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© Melissia A. Law, Sarah E. LaRose, Mark A. Russell, JoAnn Phillion

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Elements of Globally Competent Teaching in Pre- and In-Service Agricultural Educators After Participation in a Maymester Study Abroad

Melissia A. Law¹, Sarah E. LaRose², Mark A. Russell², JoAnn Phillion²

Abstract

This study utilized an ex post facto explanatory sequential mixed methods research design to explore how a short-term study abroad in Jamaica may have influenced participants' empathetic dispositions related to globally competent teaching practices. The study employed Tichnor-Wagner et al.'s (2019) Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum, an independently validated research instrument, to assess participants' self-rated empathy development. Data were collected through an online questionnaire from pre-service, in-service, and other agricultural educators ($n = 36$), followed by four focus groups. Findings were framed within Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (TLT), which emphasizes empathy as a component of transformation and global competency development. Results indicated that study abroad experiences may have contributed to increased empathy and recognition of diverse perspectives, though pre-service teachers reported lower confidence in applying these competencies. Findings highlight the role of transformative experiences in fostering globally competent educators and suggest strategies for enhancing empathy-focused training in teacher preparation programs.

¹ IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY, AMES, IA, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

² PURDUE UNIVERSITY, WEST LAFAYETTE, IN, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Corresponding author: Melissia A. Law, malaw@iastate.edu

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1. Introduction

Within our interconnected world, teachers are faced with the responsibility and pressures to prepare students for college and careers in a global economy. In addition, they teach an increasingly diverse student population. However, in many settings, the population of teachers is not reflective of the diverse populations of their students, and few teachers are confident in their abilities to teach diverse students (McClellan-Kirksey, 2020). As such, there needs to be more emphasis on instructing teachers with new strategies to reach students whose racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds may differ from their own (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019).

Our connected, globalized society is increasingly dependent upon economic, political, cultural, environmental, and technological interconnectedness (Hull & Hellmich, 2018; Merryfield, 2008). Consequently, teachers and students can be continuously connected to virtual learning platforms and social media. Because of this information overload, educators help students understand and process the amount of information consumed online, and as such, are tasked with helping their students make sense of a rapidly changing world in addition to teaching content.

As enrollment trends change the overall composition of United States public schools, teacher education programs have worked in recent years to increase global competency among the skills needed for beginning teachers (Quezada, 2004; Asia Society/OECD, 2018). Tichnor-Wagner et al. 2019, defines global competency as a “set of knowledge, skills, mindsets, and values needed to thrive in a diverse, globalized society” (p. 3). Commonly interchangeable within the literature, one can find and use the following terms: global competence, global awareness, global citizenship, global literacy, intercultural competence, international education, and global education.

To support the development of globally competent citizens, educators will need to understand the interdisciplinary dispositions, knowledge, and skills needed to thrive in a diverse, globalized society. For this to occur, teachers must first feel confident in exploring their own identities (Kerkhoff et al., 2019; West,

2012; Yemini et al., 2019). With significant demographic shifts in both rural and urban communities across the United States, students deserve to be in classrooms with globally competent educators. Globally competent teaching practices include those interrelated elements teachers need to instill global competence within their students (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019).

Unfortunately, teacher education programs are among those least internationalized on university campuses (Longview Report, 2009) and offer limited opportunities for pre-service educators to develop global competency awareness. This lack of exposure is particularly evident in agricultural education programs across the United States, which remain relatively homogeneous. According to the National Agricultural Teacher Supply and Demand Project (Foster et al., 2025), 2024 program completers were reported as 80% White, 12% Hispanic, 2% Black, 5% unknown, and 2% identifying as other. As a result, many PreK-12 educators enter the profession with limited content knowledge related to global issues and a lack of confidence in engaging with international education. This is largely due to insufficient exposure to globally focused coursework, content, and experiences during their teacher preparation programs (Rapoport, 2009, 2010).

However, in recent years, teacher education programs have gradually incorporated several opportunities to cultivate global competency skills in pre-service educators. These include adding a global context into pre-existing course work, offering support for learning other languages, professional development, and international exchange programs (Quezada & Cordeiro, 2016). In addition, institutions aim to foster global citizenship for teacher candidates by promoting international study abroad experiences. Mahon and Cushner (2010) concluded that few teachers participate in an immersive cultural experience during their undergraduate programs; however, those that do attend may enhance their cultural sensitivity, nurture empathy for others, and expand their worldwide views. Thus, studying abroad can provide invaluable life experiences and play a vital role in creating globally competent teaching practices in classrooms across the globe. Research indicates that even a short-term global experience by teacher candidates may impact the context and content instructed within their future classrooms, impact multicultural competency, and empathize with others, not like themselves (Pence & MacGilivray, 2008; Willard-Holt, 2001).

In response to these challenges, a variety of tools exist to assess the impact of global competency development. Many instruments have been

developed to measure various learning outcomes, specifically the impact of educational study abroad experiences. Several instruments exist within academic literature, including the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), the Global Competence Aptitude Assessment (GCAA), and the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory (BEVI).

The IDI, developed by Hammer and Bennett (2002), measures intercultural competence across five stages, from ethno-centric to ethno-relative mindsets. While widely used, it requires formal training and can be costly. The GCAA, introduced in 2009, uses scenario-based and behavioral Likert-scale self-assessments to measure global competence across eight dimensions (Global Competence Associates, n.d.). Unlike IDI, the GCAA is non-culture specific, can be completed online, and provides immediate feedback, making it a favorable tool for self-improvement. The BEVI assesses belief-value alignment and cross-cultural characteristics, examining how experiences shape learning responses (Shealy, 2015). Though useful for evaluating study abroad outcomes, the BEVI requires formal training, an institutional license, and a significant financial investment, limiting accessibility.

Ultimately, the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum was chosen for its specific focus on PreK-12 teacher education and its practical application in educational settings. Unlike other tools, it is designed as an accessible framework for educators to evaluate and enhance their global teaching competencies, making it more relevant and accessible for the study's objectives. See section 5.2.1 Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum for a more detailed rationale on the selection of the study's instrument.

2. Theoretical Framework

Mezirow's (1978a-b) Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) served as the theoretical framework for this study. With an association to andragogy, Mezirow's work posits that adults learn best by making meaning of their lived experiences. As learners begin to process and change their personal views of the world, individuals ultimately form new perspectives and make meaning of information differently.

The foundation of TLT rests on experiential activities and the critical component of self-reflection. Mezirow (1991) explains that while the achievement of knowledge may be transformative in its regard, it is when

knowledge is combined with hands-on experiential learning that more “meaningful ways” can be discovered. As this study seeks to examine how participation in a short-term study abroad may impact participants’ empathetic dispositions concerning globally competent teaching practices, Mezirow’s (1991) Ten Phases of Transformative Learning provide a theoretical foundation for evaluating lived experiences for those participants involved with the Maymester study abroad to Jamaica.

The opportunity for new transformational perspectives can be developed through what Mezirow (1991) refers to as a disorientating dilemma. During a disorientating dilemma, such as a short-term study abroad experience, participants are given information that does not fit their original understanding and challenges their initial worldview. This initial disruption can serve as a catalyst for learning, fostering change, and transformation. Following the disorientating dilemma, the main components of transformative learning are based on critical reflection elements. Mezirow (1991, 2000) called for individuals to reflect critically on their lived experiences. Within self-examination, one begins to explore and critically question their initial beliefs. It is then through self-reflection and assessment that significant personal transformations can evolve.

Once learners sort through their initial beliefs and critically reflect, recognition and exploration will begin. Through exploration, learners inquire and consider how changing their fundamental ideas and perspectives will impact their own lives. For a transformational learning strategy then to succeed, an action plan outlining the needed steps is necessary. Mezirow (1991) highlighted the focus of TLT on the advancement and adaptation of one’s individual beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions. Through acquisition, the new knowledge of skills is structured and organized to initiate the implementation of new roles. Following the opportunity to explore and try new roles, one becomes more confident with a new identity and understands the change. Within the final stage of the transformative process, one’s confidence implies that the changes are instrumental and needed to reintegrate and apply new knowledge to understanding future challenges. The interaction and advancement of learners through the Ten Phases of Transformative Learning occurs as a result of active learning in which themselves as individuals are involved.

Few studies have used the transformative learning theory to inform their theoretical foundation in research on short-term study abroad programs specific to undergraduate agricultural education majors (e.g., Dobbins et al., 2019; Foster et al., 2014; O'Malley et al., 2019; Pigg et al., 2021). Evidence though has demonstrated the transformational possibilities of study abroad courses and the long-term impact of those participants after returning home (Pigg et al., 2021).

3. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to examine how participation in a short-term study abroad may impact participants' empathetic dispositions as they relate to globally competent teaching practices. Empathetic dispositions served as the critical element of analysis as it provides a foundation for global competence (Tichnor-Wagner, 2019). Along with empathy, open-mindedness, and perspective consciousness are at the "heart of good teaching" (Tichnor-Wagner, 2019, pg. 6). This foundation provides a structure that allows educators to challenge perspectives, examine their own biases, and have an open mind towards various perspectives.

The three research objectives that guided this study are:

1. Describe the demographics of the study participants, including employment/educational status, race, and additional international experiences.
2. Identify study abroad participants' self-rated stage of empathy development utilizing the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum.
3. Explore themes pertaining to empathy within study abroad participants' rationale for self-rating on the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum.

4. Background and Setting

Between 2015 and 2019, a total of 80 undergraduate students studying agricultural education at a U.S. Land Grant institution participated in a Maymester study abroad program to Jamaica. The program aimed to achieve learning outcomes from two different courses, Exploring Teaching as a Career, and Multiculturalism and Education, as well as intercultural and agricultural learning outcomes.

During their 18-day stay in Jamaica, participants visited various agricultural industry sites, two public secondary classrooms, and participated

in recreational and cultural excursions. Additionally, the students reported for four classroom days at The College of Agriculture, Science, and Education while in Jamaica. The opportunity to collaborate with an in-country institution allowed for a diverse range of experiences and contacts with Jamaicans, specifically those within the agricultural sector. Because the educational system in Jamaica offers agriculture education in its secondary schools, this provided an optimal setting for agriculture students in the United States to experience dissonance and ultimately transformational learning.

This research study targeted the undergraduate agricultural education students in the United States who participated in the Jamaica Maymester study abroad program between 2015 and 2019. The five-year time frame was chosen because the program's design and delivery were consistent throughout this period, ensuring that the participants had similar experiences. Since data collection occurred between one to five years after the students' time in Jamaica, the participants currently have different roles in various stages of their professional careers. These stages (pre-service teacher, in-service teacher, and other) were identified during the questionnaire analysis and later utilized in virtual follow-up focus groups. For the purpose of this study, preservice teacher is defined as those study participants pursuing a teaching license, in-service teacher as those actively in the PreK-12 classroom that hold a current license, and other as a current graduate student, extension educator, non-formal educator, or those no longer in education.

5. Methods

5.1. Study Design

This IRB-approved study used an ex post facto explanatory sequential mixed methods research design to examine how participation in a short-term study abroad may impact participants' empathetic dispositions related to globally competent teaching practices. Agricultural education majors from a land grant institution located in the United States who participated in a short-term study abroad to Jamaica from 2015-2019 were considered as the population of this study ($N = 80$). Participants were first asked to respond to a post-experience online Qualtrics® questionnaire that utilized an unmodified version of Tichnor-Wagner et al.'s (2019) Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum and demographic questions that addressed non-identifying information. After eliminating incomplete responses through data cleaning, 36 participants completed the entire questionnaire and were included

in data analysis. The online questionnaire was administered utilizing Dillman et al.'s (2014) Tailored Design Method to emphasize personalized communication, clarity, and engagement, and served as the foundation for the subsequent qualitative piece.

Following the online questionnaire, four virtual follow-up focus groups were conducted via video conferencing to further explore the collection and analysis of study participants' self-rated stage of empathy development. Three groupings (i.e., pre-service teacher, in-service teacher, and other) emerged from the quantitative data analysis and were vital in forming the virtual follow-up focus groups. The lead author utilized intelligent transcription to transcribe the qualitative data produced from the video conferencing software. This transcription method included light editing of the audio file to omit phrases irrelevant to the conversation or discussion topics presented within the semi-structured interview guide (e.g., filler words, repetitions, grammatical errors). Study participants were contacted to assess the audio transcript through an interviewee transcript review before the data was coded and analyzed. Rowlands (2021) describes an interviewee transcript review as a "form of respondent validation that involves offering participants the opportunity to review and then respond to an interview transcript/or findings in agreement, disagreement, or proposing changes to the same" (p.1).

Data throughout this research study was analyzed using a combination of tools for both quantitative and qualitative data sets. Research objectives one and two included quantitative data collected via an online Qualtrics® questionnaire and was later entered into a statistical software program, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS®). Research objective three included qualitative data that consisted of open-ended questions from both the online Qualtrics® questionnaire and the semi-structured interview guide used during the follow-up focus groups. Qualitative responses were coded inductively using a computer software package, NVivo Pro®.

5.2. Instrumentation

5.2.1. Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum

The Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum by Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) was originally developed in 2014 to serve as a free self-reflection tool for PreK-12 educators to assess their current globally competent teaching practices. Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) created the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum to ensure the professional growth of globally

competent teaching practices. Unlike other tools within the literature, Tichnor-Wagner et al., set out to create the continuum to foster teachers' self-reflection and professional development practices, rather than measuring "their place on a pre-determined scale" (Carter, 2020 p. 31). The continuum comprises of 12 distinct yet interrelated global competency elements (Table 1) that identify the dispositions, knowledge, and skills educators need to prepare their students to prosper in a globalized society.

TABLE (1)

TICHNOR-WAGNER'S GLOBALLY COMPETENT TEACHING ELEMENTS

Globally Competent Teaching Dispositions	
Element 1	Empathy and valuing multiple perspectives
Element 2	Commitment to equity worldwide
Globally Competent Teaching Knowledge	
Element 3	Understanding global conditions and current events
Element 4	Understanding the interconnected world
Element 5	Understanding multiple cultures
Element 6	Understanding intercultural communication
Globally Competent Teaching Skills	
Element 7	Multilingual
Element 8	Classroom environment that values diversity
Element 9	Content-aligned global investigations
Element 10	Intercultural conversations
Element 11	Global learning partnerships
Element 12	Global competence assessment

Source: Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019)

Among the 12 elements, empathy was selected as the focus of this study because it serves as the foundation for perspective-taking, cultural awareness, and inclusive teaching (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019; OECD, 2018). Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory highlights empathy as essential for perspective transformation, enabling individuals to critically reflect on assumptions and engage meaningfully with diverse viewpoints (Mezirow, 1991, 2000). Without empathy, educators may struggle to implement other globally competent teaching practices, making it a cornerstone piece of the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum (Merryfield, 2008; West, 2012).

The researchers chose to use Tichnor-Wagner et al.'s Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum (2019) for four reasons. First, the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum was explicitly designed to measure global competence, which is the focus of this research study. Second, the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum uses self-reflection as a vital component for teacher learning. Critical self-reflection supports the premise of the transformative learning theory and plays a vital role in the experiential learning process. Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) described the reflective process within the use of the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum as such:

For each element, teachers first read through each developmental level and select the level that best describes them, reflecting on the professional and personal experiences that justify their choice. Second, teachers identify an element (or elements) they would like to improve and then read the description for the next highest level to understand what is required for growth. Third, teachers take actions that help them reach the next developmental level—for example, reading a series of articles and books, participating in a professional learning opportunity abroad, teaching a new unit that influences global perspectives, or researching organizations that provide service-learning opportunities around issues of global concern. Finally, teachers reflect to see if their actions have led them to the next level or move on to a different element (p. 14).

Reflective practice is common in teacher preparation programs and has infused the deliberate way of thinking in support of growth for teacher candidates (Danielewicz, 2001; LaBoskey, 1994; Zeichner & Liston, 2014). Personal reflective practice allows those pre-service educators to self-identify and examine complex issues that may arise in their classroom teaching environment. Through reflection, pre-service teachers have the opportunity to investigate both teaching and learning from a more personal approach (Larrivee, 2000) and initiate questions to challenge their previous understandings (Liston & Zeichner, 1990).

Third, the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum was developed through an extensive two-year research process to test the content validity, internal consistency reliability, and internal structure of the self-reflection tool.

And lastly, the researchers chose the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum for this study to contribute and address a knowledge gap within the body of literature for its use in both pre-service and in-service agricultural educators following a Maymester study abroad to Jamaica. Because of its recent development (i.e., 2014), few studies have utilized the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum.

5.2.2. Demographics

To help understand the identity of the study participants, the online questionnaire also included a demographics section that promoted participants to answer a series of questions regarding their racial identity, current educational/employment status, and information about additional international travel experiences.

5.2.3. Semi-Structured Interview Guide

A semi-structured interview guide was utilized as the final instrument for this study. The interview guide was developed out of the prompts within the online questionnaire and later used in the four virtual follow-up focus groups. This instrumentation was selected to allow for the flexibility of the pre-determined questions, while also allowing the study participants to take the focus group beyond the discussion guide if necessary. Before its use, the instrumentation was reviewed and approved by a panel of experts within the Purdue University Center for Intercultural Learning, Mentorship, Assessment and Research. The researchers developed questions intended to gain additional insight into the participants' experiences during the Maymester study abroad to Jamaica and the components of their self-rated stage of empathy development.

The researchers designed the semi-structured interview guide to include a checklist of prompts and questions to cover during the pre-determined one-hour sessions to promote a worthwhile discussion. Sample questions from the semi-structured interview guide include:

1. Has the study abroad experience to Jamaica influenced your own global perspectives?
2. Did your international experience specific to Jamaica help in your ability to empathize with others that are different from you?
3. As a result of the Jamaica study abroad experience and through interactions with others, explain how you do/do not value more diverse perspectives?
4. What can Purdue University do to continue your growth in areas that support empathy practices within the classroom?

6. Results

6.1. Demographic Analysis

Table (2) outlines the demographic characteristics of the 36 participants who engaged in the short-term study abroad to Jamaica from 2015-2019 and fully completed the online questionnaire. Of those demographic characteristics, at least half of the participants classified their current educational status as Alumni and two-fifths as current Undergraduates. The remaining study participants selected “Other” and indicated that they were pursuing a postgraduate degree. Two prominent groups were displayed for participants’ employment status and were identified as PreK-12 Educator (36.1%) and Other (41.7%). Of those study participants who selected “Other,” all 15 participants indicated their current employment status as full-time undergraduate students. The vast majority of study participants reported their race as White (94.4%), while one participant identified as Biracial (2.8%). One participant also selected that they preferred not to answer the question.

TABLE (2)
DEMOGRAPHICS OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS (N = 36)

Category	n	%
Educational Status		
Alumni	19	52.8
Undergraduate	15	41.7
Other-Current Postgraduate	2	5.5
Total	36	100
Employment Status		
Extension Educator	2	5.5
Graduate Student	3	8.3
No Longer in Education	2	5.5
Non-Formal Educator	1	2.8
Not Currently Employed	-	-
Part-Time Employment	-	-
PreK-12 Educator	13	36.1
Other-Current Undergraduate	15	41.7
Total	36	100
Race		

Asian/Pacific Islander	-	-
Bi-racial	1	2.8
Black	-	-
Indigenous	-	-
LatinX	-	-
Middle Eastern/North African	-	-
White	34	94.4
Prefer Not to Answer	1	2.8
Total	36	100

In addition to employment/educational status and race demographics, study participants were asked to share their involvement with other international experiences before and after the Maymester study abroad to Jamaica. Involvement with other international experiences were asked of the participants as time had elapsed from their study abroad experience in Jamaica (i.e., 1-5 years) and could be considered as a confounding variable.

Table (3) on the following page outlines the participants who reported international experiences both before and after the Maymester study abroad to Jamaica. Of the 36 study participants, 28 (77.8%) had no prior international travel experience and a number of study participants shared that traveling to Jamaica was their first time on an airplane. The number of study participants with no prior international experience was unsurprising, as the short-term study abroad is targeted to first-year undergraduates studying agricultural education. However, the remaining eight participants (22.2%) reported that they had traveled internationally before the Maymester study abroad to Jamaica.

Following the Maymester study abroad to Jamaica, 16 (44.4%) study participants reported that they had not traveled internationally since their return to the United States. However, of the 36 study participants, over half (55.6%) indicated that they have traveled internationally following the Maymester study abroad to Jamaica. One participant specifically detailed that “the study abroad to Jamaica makes me want to travel more...”. Given the increase in subsequent international travel experiences for participants, this may suggest that the short-term study abroad to Jamaica was a pivotal experience for future international experiences, whether for educational, leisure, or service purposes.

TABLE (3)STUDY PARTICIPANTS' ($N = 36$) ADDITIONAL INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES BEFORE AND AFTER THE MAYMESTER STUDY ABROAD TO JAMAICA

Category	<i>n</i>	%
Prior International Experience		
No Prior International Experience	28	77.8
Prior International Experience	8	22.2
Total	36	100
Subsequent International Experience		
No Subsequent International Experience	16	44.4
Subsequent International Experience	20	55.6
Total	36	100

6.2. Self-Rated Stage of Empathy Development

Empathy development is a crucial aspect of preparing educators to navigate the complexities of diverse classrooms and promote inclusive learning environments. By cultivating empathy, educators can better understand and respond to the diverse needs and experiences of their students. Research suggests that immersive cultural experiences, such as studying abroad, play a vital role in enhancing educators' empathy by exposing them to different cultures, perspectives, and ways of life (Mahon & Cushner, 2010). These experiences not only broaden educators' worldview but also deepen their appreciation for cultural diversity and foster a greater sense of empathy towards students from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, fostering empathy among educators can lead to more meaningful connections with students, creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where all students feel valued and understood. Therefore, integrating empathy development into teacher training programs and providing opportunities for cross-cultural experiences are essential steps in equipping educators to effectively meet the diverse needs of their students and promote positive social change within educational settings.

The study participants' developmental level for empathy and valuing multiple perspectives was measured post-experience using Tichnor-Wagnor et al.'s Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum. To capitalize on the demographics of the participants within this study, the self-rated stage of empathy development from all 36 study participants was analyzed into three

distinct categories (i.e., pre-service teacher, in-service teacher, and other). As a reminder, for the purpose of this study, preservice teacher is defined as those study participants pursuing a teaching license, in-service teacher as those actively in the PreK-12 classroom that hold a current license, and other as a current graduate student, extension educator, non-formal educator, or those no longer in education. The frequency of participants' self-rated stage of development for empathy and valuing multiple perspectives was divided by current employment status, then calculated and reported in Table (4).

Study participants self-reported a relatively high level of confidence within their rated stage of development for empathy and valuing multiple perspectives. With five developmental levels ranging from nascent (1) to advanced (5), nearly 70% of participants rated their developmental level between progressing (3) and proficient (4).

Of the three demographic categories identified within this study, nearly half (46.7%) of pre-service teachers reported a progressing (3) developmental level for the dispositions element of empathy and valuing multiple perspectives. The lowest among those demographic categories within this study. This developmental level suggests that pre-service teachers understand their beliefs and experiences are not universally shared, can identify the influences that shape how others view the world, and have a desire to explore the experiences and perspectives of people who challenge their own beliefs (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019).

The lower self-rated stage of empathy development among pre-service teachers within this study might suggest that teacher candidates are still at a place of self-discovery and reinvention, typical for undergraduates as they transition to and from university. In addition, they might also be hesitant to self-rate their empathetic dispositions along the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum as proficient (4) because they are unaware of how their personal beliefs will influence their decisions as a teacher. This hesitation might stem from the unknown because teacher candidates have minimal experience in a classroom setting and cannot implement these practices. For example, one pre-service study participant detailed, "I don't feel confident discussing global concepts in class. I feel like I am uncomfortable doing so because I don't have that background."

Similar to pre-service teachers' self-rated stage of empathy development, in-service teachers reported slightly higher than pre-service teachers, yet lower

than study participants categorized as other. These variations may suggest that opportunities to engage with a diverse student population are limited in agricultural education, as the demographics of students enrolled in agriculture programs may not reflect the diversity found in the broader school community. Additionally, teachers’ personal beliefs may closely align with those of their students, making it more challenging to explore the experiences and perspectives of students who have differing beliefs. One study participant explained, “I came from a background where I didn’t have a lot of interaction with diverse people, especially being in agriculture.”

The final demographic category includes those other study participants who are classified as current graduate students, extension educators, non-formal educators, or those no longer in education. The findings of those other study participants indicated the highest of the three demographic categories within this study. The higher self-rated stage of empathy development among other study participants might suggest that working outside the PreK-12 classroom provides more opportunities to interact with those that have different perspectives or allow for opportunities to work with a more diverse range of people. In addition, other study participants may have occupations that offer additional time for experiences that cultivate empathy. In contrast, other study participants may be experiencing the Dunning-Kruger effect when asked to rate their perceived developmental level along the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum. The Dunning-Kruger effect can be explained as a cognitive bias in which “the scope of people’s ignorance is often invisible to them” (Dunning, 2011, p. 248). This is common in many social and intellectual domains and can be a factor as study participants self-rated their own developmental level within the online questionnaire. In essence, other study participants may genuinely be unaware of how deficient their expertise is.

TABLE (4)
 FREQUENCY OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS’ (N = 36) SELF-RATED STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT FOR EMPATHY AND VALUING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES CATEGORIZED BY CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Developmental Level	Statement	Pre-Service Teacher		In-Service Teacher		Other		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Nascent	• I have not yet explored how my personal beliefs have shaped my worldview.	1	6.7	-	-	-	-	1	2.8

Beginning	• I can identify my personal beliefs and experiences and recognize how they shape my view of the world.	-	-	3	23.1	-	-	3	8.3
	• I recognize that I might hold stereotypes.								
Progressing	• I understand that my beliefs and experiences are not universally shared.								
	• I can identify the influences that shape how others and I view the world.	7	46.7	3	23.1	3	37.5	13	36.1
	• I am willing to explore the experiences and perspectives of people who challenge my beliefs.								
Proficient	• I recognize biases and limitations of my own perspective and those of others' perspectives.								
	• I recognize how my personal beliefs influence my decisions as a teacher.	5	33.3	4	30.8	3	37.5	12	33.3
	• I empathize by seeking to understand the perspectives of others.								
Advanced	• I challenge my personal assumptions to understand viewpoints that differ from my own.	2	13.3	3	23.1	2	25.0	7	19.4
	• I value diverse perspectives, including those that challenge my own.								
Total		15	100	13	100	8	100	36	100

Note. Participants utilized Tichnor-Wagner et al.'s (2019) Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum as a self-reflection tool to identify their own developmental level. This data set was calculated and displayed separately into three distinct categories. Pre-service teacher is defined as those study participants pursuing a teaching license, in-service teacher as those actively in the PreK-12 classroom that hold a current license, and other as a current graduate student, extension educator, non-formal educator, or no longer in education. No in-service or other study participants classified their empathy development level as nascent. No pre-service or other study participants classified their empathy development level as beginning.

6.3. Rationale for Self-Rating

Study participants were asked to briefly explain their rated competency level for the disposition's element of empathy and valuing multiple perspectives.

Data from the online questionnaire and virtual follow-up focus groups were triangulated to ensure evidence of an emergent code or theme. The findings revealed that internal and external factors influenced the study participants' rationale for self-rating on the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum. Internal factors were broadly defined by the researchers as those personal attributes that influence one's behavior and actions, while external factors were those influences or situations by outside motives.

6.3.1. Internal Factors

Overall study participants identified four internal factors (i.e., lack of knowledge/confidence, mindfulness of others, personal recognition, and reflection) for their self-rating rationale on the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum. The qualitative results are displayed by three distinct demographic categories (i.e., pre-service teacher, in-service teacher, and other) and are presented in the following three sections.

6.3.1.1 Pre-Service Internal Factors

Table (5) displays the internal factors influencing pre-service study abroad participants' rationale for self-rating within the element of empathy and valuing multiple perspectives. The first theme to emerge was related to the lack of knowledge and confidence for global competency elements and the inability to discuss international concepts within a classroom setting. The internal factor titled "lack of knowledge/confidence" was, not surprisingly, only listed among those in the pre-service demographic category. This suggests that teacher candidates still require frequent opportunities to develop their empathetic competencies even after an immersive study abroad experience.

Pre-service teachers expressed their lack of knowledge and confidence as a factor for their lower self-rating on the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum. Often their lack of knowledge and confidence was related to the restrictions put into place as undergraduate pre-service teachers (i.e., minimal experience with students and not having a classroom of their own). However, several preservice participants confirmed their improved knowledge and confidence for the global competency element of empathy and valuing multiple perspectives following the Jamaica study abroad experience. A pre-service participant detailed, "prior to Jamaica, I have never really thought outside of my hometown bubble."

The second theme emerging from the post-experience questionnaire and pre-service follow-up focus groups was the mindfulness of others. For many of

the pre-service study participants, it was because they participated in the Jamaica study abroad program that they were able to “...visualize where people may be coming from” and be “...more mindful of what minorities are experiencing.”

TABLE (5)

INTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING PRE-SERVICE STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS' (N = 15) RATIONALE FOR SELF-RATING ON THE GLOBALLY COMPETENT TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTINUUM.

Lack of Knowledge/Confidence	Mindfulness of Others
"I started out and never thought of these things [global competency elements]."	"I've been able to visualize where people may be coming from."
"I don't feel confident discussing global concepts in class. I feel like I am uncomfortable doing so because I don't have that background."	"I believe it [Jamaica study abroad] allowed me to put myself in their [current students] shoes and have empathy for them."
"Prior to Jamaica, I have never really thought outside of my hometown bubble."	"I am now more mindful of what minorities are experiencing."

6.3.1.2 In-Service Internal Factors

Through the inductive coding process, personal recognition emerged as a significant theme within in-service agricultural educators' rationale for selecting the appropriate developmental level on the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum. Table (6) displays the primary internal factor influencing in-service study abroad participants' rationale for self-rating within the selected dispositions element. One in-service study participant found it challenging to self-assess her developmental level as progressing because she “...struggles to fully and consistently explore experiences and perspectives of people who challenge her own beliefs.” In addition, another in-service teacher recognized her own “implicit bias” as a contributing factor for not self-assessing at a higher developmental level.

TABLE (6)

INTERNAL FACTOR INFLUENCING IN-SERVICE STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS' (N = 13) RATIONALE FOR SELF-RATING ON THE GLOBALLY COMPETENT TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTINUUM.

Personal Recognition
"I struggle to fully and consistently explore experiences and perspectives of people whole challenge my beliefs. Especially when I start to gather that I might be on the wrong side of history."
"I have my implicit biases but try to respect other points of view."

6.3.1.3 Other Internal Factors

Table (7) displays the internal factors influencing other study abroad participants' self-rating within the disposition's element. Similar to the findings of the in-service study participants, personal recognition emerged as an internal factor influencing those other study participants who traveled to Jamaica. For one other study participant, it was through her self-reflection on multiple perspectives that she detailed her personal "...struggles with understanding how some people view things in this world and how they can possibly justify those beliefs." The second internal factor to emerge through the inductive coding process was a mindfulness for others. Similar to the findings of the pre-service study participants, mindfulness of others emerged as an internal factor influencing those other study participants. An extension educator explained that she felt confident in her abilities to self-assess along the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum at a developmental level of proficient because "I understand that everyone has their own beliefs, but I still need to explore and learn about other beliefs that challenge my own."

The third and final internal factor to emerge through the rationale of those other study participants was titled reflection. Often, participants realized that the first step to developing empathy and seeking multiple perspectives through the reflective process is to first identify their personal beliefs and values. Following their initial identification, participants were then ready to trace the origins of those beliefs and values through a reflective process within the self-assessment instrument. Other study participants detailed their ability to reflect, provided them the opportunity to "...think about other cultures and differing perspectives" and "... reflect more about how my personal culture can influence how I view others who are different from me."

TABLE (7)

INTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING OTHER STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS' ($N = 8$) RATIONALE FOR SELF-RATING ON THE GLOBALLY COMPETENT TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTINUUM.

Personal Recognition	Mindfulness of Others	Reflection
"I know that I am not always right, and different perspectives allow us to see all sides of a situation that we might not have seen before."	"I understand that everyone has their own beliefs, but I still need to explore and learn about other beliefs that challenge my own."	"I have spent the last year or so learning and reflecting more about how my personal culture can influence how I view others who are different from me."

<p>"I do struggle with understanding how some people view things in this world and how they can possibly justify those beliefs."</p>	<p>"I try to understand the values and reasons people believe differently than me. And then put my original belief given to me from childhood to the test."</p>	<p>"I think it helped that [our professor] has us reflect in a journal. If I hadn't reflected, I honestly wouldn't have even thought about the other culture or differing perspectives."</p>
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6.3.2. External Factors

Overall study participants identified five external factors (hypervisibility in Jamaica, family expectations/upbringing, transformative experiences, seeing is believing, and current school corporation) for their self-rating rationale on the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum. The qualitative results are displayed by three distinct demographic categories (i.e., pre-service teacher, in-service teacher, and other) and are presented in the following three sections.

6.3.2.1 Pre-Service External Factors

Through the inductive coding process, the researcher identified three external factors representing pre-service teachers' self-rating within the element of empathy and valuing multiple perspectives (Table 8). The most frequently mentioned external factor was the feeling of hypervisibility for participants during the Maymester study abroad to Jamaica. Buchanan & Settles (2019) simply define hypervisibility as "the state of being extremely visible." For many White study participants, Jamaica was undoubtedly the first time they felt like the racial minority. For example, a pre-service teacher explained her feelings of hypervisibility as a "fish in a fishbowl and everybody's looking at me. I felt like I stuck out like a sore thumb." For this pre-service educator, hypervisibility influenced her decision to self-select the developmental level of proficient as she detailed in her rationale that she "feels confident in providing empathy as she now understands the perspectives of others."

In addition to the feeling of being hypervisible in Jamaica, study participants also detailed family expectations and upbringing as a factor for their self-selection along the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum. Participants identified various family expectations, which fueled their motives to express empathy and value the multiple perspectives of others. One pre-service study participant explained within her rationale, "my family weighs heavily on me because they are not very open." She credits her open mindfulness to the fact that she has had the opportunity to travel more than others in her family. Along with her, other pre-service participants can attest to

their social upbringing as an external instrumental factor in their ability to provide empathy and value those beliefs and viewpoints that differ from their own. When reflecting on the influences that shape their personal view of the world, another pre-service participant explained, "... the majority of my bias comes from the religion I was raised in as well as the community where I grew up."

Finally, pre-service study participants were influenced by the transformative experiences that developed during their undergraduate time. For example, one pre-service study participant shared that "the study abroad to Jamaica makes me want to travel more and see what other people experience compared to my little Indiana bubble." Another participant was thankful for the "...opportunity to see the world through a different lens." Through these transformative experiences, study participants challenged their assumptions and misconceptions to understand the value of empathy.

TABLE (8)

EXTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING PRE-SERVICE STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS' ($N = 15$) RATIONALE FOR SELF-RATING ON THE GLOBALLY COMPETENT TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTINUUM.

Hypervisibility in Jamaica	Family Expectations & Upbringing	Transformative Experiences
"Jamaica was the first time in which I felt like the minority."	"My family weighs heavily on me because they are not very open. I am the most open-minded because I've traveled the most."	"I am thankful Purdue University allowed me the opportunity to see the world through a different lens."
"I felt like a fish in a fishbowl and everybody's looking at me. I felt like I stuck out like a sore thumb."	"It is fascinating to me that a small-town mindset can really influence the way you grow."	"The study abroad to Jamaica makes me want to travel more and see what other people experience compared to my little Indiana bubble."
"We exited the bus, and always heard white people being shouted at us."	"I recognize that the majority of my bias comes from the religion I was raised in as well as the community where I grew up."	

6.3.2.2 In-Service External Factors

Table (9) displays the external factors influencing in-service study abroad participants' rationale for self-rating within the element of empathy and

valuing multiple perspectives. The external factor titled seeing is believing was identified through the inductive coding process. In-service teachers expressed the importance of seeing first-hand that their personal beliefs and values were not universally shared when traveling abroad. This was undoubtedly so for those traveling out of the country for the first time. An in-service study participant who had never traveled internationally before Jamaica, stated, “I obviously knew not everyone has the exact same life as me but seeing it first-hand changes your whole perspective on the differences between people.”

Similar to those external factors identified for pre-service and other study abroad participants, family expectations and upbringing emerged for in-service study participants. In-service study participants shared within their rationale that their family was influential in their commitment to valuing multiple perspectives. For example, a secondary agriculture educator, mentioned in her reasoning that she found it challenging to explore other beliefs, cultures, and values. She writes, “I came from a cookie-cutter town and was always in the accelerated programs at my school. Because of this, I was always in class with the same people who came from the same background.” While this study participant found it difficult early on to explore the perspectives of people who challenged his beliefs, another in-service teacher credited his parents for teaching him to be empathetic to others. He writes, “my parents taught me to be empathetic and sympathetic and to know that other people are different.”

The third external factor to emerge within in-service agricultural educators was related to the development of transformative experiences. Differing from the transformative experiences listed by those in the pre-service and other demographic categories, in-service participants only referenced the study abroad experience to Jamaica. Within their rationale, in-service participants credited the Jamaica study abroad for helping them recognize diversity and shape their personal beliefs. In particular, one in-service agricultural educator stated, “Jamaica opened me up to realize there’s tons of diversity and that we all bring something different to the table.” Another in-service participant shared the transformative experience from Jamaica “...has made me realize that they [current students] need to get out of this little bubble that we live in and experience other things.”

Finally, in-service study participants were influenced by the current school corporation in which they were employed during their involvement with this research study. In-service agricultural educators expressed their empathy

towards students from countries in the same demographic region as Jamaica. One study participant stated “I currently have a student from Jamaica in my horticulture class. It’s easier to empathize with him because I’ve seen the environment where he comes from.” Another in-service teacher explained, “a lot of my students come from countries in that region. I always think back to my Jamaica experience and recognize what they’ve all gone through and where they are coming from.” For those in-service study participants who did not currently have students from the geographic area surrounding Jamaica, they described the importance of utilizing other professionals within the school corporation to understand the perspectives of those students within their classes. As a beginning educator, one study participant struggled to understand her students’ backgrounds and beliefs. Within her rationale, she stated, “I feel that I reach out to other professionals in my school to help empathize and understand the ways in which students’ backgrounds impact their education.”

TABLE (9)

EXTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING IN-SERVICE STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS’ (N = 13) RATIONALE FOR SELF-RATING ON THE GLOBALLY COMPETENT TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTINUUM.

Seeing is Believing	Family Expectations & Upbringing	Transformative Experiences	Current School Corporation
“While I knew things [differences] were out there, just seeing it and experiencing it has definitely opened my eyes.”	“My parents taught me to be empathetic and sympathetic and to know that other people are different.”	“Jamaica opened me up to realize there’s tons of diversity and that we all bring something different to the table.”	“I currently have a student from Jamaica in my horticulture class. It’s easier to empathize with him because I’ve seen the environment where he comes from.”
“I obviously knew not everyone has the exact same life as me, but seeing it first-hand changes your whole perspective on the differences between people.”	“Realizing where you come from, the environment you are raised in, and what values are there affects how you do things.”	“I understand that I have had experiences like Jamaica that have helped shape my beliefs.”	“A lot of my students come from countries in that region. I always think back to my Jamaica experience and recognize what they’ve all gone through and where they are coming from.”

<p>“I came from a cookie-cutter town and was always in the accelerated programs at my school. Because of this, I was always in class with the same people who came from the same background.”</p>	<p>“Jamaica has made me realize that they [current students] need to get out of this little bubble that we live in and experience other things.”</p>	<p>“I feel that I reach out to other professionals in my school to help empathize and understand the ways in which students’ backgrounds impact their education.”</p>
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6.3.2.3 Other External Factors

Table (10) displays the external factors influencing other study participants’ rationale for self-rating within the element of empathy and valuing multiple perspectives. As mentioned in the previous demographic categories, family expectations and upbringing were frequently cited as factors influencing the rationale for study participants’ self-assessment along the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum. Because one other study participant grew up near campus, she detailed in her rationale that she “... had a little bit of experience with international groups on campus.” However, others referenced their ties to agriculture as a deterrent for valuing diverse perspectives and interacting with populations different from their own. For example, a current graduate student stated, “I came from a background where I didn’t have a lot of interaction with diverse people, especially being in agriculture.” Another participant acknowledged she held a “... particular set of bias and beliefs that typically are associated with agriculture.”

The final external factor to emerge through the inductive coding process was the development of transformative experiences. Other study participants mentioned several transformative experiences within their reasoning for self-selecting a particular developmental level within the element of empathy and valuing multiple perspectives. For example, a current graduate student stated, “the whole social justice movement last year really got me invested in providing empathy towards others.” Study participants also credited their intercultural and multicultural courses for igniting the conversation about multiple perspectives worldwide. Others also believed their “international experiences like Jamaica helped you realize that there are different perspectives than my own.”

TABLE (10)

EXTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING OTHER STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS' ($N = 8$) RATIONALE FOR SELF-RATING ON THE GLOBALLY COMPETENT TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTINUUM.

Family Expectations & Upbringing	Transformative Experiences
<p>"I'm from Delphi [town near Purdue University] so I had a little bit of experience with international groups on campus, but I had never really left my hometown before the Jamaica study abroad experience."</p>	<p>"Through my intercultural and multicultural courses at Purdue University I have spent a lot of time thinking about multiple perspectives."</p>
<p>"I came from a background where I didn't have a lot of interaction with diverse people, especially being in agriculture."</p>	<p>"The whole social justice movement last year really got me invested in providing empathy towards others."</p>

7. Implications

Results from this study may help advance curriculum within globally competent teaching practices and professional development for teacher candidates and in-service agricultural educators. Based on the findings, study participants from all three demographic categories acknowledged that transformative experiences, such as those from the short-term study abroad to Jamaica, impacted their empathetic dispositions. However, pre-service and in-service teachers still struggled with their confidence and knowledge on implementing these globally competent teaching practices within their curriculum. As such, the results from this study provide insights that may inform curriculum changes within teacher preparation programs in contexts where global competency is a priority.

While this study suggests that transformative experiences may have impacted participants' empathetic dispositions, this cannot be the only contributing factor for teachers to prepare the next generation of globally competent students. Unfortunately, study abroad opportunities, while impactful, are not feasible for every teacher candidate. As Phillion et al. (2009) suggested, alternative experiences embedded within coursework and teacher preparation programs are necessary to ensure a broader reach. Additionally, while reflective tools such as the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum can aid in developing global awareness, it alone is not sufficient in fostering intercultural competence. A more comprehensive approach that includes real-life exposure to cultural differences is critical, particularly within agricultural education, where students may have had limited prior experiences

with diverse global perspectives. Many students enrolled in this major come from small, rural communities which are often overwhelmingly homogeneous.

This highlights the need for institutions to adopt broader strategies, such as more diverse recruitment efforts and expanded opportunities for meaningful intercultural engagement, both within and beyond the curriculum. Ensuring that teacher candidates have multiple avenues to engage with diverse perspectives (i.e., through coursework, community partnerships, experiential learning opportunities, etc.) will better prepare them to implement globally competent teaching practices within their future classrooms.

The findings from this study may be applicable to other teacher education programs seeking to integrate globally competent teaching practices, allowing institutions to consider how similar strategies can be tailored to their individual needs. By integrating reflective tools with curriculum improvements and initiatives that enhance cultural exposure, agricultural education programs can better prepare students with skills and perspectives needed to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

Using a tool such as the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum would be an excellent way to introduce self-assessment to undergraduates early on in their plan of study, followed by periodic re-evaluations in their capstone course or following a student teaching experience. In addition, requiring students to design lesson plans that incorporate multiple perspectives or provide content-aligned global investigations could enhance their ability to implement these practices. Such requirements could be integrated into a capstone teaching methodology course or listed as a requirement as part of the student teaching internship. Encouraging lesson plans that address diverse issues and perspectives could further support teachers and students in exploring different points of view while fostering an understanding of varying viewpoints. These opportunities early on can provide a low-stakes atmosphere to build knowledge and confidence in implementing globally competent teaching practices later in their future classrooms.

The results of this study indicated that a lack of confidence and knowledge was an obstacle among some pre-service study participants. One participant specifically expressed frustration over the absence of continuing education efforts following the short-term study abroad experience and advocated for more professional development in globally competent teaching practices, specifically within their subject area.

While the findings from this study are not generalizable to all settings, they offer valuable insights that may be transferable to similar teacher education programs. Therefore, one practical application for this study is increased professional development opportunities for pre-service and in-service educators. Suggestions might include offering a workshop session at an annual in-service meeting or creating content-specific lesson plan resources that can be shared via social media or a communal Listserv. One example might be a discipline-specific choice board outlining strategies and implementation practices that support the growth of globally competent educators.

8. Limitations and Future Research

Because of the limited research of those utilizing the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum, there are several additional opportunities to pursue future research. The following recommendations for future research are suggested.

First, future research leading to an increased number of teacher preparation programs and PreK-12 educators utilizing the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum would allow for greater generalizability of the results and validity of the self-assessment instrument. Due to the small number of undergraduate participants who took part in the Maymester study abroad to Jamaica each year (i.e., 9-22 participants), the convenience sample of those participants from 2015-2019 was small. Unfortunately, this limited the statistical power of the research. Future studies should consider conducting similar research utilizing the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum with larger groups of participants and including those with various years of teaching experience. Studies should include novice, early career, expert, and late-career teachers to determine if age or teaching experience makes a difference in their ability to implement globally competent teaching practices.

Another way to increase generalizability through future research is studying the influence of academic discipline selection on teachers' ability to incorporate globally competent teaching practices. This study examined participants' empathetic dispositions in undergraduates who chose agricultural education as a major, and therefore, the results are not generalized to educators with differing disciplines. For example, future research could examine the ease of incorporating the 12 elements of globally competent teaching in various content-specific areas such as social studies, math, literature, science, etc. This

would allow researchers to explore how globally competent teaching practices best fit within the existing curriculum.

Third, future research could also increase generalizability by utilizing the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum for those who participate in study abroad programs of different lengths and destinations. Specific to this study, participants traveled to Jamaica for a Maymester study abroad experience, which limited the generalizability to undergraduates who traveled to that country and for that specific length of time. Because study abroad programs are heavily concentrated with host countries that traditionally have the same cultural, political, and religious ties, it may be possible that the development of participants' empathetic dispositions following a study abroad vary dependent upon the length of time in the host country and/or whether the destination has homologous views. Future research could also explore Globally Networked Learning (GNL) through a virtual international programming event (i.e., virtual city tour, interaction with host country nationals or students) prior to participants traveling abroad.

Fourth, participants utilized the Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum to document their self-rated stage of development for the globally competent teaching element, empathy and valuing multiple perspectives. Participants then justified their ratings through personal and professional experiences. Because data was collected through a self-report mechanism, the accuracy is reliant on the honesty of the responses provided by the participants and discussed as a limitation of this study.

Fifth, the COVID-19 pandemic placed a significant strain on research worldwide, with regulations requiring most studies to be conducted in virtual environments. As a result, both the study questionnaire and follow-up focus groups were conducted remotely. The shift to a virtual format may have limited the depth of interaction and reduced richness of participant responses. While the researcher took steps to ensure confidentiality and maintain validity, the remote nature of data collection remains a limitation of the study.

Finally, this research examined how participation in a short-term study abroad may have impacted participants' empathetic dispositions related to globally competent teaching practices. However, empathetic dispositions are only one of the many elements which encompass Tichnor-Wagner et al.'s (2019) Globally Competent Teaching and Learning Continuum. Future research should

explore the additional 11 elements which encompass the knowledge and skills necessary to becoming a globally competent educator.

9. Conclusion

In our interconnected world, educators face the critical task of preparing students for a globalized society while navigating the challenges of increasingly diverse classrooms. McClellan-Kirksey (2020) underscores the lack of confidence among teachers in effectively instructing students from diverse backgrounds. To address this, there is a growing emphasis on fostering global competency among educators, encompassing essential knowledge, skills, and mindsets for navigating cultural diversity (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019). Despite efforts to integrate global perspectives into teacher education, significant gaps persist, necessitating ongoing investment in training programs and initiatives like study abroad experiences to enhance educators' cultural sensitivity and ability to create inclusive learning environments.

In conclusion, equipping educators with the tools and strategies to engage diverse student populations is paramount in preparing students for success in a globalized world. By prioritizing the development of global competency among teachers through comprehensive training programs and cross-cultural experiences, we can foster inclusive classrooms that empower all students to thrive in an interconnected society.

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Author Biography

Melissia A. Law is a Study Abroad Advisor at Iowa State University, Ames, IA. She completed both her undergraduate and master's degrees from Purdue University, with a focus on international agriculture and extension education. With experience as a PreK-12 educator and a background in international education, she supports students in building global competency. Melissia is passionate about helping students grow through meaningful, hands-on international learning opportunities.

Sarah E. LaRose is an Associate Professor of Agricultural Sciences Education and Communication at Purdue University. As an agricultural teacher educator, she holds a joint appointment between the College of Agriculture and College of Education. As an agricultural teacher educator, her research focuses on developing agricultural educators who design student-centered, inclusive programs that foster engagement and learning.

Mark A. Russell is an Emeritus Professor of Agricultural Sciences Education and Communication at Purdue University. Throughout his career, he dedicated his teaching and scholarship to international education, community engagement, and intercultural development through service-learning and interdisciplinary projects in global settings like Ecuador, Romania, and Haiti. He remains passionate about helping students discover their worldview and explore cultures beyond their comfort zones.

JoAnn Phillion is an Emerita Professor of Curriculum Studies in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Purdue University's College of Education. During her career, she taught a variety of courses for pre-service educators and developed study abroad programs emphasizing social justice, service learning, and global outreach. Her research focused on preparing socially aware educators.