Promoting Intercultural Competence in Professional Spaces: Education Abroad Experiences in England for Social Studies Pre-Service Teachers

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Abstract
This article presents a qualitative case study of U.S. social studies pre-service teachers (PSTs) interning in England. We explore how these experiences influence their teaching and their orientation towards culture and cultural difference, and how the structure of education abroad programs are designed to support growth in cultural competence and orientations towards teaching history. Participants are enrolled in a teacher education program that affords social studies PSTs an opportunity to study abroad in England post-student teaching. For this study the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS) provided the conceptual frame to explore intercultural competence as it presents a continuum of ethnocentric to ethnorelative perspectives (Hammer & Bennett, 2003). Using this conceptual framework, data were collected from 32 social studies PSTs representing three annual cohorts who participated in the education abroad program from 2015-2017. Data from weekly student journals were captured and qualitatively analyzed. Participants wrote journal entries prior to departure, while abroad, and upon reentry to the United States in response to instructor generated prompts. Three broad themes emerged across the data: (1) living and interning in English society challenged facets of PSTs' cultural identity and professional practices, (2) PSTs more critically examined their orientation towards social studies education as a discipline, and (3) PSTs expanded their awareness of broader educational issues and concerns. Implications offer insight to how education abroad programs impact pre-service social studies teachers' pedagogical practices.

Keywords
Education abroad; Social studies education; Intercultural competence; Ethnorelative; Pre-service teachers

The first time each of us travelled beyond the borders of our home country, we could scarcely imagine the impact our time abroad would have on our professional and personal lives. This is a common feeling among many university students who participate in education abroad programs as they reflect on their international experience. Being abroad offers access to new perspectives and cultural practices without the day-to-day support systems that ubiquitously scaffold daily routines and norms. For pre-service teachers (PSTs), this growth can add significantly to their preparation as educators, reinforcing reflective practices on their identity. Dedicated to the mission of preparing productive and socially conscientious global teachers, the University of Connecticut provides a program for social studies PSTs in Nottingham, England to intern in schools and history museums, take courses alongside British PST peers, travel to museums and historic sites around Europe, and become immersed in English society.

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While engaged in fieldwork, courses, and cultural experiences abroad, these PSTs reflect on and consider the development of their professional intercultural competence, and in particular, the ways in which they are developing an enthnorelative worldview as they collaborate with secondary students and teachers, university staff and students, and museum personnel and navigate everyday life in a different society. Cushner (2011) defines intercultural competence as the knowledge and skills needed to be successful within culturally diverse contexts. This includes promoting PSTs' perceptions and skills to enable them to effectively collaborate with people of different cultural groups. The PSTs in this program are afforded experiences that promote their developing intercultural competence, particularly in professional spaces, by examining different models of the teaching profession. This particular examination of cultural and professional difference aligns with perspectives underpinning an enthonorelative worldview. An ethnorelative worldview can be described as one that allows "the experience of one's own beliefs and behaviors as just one organization of reality among many viable possibilities" (Bennett, 2004, p.62). As such, this culturally situated education abroad program broadened participants' understanding of the field of education, history education as a discipline, and teaching methods.

PSTs are afforded intercultural learning opportunities not available in their U.S. school placements that allow for a growing sense of ethnorelativism. This paper highlights what PSTs find to be the greatest influences in their evolving intercultural competence in order to offer insight to how education abroad programs impact PSTs' pedagogical practices, their global and critical orientation towards curriculum, and their grasp on the importance of ethnorelative pedagogy. We examine the research questions: How do PSTs in this education abroad program make sense of their developing professional intercultural competence and how has their time abroad influenced their teaching? Three broad themes emerged across the data: (1) living and interning in English society challenged facets of PSTs' cultural identity and professional practices, (2) PSTs more critically examined their orientation towards social studies education as a discipline, and (3) PSTs expanded their awareness of broader educational issues and concerns.

Intercultural Competence and Education Abroad Programs

Many teachers in the United States are monolingual in English with European backgrounds and may hold ethnocentric beliefs that negatively influence the education experiences of their students (Gay, 2000). In order to prepare PSTs to successfully teach culturally diverse student populations, teacher educators must challenge PSTs' ethnocentric worldviews (Marx & Moss, 2011). However, research urges that guided reflection is necessary to prevent these experiences from reinforcing existing beliefs, confirming stereotypes, and hindering PSTs' ability to seek alternative ways of teaching (Irvine, 2003; Sleeter, 2001). Moreover, Cushner (2011) asserts PSTs need an additional set of experiences built around intercultural understanding and competencies to complement multicultural approaches routinely embedded within teacher preparation programs and often aligned with social justice aims. Education abroad programs that encourage PSTs to immerse themselves in foreign cultures with specific program structures and supports is one way to develop and nurture the emerging skills underpinning intercultural competence.

Education abroad programs for PSTs afford candidates an opportunity to immerse themselves in the culture of non-U.S. schools

and society with the primary aim of participation in a teaching practicum (Cushner & Mahon, 2002). Moreover, the opportunity to live and work in a non-U.S. culture serves as an impetus to transform PSTs' ethnocentric worldviews and with guided reflection, to reinforce culturally aware teaching (Cushner & Brennan, 2007). For example, these international experiences can support PSTs to recognize the ethnocentrism, stereotypes, biases, and misinformation in classroom materials and district/state curricula in both their international and U.S. contexts (Merryfield & Kasai, 2010).

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) provided the conceptual frame for this study—offering the operational definition of intercultural competence—specifically framing one's orientation towards cultural difference. The DMIS identifies where someone is situated along a continuum from highly ethnocentric to highly ethnorelative (Hammer & Bennett, 2003). According to Cushner (2011), studies show both pre-service and in-service teachers are "stuck on the ethnocentric side of this scale and may not have the requisite disposition to be effective intercultural educators nor possess the skills necessary to guide young people to develop intercultural competence" (p.5). Hammer and Bennett (2013) contend an ethnorelative outlook is desirable although requires a significant shift in thinking. Walton, Priest, and Paradies (2013) found if PSTs participate in experiences related to their lives and involve deep connections with individuals of different cultural groups, intercultural competence can be developed. Walton et al. (2013) propose intercultural understanding can be fostered if PSTs work with students from majority and minority backgrounds, critically reflect on biases and assumptions in addition to building cultural knowledge, develop cultural reflexivity by focusing on perspective taking and empathy, and establish direct contact experiences that promote positive interpersonal and intergroup collaborations.

In addition to these four factors Walton et al. (2013) propose that self-identification and how one identifies others are critical parts of developing intercultural competence. Kramsch (2009) argues intercultural encounters allow one to critically view one's own identity and others' identity in relation to themselves. It is in this self-reflective space that one can move beyond stereotypical identities of themselves and others and realize identity is not limited to "nationhood, ethnicity, or language(s) spoken" (Holmes, Bavieri, & Ganassin, 2015, p.17).

Previous studies show the potential influence of living abroad on cultural competence and ethnorelative worldviews but are mostly limited to non-education majors and focus on quantitative measurements. Five studies of non-education majors all relied on the Intercultural Developmental Inventory (IDI), a pre-post measure built on the DMIS framework (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen & Hubbard, 2006; Engle & Engle, 2004; Pedersen, 2009; Terzuolo, 2018; Vande Berg, Paige, & Hemming, 2012). The length of stay, goals of programs, and majors of students varied widely from study to study, but they all concluded university students who studied abroad showed growth in their intercultural competence with three studies reporting statistically significant differences pre- to post-experience for students abroad compared with students who stayed in the United States. One common conclusion is that the features, such as duration of a program and supporting academic work, are important factors in what students gain from time abroad.

Three studies using the IDI did focus on PSTs studying abroad. Colville-Hall, Adamowicz-Hariasz, Sidorova, and Engelking, (2011) and Cushner and Chang (2015) also used the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)

but reported mixed results. Cushner and Chang (2015) found just being abroad is not enough to significantly influence cultural competence, and those developing and running these programs need to support reflection on cultural competence. Hauerwas, Skawinski, and Ryan (2017) examined the development of intercultural competencies with qualitative focus group interviews and reflections. They report the intercultural competence of the PSTs was impacted while teaching abroad, particularly around intercultural communication approaches in the classroom. None of these studies looked at the experiences specifically of social studies teachers, which is a noticeable gap in the literature.

Program Context

Participants are PSTs enrolled in an integrated bachelor's/master's teacher preparation program that begins in their junior year of college. Students engage in course work, clinic placements, and seminars over three years and student teach full-time during the spring semester senior year in secondary social studies classrooms. In the fifth year, students participate in the education abroad program in Nottingham, England specifically designed for the social studies PSTs. The education abroad program includes elements that take place over a whole calendar year beginning in the summer term with a research methods and cultural theory course at the University of Connecticut. Students then travel abroad for the fall term for 15 weeks and intern with history teachers in secondary schools (two days a week) and education staff at history museums (one day a week), take graduate level courses at the University of Nottingham, and conduct research as part of a master's project. Students have field trips to historic sites around England, travel to a variety of cultural sites and museum across Europe, and live in shared apartments. Finally, the experience extends into the spring semester back in the United States at the University of Connecticut with a seminar that both supports their intercultural reflections and carefully examines comparative educational issues in the United States and England such as curricular structure and objectives, testing and accountability, teaching strategies, etc. Almost all the PSTs in this program opt to participate in the education abroad program. Over three years, only four students have chosen not to travel to England out of 36. The program goals are for PSTs to

- cultivate an appreciation for teaching about the past in ways that provide multiple international perspectives, develop historical empathy, and stimulate student inquiry;
- consider how to prepare students for participation as citizens in a global community with ethno-relative perspectives beyond that of the United States;
- evaluate the history curriculum and history teaching practices in the United Kingdom as a means to promote comparative international studies and improve perspectives on the U.S. system of social studies education; and
- analyze and critique European museums and historic sites and consider the ways in which they are an effective means for teaching about European history.

England was intentionally chosen as the location for this program. Similar programs at universities across the United States give students options to study in a variety of countries, nonetheless England works particularly well as students have the ability to intern in schools and museums and complete coursework where English is the primary language. This is a significant consideration as few of the students in this program are proficient in other languages. Moreover, language acquisition is not a goal of this program and

without proficiency would likely be a barrier to many facets of deep cultural learning. Though initially England appears to be a comparable English-speaking Western society to the participants' lived experiences in the United States, there are distinct cultural and political differences, particularly in education. The curriculum (national vs. state/local), culture of schools, and structure and organization of schools provide a rich environment for PSTs and the goals of this program. Our assertion is students can more easily access, navigate, and reflect on these deep cultural and professional differences in a setting without significant linguistic barriers.

Methods

The qualitative instruments were journals students were required to begin writing during the summer predeparture course. The students then wrote two entries weekly while abroad. During the spring semester reentry course, participants wrote additional journals. All journal entries were in response to instructor created prompts with some additional open-ended entries with the aim of promoting student reflection and demonstrating growth and development around intercultural competence, historical thinking, teaching beliefs and practices, research skills, and other personal growth. For example, prompts included the following:

1. Write an entry that describes your first impressions of your school and museum placements. You can include things such as what surprised you, what you are now excited about, the "feel" of the school/museum, and any particular experiences you had the first week that helped you learn about and understand the school/museum.
2. Write an entry that discusses what you have done to build your cultural competence. What experiences have you had that immersed you in English culture? In what ways are you learning about culture? In what ways have you hindered development of your cultural competence?
3. Write an entry that answers the following question: How have your experiences abroad (in schools/museums, living in Nottingham, travel, class, etc.) helped you reflect on your own identity? In what ways have you gained insights on your own identity? In what ways, if at all, has your identity changed?
4. Write an entry that describes in detail and analyzes what you have been doing in your school placement. Be sure to include details of the classrooms you are working in, the teachers you work with, the students you work with, and your analysis of the school as a whole, curriculum in the school, teaching styles, student interests and performance, and your own growth.

Data were collected from 32 social studies PSTs who participated in the program during Fall 2015 (11 students), Fall 2016 (10 students) and Fall 2017 (11 students). The participants include seventeen males, fifteen females, twenty-eight self-identified as White, two self-identified as Asian American, and two self-identified as Hispanic. This article draws on in-depth analysis of the qualitative data from the journals.

As a measure of cultural competence, the IDI (Hammer & Bennett, 2003) was also administered to participants. The IDI is an instrument grounded in the conceptual frame of the DMIS that measures participant orientation to culture difference and is a 50-item online questionnaire with open-ended prompts (see Appendix). Results place students on a continuum from ethnocentric to ethnorelative with "developmental orientation" score between 55 and 145.

The IDI has been psychometrically tested and found to possess strong validity and reliability across diverse cultural groups, including predictive validity within educational sectors. The IDI has been rigorously tested and has generalizability across diverse cultural groups internationally and domestically. Psychometric scale construction protocols were followed to ensure the IDI is not culturally biased or susceptible to social desirability effects (i.e., individuals cannot "figure out" how to answer in order to gain a higher score). The IDI possesses strong content and construct validity (Hammer, 2011; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). Since the IDI is proprietary, we do not have permission to provide the specific prompts used.

Group means on the IDI were analyzed quantitatively for each separate cohort and for the three cohorts combined, checking for statistically significant pre- to post-difference. Initial review of the IDI data indicated significant changes pre- to post-experience. We looked to an in-depth review of the journals to deepen our understanding of the PSTs' changes in orientation to culture and identity.

Journal data that appeared to answer the research questions were coded via a set of rigorous coding procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Data analysis progressed through the stages of in vivo coding, descriptive coding, and axial coding. In vivo and descriptive coding provided a first level of coding that deconstructed the data into individual codes (Saldaña, 2016). Patterns and categories were then compared across the journals. From this process, a set of categories was inductively derived (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). While in vivo and descriptive coding fractured the data, axial coding put the data back together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories to develop several main themes (Grbich, 2013; Saldaña, 2016).

Findings

First, we briefly report IDI results to provide the broader context and comparison to other studies, many of which rely on the IDI as their primary method of data collection. We then present findings from the journals.

The developmental orientation scores for PSTs increased an average of 16 points across the three cohorts towards a more ethnorelative orientation. Most other studies found increases of ten points or less. An increase of this magnitude highlights PSTs' evolving perspectives underpinning cultural difference. The predeparture mean across the cohorts was 88.43 (SD 14.83), which is on the cusp of the polarization and minimization phases, thus participants were primarily oriented towards other cultures in a way that views cultural differences in terms of "us" and "them." The post-experience mean increased to 104.07 (SD 16.12), which is in the minimization phase, moving towards the acceptance phase. The difference in pre-post means is statistically significant at the .000 level. With a score of 104.07, students tend to highlight cultural commonality and universal values and principles that may mask deeper recognition and appreciation of cultural differences. Within this context of significant increases on the IDI, we focus this paper on the qualitative journals to provide in-depth data to potentially explain the pre-post differences and inform us how aspects of the program are influencing the results.

The results of the qualitative coding procedures led to the emergence of three broad themes in participants' journal responses that help explain PSTs' increase on the IDI. These themes help explain how PSTs made sense of their developing professional intercultural competence during their time abroad and include (1) living and interning in English society challenged facets of PSTs' cultural

identity and professional practices, (2) PSTs more critically examined their orientation towards history education as a discipline, and (3) PSTs expanded their awareness of broader educational issues and concerns.

Challenging cultural identity and practices. All PSTs reflected on unpacking their cultural identity and teaching practices and examining the context in which their identity has developed and the cultural influences on identity and practices in the United States and England. All participants mentioned having to confront aspects of their identity during their time abroad. In some cases, these aspects were at the fore of participants' consciousness; in other cases, they were aspects that were rarely considered. Specifically, the PSTs wrote about unpacking their identity as Americans, the use of language as a critical cultural practice, and other differences in day-to-day cultural practices in schools and in public settings.

The imposition of identity by others. PSTs across the three years of the program are consistently taken aback by the way others identify them in England. While some aspects of their identity, such as gender and religion, are ones they thought deeply about prior to living abroad, they found other aspects, specifically being an American, shockingly unfamiliar. For example, one participant wrote about the shift from how many Americans refer to their national identity in the context of their ancestors compared to what they experienced in England:

> We aren't "American" [in the US]; we're what our grandparents or great-grandparents were when they immigrated to this country… And while I've been here in England, I've identified myself as an American. I'm not "Armenian-Iranian on my grandmother's side"; I'm an American from New England. Being here in England, I've definitely embraced my American identity more than I ever did before.

All participants wrote about being identified as American as unanticipated, often citing the reactions of the students in their school intern placements: "Being Americans in an all-girls private school was basically being a celebrity. The girls in the classes freaked out, and I mean full on screamed, when they found out we were from the states. And then they tweeted about us."

All PSTs thoroughly discussed their internship experiences in schools and museums and the impact they had on their cultural competence and in unpacking their identity, particularly as Americans. Many of the PSTs wrote of their interactions with the secondary students and their close work with staff at schools and museums. The participants cited how these interactions pushed them to critically examine their cultural identity and to do so in the context of their professional practices as teachers. For instance, one participant wrote of being asked about being an American on his first day at his school placement:

> A lot of my first day was spent being interviewed by staff and students about Americanisms. It's hard to tell who was more excited about my Americanness, the staff or the students. I spent entire class periods being asked by students what it's like to be an American, and entire break periods being asked by staff members what it's like to be American. The subject they were most intrigued by are our gun policies. They loved hearing about our different policies, practices and laws.

Not only does this highlight the impact of the PSTs' internship experiences but reflects on their emerging understanding of their own identity. PSTs believed they were becoming more aware of and comfortable with their own culture and identity as one participant described: "Prior to this experience, I wouldn't say I was very aware of my identity. If someone asked me about my identity, I wouldn't even know what to say." Of the 32 participants, 26 specifically wrote about having to confront their

American identity and culture. As one participant wrote:

> Before coming here, I really didn't think embedded in my life, and really didn't think it existed. But my time abroad has helped me understand that there is an American culture and that it does exist.

In reflecting on unpacking their identity, PSTs incorporated new identities and understandings into their perception of themselves.

Being asked about being an American and confronting their American identity was a novel experience for all the participants and is typical of study abroad programs. However, beyond this initial interaction with the students and staff at their internship placements, many of the participants wrote about how their reflections on their American identity and culture made them change their behavior in classrooms and how they approached teaching and creating lessons. As one PST explained in preparing lessons for their English school internship placements: "I've made lesson plans and resources having to do with world issues, or events in world history that involved the United States along with other countries and completely scrapped them after realizing it was coming from a blatantly American perspective." Reflecting on their identity and culture had a professional impact on the PSTs. One participant wrote of this impact:

> It only took a few weeks abroad for me to discover just how wrong I was. There was indeed a distinctive American culture and I was a part of it whether I liked it or not.... Realizing this has been interesting. It's not that being American is necessarily good or bad. It just that being aware of these American characteristics have made me very conscious of my actions while in [my] museum [placement], school [placement], and other countries.

PSTs had to regularly check their cultural biases in preparing educational resources and teaching British students. In addition, this regular reflection of their American identity and culture had a professional impact on how they approached pedagogy.

Identity and English culture. The PSTs all discussed being immersed in English culture and the difficulty of having to navigate cultural practices and unexpected language differences. Dissimilar to education abroad studies from non-English speaking countries, participants felt language would not be a barrier while in England. However, 26 of the 32 participants cited language use as an unanticipated barrier in terms of English slang and expressions:

> And of course, there is "cheers." A few of us have started using this catch-all phrase, however, I'm not quite yet there in my immersion process. People here say "cheers," to say, "thank you," "have a nice day," "what's up," "hello," and probably even more meanings that I don't know yet.

In addition, some participants commented on normal slang they use in America having a different meaning in England: "'Packy'[1] is used as a derogatory term for a Pakistani person here, so we've all made sure from now on we say, 'alcohol store.'" These language differences extended into the PSTs' professional environments as well. PSTs had to navigate their use of language and its connection to their identity. One participant reflected on greeting students in the classroom:

> A common greeting I have used my entire life is "howdy," and I never realized how strange this was to people until I went to the U.K.! My students and even members of the [English school placement] staff would laugh and point out how this expression makes me American.

In addition, many participants also cited the differences in spelling between the two countries. In explaining their adoption of British language use, one participant noted: "Last week, students called me out for spelling 'theatre' on the board as 'theater.' OOPS! Forgot something that small could be seen as a difference between

cultures." Another participant reflected on shadowing a pupil for a day:

> Additionally, the pupils had taught me a great deal already, solely on language and interactions that I couldn't have had otherwise. Just by shadowing a pupil for a day, I learned so much about slang and general conversations that students have with one another. Essentially becoming a pupil for the day, I have developed language that I can use to enhance my ability to teach and work in the school environment.

Language use became a focal point of their immersion as it was an immediate difference highlighted between U.S. and U.K. cultures. Given both countries are predominantly English speaking, language use allowed PSTs to understand nuances in the culture they were immersed in and make changes to their behavior and practice in professional settings in addition to their everyday experiences. Participants believed their adoption of British language allowed them to adopt pedagogical practices that better met demands and needs of their students.

In addition to how students used and changed their language, students also discussed behavior changes such as moving to the left on the sidewalk, tea breaks at school, and teacher-pupil interactions. As described by one PST:

> I forgot that the British use the metric system. Trying to calculate and convert kilometers to miles in the gym is quite tricky for someone who is a math hater. Most importantly, I am surprised with the amount of breaks we get in class for tea or coffee.

Tea and coffee breaks were a common item of discussion for many of the participants. Twenty-two of the 32 PSTs specifically wrote of tea and coffee breaks in their school internships often with positive reception. As one participant noted of tea and coffee breaks:

> One aspect that I absolutely love about British culture is the coffee/tea breaks during the day. When we first got them in class, we were given them in school, and when we were talking over tea in the museum, I was surprised because I am used to the fast-paced American culture. I love that there is time allocated during the day for people to pause and reflect about their day and to take a break from whatever they are doing.

Tea and coffee breaks were a welcomed professional etiquette. Participants often reflected on the benefits of having this 20-minute break during the day to examine their own pedagogical practices as well as the differences between professional practices in the United Kingdom versus the United States. Participants also acknowledged British students benefited from this break, noting their students in the United States could use the break as a moment to unwind and self-reflect.

English customs around tea and coffee breaks were not the only observations PSTs made around how time and relationships are valued. Many PSTs also described the "formal" atmosphere in English schools, remarking on how teachers and students had to conduct themselves, as one participant wrote:

> From the beginning of the school day, students are expected to conduct themselves in a more professional manner, particularly when in the company of adults. Students are expected to address their teachers as sir or miss, respond properly doing roll, and wear uniforms appropriately. Teachers have a much longer list of items to look for in standard student conduct that allows them to create a universal set of principles and enforce them more effectively… [T]heir system of school norms definitely creates a more formal environment for student behavior, and their high expectations seem to pay off.

PSTs were unaccustomed to professional decorum in English settings. This observation of a different model of professional practice was often done in comparison to their student-teaching placements: "Between the amount of discipline, the school uniform, and the school courses and structure of the school itself, [English school placement] is very different from any school I have worked in in Connecticut." PSTs were astonished by the differences in what

is valued professionally in schools within the United States and United Kingdom, which led to further reflection of their own practices in the classroom.

Orientations toward history education. In observing English teaching practices, history curriculum, and museum education, PSTs became more critical of their orientation towards history education as a discipline. All participants reflected on navigating their experiences in their internships in schools and museums, centering their reflections on the differing pedagogical practices they found— notably on teaching a pro-English curriculum and teaching content versus skills.

Navigating English curriculum. PSTs were prompted to write about race, gender, and class in English society and schools. Through this reflection, many of the participants made critical observations on the English curriculum taught in history classes and museums and the English curricular treatment of U.S. history. Participants reflected on the history curriculum as narrowly focused, pro-English, and Eurocentric, as one participant observed:

> [R]aces and nationalities don't have their histories/perspectives taught in the classroom very often. The history seems to focus on Britain and the narrative of its white citizens. I haven't seen enough classes to confirm, but it makes me wonder how they go about teaching the narratives of those that were colonized by the British Empire (if they do so at all) and how students of those races/nationalities receive such history.

PSTs became more critical of the dominant cultural narratives being taught in English schools they were not familiar with nor took as the norm. Many of the PSTs remarked on the absence of perspectives that were antithetical to the British ethos.

The participants also reported their school internship experiences challenged the American-centric historical narratives they learned as students and taught as teachers and pushed them to reconsider the content they taught and why they taught it. One participant, in describing his work expanding the curriculum for the U.S. History courses at his English school internship, commented on some of the curriculum differences between English and U.S. schools and what the school staff wanted the curriculum to focus on:

> I am a little surprised about how much of an American focus the curriculum has. Having several units on the American West is surprising because I feel that they study it longer and in more depth here than they do in America itself… [I]t has been super helpful to see how schools in British teach concepts and ideas that are common in American schools, and compare that to how it is taught in American schools. I'm learning a lot about bias and even presentism which has been super helpful as I continue to develop as a teacher.

PSTs were surprised at the extent to which English curriculum covered parts of U.S. history. In addition, PSTs felt the English curriculum had an emphasis on perspectives not regularly covered in U.S. schools, as one participant discussed: "The curriculum does a solid job of going in depth into some lesser known perspectives such as the Mormons or the tribes of the Great Plains." Other PSTs remarked on the inclusion of other minority perspectives and content such as the Civil War in U.S. history. Examining the differences in curriculum between the United States and United Kingdom allowed PSTs to adopt a critical lens in examining what—and whose—history is taught.

Debating content versus skills. Participants' roles in their school internship placements gave them the space and time that was not afforded to them while student teaching to critically reflect on teaching practices and curriculum. Furthermore, PSTs specifically reflected on the debate between teaching content or skills in history classrooms. Of the 32 participants, 24 reflected on the content versus

skills debate in English history classrooms with 22 participants observing that English teachers emphasized teaching content over teaching skills, but many of the PSTs would rather emphasize skills. In consequence, many participants were critical of English teachers' reliance on lecturing to deliver content and were nervous about utilizing U.S. practices in the classroom, as one participant discussed:

> Because of the lecture-heavy style, we are curious about how our lessons will be received by students. Our approach to teaching history stresses critical thinking and historical skills over content. In the coming weeks, we will see how our lessons involving the skills of analysis, evaluation, and argumentation will clash with the traditional lessons the pupils are accustomed to.

In observing other models of practice, PSTs were uneasy introducing their teaching practices in an English setting. Moreover, in observing this focus on content, one participant reflected on the role of teachers in the classroom:

> The structures of the school are set up so every class is a delivery on content, and it doesn't feel like students are exploring the content or practicing using skills that I think are so essential to social studies as a subject or useful in life in general… [I]t doesn't feel like teaching and in some ways to me, it isn't teaching. For some of the courses, you don't need to be a history teacher to deliver the content, and if so, what "teaching" would I even get out of that?

By observing other models of practice, PSTs were initially very critical of English teachers and teaching practices, encouraging them to reflect on the role of teachers in the classroom. However, despite this critical reflection on English teachers and teaching, PSTs ultimately developed a more pluralistic orientation to teaching practices, specifically in teaching history. In examining the differences between her U.S. and U.K. school placements, one PST wrote:

> Our placement at this school has undoubtedly exposed us to new perspectives and ideas regarding education. Obviously, the British perspective on history has challenged our understanding of the past… Besides the content, we have been fascinated by the effectiveness of the lecture-style lessons. Although we don't believe that this approach would be effective in the public schools we work in at home, we are learning to adopt some of these techniques.

PSTs' experiences in their school internships allowed them to unpack previously held beliefs about how history should be taught. Observing different professional practices allowed participants to reexamine how students learn and what best practices should be used.

Awareness of educational issues. Paralleling PSTs' observations of English teaching practices and history curriculum, this education abroad program also allowed PSTs to begin to examine broader educational issues that extend beyond the classroom. All PSTs regularly reflected on deep cultural differences between the U.S. and U.K. school systems, including the role of school, local or national curricula, and standardized testing, among others.

Role of school in promoting British values. Observations around deep-seated educational issues were revealed as participants reflected on the intersection of individual identities and the curriculum. In reflecting on race, gender, and class, many of the PSTs expressed a common view that English society places an emphasis on being "British" over the expression of individual identities, vs. the individual emphasis which PSTs found to be the focus in the United States. PSTs wrote of a debate among educators over the role of schools in promoting "British values," as one participant observed:

> [T]here is a constant argument and discussion on what the country means by British values. It seems that some teachers and schools believe that British values and culture promotes inclusiveness and tolerance, while other teachers

> think it is about showing pride in the Empire and showing how powerful Britain was and still is as a national power. This is interesting as there is definitely a similar discussion happening in the United States.

These discussions and disagreements among educators regarding what is meant by "British values" were brought to the fore by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) in a 2014 government initiative promoting the inclusion of British values in the K-12 curriculum. PSTs were regularly taken aback by this debate in the role of schools in promoting British values. However, observation and reflection on the debate over "British values" in England resulted in participants reflecting on the role of teaching history, specifically in U.S. schools. Moreover, this debate provoked PSTs to reflect on the impact centralized curriculum standards have on teaching practices. After discussing this debate with teachers at her school internship placement, one participant wrote:

> According to this government… they define British values as teaching history as just a series of facts that need to be memorized, devotion to the crown and the monarchy and almost blind acceptance of the "truth" without questioning or any historical inquiry… After I heard teachers talk about this I thought a lot about how history is taught in schools in the United States and in some aspects it isn't that much different.

Beyond examining the role schools have in promoting common values and ethos, PSTs reflected on how teaching practices mirrored this debate. This further echoes their understanding of the complexities of the culture they were immersed in as it served to ground the teaching practices they were observing in English schools in a broader context.

Local or national curricula? Moreover, in discussing the debate over "British values," participants regularly considered the significance of teaching in a country with a national curriculum. Of the 32 participants, 26 made observations on the impact the national curriculum has had on the education system in England, with some participants specifically mentioning the impact on classroom teaching and aligning museum materials with the national curriculum. In reflecting on the implementation of a national curriculum with an emphasis on "British values," one participant contemplated her own education:

> It really made me think about my own education and how my own teachers worked to shape the view of my own country through my learning in the classroom. In what ways did they project a specific American identity into my education? Was it positive? Negative? Good? Bad?

Observations on the implementation of a national curriculum compelled students to examine nationalistic narratives in U.S. education. In addition, participants noted they felt teachers in the United States had more freedom in the classroom, and those participants placed in academy schools[2] and private schools expressed a lack of pressure because they did not have to follow the national curriculum, as one PST remarked: "Since the school is [what we would call] a private school, [English school placement] doesn't need to follow the National Curriculum. As a result, the school has a lot of freedom on what they can teach, and how they teach it." Participants in these settings felt schools were providing more innovative and balanced education than those schools that had to follow the national curriculum.

Furthermore, a few participants expressed hesitation in implementing a national curriculum in the United States. Those participants felt a national curriculum would not work in the United States as it would lead to similar problems U.K. teachers struggle with: "In my opinion, having a national curriculum wouldn't solve many problems in the United

States… My biggest criticism against a national curriculum is that it makes teaching for the test the main purpose of schooling for many schools." PSTs associated a national curriculum with standardized testing. However, no participant likened the English national curriculum with U.S. state mandated curriculums or required standardized testing for graduation. This lack of reflection and connection might be due to the majority of participants' experiences as students and student-teachers in Connecticut. [3]

Criticizing standardized testing. Lastly, parallel to the implementation of a national curriculum, PSTs regularly wrote about the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and A-Level exams, [4] the national standardized tests in the United Kingdom. Participants were noticeably critical of these national standardized tests. Twenty-seven of the 32 participants criticized the teaching practices English teachers implemented, noting that such practices were motivated by the pressure to have students pass the GCSE and A-level exams. PSTs regularly commented on the focus on memorizing facts versus engaging with texts and materials and ignoring content that would not be on the exams, as one participant conveyed:

> In [English school placement], GCSE and A-Level exam preparation was the main focus of many classes. Teachers were teaching their pupils formulas in order to do well for the exam… These kids aren't truly learning. They're not engaging with materials and lessons. Instead, they are memorizing formulas for a national exam. There is no personality in their writing, just copy and pasted pieces of information that their teachers instill into their heads.

PSTs repeatedly wrote about and were critical of "teaching to the test." However, PSTs regularly blamed the pressure English teachers were under to have their students pass these exams and often made comparisons to the culture of standardized testing in the United Kingdom and United States. One participant applauded English teachers for working in this environment:

> The teaching of history (and school in general) seems to be much more overtaken by testing in England than America. The pressure of the GCSEs and A levels seems to lead to even more "teaching to the test" than in America… There doesn't seem to be much wiggle room for teacher creativity and going off on interesting tangents. This is true in America as well, but it just seems more apparent that the tests are the priority in England. That being said, there is still great teaching going on within this high-pressure environment.

PSTs frequently acknowledged that English teachers had less autonomy in the classroom than U.S. teachers. Moreover, some participants drew comparisons to the Advanced Placement and SAT tests they took as students and administered while student teaching in the United States, commenting they felt the testing culture in England was more prominent. While discussing standardized tests in their university course in England, one participant quoted his peer: [He] brought up a really good point in class that while [we] have SATs and AP tests informing some of the teaching [practices] at higher grade levels [in the U.S.], GCSEs dominate the English school system and teachers seem forced to teach by the textbook and for the test." Despite participants having varying experiences with standardized tests in the United States, PSTs felt standardized tests in England dominated instructional practices more than they do in the United States. However, in observing English teachers in a system that places emphasis on standardized tests, PSTs were able to acknowledge and begin to adopt practices that navigated between the realities of prioritizing students passing an exam and teaching historical thinking and skills.

Discussion and Conclusions

Results from the Intercultural Development Inventory (Hammer & Bennett, 2003) grounded in the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennet, 1986) demonstrate an increased orientation towards cultural difference across all three cohorts of students studying in England. The journal data from 32 social studies PSTs across three years of an education abroad program show three broad themes: (1) living and interning in English society challenged facets of PSTs' cultural identity and professional practices, (2) PSTs more critically examined their orientation towards history education as a discipline, and (3) PSTs expanded their awareness of broader educational issues and concerns. These findings demonstrate the evolving nature of the PSTs intercultural competence towards a more ethnorelative worldview. Moreover, through key program features such as critical reflection of PSTs' identities, supporting cultural reflexivity, and the promotion of direct contact experiences, PSTs came to understand how this study abroad program has encouraged their intercultural understanding and growth as teachers.

Findings from this study support key characteristics of education abroad programs for PSTs in the literature, namely providing PSTs the time and space to reflect on their experiences in order to reinforce culturally responsive teaching and identify cultural biases in both international and U.S. contexts (see Cushner & Brennan, 2007; Hauerwas, Skawinski & Ryan, 2017; Merryfield & Kasai, 2010). Furthermore, findings were consistent with Kramsch (2009) and Walton et al. (2013). revealing PSTs' critical thinking about their self-identification through their experiences teaching in English schools. Building on this previous scholarship, this study adds to the literature focused on PSTs and sheds light on the potential benefits of education abroad for social studies teachers specifically. Not only did the Social Studies PSTs encounter different pedagogical approaches, they observed how the curriculum covered different periods and events in history and taught the past from a different perspective. This variance ignited a closer examination of the content and pedagogy they learned and are now teaching.

Fundamentally, this study suggests that strategic and sustained programmatic structures and supports can have a profound impact on PSTs' growing intercultural competence and teaching practices. These include targeted coursework completed before and after the semester abroad that helps PSTs process their experience, focused reflections, attention to field placement quality, and an explicit orientation towards considering issues of cultural competence.

A key point of this paper was to highlight what the PSTs found to be the biggest influences in their developing intercultural competence and thus offer specific insight into how education abroad programs impact PSTs' pedagogical practices, their global and critical orientation towards curriculum, and their grasp on the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy. While the majority of previous studies focused primarily on the IDI instrument to measure pre-post differences, we focus this paper on rich qualitative data which adds nuance to our IDI findings. Two factors in particular seem to support the PSTs in their orientations towards a more ethnorelative perspective. First, the opportunity to work in schools and museums while living abroad immersed PSTs in English culture while also challenging their professional views of effective pedagogy and of history education as a discipline. This dual immersion in both personal and professional contexts seems to have an important influence on enthnorelative development. Second, the structure of the program with a predeparture course, reentry course, and an explicit year-long

journaling process positioned students to consider issues of culture and identity before they even departed the United States, and it then supported careful reflection when they returned, enabling the reentry phase to be as much about their reflections on their experience as it was to readjusting to home cultural norms and identity. Moreover, this study sought to understand how PSTs are making sense of their developing professional intercultural competence and teaching practices, allowing this education abroad program to further tailor those experiences that promote the most growth.

There exists an expanding set of studies providing evidence of the benefits of education abroad for college students. However, the rigorous study of the impact of education abroad program on PSTs remains much less developed. Our study indicates that a program for social studies PSTs in England for one semester—post-student teaching—with significant program supports, and fieldwork and coursework, can have beneficial impacts. To broadly impact teacher education, much more needs to be done to examine how education abroad impacts PSTs from various subject areas, in other types of settings, for different periods of time, in different segments of the overall teacher education program, and with differing scaffolds and supports. More also needs to be done to follow PSTs into their first few years of teaching to see how the education abroad program might impact the early stages of their career. We have learned that careful consideration of program design in education abroad programs is critical. The program design discussed in this study is merely one possible model and provided a post-student teaching conceptual space to reflect on cultural differences. In particular, the museum internship added a not often seen element that further provided a lens for considering professional practices.

Research that studies these PSTs as beginning teachers in their early careers could later examine the long-term impact of education abroad on their teaching practices. Intuition tells us that spending time living in another country can influence the personal and professional trajectory of teachers, but we need additional evidence to know precisely how to build and support these transformative experiences.

Notes

1 “Packy” is a term for a liquor store, short for package store, used in the New England region of the United States.

2 State funded schools outside of local control and not beholden to the national curriculum with some similarity to charter schools in the U.S.

3 Currently in England, local school districts have control over curriculum standards, and there are no requirements for high school students to take a standardized social studies or history test to graduate.

4 The GCSE is a set of examinations required of all students. A-Level exams are not compulsory and are usually taken by students applying to post-secondary schools.

Appendix: The DMIS Framework and Interpreting IDI Results

Summary Orientation Descriptions

Denial

An orientation that likely recognizes more observable cultural differences (e.g., food) but may not notice deeper cultural differences (e.g., conflict resolution styles), and may avoid or withdraw from cultural differences.

Polarization (Defense/Reversal)

A judgmental orientation that views cultural differences in terms of "us" and "them." This can take the form of (1) an uncritical view towards one's own cultural values and practices and an overly critical view towards other cultural values and practices, (2) An overly critical orientation towards one's own cultural values and practices, and (3) an uncritical view towards other cultural values and practices.

Minimization

An orientation that highlights cultural commonality and universal values and principles that may also mask deeper recognition and appreciation of cultural differences.

Acceptance

An orientation that recognizes and appreciates patterns of cultural difference and commonality in one's own and other cultures.

Adaptation

An orientation that is capable of shifting cultural perspective and changing behavior in culturally appropriate and authentic ways.

Cultural Disengagement

A sense of disconnection or detachment from a primary cultural group.

How to Interpret the IDI Profile

The IDI Profile presents information about how your group makes sense of and responds to cultural differences and commonalities. In addition to demographic and statistical summaries for your group, the IDI profile presents the following information:

Perceived Orientation (PO): A group's Perceived Orientation (PO) reflects where the group as a whole places itself along the intercultural development continuum. The Perceived Orientation can be Denial, Polarization (Defense/Reversal), Minimization, Acceptance, or Adaptation.

Developmental Orientation (DO): The Developmental Orientation (DO) indicates the group's primary orientation towards cultural differences and commonalities along the continuum as assessed by the IDI. The DO is the perspective the group is most likely to use in those situations where cultural differences and commonalities need to be bridged. The Developmental Orientation can be Denial, Polarization (Defense/Reversal), Minimization, Acceptance, or Adaptation.

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