011). Ana's experience highlights the need for the creation of a supportive environment for cultural reflection during re-entry into domestic learning opportunities. King (2000) proposes the underlying perspective to support such reflecting thinking:

[U]nderlying respect for students regardless of their level of intellectual development; it acknowledges that the journey is each *student's* journey and that the teacher's role as guide is to choose responses that are adapted to the student's needs. Through respectful but challenging interactions like these, interactions that take account of students' epistemological assumptions, teachers can promote reflective thinking. (p. 25)

Thus, such an environment must attend to students' affective, social, and cognitive needs and create a safe space where students can share what are often difficult and confusing thoughts and feeling and take risks as they seek to explore new areas of understanding and consciousness. Parks Daloz (2000) states that such classrooms are:

Characterized by the establishment of a climate of safety in which people feel free to speak their truth, where blaming and judging are minimal, where full participation is encouraged, where a premium is placed on mutual understanding, but also where evidence and arguments may be assessed objectively and assumptions surfaced openly. (p. 114)

Berger (2004) describes such teachers as the guides who help students as they approach the "growing edge" (p. 339) of their knowledge and awareness. She suggests that these teachers must help students find and recognize their edge, be good company at the edge, and help to build firm ground in a new place.

Ana's experience once she returned home suggests that such support must be explicitly continued upon re-entry, where pre-service teachers are afforded clear and purposeful opportunities to make connections between their study abroad experience and issues of domestic diversity. As such, there are significant implications for the design of teacher education programs beyond concern for merely the semester overseas. As teacher education programs evolve to include international teaching experiences,

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teacher educators must recognize that there are significant re-entry considerations to optimize and leverage the international experience towards goals of impacting teacher's intercultural competence. If a semester abroad is to become more than an isolated experience, teacher educators must provide well designed and explicit ways for students' to continue their intercultural learning once they return to the home campus.

Connecting International Diversity to Intra-national Diversity

Teacher educators who promote the use of study abroad as a catalyst for pre-service teachers' intercultural competence must also provide structured programs that connect *international*, intercultural understandings and skills to the development of *intra-national*, intercultural skills (Banks, 2006; Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Kymlicka, 2003). Some critics of study abroad are skeptical of efforts to connect learning regarding international diversity to issues of intra-national diversity (Hoffman, 1996), feeling that they often promote an overly individualistic and cultural approach to diversity. Hoffman (1996) explains that these critics posit that the focus on cultural diversity within an intercultural and international education can allow students to avoid issues of power and privilege within the domestic sphere, stating:

Obsessive concern with culture masks the political and socioeconomic conditions that contribute to real inequity in contemporary plural societies – thereby making multiculturalism a safe way of sidestepping the important issues... [These are] overly cultural interpretations of multiculturalism that in the end reflect a reification of the concept of culture that masks continuing hegemony of established groups. (p. 548)

Critics are concerned that an intercultural development approach and international programs emphasize interpersonal change within individuals and might avoid issues related to race, class, and social justice. Pusch (2004) acknowledges that the focus on cultural diversity within the fields of intercultural communication and in international educational programs do not always address the social and political dimensions of diversity issues, but proposes that current intercultural theorists are "making headway integrating the advantages of focusing on cultural difference with the realities of continuing inequities in privilege and power" (p. 28). Theorists argue that such dialog about the social and political dimensions of domestic diversity, including institutional racism, require a level of self-cultural consciousness (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Pusch, 2004).

In this case study, we found that Ana was looking anew at domestic diversity and was just beginning to confront issues of power and privilege and the impact of these on the educational experiences of students. Though clearly only just beginning to consider such issues, we found evidence that she had begun along the path towards becoming a culturally responsive teacher and a development of a commitment to multicultural education as central to the larger field of social studies. We were encouraged by her acknowledgement that this was an area where she needed to grow, a commitment that she did not express prior to her study abroad experience. We believe that the period of re-entry from a study abroad experience can be a uniquely apt moment for such growth in pre-service teachers.

Conclusion

Advocates for the use of study abroad in teacher education must attend to the period of re-entry and develop programs to leverage growth attained in international experiences. Previous research suggests that international experiences can play a crucial role in the development of a commitment towards multicultural education (Mahon, 2003; Merryfield, 2000; Paccione, 2000). Paccione (2000) advises that developing commitment to multicultural education is a life-time's endeavor and that international experiences can play a catalytic role in such commitments. This study supports that supposition; Ana's international experience clearly moved her forward in her development of intercultural competence.

Our research indicates that re-entry should be considered a vital phase of a study abroad experience and must be intentionally designed to support intercultural growth. Teacher educators who seek to create overseas intercultural experiences for pre-service teachers need to better understand how to continue to support their students' intercultural development once they return home. This study indicates that Ana may carry the echoes of her learning begun in London as she begins her first years of teaching, yet does not provide insight into her continued development of a commitment to multicultural education throughout her career. Teacher education study abroad programs seek to influence pre-service teachers' intercultural competence, preparing teachers to work within culturally diverse schools and educate youth for lives in an increasingly interconnected global world. Continued research is needed that explores the types of programmatic interventions that within a re-entry semester leverage intercultural growth during the remainder of a student's time on campus and as they begin enter professional service.

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