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Developing Global Perspectives in Short-term Study Abroad: High-Impact Learning through Curriculum, Co-curriculum and Community

Christina M. Ferrari and Janis B. Fine

Abstract

As short-term study abroad gains popularity, it is essential to examine the immediate and ongoing effects of these programs. This paper explores a two-week study abroad course for students in P-12 educational administration and higher education graduate programs. It makes valuable contributions to the limited research that exists for graduate students studying abroad and short-term study away experiences. It examines a course design utilizing the Global Perspective Inventory and high-impact learning pedagogy as derived through curriculum, co-curriculum, and community frameworks. Such a strategy aims to influence students' decision-making processes and connect global knowledge to education's urgent social, ethical, and civic challenges.

Introduction

As educational leaders are prepared to address current issues in today's classrooms and schools, it grows increasingly important for the field of educational leadership to provide opportunities for leaders to gain perspective-taking skills and develop the capacity to make courageous, difficult decisions with a clear understanding of their personal beliefs, values, and commitments. One of the most effective ways to help students explore their values and beliefs is to expose them to new experiences. International education experiences provide in depth opportunities for students, both international and domestic, to learn how to live in global society (Sanders, 2013).

Literature proposes that most effective study abroad experiences are those that purposefully expose students to another culture in a variety of ways, encourage student reflection, and explore meaning-making processes (Braskamp & Engberg, 2011; Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012). Best practices in student learning emphasize the importance of intentional programmatic design (Kuh, 2008). Previous research on short term study abroad concludes that these experiences can be just as beneficial and impactful as semester long programs. According to Dowell and Mirsky (2002), short term study abroad experiences can be more impactful than longer programs if they purposefully engage students with host families, cultural sites, or if students use the native language of the host country.

Additionally, research demonstrates the impacts of experiential education. For example, Stone and Patrick (2013) found that educational experiences, specifically study abroad programs, that bring students and the community literally together to learn from one another yield to greater learning of material than classes without an experiential education component. Indeed, it seems that when both graduate and undergraduate students are provided opportunities to engage, reflect, and immerse themselves into a new environment and experience material not only cognitively but also physically, the learning and educational impact is often profound (Gilin & Young, 2009; Keeton & Tate, 1978; Sanders, 2013).

As the world becomes more globally interconnected and complex, educational leaders must develop an internal belief system and a capacity to engage in authentic, interdependent relationships. Educational leaders are defined as men and women who work and study in the field of educational leadership, wherein they serve as administrators and educators for elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education (Fine & Ferrari, 2014). For graduate students of these preparatory programs, cultural immersion opportunities allow educational leaders to connect their professional experience with the needs and realities of a global society.

This research study supported the notion that short-term study abroad experiences for educational leaders shape their global perspective and encourage a self-authored worldview that in turn impacts the way they lead schools. Through pre-test and post-test questionnaires and follow-up reflective surveys, the authors identified specific examples of how educational leaders in a short-term study abroad program developed cognitively, intrapersonally, and interpersonally. According to this research, the effect of this experience becomes a seminal vehicle for shifting their locus of decision making from external authority to internal convictions. Providing a global framework to guide this development affords tomorrow's educational leaders with the learning they need to address problems they will face in the future. Such a strategy aims to revitalize educational leadership preparation programs and increase student engagement by showing the relevance of global knowledge to education's most urgent social, ethical, and civic challenges.

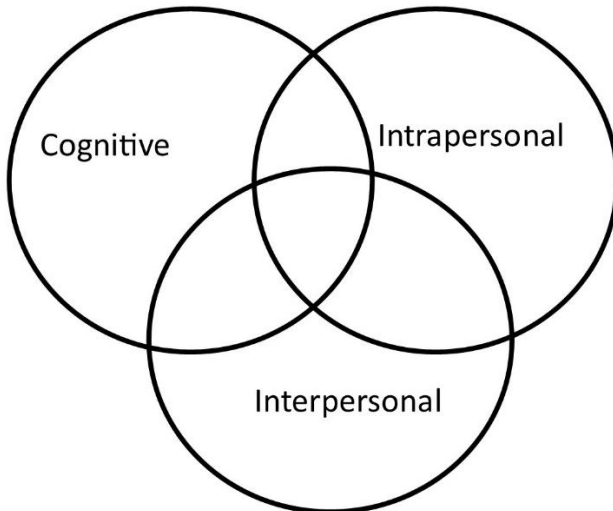
Our findings suggest a short-term study abroad course that integrates curriculum, co-curriculum, and community influences students' understanding of identities, social responsibility, and affect for cultural differences. For the purposes of this paper, we define *cultural immersion* as a series of experiences in another country that allows students to examine societal issues and engage in critical reflection (Rodriguez, 2000). Experiential learning activities, interactions with local culture, and purposeful reflection combine in a two-week cultural immersion course for graduate students in P-12 and higher education programs. Our research provides insight into how cultural immersion programs promote the moral and civic education of graduate students in the field of education.

Program Framework: Global Perspective Inventory

The Global Prospective Inventory (GPI) was purposefully "designed to comprehensively measure each respondent's global perspective" (Merrill, Braskamp & Braskamp, 2012, p.2). The study abroad course design utilized the holistic and multidimensional model of global perspective taking. A global perspective is the capacity for a person to think with

complexity taking into account multiple perspectives, to form a unique sense of self that is value-based and authentic, and to relate to others with respect and openness, especially with those who are not like him or her (Merrill, Braskamp & Braskamp, 2012). The study abroad course design utilized the holistic and multidimensional model of global perspective taking. One's global perspective, as it relates to the Global Perspective Inventory (GPI), includes the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes, and skills important to communication and development of complex epistemological processes, identities, and interpersonal relations (Braskamp, Braskamp & Engberg, 2013). In sum, a global perspective is the capacity for a person to think with multiple perspectives, to form a value-based and authentic sense of self, and to relate to others with respect and openness (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Dimensions of Development, Global Perspective Inventory



Source: Braskamp, L., Braskamp, D., & Carter Merrill, K. (2007). Domains of Holistic Development. Retrieved December 16, 2015, from <https://gpi.central.edu/index.cfm?myAction=Development>

The GPI is a survey instrument designed to measure respondents' global perspective. The instrument includes six scales—both developmental and acquisition—within three dimensions: cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. These scales are sufficiently independent measures of the three dimensions of holistic human development. A chart with the definitions for each of the six scales is presented in Table 1. Additionally, the GPI measures the frequency and quality of global learning opportunities in the curriculum, co-curriculum, and community (Table 2).

Table 1: Global Perspective Inventory Scales

<u>Cognitive (Knowing):</u> Degree of complexity of one's view of the importance of cultural context in judging what is important to know and value.
<u>Cognitive (Knowledge):</u> Degree of understanding and awareness of various cultures and their impact on our global society and level of proficiency in more than one language
<u>Intrapersonal (Identity):</u> Level of awareness of one's unique identity, sense of purpose, and degree of acceptance of one's identity.
<u>Intrapersonal (Affect):</u> Level of respect for and acceptance of cultural perspectives different from one's own and degree of emotional confidence when living in complex situations
<u>Interpersonal (Social Responsibility):</u> Level of interdependence and social concern for others
<u>Interpersonal (Social Interaction):</u> Degree of engagement with others who are different from oneself and degree of cultural sensitivity in living in pluralistic settings.

Source: Braskamp, L., Braskamp, D., & Carter Merrill, K. (2007). GPI Scales. Retrieved December 16, 2015, from <https://gpi.central.edu/index.cfm?myAction=Development>

Case Study: Graduate Study Abroad Course

Forty graduate students in master's and doctoral level higher education and P-12 administration programs at a Midwestern, Jesuit-Catholic University participated in a study abroad program during the summers of 2010, 2011, or 2012. Students enrolled in a three hour graduate level course titled, "Instructional Leadership: Cultural Context for Informed Decision Making." This course used sites of Rome, Italy to discover cultural components of Western civilization and interpret fundamental issues in current educational controversies. This destination was chosen as the University had a relationship with a campus in that particular city. Every course activity, lesson plan, and experience was designed to target one or more of the developmental domains in the GPI utilizing curricular, co-curricular, and community experiences. This course was also designed to enable students to explore short-term intercultural immersion as Rome became each student's learning laboratory and served as the immediate cultural context for the exploration of the study. Students had the opportunity to systematically reflect on the reality of their own experience studying in Rome and to develop holistically in the cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal domains in relation to the topics that the course addressed. These experiences and reflections were recorded in daily journals which students maintained during site-based classes, engagement in the city, and weekend travel.

Table 2: Connecting Experiences to Outcomes: The 3x3 Chart

What do we want students to be and become in terms of their developing holistic and global perspective?		What can students experience in college that are most promising in fostering these desired student learning outcomes?		
		<u>Experiences:</u>		
<u>Domain of Development:</u>		Curriculum	Co-curriculum	Community
OUTCOMES	Cognitive			
	Intrapersonal			
	Interpersonal			

Source: Connecting experiences to outcomes chart. Adapted from “Global Perspective Inventory (GPI): Its Purpose, Construction, Potential Uses, and Psychometric Characteristics,” by L.A. Braskamp, D.C. Braskamp, and M.E. Engberg, 2014, Global Perspective Inventory Manual, p. 20. Copyright 2014 by the Global Perspective Institute Inc. Adapted with permission.

Curriculum

The course learning objectives were to: (1) Visit locations in Rome which display issues present in education today (Roman Forum, Coliseum, Capitoline Hill, etc.); (2) Reflect on current crucial educational issues to understand them as part of the fabric of Western civilization; (3) Present pros and cons of current educational debates such as, “Is it ever necessary to create settings that separate students by gender?”; (4) Examine schools/campuses and how issues raised manifest in explicit, implicit, and null curricula; (5) Determine implications for leadership and change, enlightened by issues’ cultural heritages and current manifestations. Through class site visits to historical, political, and spiritual places in Rome students learn relevant stories from Roman history and culture. Debates, student led excursions, and intergroup dialogues prompt students to draw connections between their experiences abroad with their experiences in education.

The course met every day for at least three hours and often took place outside the traditional classroom in various locations in the city of Rome each day. As will be described, this provided students a more robust learning environment and immediate practical applications between the class material and historical or cultural mythology, narratives, or events.

Co-curriculum

Students had the opportunity to systematically reflect on their experience in Rome and to critically explore issues related to their careers. These experiences and reflections were

recorded in journals students maintained during site-based classes, engagement in the city, and weekend travel. Interacting with Rome in informal or unstructured ways provided students with an implicit curriculum. No less important, learning experiences such as traveling on the city's public transportation system, practicing local customs, and speaking with Italians contributed to the learning experience in another culture. According to Stone and Patrick (2013), students abroad who attempt to emulate the host country's culture or adapt daily practices they are not accustomed to while abroad enhances their learning and appreciation for difference. The program intent focuses on cultural immersion, not tourism, and efforts are made so students understand the purpose of the study abroad experience. Through intentional, reflective engagement with the surrounding environment students are constantly learning or making-meaning of their experiences.

Community

The study abroad experience engages graduate students in either P-12 education administration or higher education programs in a way that cultivates deep relationships. First, class sizes are intentionally kept small, typically ranging from 12-18 students for each cohort. This allowed for intimate classroom settings wherein students shared personal stories about inequality, injustice, marginalization, and power. Embedded in the course experience were facilitated intergroup dialogues which resulted in students processing what it means to be studying in another country as men and women with specific lived experiences, privileges, and identities. While the students held a shared identity of being educated Americans, the intersection and culmination of their own unique identities were explored during their time together in and outside of class sessions. Additionally, students spent approximately six hours a day in class sessions, traveling and eating together, engaging in debates, teaching one another, and dialoging about challenging topics facing elementary, high school, and higher education. After class and over the weekend, students were encouraged to explore together. Students also resided together in on-campus housing at the University's satellite campus in Rome, Italy. In addition to class sessions, students were provided with community-building activities. For example, there was a welcoming lunch and orientation, a group tour of the Vatican Museums, and a final dinner before the program ends. These activities are designed to encourage the different populations of education professionals to build relationships and share in fellowship. It provided an informal learning environment, and an opportunity for educators from across sectors to bond. Indeed, as the field of education becomes increasingly segregated and regimented the program director and class instructor wanted students to experience ample time for leisure, informal dialogue, and relationships across sectors in the educational field.

Analysis of Program Success

In order to better understand the effects of this short-term study abroad course, a qualitative and quantitative study was developed to explore the following:

1. According to pre and post-test data from the Global Perspective Inventory, what changes occurred cognitively, intrapersonally, and interpersonally during a two-week study abroad program in 2010, 2011, and 2012?

2. How do higher education professionals and P-12 administrators understand their decision-making following the study abroad experience?
3. According to a follow-up qualitative survey, how do higher education professionals and P-12 administrators act in socially responsible ways?
4. What are the implications of the effectiveness for a short-term study abroad program for P-12 and higher education professionals?

Table 3: Rome Study Abroad Course with GPI Domains

<p>Cognitive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discover, become aware of, and understand diverse perspectives, worldviews, social interactions, values, and cultural practices. 2. Understand one's own cultural background when compared to another 3. Increase awareness of self and "other" and boundaries of tolerance. 4. Understand national destiny and historical honesty. 5. Examine how perceptions about "the other" are constructed, particularly in educational settings. 6. Examine repercussions of constructed perceptions of "the other," particularly in education settings 7. Analyze ways to manage conflictive perceptions and cultural difference in the work setting. 	<p>Site-based</p> <p>Intergroup Dialogue at:</p> <p>Vatican Museum, Coliseum, Jewish Ghetto, St. Peter's Basilica, Capitoline Hill, Piazza Minerva, Pantheon</p>	<p>Cultural immersion:</p> <p>-Daily travel</p> <p>-Restaurants</p> <p>-Weekend travel</p> <p>-After class excursions</p>	<p>-Teach-us Sessions</p> <p>-Daily travel</p> <p>-Site-based activities</p> <p>-Faculty walks</p>
<p>Intrapersonal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Become conscious of, analyze, and gain a new perspective on one's own world views. 2. Increase self-confidence in negotiating cultural difference. 3. Construct and trust in one's self-identity through comparisons with diverse others. 	<p>Course activities:</p> <p>-Journaling</p> <p>-Debates</p> <p>-Teach-us Sessions</p> <p>-Site-based discussions at</p> <p>Vatican Museum, Coliseum, etc.</p>	<p>-Intergroup Dialogue</p> <p>-Meetings with local students, educators</p> <p>-Weekend travel</p> <p>-After class excursions</p>	<p>-Picnic</p> <p>-Opening lunch</p> <p>-final dinner</p> <p>-Faculty walks</p> <p>-Papal audience</p>

Interpersonal:	-Debates	-Site-Based	-Interactions with
1. Increase ability and comfort in interacting with persons from different cultural backgrounds.	-Teach-us Sessions	Intergroup Dialogue	local Italians, and fellow students
2. Ability to assist others in adapting to various situations representing cultural difference.		-Meetings with local students, educators	-Decision making for school/campus
3. Develop acceptance, tolerance, and respect of others with perspectives, values, worldviews, and social and cultural practices different from one's own.		-Weekend travel	
4. Assist others to develop acceptance, tolerance and respect of others with perspectives, values, worldviews, and social and cultural practices different from one's own.		-After class excursions	

Research Design

The methodological approach is a qualitative survey and quantitative pre and post-test research design. Prior to conducting research, the primary investigator (Author 1) received Institutional Review Board approval through the institution to conduct both qualitative and quantitative surveys. Data-gathering techniques include the Global Perspective Inventory and a follow up open-ended survey focused on the ongoing effects of the study abroad experience. The GPI, a 46 item survey instrument using 5-point Likert scales is administered as a pre-test prior to the study abroad experience and as a post-test at the program's conclusion. Two types of reliability are calculated, test-retest and internal consistency. Both measures demonstrate the GPI is sufficiently reliable for making statements about scales means of groups taking the GPI. Validity measures included a pilot test for face validity, the extent to which the survey is considered fair and reasonable to those taking the survey, and consultation with student development professionals. In addition, the GPI underwent a Principal Component (PC) analysis with a Varimax rotation, the convergence of all three sets of analysis provided strong statistical rationale for the current scales used and their conceptual underpinnings (Braskamp, Braskamp, & Engberg, 2013). After compiling data, we used the "Interpretive Guide and Norms for the Global Perspective Inventory" for analysis (Braskamp, 2012). We compared our results to differences of the norms of undergraduate study abroad participants. To date, norm for graduate students has not been calculated. However, in consultation with the developers of the GPI assessment, it was determined that a difference of 0.10 or greater in the pre and post-tests would suggest statistically significant results.

The qualitative follow-up reflective open-ended survey was sent to the same forty students who attended the two-week Rome experience during 2010, 2011, or 2012. In the survey, respondents described how personal development that occurred during the Rome

course manifested into their day-to-day practice after their study abroad experience. Fifteen subjects responded, yielding a 38% response rate. We then analyzed the findings using an emergent coding approach, utilizing the main stages of self-authorship as the framework for analyzing results (Baxter-Magolda & King, 2012).

Sample

Forty graduate students in master's and doctoral level higher education and P-12 administration programs participated in a study abroad program to Rome, Italy at the institution's satellite campus during the summer of 2010, 2011, or 2012. Students enrolled in a three hour course titled, Instructional Leadership: Cultural Context for Informed Decision Making. This population served as our research sample, and of the participants surveyed, 57% were female, 43% were male, 60% identified ethnically as European, 3% were Multiple Ethnicities, 8% were African, and 29% preferred not to respond. All forty respondents identified as Education graduate students.

Data Collection and Analysis

The GPI was administered as a pre-test prior to the study abroad experience, and as a post-test at the conclusion of the study abroad experience. After compiling data from the GPI, we used the Interpretive Guide and Norms for the Global Perspective Inventory for analysis, comparing the GPI from the graduate programs to the undergraduate norms to demonstrate the impact of the short-term graduate study abroad experience.

The qualitative follow-up survey asked seven questions about the participants' Rome experience and how this influenced their professional practice. The survey was sent electronically in February 2013 to the same 40 students who attended the two-week Rome experience during 2010, 2011, or 2012. In the survey, respondents had the opportunity to describe how personal development occurred during the Rome course were then manifested in their day-to-day leadership one, two, or three years after their study abroad experience. Fifteen subjects responded, yielding a 38% response rate. Through the reflective open-ended survey, the responses showed insight into the subjects' experiences since returning from Rome. Emergent coding using the Developmental Pathways toward Self-Authorship (Appendix A) themes were utilized to determine general themes as they relate to participants' decision-making processes.

Discussion of Findings

The means of the pre and post-test are presented in Table 4 for each of the three GPI scales that demonstrated strongest growth—Intrapersonal/Identity, Intrapersonal/Affect, and Interpersonal/Social Responsibility. The average responses were calculated by averaging the scores from the Likert scales wherein 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree. The higher the mean-score, the more the group is considered to have a multicultural or global perspective wherein they are more apt to express the view of a global citizen.

We compared the differences between pre-tests and post-tests from 2010, 2011 and 2012. These results allowed us to identify areas of strength and weakness in each class and also common themes. As shown in Table 4, students showed a strong growth in Identity

(Intrapersonal domain); students understood cultural differences and became more aware of how unique characteristics make up their own identities. The difference in the pre-test and posttest for our population of students was 0.22 versus the average difference for all GPI participants in the Intrapersonal Identity scale (0.15). We recognize this could be due to the fact that the normed averages were from undergraduate students who spent a semester abroad, and our sample studied graduate students who participated in an immersive short-term program. Further research on short term abroad experiences is needed to better understand the impact that programs such as this one has on students compared to more traditional and popular study abroad program types. Similarly, we suggest more research on graduate students' decision making processes and self-authorship development could prove valuable to better understand how to educate this student population. Students also demonstrated strong growth in Affect (Intrapersonal domain). The difference in scores between the pre-test and post-test for our students over the past three years of the program was a very high 0.39 as opposed to the normed difference for all study abroad students during the same period which amounted to a 0.10 difference. Part of this difference could be due to the fact that the students who participated in the program were education majors and professionals, this particular field and industry requires a level of affective maturity and social predisposition due to the nature of the work and work environment. This reality may in part contribute to the significant differences in the tests. Finally, students increased their Social Responsibility (Interpersonal domain), though the growth was less than is generally seen on the GPI assessment. This is in part because the pre-test score that was already high; suggesting these students already developed a commitment to social responsibility through Ignatian pedagogy, which emphasizes concepts of social justice and advocacy, and through their pursued field of study.

Table 4: GPI Pre-Test and Post-Test Results Compared to Norms

	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference	Average Post-test Responses	Normed Differences
Intrapersonal: Identity	4.12	4.34	0.22	4.09	0.15
Intrapersonal: Affect	3.72	4.11	0.39	4.11	0.10
Interpersonal: Social Responsibility	4.03	4.13	0.10	4.13	0.06

Our population of participants were graduate students, education majors and professionals. Coming from an intentional, mission-driven, and social justice focused institution may have influenced our results. To some degree, it speaks to the receptiveness of our students to participate in a study abroad course such as the one described in this

study. Indeed, to probe deeper and to better understand the students' experiences one must examine in their own words what students learned and what impact, if any, the study abroad course had on their decision-making skills and global perspective. To do so, we implemented the qualitative survey described below.

Follow-up Qualitative Survey

Through the reflective open-ended survey, responses provided insight into students' experiences since returning from Rome. Forty students were sent an electronic open-ended survey in February 2013. Of the forty students, 38% responded; specifically, three students from summer 2010, five students from the summer of 2011, and seven students from the summer of 2012. The questions asked on the qualitative survey probed the areas of strength as a result of the GPI assessment to explore how students' meaning-making process was affected as a result of the cultural immersion abroad.

The first question asked respondents to state the year they participated in the program. The second question was related to the Intrapersonal/Affect scale on the GPI, in which one considers multiple perspectives when problem-solving: *Since you returned from your Rome experience, please describe a situation where you solved an issue using multiple perspectives.* Of the responses received several themes that arose from the subjects' answers. Nearly all respondents (93.3%) described needing to use multiple perspectives daily when making decisions. For example:

In Student Housing I do a lot of work around student conduct. I've been working on creating policies and protocols for my department. I have been able to see the administration point of view, the concerns of individual students, and the general campus community.

Regarding the third question, *Was there anything in your Rome experience that influenced the way you solved an issue using multiple perspectives?*, 67% of respondents identified one or more aspects of the Rome program that shaped their ability to consider perspectives beyond their own, and how that impacted their outlook on the world around them. One respondent reported:

From a psychological perspective, I know that suspension is not an effective way to prevent a behavior from occurring again. However, I must follow my school's rules which use suspension as a mandatory consequence for various violations. I try to work with the student then in school through counseling rather than take a punitive approach myself. My time in Rome, learning about punishments in the Coliseum and wrongful convictions, I connected those stories with how often times we in K-12 education punish students without understanding or even considering other factors, including a student's psychological state.

The next question reflected the Interpersonal/Social Responsibility scale of the GPI. We asked, *Since you returned from your Rome experience, please describe a situation when you stood up for the rights of others by taking action regarding a social, ethical, or civic challenge.* 73.3% of respondents described needing to trust their conscience, beliefs, and values to act against a challenge of social concern.

I try to explain cultural tolerance and understanding with all my students, both when advising and when with them on programs abroad. I regularly try to defend and explain

seemingly bizarre behavior so that the American students can see the world in a different light.

The fifth question asked in the survey was for respondents to determine, *Was there anything specific in the Rome study abroad experience that influenced why you took action to stand up for the rights of others?* Ten of the thirteen that responded (83.3%) to the questions stated one or more experiences that occurred during their time abroad that shaped the way in which they saw social injustices in the professional setting. Over half (60%) identified site visits such as the Jewish Ghetto, Vatican Museums, or Coliseum and the lessons they learned there about individuals who combatted power and authority in both minor and major ways. For example, one respondent stated,

As educators, being an advocate is our social responsibility and it can be difficult to stand for what you believe in. I recall learning about the Jewish holocaust in Rome... The events, stories, and museum were an eerie reminder of what happens to people when there are not enough voices or support to put an end to senseless violence/killing. Knowing that I'm speaking on behalf of others and from their viewpoint is valuable even if that information is not received well; it has given a voice to an unheard member of society.

The sixth follow-up question we asked attempted to better understand the respondents' concept of their internal voice when making decisions: *In the situation in which you took action, how did you decide to listen to your internal voice, which may have been at odds with outside influences?* Seven respondents (46.6%) described that, when faced with what they perceived as social injustice, they had to consciously work to not be swayed by following the status quo. Six respondents (40.0%) claimed it was their obligation or responsibility to act in accordance with their own beliefs and values if they believed it was in the best interest of populations they served.

Having been in Rome, where I traveled as a 'minority' and didn't speak the native language and had to navigate the public transit system and reading maps and menus and a variety of other information, it heightened my awareness to the difficulties and struggles that others go through on a daily basis- immigrants, refugees, even people of Color at a predominantly White school.

By drawing out lessons learned in Rome and building on a commitment to speak up for others, this response suggests that the experience helped this broaden this individual's perspective. This individual went abroad and when immersed in foreign culture, the challenges of not belonging became apparent.

The final question asked respondents, *In what ways, if any, did the Rome study abroad experience increase your ability to trust your internal voice in everyday decision making?* Eleven respondents (73.3%) mentioned the Rome experience reinforced the importance of trusting their internal voice when making difficult decisions. According to one student,

The Rome experience deepened trust in my judgment because it broadened my understanding of the human condition in a greater context. It helped me see more clearly through various lenses, understand and value the perspectives of others, and appreciate the unique opportunities I have in my life as an American citizen and educator.

Overall, it seemed that whether educational leadership students participated in the study abroad program one, two, or three summers prior, educational leaders had vivid memories and made connections from their professional circles of influence to the curriculum, co-curriculum, and community experiences. As one respondent eloquently summarized:

Rome was transformational for me. It forced me to examine my own habits, practices, procedures, and methods for achieving my personal and professional goals. The coliseum helped me to think about our discipline policies and about who should be making the rules. The visit to the Vatican reminded me that those in power can do good things when they are allowed and that beautiful stories must be told. The Sistine Chapel taught me about the power of one person and the view that Michelangelo had of his work and how this relates to me. Everything about this trip has helped me to become the leader that I am today and to remember that we must constantly be critical and forward thinking.

Conclusion

Our contribution to the field is two-fold. First, we aim to provide research that remains largely unexplored by study abroad and international education scholarship. The experience of graduate students studying abroad is often neglected by international education researchers. Furthermore, short-term experiences have only begun to gain popularity in research circles over the past decade (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). This reality points to the need for deepened knowledge in the field regarding graduate students and short-term study abroad programs. We entreat international education professionals and researchers to explore these areas of study further and build upon the existing research in experiential education.

Secondly, we argue, based on the study results, that short-term education abroad is an effective educational experience for educational leaders to develop a global perspective and promote self-authorship. Researchers have found consistently that it is not necessarily the method or length of time an educational experience takes, but rather the quality and intentionality that matters when it comes to providing students with impactful learning environments (Stone & Patrick, 2013;). As education scholars posit, “leadership for social justice and democracy begins with building a sense of community and providing people with a voice in decision making” (Blackstein & Houston, 2012, p. 126). Social awareness, multiple perspectives, and a self-authored life enables educational leaders to “recognize various spheres of influence in their daily lives; analyze the relative risk-factors in challenging discrimination or oppression in intimate relations, friendship networks, and institutional settings; and identify personal or small-group actions for change” (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007, p.30).

Based on the results of our study, immersion in another culture provides opportunities for educators to challenge understandings of themselves and their field. Our findings suggest that an intentional, high-impact immersion experience can become a vehicle for educators’ global perspective-taking and decision-making processes. Little research currently exists for graduate students studying abroad. Furthermore, short-term experiences have only begun to gain popularity in research circles over the past decade (Vande Berg, M., Paige, R.M., & Lou, K.H., 2012). Additionally, there is virtually no research on the impact of P-12 and higher education professionals learning together. Multi-

dimensional, high-impact initiatives that integrate curricular, co-curricular and community experiences influence students' meaning-making processes. This study provides some insight into how study abroad experiences provide educators and education students with valuable cultural experiences that then influence their practice. Indeed, research demonstrates that short-term education abroad can be an effective experience for students to learn from one another, critically reflect on past experiences, and acquire skills necessary to be social change agents. Such a strategy aims to revitalize educational leadership preparation programs and increase student engagement by showing the relevance of global knowledge to education's most urgent social, ethical, and civic challenges.

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