"You have to be a bit brave": Barriers to Scottish Student-teachers' Participation in Study-Abroad Programmes.

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Abstract

This article reports on a study examining Scottish student teachers' attitudes to study-abroad and the reasons underpinning their reluctance to participate in these programmes. Data collection comprised a mixed-methods approach consisting of a survey of 318 student-teachers in one Scottish university followed by semi-structured interviews with 12 volunteers. Descriptive and thematic data analyses revealed that the majority of student-teachers perceived international study experience as useful to their development as teachers. However, their lack of confidence and anxiety about travel were significant reasons about why they did not take up opportunities to study abroad. In particular, fear of not being understood and fear of different cultural norms and practices shaped their decision to remain in Scotland. In order to allay these fears and increase student-teacher participation, the authors suggest universities invest in intercultural competence training, language education and provide detailed briefings as part of the recruitment process into study-abroad programs.

Keywords: study-abroad; teacher education; travel anxiety and risk; international experience;

Introduction

Increasingly, opportunities to live and study in a different cultural context are being made available to students in universities in most European countries, as well as the US, Australia, Canada, areas of Asia and South East Asia. An international experience has a range of potential benefits for university students such as increasing their competitiveness in the job market, expanding their intercultural skills and improving their knowledge of foreign

languages (Paola and Lemmer 2013). It offers opportunities for students to learn about the world beyond their local context, to develop global perspectives and greater understandings of ways of being and doing that may be different from those into which they have been socialised (Kissock and Richardson 2010). Travelling abroad offers students the opportunity to draw upon, and/or develop what has been called 'mobility capital', that is the social, cultural and economic benefits of mobility (Scott 2006).

For teacher education students, a period of study-abroad potentially provides opportunities for deep learning, intercultural understandings (Scoffham and Barnes 2009) and experiences and insight from which to develop a 'global perspective of life and teaching' (Kissock and Richardson 2010, 95). Ochoa claims that teacher preparation programs are 'enriched when teacher candidates […] examine the world from different perspectives and learn to create new approaches to teaching and learning' (2010, 108). Being able to understand their pupils' different cultural perspectives is of particular importance to student-teachers. As classrooms in many places in the world become increasingly characterised by cultural and linguistic diversity (OECD 2011), effective teachers are those who are culturally responsive practitioners, that is, those who hold high expectations of culturally diverse students, respect and understand their cultural values, knowledge, practices and histories, and draw upon, and build on, students' funds of knowledge' (Gonzales, Moll and Amanti 2005). This depends on knowing culture as complex and understanding how one's own professional practices are shaped by one's cultural assumptions and ways of seeing the world. International experience potentially offers opportunities for student-teachers to develop these understandings and to critique their own cultural positionality.

The opportunities for international experiences available to teacher education students, both in Scotland and elsewhere, are varied. International experiences can be part of non-credit bearing or credit bearing subjects, they can be volunteer work experiences undertaken during holiday periods or year-long programs or student exchanges that offer students the opportunity to spend a significant length of time studying in a different country. For example, Erasmus, the European Union exchange program for Higher Education students, facilities the mobility of students within Europe, while international exchange programs can also be organised between universities and partner institutions, worldwide. However, despite the numerous opportunities for an international experience and rigorous promotion of programs,

in general, students in UK higher education are far less likely to undertake an international experience than their counterparts in other countries. For example, during the academic year 2012/13, the UK ranked seventh after Spain, Germany, France, Italy, Poland and Turkey for outgoing mobility via Erasmus (European Commission 2014, 32), the program for which participation figures are the most readily available. As well as having different rates of uptake in different countries, the uptake of Erasmus study-abroad programs by students is unequally distributed among disciplines, with Education students, in general, participating in 3.3% of total outbound trips (European Commission 2014, 10). In the UK, Education students have the lowest uptake of study trips abroad. During the academic year 2012-2013 a total of 123 UK students in Education and Teacher Education programs elected to undertake a period of study at another HE institution in Europe (ERASMUS+ n.d). In Scotland, according to the National Union of Students (n.d), less than 1% of students in Scotland go on an international students study program. In the university in which this research was undertaken, of the 400 students enrolled in an undergraduate teaching degree program, there were none who took up an opportunity to participate in an ERASMUS program in 2013.

In this article, the authors report on the findings of a study investigating the attitudes of a cohort of Scottish teacher education students towards travel and study-abroad programs, what they perceive to be the benefits of travel in general, the benefits of study trips abroad to their development as teachers and what underpins their reluctance to spend time abroad as a student. In what follows, the authors present an overview of the study, then review some of the literature about travel, risk and anxiety before presenting some of the study's main findings. The authors conclude with some observations on the wider significance of these findings.

The Study: Design and Methodology

After obtaining university ethics approval a mixed-method, 2-staged approach to the data collection was used. *Stage One*, a cross-sectional survey was conducted of all first, third and fourth year students enrolled in a Bachelor of Education program in one Scottish university (n = 329). It should be noted that second year students were not on campus and on school experience at the time of the questionnaire being distributed.A pen-and-paper anonymous

questionnaire consisting of 36 closed and 11 open-ended questions elicited data about: a) the students' backgrounds; the nature of their travel abroad and their perceptions of the value of travel to their development as teachers, their attitudes towards study trips abroad and what underpins their reluctance to study-abroad. Response sets included a mixture of binary categories (e.g., Yes/No), a selection of applicable options, a Likert-type responses and qualitative responses. Overall, 318 students returned a completed questionnaire.

Participants who were interested in participating in *Stage Two* of the study, that is, an in-depth interview, were invited to supply their contact details at the end of the questionnaire. Forty-three students volunteered to participate in an in-depth semi-structured interview. Twelve students were selected to achieve a range of age, gender, year group and travel experiences. Most interviewees were aged in their early twenties, with one student being 5, there were 11 females and 1 male. At the time of the interviews which coincided with the beginning of a new academic year, four students were in second year, six students were in fourth year and two had just begun their probationary year as newly qualified teachers. In-depth individual semi-structured interviews explored some of the key issues highlighted in the survey, and elicited in-depth data from the student-teachers, such as their experiences of travel abroad, both generally and in regards to their development as teachers and their views about cultural difference and diversity. The interviews lasted between 40-60 minutes each, were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim.

The responses to the closed items on the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics, undertaken in SPSS 21. The qualitative responses to the 11 open questions in the questionnaire were read and re-read to identify patterns and themes. For example, responses to the item: "List the reasons why you are not interested in the University's travel Abroad Program", were categorised under the following themes: financial concerns; concerns about missing Scottish course content; family commitments; concern about loneliness/homesickness; concern about different culture and language. A thematic approach to the analysis of interview data was adopted whereby members of the research team read and re-read the individual transcripts, collectively and individually, using a process of open coding to identify patterns, themes and sub-themes in the interviewees' experiences and attitudes. The significant themes that emerged from the data were: fear and anxiety about travel abroad; fear about a language barrier. The patterns of data were then compared,

contrasted and cross checked across the sets of interview data with the researcher looking for differences and similarities, tensions, contradictions and complexities.

In this article, selected data from the questionnaire is presented to highlight the students' cultural backgrounds and their experiences of, and attitudes towards travelling abroad and study-abroad. The interviews with the students provide rich data that is presented under the themes; 'Fear of Being Out-of-Place' and 'Fear of Not Being Understood'.

While there is not an intention to generalise from this cohort of Scottish student-teachers to all student-teachers in the UK, nonetheless, some of the findings may resonate with researchers and teacher educators working in similarly contexts.

In what follows, some of the literature about travel, risk and anxiety is presented.

Barriers to travelling abroad: the role of perceived risk, anxiety and fear

Being away from home can present challenges to an individual's sense of security. Being in a new environment where the physical environment is different, where people are not only strangers, but likely to be strangers who have different values and practices, and who speak a different language, constructs travel abroad as risky business. Wilson and Little suggest that when people have strong connections to the communities in which they live, what they call "strong social, spatial and community ties" (2008, p.167), they know where to find things, who to ask for help if they need it, and how to negotiate public spaces. However, for those same people, "Negotiating their movement through unfamiliar spaces and places can be a daunting task…" (Wilson and Little 2008, 167).

There is a wide range of literature that examines the concept of travel and perceived risk and the generation of fear and/or anxiety. In general, anxiety is associated with 'feelings of being nervous, apprehensive, stressed, vulnerable, uncomfortable, disturbed, scared […It] occurs as a consequence of being exposed to risk' (Reisinger and Mavondo 200616). Fear is an 'emotion caused by imminent danger; apprehension, dread; and tied to our desire to avoid risk' (Wilson and Little 2008, 169). Most of the literature about travel, risk, anxiety and fear

is in the field of tourism studies and much claims that the higher the real, or perceived risk to an individual's safety, comfort and security, the greater the chances are that they will experience anxiety and fear. The perception of risk and tolerance of risk affects travellers' decisions about where they go, what they do when they are there, and even, whether they travel at all. What constitutes a risk and what is perceived as 'risky' is dependent on a number of factors. For example, according to Reisinger and Mavondo (2006), the major risks associated with tourism and travel are; terrorism, war and political instability, health issues, crime and safety and cultural and language difficulties. Increasingly, fear about war, terrorism and political instability have shaped people's decisions to travel, with there being connections between the perceived degree of risk and the traveller's nationality. For example, nationals from the United States of America are more likely to be concerned about becoming a victim of terrorism when abroad than people of other nationalities (Korstanje 2011). The risk of contracting an exotic disease while abroad as well as concerns about getting ill due to poor hygiene has been shown to affect the preparedness of many to travel, as well as affecting the destinations to which they travel (Reisinger and Mavondo 2005; Bardhi et al., 2010). Crime and safety are perceived by many as significant travel risks, particularly by women who generally feel more vulnerable than men in regards to personal safety when travelling abroad. According to Wilson and Little , 'It seems that women, even before they set foot out the door, face a cumulative suite of messages that are socially and culturally constructed and bureaucratically condoned, reminding them of their vulnerability and acknowledging their risk of attack' (2008, 172).

However, not everyone perceives travel as risky - nor do they perceive it to involve the same degree of risk. Fear and anxiety in relation to travel are the result of an amalgam of factors and closely tied to an individual's biography at any given point in time. Wilson and Little, suggest fear 'is complexly tied to social expectations and messages, our individual expectations and histories, our gender, our class and/or our capacity or belief in our capacity to be able to manage fearful or dangerous situations' (2008, 169). Other scholars, drawing on psychological theories of personality type, believe that responses to, and perceptions of travel risk are connected to particular personality types and previous socialisation. For example, those who are socialised in contexts where there is a high degree of certainty and security are likely to develop an allocentric-personality and will seek adventure and contact with strangers. Thus, the prospect of travel does not generate high levels of anxiety for such

people. On the other hand, and at the other extreme, those socialised in environments of insecurity are more likely to be psychocentric and more likely to avoid situations that they perceive as too great a risk to their security (Plog in Korstanje 2011). Other factors that shape perceptions of travel risk are place of residency and age. Those living in urban areas experience greater risk on a daily basis than those in rural areas and are more likely to cope with travel risk (Korstanje 2011). Age can both promote and reduce perceptions of travel as risky. For example, psychological immaturity in young people, as well as strong attachment to, and dependence on home and family can lead to perceptions of travel as risky, as can old age whereby changes to routine and environment are perceived as a risk to safety and wellbeing (Korstanje 2011).

The type and amount of information would-be travellers have about the world can also shape their perception of risk. For example, the mass media does not simply report objectively what happens in the world - it also contributes to creating a disproportionate sense of insecurity and fear in some individuals through a bombardment of images and stories that instil and reinforce terror about some locations and some cultures. Depending on the ability of individuals to critique what they read and see on their televisions, computer screens and newspapers, as well as their access to counter narratives, the mass media has a significant role to play in what places in the world are deemed risky (Wilson and Little 2008). Bardhi et al. claim that anxiety experienced by travellers to China in regards to food is due, in part, to reports in the US media about food scares in china, bird flu, hygiene that 'had created myths about the Chinese food and culture as unhealthy, dirty, not trustworthy and not safe' (2010, 47). These reports, in turn, had shaped the travellers' expectations of risk.

Survey Results: The cultural backgrounds and travelling profile of respondents

As is the case generally with initial teacher education students (eg. Smithers et al. 2012), the vast majority of the student-teachers in the study were female, young and recent school leavers. Eighty-five percent were between 18 and 22 years of age (n = 298) and 92% were female (n = 285). When asked to describe their ethnicity in an open-ended question, 88.4% of respondents (n = 217) identified themselves as 'Scottish white', 'white-British' or simply as 'white'. This reflects the ethnic and racial composition of the teaching population in the

UK on the whole, where, overwhelmingly, teachers are white and monolingual (The Scottish Government, 2011; Department for Education, 2012). Ninety-seven percent (n= 307) of the student teacher respondents indicated that English was their first language, with 67% of them (n = 204) saying they were monolingual. Of the approximate 30% (n=101) who said they had some knowledge of a language other than English, only 10% (n=10) said they were fluent speakers of another language. Even accounting for a possible under-estimation of linguistic abilities by some of the students, their lack of competence in a second language reflects national trends in Britain (Coleman 2011). Concerns about language emerged more strongly during the interviews, a point to which the authors will return.

The survey data indicated that nearly all the students had some experience of travelling abroad. The majority of respondents (99.7%, n= 309) reported having travelled outside the UK, mainly for holidays to European destinations, although some have been further afield to Australia, New Zealand, Canada. Generally, these trips abroad were short, with 53.5% of responses indicating they had been on trips of less than 2 weeks (n=165). Only 3.8% of the survey responses indicated students had been away for periods of 6 months or more (n=12). A small number of students (4.4%, n=14) had travelled abroad for the purposes of study but these were generally to Anglophone countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and were for short periods of time and not for credit-bearing components of their courses. The student-teachers reported having very little to some contact with local people when they had been abroad (41%, n=130). This is possibly due to the short length of time they were abroad, that they stayed in holiday resorts, or that they were unable to communicate with the locals because they had no knowledge or little knowledge of the language.

Nearly 87% (n=279) of students thought it would be useful or very useful to their development as teachers to have an international study experience. However, 20% of respondents (n=63) said they would not even consider going abroad to study. This suggests a gap between believing study abroad is important, and being able/willing to go. In response to an open-ended question asking the students to provide reasons for not wanting to go abroad, of the 76 responses, 41 responses indicated fear of being lonely and/or homesick/ unconfident, 12 indicated concern about about being in a country where English was not the main language, 11 indicated cost was a barrier and 12 of the responses indicated commitments to family prevented travel aboard. Of less importance, was the concern that

courses of study in other countries might differ too much from the ones in which they were currently enrolled and they would miss learning knowledge that was particular to the Scottish context (2 responses). Examples of responses to an open question about why they would not take up an opportunity to study-abroad included: "Travelling makes me anxious and very ill"; "I would be too worried about living on my own with no support"; "I am not ready to leave home yet"; "It would be too much change!", "University is stressful enough without having to be away"; "I would miss Scotland"; "I would miss the comfort of home"; "Too stressful"; "Miss my family"; " Worried about lack of communication"; "Worried about offending a different culture".

In what follows, the interview data with the student-teachers is presented in order to further explore the concepts of fear and anxiety about travel, and fear about communication and language.

Fear of travelling abroad and 'being out-of-place'.

Lucy (all names are pseudonyms) is typical of the student cohort - she is in her early twenties and has travelled abroad several times, but only for short one-week or two-week holidays, and always with her family. In the following extract of interview data she reflects on travelling to Spain and Egypt for holidays;

> You have to be a bit brave because it's a change and a culture shock and it can be intimidating. It's just being somewhere and not really knowing what you're going to get at the end of it […] It's not what you're used to so therefore, you know, you just have to kind of shut your eyes and go with it a little bit sometimes.

Morag, who is also in her early 20s, and from a small town in the north of Scotland finds being in a situation where she doesn't understand how things work, very stressful.

> I don't like not being in control. I like knowing what's going on. I like being, like, having a system. So, yeah, I found it [being abroad] quite nerve wracking. Not being able to understand things.

Anxiety about the prospect of being in a place where the cultural expectations of behaviour and communication are unfamiliar, are of great concern to the student-teachers. In particular, fear of offending people and apprehension about saying the wrong thing emerged strongly during the interviews as significant, but were also evident in the responses to the open questions in the survey.

Lisa has limited experience of travel abroad, having been to Austria once with her family ten years ago. She describes herself as 'a home-bird'. She tentatively says she might consider going abroad to study.

> Yeah, I think so…maybe… Uh huh. But I think it would depend where though, like, as long as it wasn't kind of too far away because, obviously, you don't know how you are going to settle and you don't know what's going to happen.

However, an international study trip is likely to be very challenging for her and its success would depend heavily on her being able to quickly become familiar with the context. She goes on to say:

> I panic so much about something and then once I am in the situation, I can calm down a lot more if I know people and I'm familiar with the people and I know that if I need any help that they are nice and I can just go and ask them, it's not an issue. I suppose it's a kind of .. comfort zone thing.

Stephanie has travelled extensively. However, when asked about whether she would be interested in going abroad to study, she appears to be influenced by what she hears in the news about the danger of venturing beyond the UK.

> I think when I was in third year there was a group of students that went to Romania and in my final year there were a group of students that went to Malawi but I think I was probably afraid to go, just because of the things that you hear in the news, the things that you hear happening.

She goes on to say, "I think I would still need a bit more experience before I could even consider going abroad to study". When asked what she meant about needing more experience she explained she needed to have more experience of living away from home.

Lucy too has travelled extensively, although always to holiday resorts and with family or friends. Her reflections on a holiday in Egypt reveal how uncomfortable she felt in a place where cultural practices were markedly different from what she is used to.

> We were in a hotel and the ambiance and the place was perfect but then it wasn't so comfortable outside. Egypt was a bit mmm… hussley-bussley and I think I was told that sometimes you can get different reactions because of the East and West thing and I was … not accosted, but I got grabbed at a lot and I didn't like that when we went into the main town and it was a bit… there was nothing, nothing untoward just kind of, you know, to get my attention.

Seema is 21 years of age, but is atypical of the cohort of student-teachers in that she is Sikh and bilingual, although born in Scotland. She has made many trips with her family to a wide range of countries. However, on the basis of some of her experiences on holidays she says she would be anxious about living and studying abroad, especially in countries where she thinks she would have to compromise her personal freedom.

> When we went to Egypt, and other Muslim countries, when we went to Dubai, I felt like .. . when you go to those countries you have to live by their rules and its very very strict over there. […] And I understand that and I respect that to a certain degree but when I was in Egypt, it was 40 degrees and I wasn't allowed to wear shorts because the people in the hotel were saying, it's not safe for you to go out with your legs showing and your arms showing. So I had to wear long trousers and a long-sleeved top and I was dying, it was so hot […] I felt it was really really difficult to have to live their way….When we were in the hotel it was lovely and everyone was really respectful, they didn't stare, they didn't hassle you at all. But as soon as you went outwith your hotel I didn't feel safe.

So if I was to teach in a different country, it would be a challenge going to a country that was so strict. I don't know if I'd be able to live in that type of country. I just found it really hard.

In the last 2 excerpts of interview data, Seema and Lucy express concerns about their personal safety, constructing the hotel as a safe, protected, calm and quiet space, populated either by people like them, or locals who understand them. The street, on the other hand, is an uncontrolled space, bustling, risky, intimidating, menacing and populated by people who are not like them, and whose difference poses a threat of danger.

Fear of not being understood

The student-teachers' lack of proficiency in a second language was given by many as a reason as to why they weren't interested in going abroad to live and study in a country where English is not the main language. Although international experiences offer opportunities for language learning, generally, the student-teachers considered language to be a major barrier to their participation. Morag, who experienced a relatively long period abroad working and travelling in an Anglophone country before entering university, is aware that her tendency to avoid travel to non-Anglophone countries limits her experiences and portrays her as "narrow minded" and "shallow".

I like travelling in Europe if I have British people around me that can speak English or can translate it. […] I wouldn't mind [going] somewhere in Europe that was English speaking. I know that's really narrow minded of me and I know that's really, really shallow .. but I would feel more comfortable and I would feel more safe […] So I try to choose not to go to a country to stay for a long period of time if they speak a different language.

Not being able to speak the language of the country she is in, makes Morag feel unsafe. While other student teachers were less explicit about expressing their concerns about safety, the majority said they prefer to travel to areas where they can confidently expect there will be people who can understand them. Ben is in his mid-twenties and the only male interviewee.

He has travelled abroad several times for holidays, but always to places where English was spoken. He says, "If I was the only English speaker it would be really frustrating. I don't know if I'd feel comfortable … it would be more frustration I would say…. You could feel cut-off if you can't really express yourself".

Cara recollects time spent in Austria with her family on holiday, reflecting on the difficulties of the language barrier and the risk of appearing rude.

> The language barrier can be a challenge just because you don't want to be rude. Like, you want to try your best with the language but you don't really know that much about it and it can be quite hard to try and say what you want in English because they don't understand and you are trying to say what you want in German or whatever it is, and they don't understand.

The failure of staff in a shop in Barcelona to understand what Lucy and her friends wanted is interpreted by Lucy as intentionally unhelpful.

> I find that language barriers are made or broken by the natives themselves. I don't know if that's a very PC [politically correct] thing to say but I went to Barcelona one year and they were so unhelpful […] We were trying to buy lunch and it felt like we were .. literally talking to a completely different race. That was the biggest language barrier I've ever encountered.

Lucy appears to believe it was the staff's responsibility to bridge the communication barrier and they could have understood what she and her friends wanted, if they had the mind to - they were being unhelpful, and deliberately so. This reflects, at best, a lack of awareness of the need to share the responsibility of communication and for visitors to a country to make an attempt to communicate in the local language. At worst, it reflects ethnoccentrism and constructs a divide between Lucy and her friends and a "different race", who are rude, unhelpful and unfriendly.

Of those who volunteered to be interviewed, 2 were atypical of the cohort in that they had travelled abroad for reasons other than for holidays. For example, Charlotte who is 51, is in her final year of study and a native French speaker. She emigrated to the United States of America with her family from France when she was 12 and has lived in Scotland for the past 17 years. Anne is 22 and on an ERASMUS study-abroad program from Germany. She has been in the UK for the past 3 years and describes herself as part of a social group of international students from a diverse range of countries. In contrast to the other student-teachers, both women were undaunted by the challenges of travel abroad and reported experiencing few anxieties about being in another culture. Anne says she enjoys the challenge of being in a different environment, saying:

> If you interact with the local people and, if you try to use their language you'll see that they are happy. If you give it a try, they really appreciate it and they try their best to understand you. And that gives you a really good connection in a way because even though you have never met you've communicated. I think that is something that I always enjoy.

Charlotte describes herself as "having being exposed to a lot of different cultures and ways of thinking. I'm comfortable in different cultural environments. Because I've moved about a lot I've had to adapt." She says she is really interested in cultural diversity and finds the challenge of negotiating a different cultural context, personally rewarding. Charlotte says she intends to work in different places after graduation and won't go back to Germany for a while. Anne says she wouldn't go on an international study trip because of family commitments.

Concluding Remarks

A lack of confidence and anxiety about travel abroad has emerged as a possible explanation for why the student-teachers have not taken up opportunities to study abroad. It is the case however, that anxiety about travel appears not to have affected the majority of student-teachers' decisions to go abroad for holidays - most report having been on numerous trips abroad, holidays are a very different prospect to study abroad. Holidays are spent with family and friends, are for short periods of time, usually in places where English is widely spoken,

accommodation and transport are often organised in advance by travel agents. Tourists can often be 'sheltered' from the reality, and risk associated with being in a different culture by dealing only with locals whose jobs require them to understand and accommodate tourists' needs. However, when difficulties in communication, unfamiliarity with cultural norms and practices were experienced, they generated stress and anxiety. The student-teachers drew upon these examples to explain in the survey and the interviews why they wouldn't consider going abroad for an extended period.

The authors speculate that there are a number of factors such as gender, age and lack of competence in a second language that may contribute to a lack of confidence and an intolerance for the risk that travel potentially entails. First, the vast majority of students have entered teacher education as school leavers, they live at home and they are used to the support of family and friends. Few have expereinced independent living. Second, the majority of teacher education students are female. The literature about women travellers indicates that females have particular concerns about personal security when abroad, an aspect highlighted in the interviews. However, in general, teacher education students in most parts of the world are young and female. Yet, as it has been established earlier in this article, education students in the UK are less likely than their counterparts in other European countries to go on study-abroad programs. The authors speculate that a lack of competence in a second language may be one significant contributing factor that differentiates UK students from those in Europe. The participants in the study, like the majority of members of Anglo-phone countries, are generally monolingual (Worton 2009; The Scottish Government Languages Working Group 2012). Apart from not being able to communicate in another language, the Scottish student-teachers also lack the confidence that bi/multilingual speakers often have to take communicative risks in general. Fear of being unable to communicate, to being in situations where there is a potential to offend others, of not being able to obtain what they need because of communication barriers, is a concern generally not applicable to study-abroad students who are bi/multilingual. Findings from Kim and Goldstein's study (2005) suggest that students who have positive attitudes towards study-abroad programs are those with competence in intercultural communication and an interest and competence in foreign languages.

Finally, living and studying abroad may well be a particularly valuable experience for teacher education students. It would force them beyond the familiar and what they know and take for granted. It may enable them to develop new understandings of the world and may lead to less ethnocentric views. It may help them develop confidence and the ability to cope with the unexpected — attributes that are useful to teachers. However, in order to willing take the risks they perceive to be associated with study-abroad, they need to see the benefits to their development as professionals outweighing their fears about discomfort, safety and language barriers. Therefore, if their fears are to be allayed and student-teachers are to be attracted into study-abroad programmes, universities and teacher education institutions must invest considerable resources and time into providing detailed briefings and information as part of the recruitment process, as well as intercultural training pre and post departure. Importantly, given the fear of language barriers than has been highlighted in the data, some language training must feature in the preparation of student-teachers for study-abroad programmes to contexts where languages other than English are spoken. However, the authors also acknowledge it is not possible to achieve competence in an additional language in just a few weeks, or even months. To be effective, language learning, as it is in many places in the world, must be established in the curriculum and prioritised early in school education. If more student-teachers were bilingual, and therefore, bi-cultural, the authors speculate that the kinds of fear of difference, anxiety and ethnocentrism experienced by these student-teachers might be alleviated.

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