



UNIVERSITY OF
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**Werklund School
of Education**

Teachers Reflecting on Study Abroad

Insights in Previous Literature

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<https://teachersreflectingonstudyabroad.weebly.com/>

Abstract

This annotated bibliography provides a review of studies on the personal and professional learning that emerges for in-service teachers who took part in a pre-service sojourn. Specifically, these studies examined longitudinal outcomes from teachers who engaged in reflective practices. These studies inform study abroad research into the longitudinal outcomes of sojourns in professional programs.

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Introduction

In Canada, numbers of families with home languages other than English or French are increasing rapidly. According to a 2021 Canadian census, 9 million Canadians have mother tongue other than English or French (Statistics Canada, 2022). This increase results in a demand for educators to respond to cultural and linguistic diversity in their teaching practices. Study abroad experiences can increase both intercultural and language competencies, which teachers can then draw from to increase connections with students from diverse cultural and language backgrounds (Burns, & Shadoian-Gersing, 2010; Witte, 2011). These skills, important for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students, can be gained through a pre-service study abroad sojourn.

The immediate benefits of a pre-service teacher sojourn include professional competencies. Participants in Corder et al. (2018) indicated an increase in second language skills, intercultural competencies and responsiveness, as well as a deepening of critical thinking and reflection skills. They used these skills to enhance their professional practice when engaging with students of varying languages and cultures. Other immediate benefits included increased empathy towards students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Arthur et al., 2020). Short-term sojourns allowed for a development of practical skills, and an increased understanding of the field of teaching in broader contexts.

Beyond the short-term benefits of study abroad, little is known about the lasting impact that short term sojourns have on pre-service teachers, both personally and professionally (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Desai Trilokekar, & Kukar, 2011; Roose, 2001). Our project *Teachers Reflecting on Study Abroad* was the first Canadian study to examine longitudinal and reflective impacts of a pre-service teacher sojourn. As a first step in this research, we undertook the creation of this annotated bibliography.

Methodology

For this annotated bibliography, we conducted a review of the literature between December 2020 and February 2021. Jesson et al.'s (2011) key phases of a systematic review were followed: map the field through a scoping review, do a comprehensive search, do quality assessment, extract data, and synthesise data before the write up. We used the search terms “pre-service teacher” AND “study abroad” OR “international experience”; “teacher” AND “study abroad” OR “international experience”; “reflection” AND “study abroad” OR “international experience”; “longitudinal” AND “study abroad” OR “international experience” as a general advanced search in library.ucalgary.ca and the ProQuest Linguistics and Language Behavior

Abstracts database. This review enabled us to review follow-up studies on teachers who went on study abroad sojourns during their pre-service teacher education program.

The search identified 205 sources or entries (see Figure 1) – including articles, books, handbooks, book chapters– that we imported into Covidence (Covidence Systematic Review Software, n.d.). The software automatically removed duplicates (N=35), leaving 170 sources to be screened. Our inclusion and exclusion criteria for a title and abstract screening left us with 75 studies that were relevant to full screening (see Table 1). A study was included if participants had taken part in a pre-service study abroad, were currently in-service teachers and engaged in a reflective practice as part of the study. A study was excluded if the title or abstract indicated it was not about a pre-service sojourn or focused on an in-service sojourn only. These inclusion and exclusion criteria ensured that we were capturing studies relevant to our follow-up research.

Table 1

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

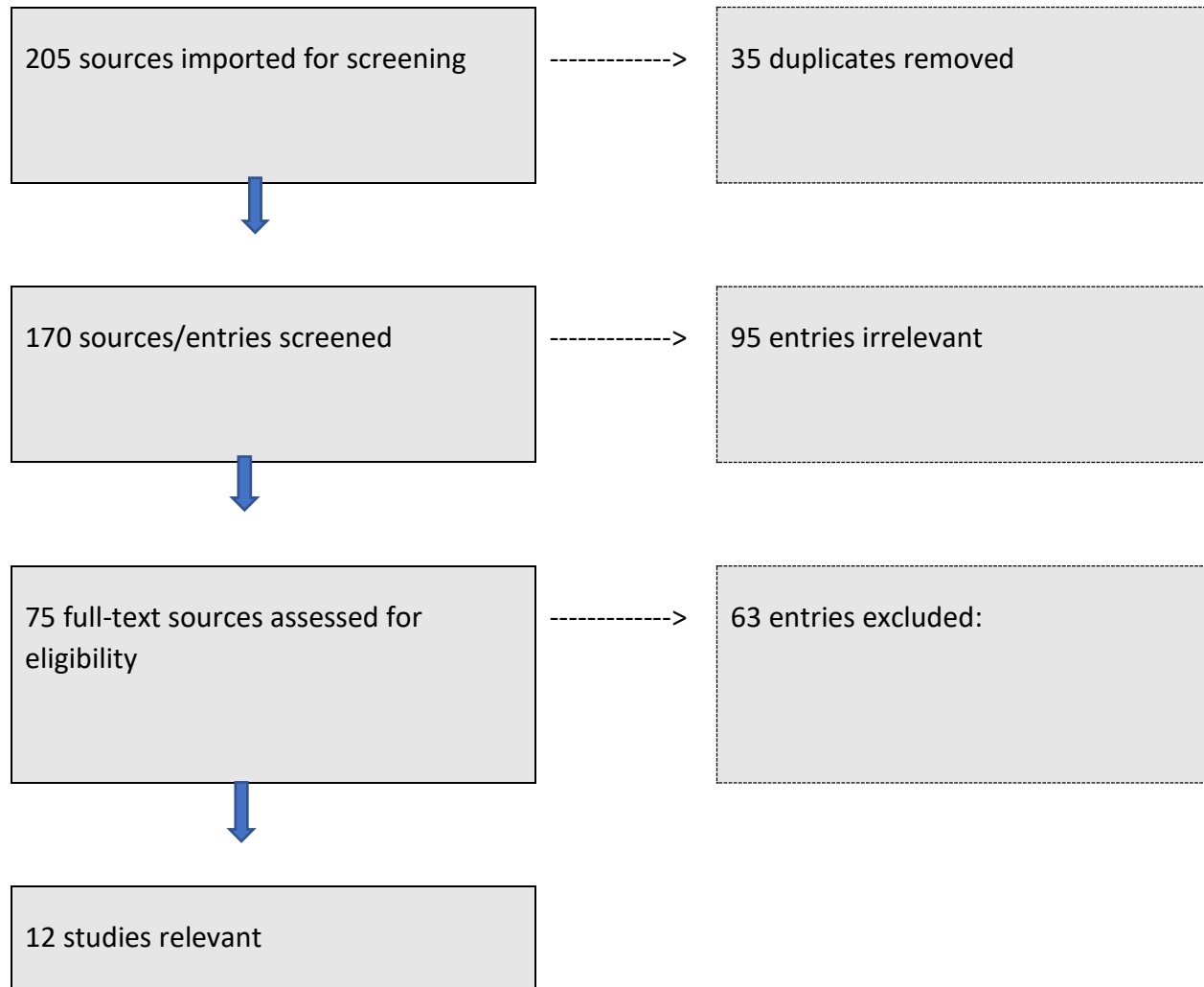
Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
pre-service study abroad	no pre-service sojourn
in-service teachers	In-service sojourn only
reflection	
personal learning (may include language)	
professional learning	
impact on practice	
longitudinal	

At the full review level, we read full papers, deciding whether the papers were IN or OUT of review and documenting the reasons for excluding papers (see Jesson et al., 2011). This allowed us to rule at papers that initially appeared to fit the criteria. We excluded 63 studies for the following reasons: not about a pre-service sojourn (n=32); not longitudinal (n=23); not

including in-service teachers (n=3); could not locate article (n=3); in-service sojourn only (n=1). In the end we found 12 relevant studies (see Figure 1)

Figure 1

Inclusion and Exclusion Flowchart of Studies



Note. Figure 1 is produced from the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) generated in Covidence.

Intended Audience

The intended audience of this annotated bibliography is academic researchers and post-secondary educators in the field of teacher education.

Teachers Reflecting on Study Abroad

Fasching-Varner, Stone, M. P., Mella, R. M., Henríquez, F. O., & Palma, M. Y. (2019). ". . . 4542 Miles from Home . . . ": Repositioning English language Learners as power brokers and teachers as learners in the study abroad context. *Education Sciences*, 9(2), 146. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci9020146>

This study abroad program provides practical experience of living in a foreign landscape, which enhances teacher/student equity in teaching practices, including making experiences and engagements explicit, meaningful, and authentic.

This article provided context for how multilingual students and their families supported pre-service and in-service teachers who participated in a literacy and language situated study abroad (SA) program in Chile. This 15-year, longitudinal case study (n=239 participants) investigated how Chilean students and their families navigated the role of teacher, and how teachers become learners while being language and cultural minorities in their host country. The goal of the study was to see how both pre- and in-service teachers engage in difference through meaningful engagements with local populations and being out of their comfort zone. Part of this goal was to also challenge participants' pre-conceived notions and stereotypes of other (in this case Latino) countries. The SA program brought primarily monolingual pre- and in-service educators to Concepcion, Chile for a three-week internship at a PreK-12 English school. Participants were paired with non-English speaking teachers to develop delivery of instruction, with the multilingual students serving as language intermediaries. Development sessions were led each week by either the Chilean teacher, SA teacher, or students. SA participants stayed with host families, where only the school-aged student was multilingual. Beyond teaching, participants also engaged in tasks with their host families, designed to push participants beyond their comfort zone and rely on the student as their source of knowledge. Two-way journaling between participants and faculty was conducted on a weekly basis. Other data collection methods included pre-experience questionnaires and interviews; interviews with participants, teachers, administrators, families, and students; lesson observations, blogs, and journals while on the SA; and post-SA interviews and surveys. Findings from the study revealed that engaging with other cultures and that becoming the 'other' (i.e., the language/cultural minority) moved teachers closer to equity by connecting with their students. Since participants were forced to focus on listening, due to their lack of ability to communicate in languages other than English. Programs, such as the one described in this article, provide practical engagements of living in a foreign landscape, which can come to enhance teacher/student equity in teaching practices, including making experiences and engagements explicit, meaningful, and authentic.

Felts, M. (2018). *Perceived impacts of a study abroad experience on in-service teachers' practices*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of North Texas]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

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- *increase in globally minded classroom vision*
 - *increased awareness of student challenges*
 - *increased awareness of student perspectives*
 - *developed increased compassion*
 - *developed appreciation of home and other cultures, appreciation of student challenges, and appreciation of the long-term purpose of education*
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In this doctoral dissertation, in-service teachers' perceptions of the impact of a study abroad (SA) program on them as classroom teachers once they enter the classroom are documented. The central research questions guiding this research were: "(a) what are the perceived impacts on in-service teachers' practice related to a study abroad program experience? and, (b) how does the teacher's perception of impact of their study abroad experience change over time within a teacher's career?" (p. 61). This multiple case-study included four in-service teachers who had participated in a pre-service SA program. Ethnographic methods were employed to collect post-sojourn participant data: semi-structured interviews, observations, and focus groups. Classroom observations were followed by an unstructured stimulated recall interview, where teachers were shown the video of recorded observational data and asked to speak to it. Data analysis was conducted using principles of phenomenology. Findings were categorized into three major themes of the impact of SA programs on teaching practice: accountability, acceptance, and appreciation. Findings also revealed that SA programs contributed to an increase in globally minded classroom vision and an increased awareness of student challenges. SA programs also helped some teachers see things from a student perspective and developed increased compassion. The most reported impact was participants' appreciation of home and other cultures, appreciation of student challenges, and appreciation of the long-term purpose of education.

Hauerwas, L. B., Skawinski, S. F., & Ryan, L. B. (2017). The longitudinal impact of teaching abroad: An analysis of intercultural development. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 67*, 202–213. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.06.009>

This case study inquired into the development of intercultural competencies among a group of pre-service elementary special education teachers. All nine participants went to Italy for a semester-long study abroad (SA). They completed education and language courses and 40 hours of field experience, where they taught English at a primary level. Participants lived in apartments and were expected to immerse themselves in local culture by grocery shopping, taking public transit, and living independently. Data was collected through reflective writing, focus groups, and prompts from the Cultural Awareness Profile (version 1). The Cultural Awareness Profile is an instructional tool that assesses student teachers' growth during their program. Data was collected throughout the SA and for 16 months following the SA. Written reflections included four writing prompts written during the SA and a reflection written one-year post-SA. Three focus groups were conducted: one at the end of the SA, one three months post-SA, and one 16 months post-SA. The Cultural Awareness Profile was administered pre- and post-SA, as well as one-year post-SA. Findings demonstrate that participants' intercultural competence was impacted during the SA. Being the language 'other' as well as teaching English to primarily Italian-speaking students fostered a sense of empathy among the pre-service teachers and also allowed them to employ intercultural communication approaches in the classroom. Yet, pre-service teachers also struggled to see education as culturally based, would form judgements on classroom practices through an American lens, and would reflect on the differences as cultural variations. The reflective experiences on cultural differences highlighted the participants' need to become culturally aware teachers. This awareness was also enhanced by experiencing Italian culture, living independently, and being immersed in Italian culture. Findings from the longitudinal data revealed that intercultural competence continued long after the SA had ended. Participants, who were now teachers, implemented intercultural communication skills in their current classrooms, where they differentiated their teaching practice and were more aware of the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs). They also implemented instructional strategies learned during their SA to support ELLs. However, it should be noted that the increase of intercultural competence was not sustained for all participants. Lastly, the development of a personal cultural identity was an area that revealed limited development. While participants noted an increase in problem-solving skills and independence, they did not connect identity to teaching. This result suggests that further opportunities are necessary to allow pre-service teachers to make the connection between the understanding of self and others in a variety of diverse educational contexts. Since intercultural competence develops over time, this might not be achievable in a one-semester SA. The fact that this SA was offered in the middle of the participants' program allowed these pre-service teachers to continue to develop their intercultural competence as they transitioned back into American classrooms to complete additional preparation experiences for their programs.

Mitchell, R. & Tracy-Ventura, N. (2022). From language teaching assistant abroad to language professional: A longitudinal study of career entry. In G. Barkhuizen (Ed.), *Language teachers studying abroad: Identities, emotions, and disruptions* (pp. 219-232). Multilingual Matters.

In this qualitative study, participants were interviewed six to eight years after their one-year sojourn abroad during their gap year. Seven of the participants were in-service teachers of Spanish, French, or English. During the original sojourn abroad, participants served as language teaching assistants in France, Spain, or Mexico. The data for this study was collected through interviews with participants before, during, and after their sojourn abroad. During these latest rounds of interviews, four participants were working in their home country as language teachers. Participants reported varied outcomes from their time teaching abroad: an increase in “intercultural perspective” (p. 7), the use of the teaching-abroad experience as a student motivator in the classroom, and immense personal and career changes. Some participants reported that the experience abroad had encouraged them to pursue a teaching career, while one participant reported her sojourn abroad as a language teaching assistant had made her realise that a teaching career was not for her. In conclusion, the researchers noted that the participants’ previously held motivation for language learning and teaching was supported or confirmed by their study abroad period, and that their experiences gave them the confidence to pursue careers abroad related to language teaching and beyond.

Palmer, D. K., & Menard-Warwick, J. (2012). Short-term study abroad for Texas preservice teachers: On the road from empathy to critical awareness. *Multicultural Education*, 19(3), 17–26.

This qualitative study followed up with in-service teachers (n=5) who participated in a one-month study abroad (SA) in Mexico three years after their sojourn. Three participants responded in writing, and two were interviewed. During the SA program, undergraduate students (n=11), seven of whom were pre-service teachers, engaged in field trips, watched films, completed readings, had discussions, and stayed with local families. All SA students were also enrolled at a Spanish language school and studied there 10 hours a week and attended a five-hour-per-week second-language acquisition (SLA) class. For one or two of the four weeks, they worked as interns in local schools. Data was collected from their reflective dialogue journals (in Spanish as much as possible), and pre- and post-sojourn surveys. To analyse the data, the authors drew from Byram et al.'s (2002) "critical cultural awareness" (p. 17), which is defined as the skill of comparing one's culture and experiences with others'; and Freire's (2000) "critical consciousness" (p. 17), which is defined as being aware of immigrant and ELL students' challenges in the school setting and helping them with the "systematic inequity or larger structures of power" (p. 22). The in-service teachers who participated in the follow-up interviews reported that the SA had a lasting effect on their personal and/or professional lives, increasing their empathy and understanding of otherness and language difficulties. This was especially the case for empathy for English language learner (ELL) students in their classrooms, which was the most noted long-term impact. Even the one participant who struggled to connect the SA experience to her current practice admitted that she had gained self-confidence, which helped her choose a teaching position far from home. Results suggested that short-term SA combined with reflection can have long-lasting effects on the personal and professional growth and experiences of its participants. The authors noted that the students had come close to the goal of critical consciousness (Freire, 2000) and critical cultural awareness after the SA experience; however, while the participants showed evidence of critical cultural awareness, the authors noted that the participants fell short of completely acquiring a critical consciousness. The authors call for more, long-term follow up with participants. This SA program was limited to one year; thus, the authors noted the limitations to generalizability of the findings.

Roose, D. (2001). White teachers' learning about diversity and "otherness": The effects of undergraduate international education internships on subsequent teaching practices. *Equity and Excellence in Education, 34*(1), 43–49.

This qualitative study reports on the findings from pre-service teachers who attended an education program through a small liberal arts institution that required a semester in a cross-cultural internship (national and international placements) before graduation. The methods of reflection during the program included journaling and writing a final reflection paper. The researchers followed up with ten former participants who were in-service teachers after their program ended. The teachers had been in service for six months to three years, and seven of the ten were white females. At this follow-up, five participants presented a workshop about the personal and professional effects of the internships, and the other five were interviewed or filled out a questionnaire. The collected data was organised thematically into categories based on previous literature and emerging themes. The in-service teachers reported that during their cross-cultural internship they learned about the effect of culture on the classroom, the relationships between teachers and students and parents, and the challenge that is understanding culture. Learning to observe and adjust to a culture was directly transferred into their post-educational service. Participants reported being more open to and patient when learning about a new school's culture and new students. The participants reported an increased cultural awareness that helped them feel comfortable in their teaching positions. This also included seeing teaching and learning from different perspectives and an increased appreciation for different ways of learning. This reflection was also mentioned in terms of the important challenge of relationship building with students. In-service teachers reported using ideas from their SA classroom in their current one, including the idea of using fewer or more varied materials and educational approaches in their lessons. Participants reported having more respect for and being more interested in learning about different cultures, learning styles, and beliefs. They also reported being more outgoing and taking more risks. The authors concluded that SA programs provided the experience for pre-service teachers to experience an "otherness" that their students may feel, thereby bringing them closer to understanding differences. The authors noted that SA programs provided participants with the opportunity for developing personally, professionally, and culturally.

Sharma, S., Phillion, J., & Malewski, E. (2011). Examining preservice teachers' critical reflection for developing multicultural competencies: Findings from a study abroad program to Honduras. *Issues in Teacher Education*, 20(2), 9–22.

This qualitative critical research study presented data for 49 pre-service teachers (18 to 24 years old) who participated in a five-week study-abroad (SA) program to Honduras, at a mid-Western university from 2003 to 2010. Two participants, who were in-service teachers at the time, were interviewed “subsequently” (no other info provided on the time between the SA and the interview). The data was compiled from pre-trip orientation and interviews, interviews and focus groups during the trip, course assignments, reflective journals, field notes, and post-trip interviews. Participants were also enrolled in two courses to explore their perceptions on teaching diverse students and to question their attitudes on different cultures. The authors used Merriam’s (2009) critical research definition and six analytical steps for their methodology to code the data for emerging themes. Findings from the pre- and post-sojourn data revealed that participants held preconceived (usually false) notions of Honduras and its people, and that the SA created conflict between the participants’ selves and others. However, the data also showed that participants connected their experiences to broader meanings and re-examined their own beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives (that mostly led to them rethinking their preconceived notions). The data also revealed that participants changed their beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives, a transformation which the authors explained through Dewey’s (1933) theory of the practice of critical reflection. The one reported finding from the follow-up interview with an in-service teacher noted personal and professional growth and his belief in the requirement for continued critical reflection to improve his teaching practice. The results suggested that critical reflection developed cross-cultural competencies. The authors called for the inclusion of critical reflection practices and transformative ways of thinking of others and the self into teacher education. No conclusions were offered from the subsequent interviews about the long-term effects of study abroad programs.

Shiveley, J., & Misco, T. (2015). Long-term impacts of short-term study abroad: Teacher perceptions of preservice study abroad experiences. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 26(1), 107–120.

This qualitative case study focused on global and cross-cultural competencies and presented the results from open-ended questionnaires completed by 148 in-service teacher participants who had gone on a pre-service, short-term study abroad program through Miami University from 2000 to 2013. The participants had graduated 0 to 12 years prior to the study. The sojourn itself included pre-sojourn work, visiting various European countries, post-sojourn course work, and reflection. The researchers analysed their data by looking for emerging themes and classifying the themes into related categories. The emerging themes included an added professional advantage, increased employability, and increased personal and professional reflection, cross-cultural awareness, and personal growth. The authors concluded that short-term study abroad (SA) programs have a direct and lasting, personal and professional impact on students who become teachers, which was supported by the evidence that all participants communicated the same through the questionnaires. The authors noted that the limitation to this study was the use of reported data, not confirmed by classroom visits.

Willard-Holt, C. (2001). The impact of a short-term international experience for preservice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*(4), 505–517.

This qualitative study reported the impact that a six-day sojourn in Mexico had on 22 pre-service elementary teachers. The participants were females (n=17) and males (n=5), who were all over 21 years of age, white and non-Hispanic except two (one Puerto Rican female, one Cuban female). The sojourn included teaching in a private bilingual school. The participants completed a pre-service open-ended questionnaire, which they reviewed and reflected on post-sojourn. The participants also completed an impact questionnaire four months post-sojourn to assess impacts of the trip on their student-teaching practice. The researchers also used field notes, informal interviews, and participants' presentations about their study-abroad (SA) experiences in their analysis. Some participants, eight of whom were in-service teachers, participated in phone interviews one year post sojourn. The authors used Wilson's (1993) four categories of cross-cultural experiences (i.e., substantive knowledge, perceptual understanding, personal growth, interpersonal connections) to analyse the data. Pre-service teachers reported that their personal and professional lives were impacted by the program. They reported their cultural preconceptions were challenged, and that they experienced an increase in patience, empathy, self-confidence, flexibility, and willingness to help students with difficulties. They also reported that their teaching practices were affected and that they included a more global perspective in their teaching because of the SA. The authors noted negative impacts from the program as well: some participants were seen as overconfident in their teaching knowledge and abilities and in their understanding of Mexican culture. That said, the researchers concluded that pre-service teachers had learned the importance of cross-cultural awareness and understanding, falling into each of Wilson's (1993) categories of benefits of cross-cultural experiences. Results had implications for their program: the authors recommended adjusting pre-sojourn planning and preparation and post-sojourn debriefing, extending the length of the sojourn, and providing opportunities to visit other schools in Mexico. While the authors admitted short-term sojourns cannot replace longer term ones, they concluded that short-term sojourns do have an impact on pre-service teachers.

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