



# A Longitudinal Study of the Effect of an International Level I Fieldwork Experience on Interprofessional and Cultural Competencies

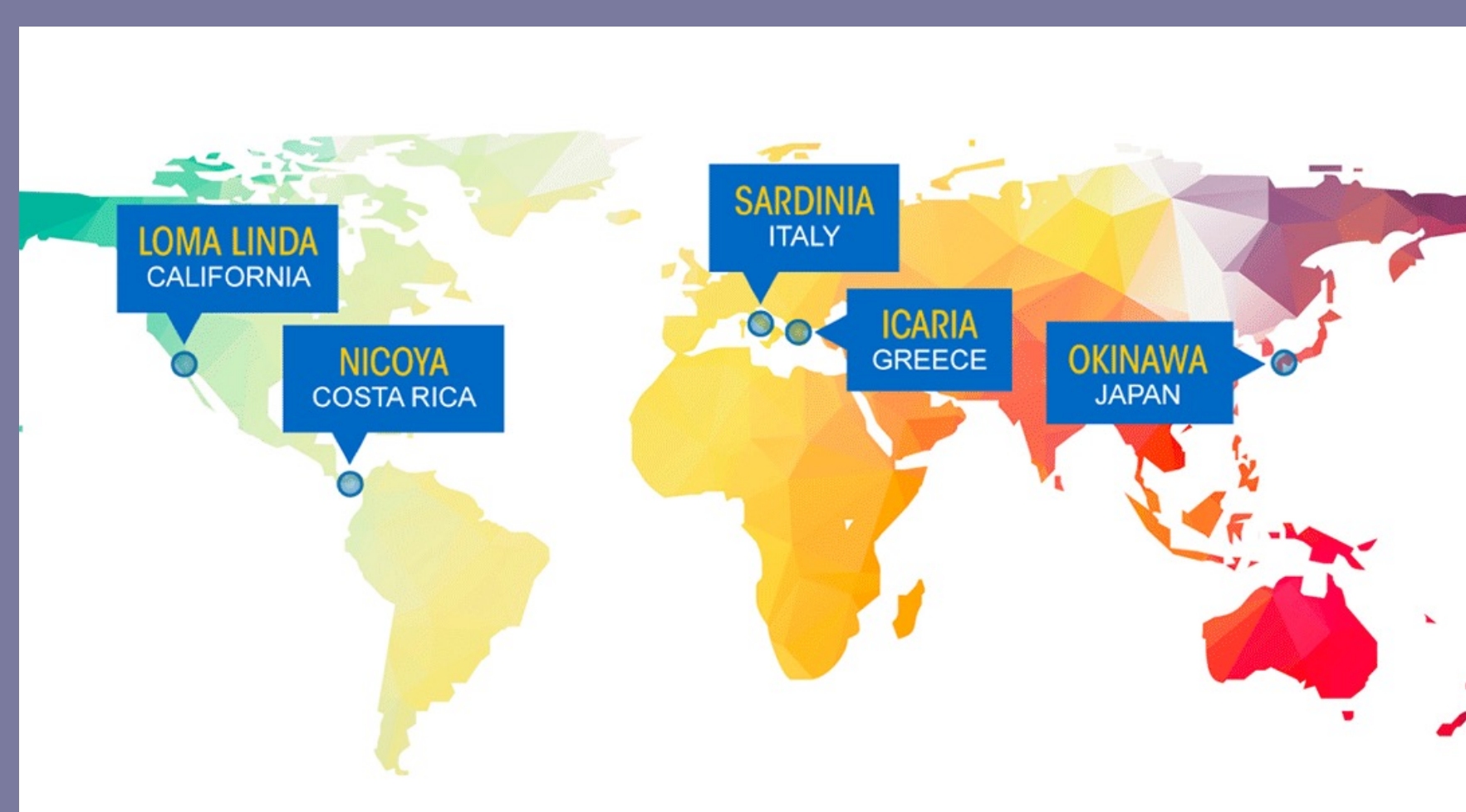
Brittany N. Saviers, Ph.D., OTR/L; Deborah Gangluff, Sc.D., OTR/L; Andree Ledbetter, OTD, CLT

Department of Occupational Therapy, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, AR.

## Background

Healthcare professionals require personal and professional skills that include the ability to provide care to diverse populations and to collaborate across disciplines to deliver culturally sensitive quality care. International learning experiences can provide opportunities for students in health professions to work and learn collaboratively across disciplines.

Through this international Level I Fieldwork experience, students were engaged in interprofessional learning surrounding the physical and social determinants of health and longevity for the people of the Nicoya Peninsula of Costa Rica. Faculty developed a short-term, 10-day, study abroad experience based upon an occupation-centered teaching and learning process. The destination was selected as it is one of the five areas in the world identified as a "Blue Zone," a place where people reach age 100 at rates of up to 10 times greater than usual (Madrigal-Leer, et al., 2019).



## Purpose

The purpose of this research was to measure the effect of a short-term study abroad experience to Costa Rica on interprofessional and cultural competencies of occupational therapy and nursing students.

## Research Questions

What is the effect of a study abroad experience to Costa Rica on a) cultural competencies, b) interprofessional competencies of occupational therapy and nursing students?

## Sample Methods and Design

### Sample:

- Graduate students in an Occupational Therapy Doctoral program (n=11 immediate pre/post; n=5 delayed post)
- Undergraduate students in a Baccalaureate of Science Nursing program (n=6 immediate pre/post; n=2 delayed post)

### Research Design:

- Pre-test / immediate post-test quantitative surveys and qualitative reflections
- Delayed post-test quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews

### Instruments:

- Cultural Competency Questionnaire (CCQ; Mareno, Hart, & VanBrackle, 2013)
- Entry Level Interprofessional Questionnaire (ELIQ; Pollard, Meirs, & Gilchrist, 2016)
- Qualitative (student reflections and interviews)

## Itinerary Highlights: Keys to Well-Being in Costa Rica



### Skill-based Tasks

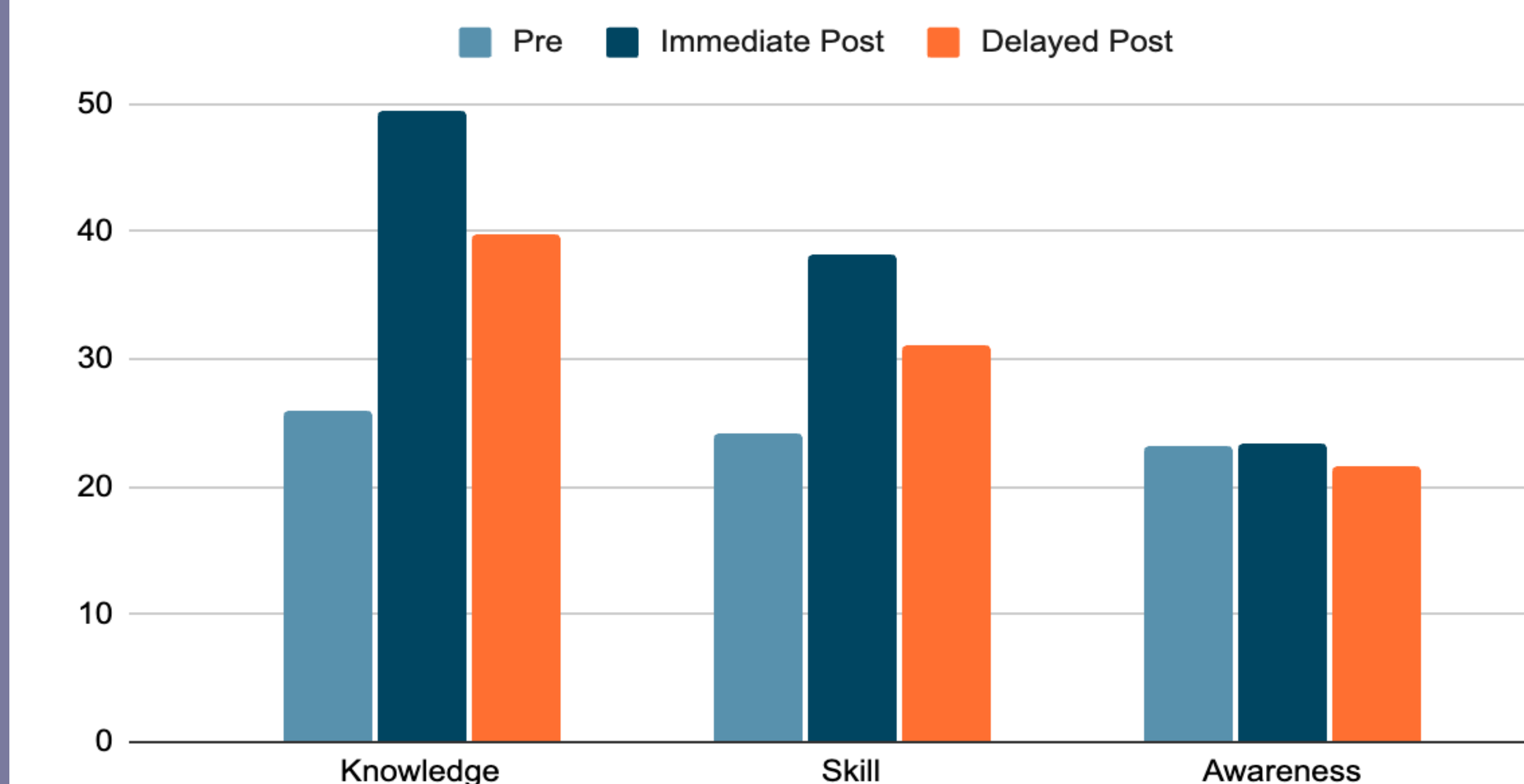
- Evaluating client's occupational performance utilizing standardized and non-standardized screening and assessment tools, considering client needs, cultural, and contextual factors
- Planning and implementing interprofessional activities with elementary school-aged children
- Engaging in lectures from local health professionals
- Dialoging with local residents
- Touring a rehabilitation hospital, nursing home, and the local health department
- Using self in a therapeutic manner
- Demonstrating professional behaviors and sound judgement in relation to self and others
- Reflecting with faculty throughout the trip

### Occupations Central to Costa Rican Culture

- Making and sharing of meals in the homes of local residents.
- Participating in a traditional Costa Rican folklore dance lesson
- Tortilla making
- Visiting a pineapple farm / coffee plantation / banana plantation
- White water rafting or zip lining
- Exploring the biodiversity of Costa Rica (e.g. waterfall garden)

## Results

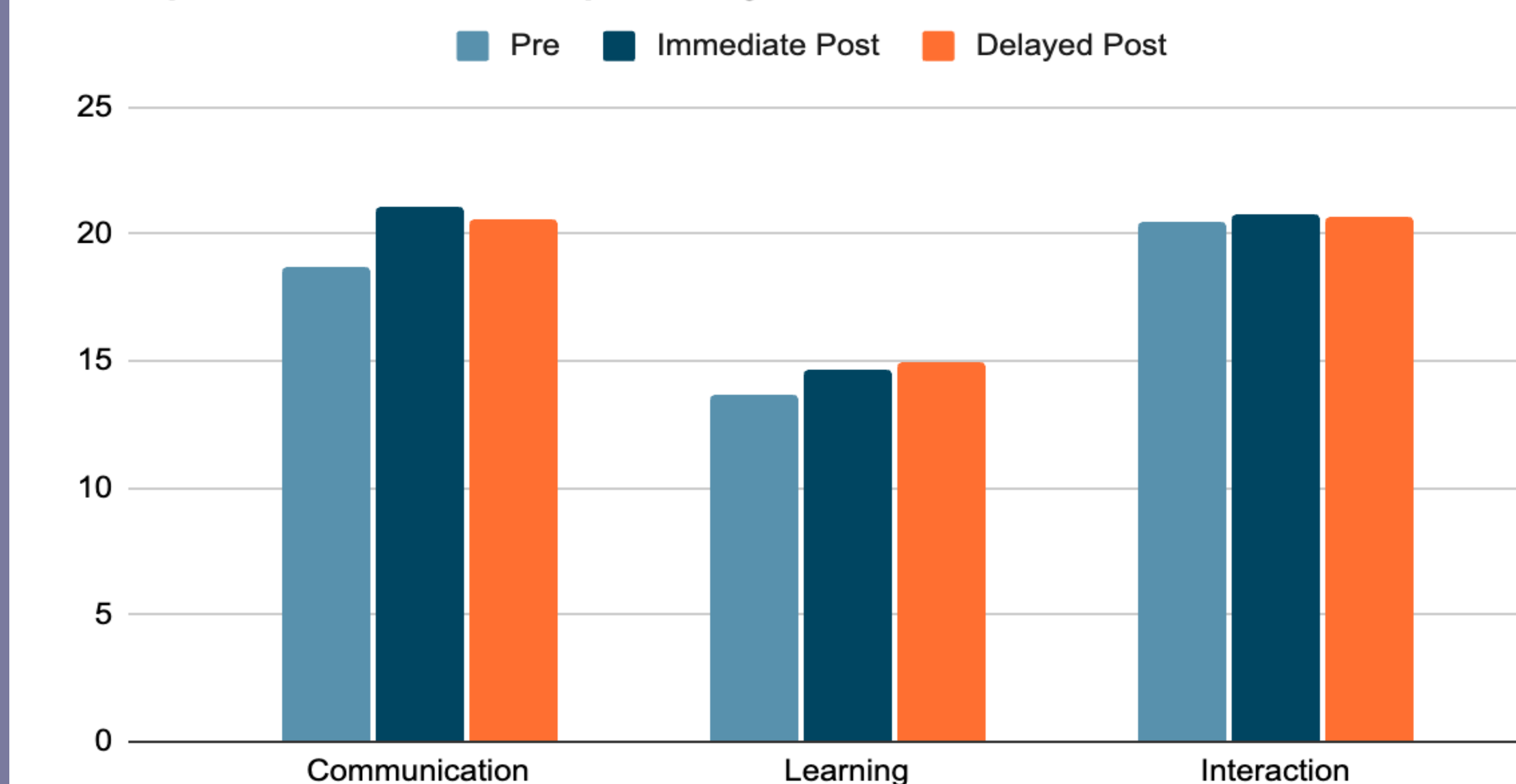
Cultural Competency Questionnaire



"Because of this experience, we understand each other's professions better and are more comfortable communicating with different professions to better educate ourselves."

"I found that my value system was conflicting with my cultural sensitivity. I had to remind myself to take a step back...Differing lifestyles and views do not make one country more superior than the other – it is just different."

Interprofessional Competency Questionnaire



## Conclusions

- 2019 and 2021 post-trip CCQ subscale results indicated statistically significant improvement in longitudinal effects of **knowledge** ( $p < 0.02$ ) and **skill** ( $p < 0.02$ ).
- 2019 ELIQ Likert scale results suggested statistically significant improvement in **Communication and Teamwork** ( $p < .05$ ); however, results were not statistically significant for the 2021 follow-up.
- The qualitative data further supports the quantitative results.

Results suggest a short-term international fieldwork can help students improve cultural competencies and their worldview two years following the initial trip.