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The Development of Intercultural Competency in School Psychology Graduate Students

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Abstract

School psychologists often have the opportunity to work with students and families from varied

backgrounds and cultures. While this can be an exciting and enriching part of the job, it can also

be daunting for some practitioners, particularly those who are inadequately prepared. A number

of strategies have been implemented in school psychology training programs to improve

students' intercultural competency. This exploratory study investigated the results of one

university's short-term study abroad program for school psychology graduate students. Pre- and

post- intercultural development assessments were given to school psychology graduate students

who completed a course abroad; results were compared to students who took the same course on

campus in the United States. Findings indicated that there was no measurable growth in

intercultural competence in either group. Implications for school psychology training programs,

suggestions for future research, and ways to improve intercultural competency among school

psychologists are discussed.

Keywords: Cultural immersion, intercultural competency, multicultural counseling, school

psychology training, study abroad

The Development of Intercultural Competency in School Psychology Graduate Students

In recent years the number of families from diverse backgrounds in many countries worldwide has grown rapidly. Between 2003 and 2012, the number of students with an immigrant background grew by 5% or more in Canada, Ireland, Italy, Spain and the United States (U.S.) and by more than 10% in Luxembourg and Liechtenstein. In 2003, school systems in Ireland, Italy and Spain were predominantly composed of non-immigrant students; however, by 2012 the share of immigrant students nearly tripled (OECD, 2013). By 2012, 13% of the total U.S. population was composed of immigrants (Camarota, 2012). Further, it is predicted that by 2020, the majority of children in U.S. schools will be children of color or from diverse backgrounds (Holcomb-McCoy, 2004). With such a high number of students who would be recognized, or self-identify, as belonging to a socio-ethnic minority in schools worldwide, school psychology professionals are advised to develop their intercultural competencies in order to effectively serve all students. Students with an immigrant background may have different educational needs than native students, particularly if their primary language is different from that of the host country. They may also have unique strengths that school systems need to be aware of to help students succeed both academically and socially. Likewise, native students who are socio-ethnic minorities may also have needs that require school-based professionals to have improved intercultural competency.

In contrast to the diversity of students in schools, the demographics of school psychologists are largely homogeneous and have become increasingly so in recent years. According to a recent study of school psychologists in the U.S., a large discrepancy exists

between the number of school psychologists from diverse backgrounds and the number of

diverse students in U.S. schools (Curtis, Castillo, & Gilley, 2010). Additional results of this

study indicated that more than 97% of respondents served students from ethnically diverse

backgrounds. It is unknown whether this exact pattern exists in other countries, but the overall

number of school psychologists worldwide is certainly increasing. From 1992 to 2007, the

number of practicing school psychologists has grown from approximately 87,000 in 54 countries

(Oakland & Cunningham, 1992) to an estimated 500,000 internationally (Oakland & Jimerson,

2007). This recent significant growth in the field suggests the need to ensure school

psychologists are prepared to serve diverse populations, regardless of their own cultural

backgrounds.

Defined broadly, cultural competence is "a cultural learning process in which one builds

authentic relationships by observing, listening, and asking those who are from different

backgrounds to teach, to share, to enter into dialogue together about relevant needs and issues"

(Deardoff, 2009, p. xiii). It is "the complex of abilities needed to perform *effectively* and

appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from

oneself" (Fantini, 2005, p. 1). Such difference may exist along multiple continua; thus, the

helping professional must be particularly sensitive to the complex interactions of individuals

within their own culture and within the mainstream culture. In order to provide services cross-

culturally, individuals must develop a range of skills that allow them to be culturally responsive.

There are specific skill areas that collectively contribute to intercultural competence, including:

(a) awareness and acceptance of differences, which involves developing an awareness of ways

cultures can differ; (b) self-awareness, which involves getting in touch with one's own cultural

background; (c) dynamics of difference, which involves knowledge of cross-cultural communication; (d) knowledge of client's culture, which requires the mental health professional to have a basic understanding of their client's culture; and (e) adaptation of skills to include cultural differences (Diller, 2011).

For school psychologists specifically, Rogers and Lopez (2002) identified activities involving cross-cultural practice with which school psychologists most often reported their involvement. The top four reported activities were providing psychological services to diverse families (e.g., counseling, evaluations), assessment of diverse families, providing consultation services to diverse clients, and attending conference presentations relevant to cross-cultural school psychology. Due to the wide variety of tasks required of school psychologists, practitioners must adapt a number of skill areas to provide competent cross-cultural services to diverse populations. Developing intercultural competencies can be challenging, and little research exists regarding the effectiveness of various forms of intercultural training in school psychology graduate programs.

Achieving Intercultural Competence

One theory of intercultural development focuses less on a set of skills to develop; instead, it proposes that intercultural competence is developed across a continuum over time. According to the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*, individuals progress from having basic perceptions and behaviors regarding the similarities and differences among cultures to more complex behaviors whereby the individual can shift and adapt their cultural perspective and behaviors to the cultural context in which they find themselves (Hammer, 2011). Thus, this model assumes that, as an individual's experience of cultural difference becomes more complex,

their potential to develop intercultural competence increases (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). This theory served as the basis for the development of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI; Hammer, 2011), which was the primary measure used in the present study. The developers of the IDI utilized the model to develop the Intercultural Development Continuum, which consists of five orientations (see Figure 1) ranging from a more monocultural mindset to a more intercultural mindset (Hammer, 2011).

Figure 1. Intercultural development continuum.
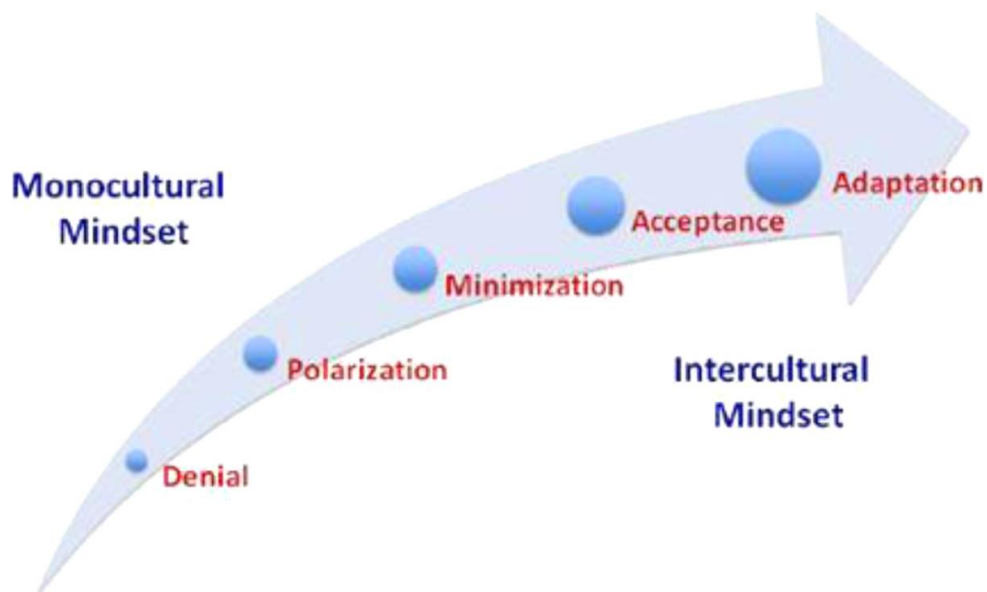
Reprinted from the *Intercultural Development Inventory Resource Guide* (p. 33), by M. R. Hammer, 2015, Retrieved from https://idiinventory.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/IDI-Resource-Guide-01-01-2015.pdf. Copyright 2015 by Mitchell R. Hammer, Ph.D., IDI LLC. Reprinted with permission.

The first orientation in the continuum is called *Denial*. Denial is characterized as a monocultural mindset in which one may recognize observable cultural differences but not notice deeper cultural differences. In the Denial orientation, one may also avoid cultural differences.

The next orientation is called *Polarization* and has two sides—defense and reversal. Defense is a judgmental mindset in which one may view different cultures in terms of "us" and "them". An individual in defense may be overly critical of other cultures and uncritical of their own culture. Reversal is characterized by a mindset that is overly critical of one's own culture and uncritical of other cultures. Polarization is followed by *Minimization*, which is considered a transitional orientation in which one is progressing from a monocultural mindset to a more intercultural mindset. In the Minimization orientation, one emphasizes the commonalities among her/his own culture and other cultures, which may mask the recognition of cultural differences (Hammer, 2011). After the Minimization orientation, individuals begin to progress towards a more intercultural mindset. The next orientation is called *Acceptance*, characterized by one's ability to recognize and appreciate similarities and differences among her/his culture and other cultures. Acceptance is followed by *Adaptation*. In Adaptation, one is capable of shifting between different cultural perspectives and adapting his/her behavior to various cultural contexts (Hammer, 2011).

Developing Intercultural Competence

Several techniques for developing intercultural competence can be used, such as on-campus coursework, community engaged learning, and short-term study abroad programs (Green, Cook-Morales, Robinson-Zanartu, & Ingraham, 2009). For example, Arra (2010) described cross-cultural consultation experiences in a semester-long school-based consultation course in school psychology. A significant theme that emerged from their data was the importance of continual cross-cultural competency development in school psychology training programs. Other questions raised from the study included how to extend a practitioner's cross-

cultural development beyond formal training. Likewise, Lopez and Bursztyn (2013) reviewed training program practices in school psychology and identified specific challenges to advancing culturally responsive preparation of school psychologists, including (a) integrating multicultural perspectives within the philosophical foundation of training programs, (b) adapting multicultural approaches to reframe education and psychological theory in school psychology training, (c) defining the multicultural scope for training, and (d) articulating and implementing multicultural competencies via criteria already sanctioned through the latest National Association of School Psychologists Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists. However, limited research has evaluated the effectiveness of short-term study abroad programs specifically for school psychologists; instead, much of this research has involved programs in other fields of study, such as social work (e.g., Greenfield, Davis, & Fedor, 2012; Mapp, 2012) or business (Wang, Peyvandi, & Moghaddam, 2011).

Considering the need for interculturally competent school psychologists, as well as the limited literature regarding ways to develop students' intercultural skills in school psychology graduate programs, this exploratory study evaluated the results of one university's attempt to meet this growing need. This study sought to answer the following research question: Is there a difference in intercultural development between groups of school psychology graduate students who completed a course that involved two-weeks of study abroad and those who took the same course entirely on campus?

Methods

Design

A mixed-methods design involving analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data was employed. This allowed the researchers to gain information on the intercultural development of the group as a whole, as well as the development of individual students. Participant data were collected across three years of the study abroad program. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data. A content analysis was conducted on qualitative data collected during the third year of the program to allow the researchers to examine emergent themes resulting from the data.

Participants

Participants in the current study included ($n = 16$) school psychology graduate students from a private university in the Midwestern United States who participated in the study abroad course and completed the measures described below. The majority (87.5%) were between the ages of 22 and 30. Most (62.5%) had never lived in another country. Five had lived in another country less than three months. One person in the travel group had lived overseas for 1-2 years. A small ($n=5$) comparison group of school psychology students who took the on-campus section of the course also completed the measures.

Due to the nature of the study, participants were not randomly assigned to groups. Participants in the study abroad group were chosen based on their application to the study abroad program and informed consent. Not all school psychology students were required to apply to the study abroad program, but those who did not apply were required to take the on-campus course.

Measures

   Intercultural Development Inventory. Intercultural competency was measured with administration of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) before and after the course (Hammer, 2011). The IDI is a well-researched theory-based tool. It measures the level of intercultural competence across the intercultural developmental continuum previously discussed; it can be used in a variety of settings and professions (Hammer, 2011). The IDI measures an individual's ability to perceive cultural differences and commonalities and to modify behavior when working with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. The IDI is comprised of 50 multiple-choice items and five open-ended questions that can provide the evaluator with more extensive information regarding the respondent's intercultural development. The IDI is administered electronically and requires a trained evaluator to interpret and analyze the results. The IDI has strong predictive validity, as well as strong content and construct validity, across different cultural groups (Hammer, 2011).

   Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, and DeJaeghere (2003) examined the empirical properties of the IDI and generated a composite score for the measure, which could be useful for creating an intercultural competency profile of participants in training programs. Data analyses of the completed IDIs demonstrated that the measure is reliable and contains minimal social desirability bias. The researchers support the use of the IDI in providing approximate levels of an individual's intercultural competence as conceptualized by the DMIS. Recent additional cross-cultural validity testing of the IDI offers strong support for the cross-cultural generalizability, reliability, and validity of the instrument (Hammer, 2011).

myCAP. The My Cultural Awareness Profile (myCAP) was developed based on research of different cultural awareness theorists, primarily Robert Hanvey (1976), Milton Bennett (1986, 1993), and King & Baxter Magolda (2005). The myCAP can be used as a formative assessment tool, or to support cultural reflection (Marx & Moss, 2011). The purpose of the myCAP is to allow students to reflect on their global awareness and provide a starting point for students and educators to focus their efforts in terms of developing multicultural awareness and competencies.

The myCAP consists of 40 Likert-scale and essay questions that are categorized by four dimensions of cultural awareness: (1) exploring the global world (global perspective); (2) learning about different cultures (cultural understanding); (3) knowing ourselves as cultural (perspective consciousness); and (4) communicating across cultural differences (intercultural communication). A sample survey question from the myCAP (in which students are asked to select the level to which they agree or disagree with the statement) reads, "Talking about common cultural characteristics is different from stereotyping" (Marx, 2011, p. 4). A sample essay question from the myCAP reads: "How do you define a global citizen? Do you consider yourself a global citizen?" (Marx, 2011, p. 4).

The myCAP was added as a pilot tool for participants in the most recent (third) study abroad group to provide supplemental qualitative information (Marx & Moss, 2011). In the present study, the myCAP was included to provide participants the opportunity to reflect on their cultural awareness and immersion experience. The tool was not used to suggest evidence of true intercultural development.

Procedures

Prior to the start of summer term, students in both the on-campus and travel groups were emailed requesting their anonymous participation in the present study. Participants completed the IDI online both at the onset of and eight weeks following the completion of their respective training courses.

Five students in the 2014 travel group completed the myCAP at the beginning of and eight weeks after the completion of the course. This allowed the researchers to find common themes in the reflections, pre- and post- training, and thus served as an additional evaluation of students' intercultural competency development.

Conditions. One group of school psychology graduate students completed an on-campus course focused on counseling diverse populations, and another group completed a combination of this course and a short-term study abroad program.

On-campus course. The counseling diverse learners course was designed to: 1) develop counselor sensitivity, awareness, and training in human diversity; 2) introduce multicultural theory in concepts, competencies, and research; and 3) provide an experiential component for application of multicultural and global awareness. The course assignments included written reflections, local learning excursions within the community, a paper describing their personal cultural identity and background, short quizzes, and a self-assessment of intercultural competencies.

On-campus plus study abroad. Students in the travel group completed a combination of pre-travel coursework, as well as immersion experiences and coursework while abroad for two weeks in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This location was selected because the program coordinator

wanted a non-English speaking destination that would offer opportunities to engage with students in schools. The traveling students attended a school psychology program in the US that had a two-week break in the summer months in which they could conduct the study abroad class. Thus, a southern hemisphere city was an ideal choice they were in the winter season and schools were in session. Further, the university had existing links within the city to institutions and individuals who facilitated the objectives of the program. The pre-travel coursework utilized the same textbook and learning objectives as the on-campus only course. During pre-travel coursework, students engaged in various learning activities involving multicultural counseling, the Argentine culture, preparation for international travel, and an exam covering course readings.

While abroad, students visited several local schools in Buenos Aires with a range of socioeconomic demographic makeups. During these visits, students conversed with Argentine students and faculty about familial, educational, and social differences between their two cultures. Students also participated in group excursions to cultural and historical sites within and outside of the city. Students had free time to explore the city, converse with local citizens in Spanish, and visit local attractions. Class sessions held abroad afforded an opportunity to reflect on and connect in-country experiences with personal and professional development. Students completed specific assignments as part of the study abroad program, including journal entries, a written comparison of the educational and counseling systems in the U.S. and Argentina, and a reflection paper describing how one's practice might change as a result of the study abroad experience.

Results

Post-training Intercultural Competence

Due to the relatively small number of participants and the fact that this was an exploratory study, data were analyzed descriptively rather than inferentially. The pre-test IDI scores for the travel group ranged from 81.9 to 115.2, a range of 33.3. The post-test IDI scores for the travel group ranged from 76.3 to 125.2, a range of 48.9. Scores for both the pre- and post-test IDI orientations ranged from the polarization orientation to the acceptance orientation. The median pre-test IDI score for the travel group was 98.49, compared to the median post-test IDI score of 100.95. The mean IDI scores for the pre- and post-test IDI were similar, with the pre-test mean falling at 97.4 and the post-test mean falling at 97.2. Results of the pre-test IDI found one participant in the polarization orientation, 14 participants in the minimization orientation, and one participant in the acceptance orientation. Results of the post-test IDI found three participants in the polarization orientation, 12 participants in the minimization orientation, and one participant in the acceptance orientation. Both the pre- and post-test mean scores fell in the minimization orientation (see Figure 2).
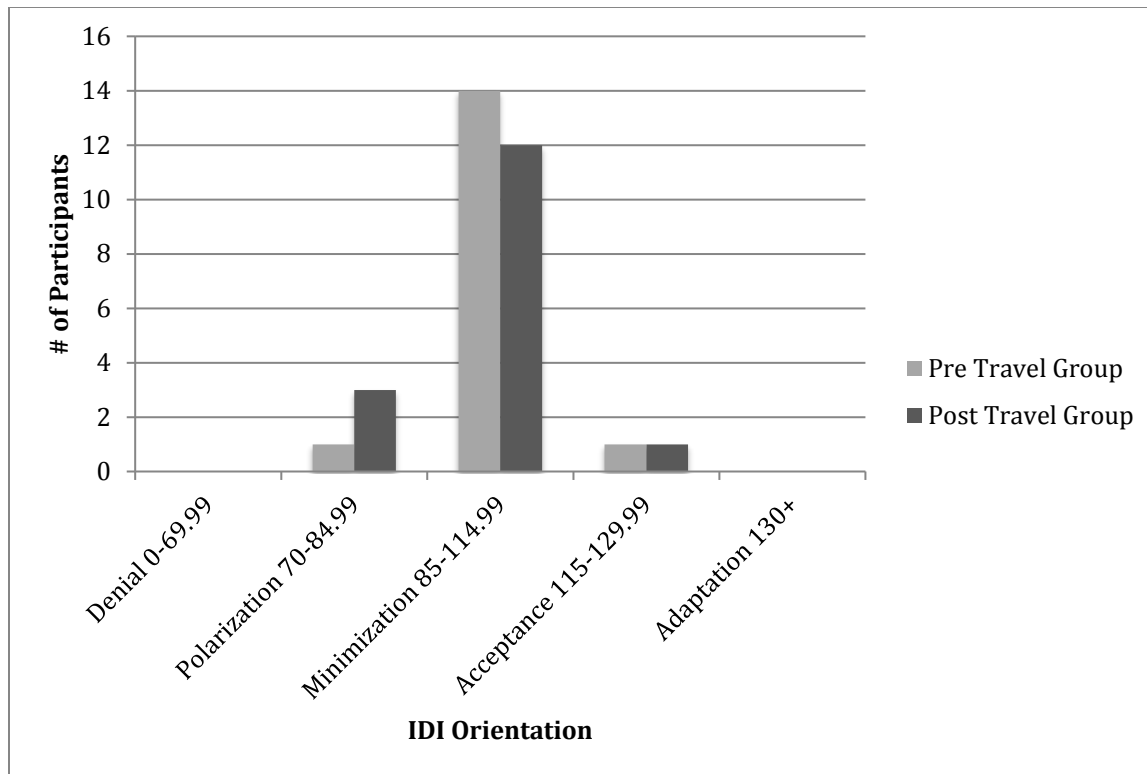
Figure 2. Pre/Post IDI Orientations

A descriptive analysis of IDI data from students who took the same course without the study abroad component indicated that there did not appear to be notable differences in intercultural competence growth between the on-campus only course and travel groups. Results of the post-test IDI indicated an average level of intercultural development in the non-travel group that fell within the cusp of the Acceptance orientation, and an average level of intercultural competence in the travel group that fell within the Minimization orientation. Due to the small number of non-travel group participants who completed the measures and the exploratory nature of this study, conclusive comparisons between the groups could not be drawn.

myCAP Content Analysis

A content analysis was completed on the open-ended questions for each dimension of the myCAP for the five 2014 study abroad participants. The students were identified with pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. The researchers looked for changes in responses between the pre- and post-assessments. For example, Katie's pre-test response to the question asking her to define a global citizen and share if she thought she was a global citizen read, *"...a global citizen is someone who speaks up for global awareness. Someone who has acknowledged the challenges and issues that are faced globally and [are] willing to speak the word to make a difference. I do not exactly call myself a global citizen."* Katie's post-test response to the same question was, *"I would define a global citizen as someone who is an advocate for all people on this earth no matter what culture. I would consider myself a global advocate."* Because Katie did not consider herself a global citizen in the pre-test, but did in the post-test, this may represent development.

The "Knowing Ourselves as Cultural" dimension considered ideas associated with understanding one's own cultural identity and how it affects their beliefs, attitudes, and actions. One change in participants' myCAP assessments in the "Knowing Ourselves as Cultural" dimension was the expanded definitions of their own cultural identities after participation in study abroad. One student expanded the definition of his/her own cultural identity to include career and that he/she is family-oriented, one student expanded the definition to include gender, and one student expanded the definition to include his/her socio-economic status and the region of the United States that he/she is from. These participants expressed a more comprehensive definition of the various aspects that make up one's cultural identity in the post-test myCAP than in the pre-test myCAP.

Also in the dimension of "Knowing Ourselves as Cultural," one participant demonstrated an understanding of how one's cultural identity can influence one's work. One of the questions in this dimension asks the respondent to name ways in which a teacher's cultural identity might influence the way they teach. Katie's response in the pre-test myCAP was as follows:

> A teacher may teach [sic] be influenced by the way they were raised. These teachings they gained throughout childhood may come through their teaching strategies. Also, the teacher's assumptions may show through lessons or the way the lesson is brought about.

> Katie's post-test response read:

> In so many ways! If they are not fully aware of their cultural identity then it can come off in multiple ways. For example, a southern teacher teaching up north may feel that people move too fast in the north. So she may work to ensure that her class is laid out the way she was taught when she grew up.

In this post-test response, Katie specifically mentions one way in which not understanding one's cultural identity could have an effect on her teaching style, reflecting a deeper understanding of the importance of knowing one's own cultural identity and how it can affect one's work. Furthermore, Katie also reflected the idea of being familiar with her own cultural identity in another question on the post-test myCAP which asked the respondent to identify specific strategies that could be used to effectively teach students from different cultural backgrounds. Katie's response read:

> Be completely aware of their personal cultural identities and my own, be self-aware so that I can see when my own cultural identity may come out in my teaching and working with students.

The "Communicating Across Cultural Differences" dimension considered ideas such as understanding how cultural differences can affect communication and effective ways to overcome this barrier. This dimension also revealed potential understanding of strategies to engage across cultures, although intercultural development between the pre- and post-test

myCAP responses cannot be determined. On the question that asked the respondent to identify

strategies that could be used for effective teaching of students from various cultures, students

referenced their study abroad experience in Argentina when describing the specific strategies

they use when communicating with individuals from another culture. For example, Emily's pre-

test myCAP referenced a student she met when the student was studying abroad in the United

States:

> I have a good friend who did a study abroad program in the US for her HS and now
> currently lives in Norway. I recently talked to her over the phone and she seemed to be
> doing very well and her English has improved. When speaking to her I made sure to use
> phrases that are somewhat simple and literal in translations. I also made sure that I spoke
> clearly and a little more slowly.

Emily's post-test response to this question referenced her own study abroad program in

Argentina and was expanded to include the concept of checking for understanding:

> I spoke with someone from another culture when I was in Argentina. When talking with
> this individual, I had to speak slower and use simpler vocabulary so that the individual
> could better understand what I was saying. Also I made sure to ask if they understood
> what I was saying.

This informal review of participants' myCAP responses suggested that the "Knowing

Ourselves as Cultural" and "Communicating Across Cultural Differences" dimensions saw the

most change from the pre-test to pots-test responses. Despite the fact that changes in responses

were seen between the pre-and post-test myCAPs, this is not sufficient evidence to suggest that a

true development in intercultural competence was indeed achieved as a result of the study abroad

experience. Further evidence would be necessary to conclude that true gains were made in

intercultural development.

Discussion

The present study examined the difference in growth of intercultural competence among school psychology graduate students before and after an on-campus multicultural training course compared to the intercultural competence of school psychology graduate students before and after a combination of an on-campus and short-term study abroad course. Although research supporting the use of short-term study abroad programs for school psychology graduate students does not exist, research on short-term study abroad programs with other types of students (e.g., school counseling, social work) does provide initial support for their effectiveness (Mapp, 2012; Wang, Peyvandi & Moghaddam, 2011). Because research has demonstrated that on-campus coursework can also be effective in developing students' intercultural competencies, it was predicted that the group who participated in the combination of the on-campus coursework and a short-term study abroad program would experience greater growth in the development of their intercultural competence than the students who participated in the on-campus only course.

Results indicated no notable differences in the growth made in IDI scores between the travel group and the non-travel group of students who took the same class. A content analysis of the myCAP assessment completed by the 2014 travel group revealed some potential strategies students might use across cultures, but did not reflect a significant shift in students' perceptions of their cultural awareness on the pre- and post-tests.

Intercultural Development Inventory Analysis

It was predicted that the travel group would display more growth in intercultural competence measured eight weeks after the conclusion of the course and study abroad program than the non-travel group. Although the average level of growth was slightly higher in the

control group than in the travel group, descriptive results indicated that the growth between the

two groups was similar. The post-IDI suggests an average level of intercultural development in

the control group that fell within the cusp of Acceptance orientation, and an average level of

intercultural competence in the travel group that fell within the Minimization orientation. The

minimization orientation is considered a transitional orientation in which one is progressing from

a monocultural mindset to a more intercultural mindset. In this orientation, one emphasizes the

commonalities among their own culture and other cultures, which may mask the recognition of

cultural differences. The acceptance orientation is characterized by the ability to recognize and

appreciate similarities and differences among one's own culture and other cultures (Hammer,

2011). When the individual is on the cusp of acceptance, he or she is close to transitioning from

minimization to acceptance, and may, at times, operate with an acceptance world view.

Although both the mean and median IDI scores were higher in the control group eight

weeks after completion of the course, and the group moved from minimization to the cusp of

acceptance, the difference in growth was not significant. The variance and standard deviation of

the control group's scores are larger than the variance and standard deviation in the travel

group's scores. This, along with the small sample size of the control group, suggests that the

control group's mean score was likely affected by extreme scores. The IDI does not contain a

quantitative question pertaining to an individual's amount of previous intercultural experience;

therefore, it is possible that some participants in the control group had more experience or

training with individuals from diverse cultures, which may have accounted for higher IDI scores.

With regard to the prediction that the travel group would make greater gains in

intercultural competence, results of the data analysis indicate that this hypothesis cannot be

supported. This may be due to the fact that intercultural competence is challenging to develop; it

is something on which individuals can spend many years, even their entire life, developing,

further pointing to the difficulties in measuring this construct. Although individuals in the travel

group likely found their study abroad experience to be rewarding and enlightening, the small

amount of time spent abroad likely did not allow for significant gains in intercultural competence

to occur; or, if gains did occur, they may have been short-term in nature and were not sustained

over time.

myCAP Analysis

There is not sufficient information on the myCAP data from this study to identify

developmental trends. However, it may be a tool that warrants investigation in future studies.

The responses to the myCAP in this study indicated the possibility that, while abroad, students

become more aware of their own culture through interacting with individuals from a different

culture. This could be due to the fact that communicating across cultural and language barriers

can be one of the most challenging aspects of traveling and studying abroad. After experiencing

this challenge, students may better understand the difficulty that comes with communicating with

diverse individuals, and possibly acquire some strategies that aid in their communication across

language and cultural barriers.

Limitations

Several variables limited the results of this study. Students could not feasibly or ethically

be randomly placed into groups. Participation in the study abroad option was offered as a

voluntary option to all school psychology graduate students. Expenses related to the program

made it unethical to require students to participate; further, it would not have been ethical to offer the program to only a select number of students.

The small sample size in the control group was also a limitation. Because the completion of the IDI was not mandatory, not all class participants completed both the pre- and post-course IDI assessments, particularly those in the on-campus group. Thus, the average IDI score in the control group was likely affected by extreme scores. For example, some individuals may have been particularly interested in taking it because they had well-developed intercultural skills. The researchers were also unable to control for participants' previous intercultural training or experience, which may have affected their intercultural development during this international experience. With additional participant data in the future, it may be possible to run analyses controlling for previous overseas living experience.

Group results of the IDI were shared with the students, but few students opted to receive individual feedback. This may have impacted the self-reflection/self-awareness process that is essential to intercultural development. Moreover, during the period that this project was launched, the developers of the IDI implemented a complementary Intercultural Development Plan (IDP) because they believe that guided development is essential to the process. The IDP includes goal setting and action planning that, if used in this situation, may have provided more opportunities for the students to focus on their own development.

Data in the current study were collected over three different years of the program, further limiting the conclusions drawn. The faculty chaperones differed each year of the study abroad program, and activities students participated in while abroad also varied somewhat from year to year. The instructor who taught the solely on-campus course also changed from year to year.

Thus, it cannot be concluded that the multicultural training students received in each group was identical from year to year, which could have affected the IDI and myCAP results.

Implications

      Training practices in school psychology programs. This study provides implications for school psychology training programs regarding effective methods for preparing culturally competent school psychologists. First, intercultural competence is a complex, ongoing process that individuals can spend many years trying to achieve (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2012). It is important that training programs emphasize the "Diversity in Development and Learning" domain required by NASP by incorporating opportunities to develop intercultural competencies throughout the duration of a student's training program, including multiple courses and practicum experiences.

      Not only is it difficult to develop intercultural competence in school psychology graduate students, but continuing to develop this competence over time is also challenging. A recent presentation at the National Association of School Psychologists convention on diversity training in educational settings suggested that ongoing training opportunities, or the combination of a training course or study abroad program with a long-term, intercultural development plan may be an effective method for continued development of intercultural competence over time (Hughes, 2014). Although it may be challenging for school psychology training programs to offer ongoing training to past students or require students to establish an intensive intercultural development plan, training programs could seek out and inform students of additional training opportunities and encourage students to be active participants in their own intercultural development.

In the ideal scenario, school psychology programs would assess intercultural competence prior to the start of the program and develop individualized intercultural development plans for each student based on these results. These plans would be woven into coursework and practicum throughout the duration of the program. An alternative option is to incorporate such plans in a diversity course or a study abroad program. It is unlikely that significant development in intercultural competence will occur in students after a single course or study abroad program without the students also making intentional efforts to further this development. The creation and use of intercultural development plans is one such way that school psychology programs might encourage students to become active participants in their own intercultural development.

Also important when considering the implementation of short-term study abroad programs is to ensure that time abroad is used effectively. Some suggestions for helping ensure learning objectives are indeed met during a short-term study abroad program include (a) start with strong, clear academic content, (b) make certain faculty are comfortable and competent with experiential teaching, (c) ensure integration with the local community, (d) bring in lectures from the host country, and (e) require ongoing reflection for both individual students and the group as a whole (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). Due to the limited time spent abroad during short-term programs, it is crucial that such programs are highly structured and include as much experience with citizens from the host country as possible.

One university has suggested additional activities that school psychology graduate students can engage in to promote developing a global perspective when a study abroad experience is not offered in their program (Shahidullah, Saint Gilles, Musielak, Girard & Hall, 2013). Although the authors acknowledge that participation in a study abroad program may be

the most enriching experience in terms of developing a global mindset, they provide several

alternatives for students for whom this opportunity is not available, including: 1) seeking out a

study abroad program from another university, 2) organizing an advanced practicum abroad, 3)

taking a class from an international university, 4) seeking out diverse experiences in students'

current location, 5) joining the International School Psychology Association, 6) attending an

international conference that focuses on multicultural psychology, and 7) getting involved with

NASP's multicultural initiatives (Shahidullah, Saint Gilles, Musielak, Girard & Hall, 2013).

Future Research

This study evaluated the initial three years of a short-term study abroad program for one

school psychology training program. It is important that research continue to explore effective

methods of doing this so that training programs can prepare students to serve the increasingly

diverse populations in U.S. schools today. Future research studies might involve more in-depth

follow-up interviews or focus groups of school psychology students after a short-term study

abroad program. This might provide in-depth qualitative reflections of their experiences abroad.

Although the IDI is a theory-based instrument that has been carefully developed by researchers,

it is only one measure, and does not directly measure all of the many potential benefits of a study

abroad program. Conducting individual interviews or focus groups reflecting specifically on the

study abroad experience may reveal benefits of the study abroad program that were not assessed

in the IDI.

It might also be valuable to measure intercultural competence in students with the IDI or

another research-based instrument prior to the start of a school psychology training program and

again after the completion of the program (with and without a short-term study abroad

experience). Ideally, school psychology training programs should strive to train culturally

competent school psychologists by actively promoting intercultural development *throughout the*

duration of the program, and not only during one course. Measuring intercultural competence in

students before and after school psychology graduate training would provide information

regarding the effectiveness of the entire program in developing students' intercultural

competence.

Results of this study also further reflect the lack of diversity in school psychology

graduate students, as demonstrated in the ethnically homogenous group of participants. It points

directly to the underrepresentation of school psychologists from diverse backgrounds compared

to the number of culturally diverse students. In addition to promoting the development of

intercultural awareness and sensitivity, school psychology training programs should also

continue efforts in attracting culturally diverse graduate student candidates. Finally, school

psychology programs might create partnerships with programs internationally. Social media and

video communication could facilitate communication on a range of topics and help develop

personal and professional connections within the field.

Conclusion

As cultural diversity increases in schools worldwide, there is a need for school

psychologists to have increased intercultural awareness and sensitivity. School psychology

training programs must work to develop these skills in their students. Little research exists

exploring effective methods in developing intercultural competence in school psychology

graduate students, and virtually no study evaluated the effectiveness of a short-term study abroad

program for school psychology graduate students. This study served as an initial evaluation of

one university's study abroad program for school psychology graduate students.

Results of this study suggest that there was no measurable growth in intercultural

development from the beginning of the course to eight weeks after the completion the course, as

measured by the IDI. Qualitative data suggest that some growth was made in terms of

understanding one's own cultural identity and communicating with individuals from different

cultures. School psychology training programs should emphasize intercultural development

throughout the entirety of the graduate program, in multiple courses and via specific practicum

experiences; faculty should encourage students to participate in additional and ongoing

intercultural training opportunities.

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