

Transcending Boundaries: The Benefits of Short-Term Study Abroad Experiences for Foreign Language Teachers



Jorge H. Cubillos, University of Delaware, Diana E. Robbins, Central Middle School

Abstract

The goal of the present study is to expand the empirical knowledge on the effectiveness of study abroad programs for teacher training and development. Specifically, this investigation seeks to determine how much linguistic gain may be achieved with a short-term immersion program, and what kinds of non-linguistic gains can result from such an experience. Analysis of written output indicates that key aspects of participants' writing skills underwent significant changes during the course of the experiment. Review of participants' final projects and self-reported measures also suggests that important non-linguistic gains were achieved as part of this study abroad program: increased bonds with Hispanic culture, augmented knowledge of relevant content areas, a significant development of basic technical skills, and the improvement of skills related to materials and lesson plan design. Given the importance of linguistic and cultural proficiency in today's standards-based curricula, this investigation provides evidence in support of carefully structured brief sojourns abroad as valuable and fruitful alternatives in teacher training and development.

Introduction

Study abroad has been gaining prominence in recent years as an invaluable component of the undergraduate experience of foreign language (FL) majors and minors (Chieffo & Zipser, 2001; Wilkinson, 2000, Von Hoene, 1999). Although the

"...this investigation provides evidence in support of carefully structured brief sojourns abroad as valuable and fruitful alternatives in teacher training and development."

value of foreign travel is widely acknowledged in the profession, there is not much information regarding the specific benefits of study abroad for FL instructors, or the extent to which such programs are incorporated into graduate or continuing teacher-education programs.¹ Such lack of information is problematic and should be promptly addressed, especially if we hope to determine the degree to which such foreign sojourns would represent a viable answer to the higher proficiency expectations placed on FL teachers today.

With the national standards now defining student performance goals, many teachers find themselves needing to elevate their own levels of linguistic, cultural, and technological proficiency in order to support and advance their students' achievement. According to the standards document, students need to be "linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad" (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996, p.7). Undoubtedly, higher student proficiency will not happen unless (or until) faculty is adequately trained to support the standards. As indicated by many leaders in our profession, foreign language teachers need, first and foremost, solid communicative and cross-cultural skills:

Teachers must be able to conduct multiple tasks in all modalities at a high level of competency. If not, students will not be able to achieve the challenging Standards [for Foreign Language Learning]. (Phillips, 1998, p.6)

Teachers cannot teach culture effectively from a textbook; they must also be able to bring their own real-life experiences to the classroom. (Glisan, 1996, p.7)

Foreign language teachers must be trained to be consumers of research, instructional leaders with a repertoire of approaches, decision-makers, creators of assessment and assessors, knowers,

doers, and know-how-to persons (Phillips, 1998). Furthermore, teachers need to have solid grounding in other disciplines, as well as in modern technologies, to adequately incorporate the 5 Cs (the standards of Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) in their daily lessons (Martinez-Lage & Herren, 1998; Bragger & Rice, 1998). Such a need for higher linguistic, cultural, and technological proficiency on the part of FL teachers requires an urgent shift in priorities and teaching approaches. In the past five years, language departments nationwide have dedicated a considerable amount of time and resources to revise their programs and to adopt (or develop) new materials consistent with the new standards. It is not clear, however, if the curricular changes taking place in K-12 environments have extended to teacher-training institutions.

As stated by these researchers and by ACTFL/NCATE in its *Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers*, the following priorities must be incorporated into foreign language teacher preparation programs:

- enhanced linguistic & cultural proficiency;
- pedagogical training geared to establish (or augment):
 - familiarity with SLA theory and research;
 - proficiency in a variety of instructional methods;
 - skills in lesson planning and materials design;
 - technical competency in the use of modern language teaching/learning tools (ACTFL, 2002, p. 19).

At the University of Delaware (U of D) in the summer of 2000, we set out to test a hybrid program which combined pedagogical training in the U.S. (focused on the theoretical foundations of the national standards, task and lesson plan design,

Jorge H. Cubillos (Ph.D., Pennsylvania State University) is Associate Professor of Spanish and Foreign Language Pedagogy at the University of Delaware. He supervises Elementary and Intermediate Spanish instruction, as well as the training of Teaching Assistants. He is the author of several textbooks and ancillaries for the teaching and learning of Spanish. His research work has been centered in the areas of culture, technology, and student assessment.

Diana E. Robbins (B.A., Northern Michigan University; teacher certification/post-graduate studies, University of Delaware) is a Spanish teacher at Central Middle School, Dover, DE. She has participated in three study abroad programs. She has served on the Delaware Performance Indicator Committee and is a board member of the Delaware Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages.

and educational technology), with a structured study abroad immersion experience.

The University of Delaware has a long history of interest in foreign study (U of D was the first institution in the U.S. to establish a study abroad program in 1923). However, the idea of offering a study abroad program for teachers was the direct result of feedback received from participants in U of D's Summer Institute for Foreign Language Teachers. Teachers enrolled in this program frequently expressed interest in courses designed to address their need for higher proficiency and familiarity with the target language (TL) culture. Not only did we feel at U of D that the study abroad option had intuitive appeal, but we also felt

that the leaders in the profession were urging such a development:

Teachers currently in the classroom must exercise the responsibility to assess their own proficiency levels.... **Study abroad** [emphasis ours], continuing professional development, summer seminars all contribute to the lifelong learning that is part of this profession. (Phillips, 1998, p.6)

It is imperative that teachers keep abreast of current happenings in the cultures of the languages they teach and benefit from travel and **study abroad** [emphasis ours] experiences continually. (Glisan, 1996, p. 73)

Review of the Literature

Although study abroad is widely perceived to be beneficial to language learners, the available empirical evidence about its benefits is limited and somewhat inconclusive. The studies reviewed (Table 1) suggest that, for the most part, linguistic and non-linguistic gains do take place as a result of study abroad experiences. Unfortunately, given the diversity of study abroad programs involved (ranging from 4 weeks to a year) and the multiplicity of measures used (Oral Proficiency Interviews, surveys, journals, etc.), it is difficult to determine with any degree of precision the extent and nature of those gains.

Table 1. Effects Of Study Abroad Programs - Literature Review.

Authors	Sample Size	Mean Age	Language	Length of Program	Assessment Method	Results
Boots-Ebenfield (1995)	30	College level	Russian	4 months	OPI	- Acquisition of Russian aspect was similar to both first and second language acquisition of tense and aspect systems in other languages - Study abroad was shown to have several significant effects on the use of aspect by American students
Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsberg (1995)	658	22	Russian	4 months	OPI, ETS (list/read), ACTR (grammar), MLATSF (learning strategies)	- Men gained more than women - Younger people gained more than older - The higher the initial level, the less likely a gain - MLATs (analytic, synthetic, memory) do not predict OPI - ACTR predicts OPI
Brecht & Robinson (1995)	15	College level	Russian	1 semester	Observations, interviews, diaries	Value of formal instruction abroad: mediation value, need to connect with outside world, cultural difficulties enhanced by foreign teachers
Carroll (1967)	2,775	College level	French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish	Varied	MLA Foreign Language Proficiency Test for Teachers and Advanced Students	- Time spent abroad has a potent effect on a student's language skills - Students of Spanish or French who started the language in elementary school and continued it tended to have an advantage over other majors - Many low-aptitude students were able to compensate by diligent study and practice, or because of special opportunities such as study abroad.
De Keyser (1991)	12	College level	Spanish	1 semester	Grammar tests, interviews	- No significant effect for study abroad - Great individual variation in the experimental group (probably associated with learners' monitoring styles and communication strategy preferences)
Dyson (1988)	229	College level	French, German, Spanish	1 year	Receptive competence tests	- Study abroad does have a measurable effect on linguistic competence - Students categorized as "poor" before they went abroad appear to improve the most. Good students tended to stay at the same level or even regress.
Freed (1995)	30	Under-graduates	French	1 semester	OPI	- Less advanced learners had a modest gain in their perceived global fluency (fewer dysfluent silent pauses, fewer non-lexical filled pauses, longer utterances) - Significant individual differences in performance related to extent of prior instruction
Guntermann (1995)	9	23 (Peace Corp Volunt.)	Spanish	12 weeks	EOT interview	- Higher proficiency ratings as similar groups who received instruction abroad (or in the US) for a semester - Better control of certain structures (ser/estar, preterit/imperfect) - Significant individual differences
Hoffman-Hicks (1999)	14	College level	French	16 months	Production questionnaire	Study abroad subjects exhibited pragmatic development over time (albeit slight and limited and scope)
Howard (2001)	18	College level	French	1 term	Sociolinguistic interviews	Study abroad learners attain higher levels of accuracy in their use of past time morphology across a more expansive range of aspectual contexts
Hubner (1995)	24	22	Japanese	9 weeks	ETS (JPT), OPI, Narrative retelling, diaries, reports	- Trend: higher proficiency for study abroad group - Observer's data: opportunities for informal contact widens range
Hudson (2001)	107	College level	Spanish	5 weeks	GPA, final course grade	Statistically significance was found between final course grade and the composite set of cumulative GPA, gender, and status

Table 1. Effects Of Study Abroad Programs - Literature Review. (continued)

Authors	Sample Size	Mean Age	Language	Length of Program	Assessment Method	Results
Isabelli (2001)	31	College level	Spanish	9 months	Grammaticality judgment tests and oral narratives	Study abroad students moved further away from the L1 NSP (native language null subject parameter), and closer to the L2 NSP (target language null subject parameter)
Lafford (1995)	29	Under-graduates	Spanish	1 semester	OPI	Study abroad broadens the repertoire of communicative strategies of L2 learners and makes them better conversationalists (more words, self-repairs, fillers, connectors, more aware of scripts)
Lapkin, Hart, & Swain (1995)	116	16	French	3 months	Test package (all modalities), self-assessment	- Students with initially lower French language proficiency made greater gains - Gains: oral/aural & sociolinguistic skills (dialect, register) - Correlational data discourages dispensing with language testing in favor of self-assessment
López Ortega (2002)	4	College level	Spanish	10 weeks	Interviews	Despite individual variation, learners develop in their use of pronominal and null subjects after their study abroad experience.
Marriott (1995)	6	17	Japanese	1 year	J-OPI	- Sociolinguistic competence: Politeness (proficient in formulaic expressions not in honorific style due to lack of exposure/explicit teaching) - Previous study not a strong predictor BUT amount and type of input and interaction available
Masgoret, Bernaus, & Gardner (2000)	127	20.7	Spanish	4 weeks	AMTB, CanDo (Speaking, Understanding), Cultural Distance Survey, Sociocultural Adjustment Survey	- Sojourners in Spain: Less positive attitudes towards Spanish people, lower levels of integrative orientation, higher Spanish use anxiety
Miller & Ginsberg (1995)	80	College level	Russian	1 semester	Diaries	Mixed feelings about classroom instruction. Need to articulate in- and out-of-class activities
Milton & Meara (1995)	53	College level	English	1 semester	EVST	- Period abroad had a significant effect on students' vocabulary growth (nearly five times faster abroad than while taking classes at home) - There was great individual variation (most gain was achieved by lower proficiency students)
Owen (2001)	84	College level	Russian	10 weeks	OPI	Study abroad experience alone, regardless of proficiency level, leads to more native-like pragmatic strategy selection
Polanyi (1995)	160	College level	Russian	1 semester	Diaries	Language speakers are gendered and the language they speak is also gendered (toasting, bonding)
Regan (1995)	6	22	French	1 year	Interviews	- No significant effect on negation (individual differences had to do with previous instruction), but significant for "vernacular grammar and sociolinguistic competence" - One year not enough to prevent overgeneralization
Ryan & Lafford (1992)	16	College level	Spanish	10 weeks	OPI	Order of acquisition of Spanish copulas (ser/estar) is the same for classroom and study abroad subjects
Siegal (1995)	2	30	Japanese	18 months	Journals, interviews, field observations, audio tapes	Struggle with the honorific style due to non-linguistic issues
St. Martin (1980)	83	?	English	14 weeks	TOEFL, class grades	Home stay correlated with higher test scores
Talbur & Stewart (1999)	35	College level	Spanish	5 weeks	Audiotapes, interviews	Potential for self-directed learning, but risk of alienation (race & gender are not always addressed directly)
STUDIES CONDUCTED ON FL TEACHERS						
Kalivoda (1987)	25	Teachers	FR/GR/SP		Survey	Teachers seek courses abroad with a focus on oral skill development & culture
Rissel (1995)	25	Teachers (1-27 yrs. Median: 4)	Spanish	5 week	Written testing, SOPI, MLAT (reading, listening)	- All four skills showed significant improvement - Evaluations suggest increased familiarity with culture, collection of materials, enthusiasm, increased confidence
Wipf (1988)	60	Upper level HS teachers	FR/GR/SP	4 weeks	MLAT, survey	Language skills of those with a solid knowledge of fundamentals can be improved in a short amount of time

LEGEND

ACTR : American Council of Teachers of Russian

AMBT: Attitude Motivation Test Battery

CanDo: Self-perception measure

ETS: Educational Testing Service

ETS (JPT): Educational Testing Service, Japanese Proficiency Test

EOT: End of Training

EVST: Eurocentres Vocabulary Size Test

GPA: Grade Point Average

J-OPI: Researchers' designed Japanese Oral Proficiency Interview

NFLC: National Foreign Language Center

MLA: Modern Language Association

MLAT: Modern Language Aptitude Test

MLATS: Modern Language Aptitude Test, Short Form

OPI: Oral Proficiency Interview

SOP: Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

Albeit tentative, the conclusions reached in these studies are intriguing: some describe proficiency gains for all participants (Hubner, 1995), while others suggest that the study abroad experience may tend to benefit only certain segments of the population: men (Polanyi, 1995); younger individuals (Brecht, Davidson & Ginsberg, 1995); and low-proficiency learners (Lapkin, Hart & Swain, 1995). Furthermore, one study reports that foreign immersion experiences may actually have a negative impact on participants (Masgoret, Bernaus, & Gardner, 2000). Overall, a great deal of variability among study abroad programs and participants has been noted (Freed, 1995).

Although the relative effectiveness of different study abroad formats has not been the focus of most investigations, the data suggest that the following variables may be associated with the degree of success of study abroad programs:

- the careful and deliberate articulation of in-class and out-of-class activities (Miller & Ginsberg, 1995);
- the use of home stays (St. Martin, 1995, Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002);
- the number of opportunities for informal contact with the TL population. (Hubner, 1995)

Of the thirty studies reviewed in Table 1, only three referred to language teachers specifically. Although limited, their conclusions are promising: (1) FL teachers appear to be highly motivated to participate in study abroad experiences (Kalivoda, 1987); (2) those who participate in study abroad programs seem to experience important linguistic gains (Wipf, 1988); and finally, (3) teacher gains tend to transcend the linguistic realm to encompass areas such as familiarity with the TL culture, enthusiasm, and self confidence (Rissel, 1995).

The Present Study

The goal of the present study is to explore the impact of a study abroad experience on FL teachers and its functionality as a formal aspect of their professional training and development.² Specifically, this investigation seeks to determine how much linguistic gain (if any) was achieved with a short-term immersion program, and what kind of non-linguistic gains (content area knowledge, pedagogical skills, cultural awareness, and technical skills) resulted from such an experience.

In order to examine the linguistic gains experienced by the program participants, a Paired Samples Test of their writing (pre- and post-treatment) were used.³ These

gains were theorized to occur at different levels and therefore required different measures to get a better sense of the changes that resulted from the study abroad experience. Non-linguistic gains were measured on the basis of self-reporting tools (program evaluation and one-year survey), and also through the analysis of the pedagogical units developed by the teachers as part of their program requirements.

Participant Profiles

Six participants, all female, comprised the study group (for a comprehensive view of all demographic statistics, see Appendices 1 and 2). Although the number of participants may appear to limit the scope of this study's findings, the profiles of the six who elected to participate in the study abroad experience reflect the general teacher population of the State of Delaware, as stated in the most current Delaware's Educational Personnel document: predominantly female (state: 75%; study: 100%); white (state: 87% white, 12% black; study: 83% white, 17% black); middle-aged (state: 42 years old; study: 35 years); and with an education level of Master's and above (state: 47%; study: 33%) (Delaware Department of Education).

In addition to being representative of the teaching population in the State of Delaware, participants' personal characteristics are closely aligned with the foreign language teacher profiles elicited from several studies in Glisan's work on professional development for FL teachers in the United States as a whole: white (study: 87%), middle-aged (study: 50%), female (study: 100%), with 21 years of experience (study average: 8 years), having both her bachelor's and master's degrees (study: MA 33%, PhD 16%), 50% with study abroad experience (study: 33%), predominance of college class time spent on literature, usually lacking in "linguistic skills, cultural awareness, and pedagogical expertise", and with inadequate exposure to "instructional techniques that include modern technology" (Glisan, 1996, p.59).

Study Abroad Objectives and Assessments

The study abroad experience was structured around a 3-credit, five-week graduate course on Spanish Pedagogy (SPAN 667: Cross-Cultural Connections).⁴ Course objectives were designed to meet the needs of the in-service teacher while also reaching goals set forth by the national standards and ACTFL/NCATE. These objectives were:

1. to refine and enhance the participant's writing and speaking skills in Spanish (National Standards# 1: Communica-

tion, p. 9; ACTFL/NCATE Standard #1: Language, Linguistics, Comparisons, p. 20);

2. to heighten cross-cultural awareness and competence (National Standards #2: Cultures, p. 9; ACTFL/NCATE Standard #2: Cultures, Literatures, Cross-Disciplinary Concepts, p. 31);
3. to establish connections with various disciplines (history, geography, art, etc.) (National Standards #3: Connections, p. 9; ACTFL/NCATE Standard #2: Cultures, Literatures, Cross-Disciplinary Concepts, p. 31);
4. to develop and share learning scenarios for use in the foreign language classroom (NCATE: Standard #2: Cultures, Literatures, Cross-Disciplinary Concepts, pp. 31-37; ACTFL/NCATE: Standard #3: Language Acquisition Theories and Instructional Practices, pp. 37-42; ACTFL/NCATE: Standard #4: Integration of Standards into Curriculum and Instruction, pp. 43-47);
5. to establish or enhance the computer technology skills of the participants (specifically: basic presentational software and web-based programming) (ACTFL/NCATE: p. 19; Standard #4: Integration of Standards into Curriculum and Instruction, pp. 43, 46-47).

The evaluation process was three-fold: a class project with project defense (50% of the final grade), a journal (30%), and a self-assessment (20%). The class project involved the development of learning scenarios aligned with the national standards. Emphasis was put on the creative use of materials collected while in Mexico as well as on the use of technology. The journal writing—relating activities and experiences throughout the course—was used as an assessment tool for writing strengths and weaknesses, with immediate feedback given by the professor. Participants were also required to discuss their degree of accomplishment of the stated course goals at the end of the course (self-assessment). All aspects of this course were conducted entirely in Spanish, with the exception of technology training.

The Study Abroad Experience

The course SPAN 667: Cross-Cultural Connections was organized into three stages. The first and last weeks of this five-week course were spent at the University of Delaware, while the 3 middle weeks involved an immersion home stay in Mérida, México. Such a hybrid course format was chosen in order to maximize the amount of training, while minimizing the time that participants were required to be away from home (a significant practical concern for many teachers).

“The teachers’ keeping of a journal in the target language during this time of immersion also provided a meaningful tool for recalling cultural and personal experiences along the way.”

1. *Pre-immersion*: This phase of the course, conducted at the University of Delaware, was one week in duration. At the inception of the program, a pre-treatment test of writing skills⁵ was administered to all participants to determine their linguistic base level. This first week of classes consisted of an exploration of the national standards, which included reflection on their relationship to teaching, as well as their application in the classroom and in lesson construction. Participants were each assigned research in a content area to share with colleagues as a classroom presentation. At the same time, students were exposed to the potential uses of modern technology in the classroom. Two training sessions in presentational software and web page design were conducted through the media laboratory.

2. *Immersion*: The three-week immersion took place in Mérida, México. The University carefully matched family and participant profiles in an attempt to provide the most compatible home stay possible. The selection of location was also critical to program success: Mérida is in the heart of the Yucatán Peninsula, surrounded by a multitude of historical and archeological sites representative of the indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica. The city itself, considerable in size, provides adequate exposure to the peoples, lifestyles, and issues of modern-day Mexico. Offering regularly scheduled cultural events (folkloric dance presentations, concerts, poetry readings, and plays—usually free or for a minimal charge), a substantial marketplace, bookstores, shops and museums, Mérida afforded the study participants daily access to mingling and conversational opportunities.

Traditional classroom instruction was accompanied by excursion and lecture experiences. These were conceived as a means to increase cultural awareness, while providing access to the materials and information necessary for the completion of the class project. Participants attended lecture meetings with an author of Mayan legends and literature, a professional recording

artist expert on Mexico’s musical heritage, a prominent anthropologist for insights into Mexican history, and a small business owner, who spoke (on site) about the current challenges facing the Mexican economy.

Trip highlights included a visit to an archeological site under excavation (guided by the chief archaeologist), and the exploration of the biological reserve of Celestún (led by the directors of Pronatura, the leading conservation institution in Yucatán). All other journeys to various archeological and historical sites included the services of licensed professional guides.⁶ Throughout all lectures and excursions, participants were able to directly question and interact with the experts, clarifying and expanding on their understanding of the topics.

The teachers’ keeping of a journal in the target language during this time of immersion also provided a meaningful tool for recalling cultural and personal experiences along the way. With prompt feedback from the professor, the positive reinforcement of writing skills (including help with problem areas) was designed to be immediate and personalized.

3. *Post-immersion*: A one-week wrap-up of the abroad experience included a period of debriefing, final project completion, and project presentations. The last day of classes, a post-treatment test⁷ was administered to all participants in order to ascertain if the writing skills changed after the immersion experience.

Final Projects

One of the desired outcomes of this experimental program was the development of learning scenarios that could be shared by many. Final projects were to exhibit a cultural component with a focus on a content area. They were to involve readings, research, and interaction, while incorporating some facet of modern technology. Interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes of communication were to be targeted through interactive activities aimed at beginner or intermediate proficiency levels.

The eight resulting projects featured:⁸

- web-based activities, using access to various web sites to obtain information for activity sheets concerning ecosystems. Activities include map skills, reading, writing, and multiple-choice.
- PowerPoint presentations on the Mexican peoples, as well as an ecological journey down the Ría de Celestún;

- literary exposure to a traditional Mayan legend, including PowerPoint presentations of the vocabulary with pictures;
- a PowerPoint presentation of Yucatecan cuisine from an authentic menu. Lessons incorporate information on the eating traditions of the culture.
- the same menu used in conjunction with lessons on the Mayan numeration system, as well as currency exchange tasks;
- culture capsules based on the videotape of an actual Mexican wedding;
- video interviews of host family members speaking to potential study abroad participants about expectations and giving personal information;
- Web site with interactive tasks for students on the subject of study abroad.

All projects met the established criteria and received an average of 20.1 points (out of 25 possible points) according to the rubric developed for the assignment (see Appendix 3).

Research Findings

Two samples of every students’ writing were collected—one at the beginning and one at the end of the study abroad program. Composition topics⁹ were designed to elicit similar types of information (past experiences, reflection on current events, and formulation of recommendations). Time was strictly controlled on both occasions (30 minutes).

The following measurements were made on the samples in order to examine changes in fluency, complexity, and grammaticality:

- total word count (fluency)
- mean length of utterance (fluency and complexity)
- instances of subordination (complexity)
- number and type of grammatical errors (grammaticality).

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the pre- and post-test scores of the participants’ writing samples. Table 3 presents the correlation between the pre- and post-test for all variables in question. These results suggest significant changes in the amount and accuracy of participants’ written output.

To further establish the significance of these correlations, a Paired Samples T-Test analysis was conducted (see Table 4). The values for the 2-tailed test suggest that indeed, significant changes took place in the participants’ writing skills. Of the dif-

Table 2. Statistical Analysis: Descriptive Statistics.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
WC1	6	250	465	365.5	74.80
WC2	6	320	499	399.5	78.57
ML1	6	6	14	9.5	2.96
ML2	6	7	16	11.75	3.46
SUB1	6	7	15	10.5	2.81
SUB2	6	9	16	12.5	2.66
VERB1	6	0	9	4	3.46
VERB2	6	0	6	2.16	2.22
WORD1	6	3	10	5.5	2.73
WORD2	6	1	5	2.33	1.63
OTHER1	6	2	5	3	1.26
OTHER2	6	0	5	2	2

LEGEND:

1 = pre-treatment
 2 = post-treatment
 WC = word count
 ML = mean length of utterance

SUB= subordination
 VERB = verb error
 WORD= lexical error
 OTHER = other error (word order, agreement, etc.)

ferent aspects of writing targeted, word choice (more precise in the post-test), mean length of utterance (longer in the post-test), and verb errors (reduced in the post-test) were distinctly affected. No significant differences were found for word count or sentence subordination.

In addition to the linguistic data obtained from participants, program evaluations suggest that important non-linguistic gains were also achieved as part of this experiment (see Appendix 4 for a complete transcript of responses). Participants reported an enhancement of their familiarity (and personal bonds) with Hispanic culture, an increase of knowledge of content areas relevant to the teaching of material related to Mexican culture, a development of basic technical skills, and the establishment (or augmentation) of skills related to the materials and lesson plan design in accordance with the National Standards. As eloquently put by one of the participants:

Mérida 2000 was one of the best decisions of my life. Not only did I further my connections to Mexico, the Yucatecan peoples and cultures, but I also developed hopefully lasting friendships with five other terrific colleagues.

The pedagogical impact of the program was also evident in the overall quality of the final projects (as outlined in the previous section), and in the lasting impact of the program. Participants indicated in the one-year survey (see Appendix 5) that their involvement with this study abroad program reaffirmed their already positive opinion of the Mexican peoples, reinforced

their desire to find ways to incorporate culture into their lessons, increased their awareness about the potential of technology in the classroom, and provided them with materials that they continue to use in their courses. When asked to look back at their study abroad experience, the most highly rated components of the program were the linguistic immersion per se, the in-depth exploration of Mexican culture, and the training in the use of technology. When asked if they would recommend a similar experience to a colleague, one of the participants responded:

Absolutely, and I have. There is no better teacher than first-hand experience. There is no better way to undo stereotypes we may hold of certain peoples than to have the experience of living among them. I have been surprised by the attitude that many of my colleagues hold towards Mexico in general. These same people have not ventured into real Mexico, nor have they bothered to awaken themselves

“When asked to look back at their study abroad experience, the most highly rated components of the program were the linguistic immersion per se, the in-depth exploration of Mexican culture, and the training in the use of technology.”

Table 3. Correlations.

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Variable Pair 1	WC1 & WC2	6	.900	.015
Variable Pair 2	ML1 & ML2	6	.882	.020
Variable Pair 3	SUB1 & SUB2	6	.547	.261
Variable Pair 4	VERB1 & VERB2	6	.959	.003
Variable Pair 5	WORD1 & WORD2	6	.626	.184
Variable Pair 6	OTHER1 & OTHER2	6	.632	.178

Table 4. Paired Samples Test.

		Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	WC1 & WC2	-34.00	34.54	-2.41	5	.061
Pair 2	ML1 & ML2	-2.25	1.63	-3.37	5	.020
Pair 3	SUB1 & SUB2	-2.00	2.60	-1.87	5	.119
Pair 4	VERB1 & VERB2	1.83	1.47	3.05	5	.028
Pair 5	WORD1 & WORD2	3.16	2.13	3.63	5	.015
Pair 6	OTHER1 & OTHER2	1.00	1.54	1.58	5	.175

to the wealth of history and knowledge abundant through the natives/peoples of the Americas. They will be missing out, but more importantly, so will their students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of this study coincide with the positive outcomes reported for similar study abroad experiences with teachers and other language learner populations, and suggest that brief and structured foreign sojourns may have significant and lasting impact on the linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical skills of foreign language teachers. Hybrid study abroad programs (i.e., programs that combine time abroad with time in the home country) appear to be effective not only in achieving the desired pedagogical gains, but also for addressing the practical concerns of participants.

The present study also furthers support for the notion that teachers are highly motivated by the prospect of foreign study, and that they are in a privileged position to take advantage of the many language acquisition opportunities afforded by the TL environment. Moreover, it suggests that structured foreign travel can positively impact teachers' confidence, cultural awareness, and pedagogical skills. As indicated by the one-year survey, the impact of this type of learning experience for teachers seems not to be short-lived, but rather affects how teachers approach their praxis for months to come (Appendix 5).

A review of participant responses to the surveys in this investigation (Appendices 4

“The time abroad is most productive when there is a clear purpose and focus for all immersion-related activities.”

and 5) suggests that the following factors may play a key role in the success of study abroad programs for teachers:

- *Home stay:* Families need to be carefully selected, and the aim should be to locate families eager to interact with their language-learning guest.¹⁰
- *Task orientation:* The time abroad is most productive when there is a clear purpose and focus for all immersion-related activities.
- *Semi-structured format:* Structure provides coherence to the program. However, building in some flexibility to the schedule of topics and activities is desirable, as it allows for a more personalized and relevant experience.
- *Journal writing:* Completion of regular free-writing assignments appears to correlate with increased overall language proficiency in this type of study abroad program. Also, teacher’s feedback on writing assignments (focused

on both content and form) seems to be helpful as it responds to the needs and expectations of this type of learner.

- *Selection criteria:* Proficiency level, teaching experience, and flexibility appear to be factors that affect participant gain in this type of program. However, the evidence provided by this investigation is not sufficient to make any generalizations. Further research on this subject is required.
- *Funding:* Government funding for this type of teacher training program has significant political ramifications that may affect the nature and future of such a program. Alternative funding of these types of programs may be a preferred option, not only to avoid the complications associated with official grants, but also to increase participant’s ownership and involvement in the success of the program.

In spite of its limited sample size, the present study provides additional evidence in support of the linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical benefits of foreign study for language teachers. Although the recorded outcomes were encouraging, it is clear that further research is necessary in order to answer with more precision questions such as: What is the ideal length of a study abroad program for teachers? What program components will result in more gains

“...we hope to encourage other institutions to create similar teacher training programs, and, for the benefit of all, persuade these new and/or established programs to document and publish their findings regarding their own experiences.”

for participants? And most importantly, what individual and context variables are the best predictors of gain for language instructors in study abroad contexts?

Teacher training and professional development through foreign study is a promising field of research, with important practical implications for the profession. By sharing these findings in support of practical hybrid formats we hope to encourage other institutions to create similar teacher training programs, and, for the benefit of all, persuade these new and/or established programs to document and publish their findings regarding their own experiences. The initiation of such a dialogue will enhance the body of information available, and, hence, aid our current in-service and future teachers in reaching the desired content and proficiency standards.

Appendix 1. Demographic Statistics. (N=6)

Gender	Female = 6	Male = 0	
Age	20 – 30 = 3	30 – 40 = 0	Over 40 = 3
Ethnicity	Caucasian = 4	Hispanic = 1	African-American = 1
Native language	English = 4	Bilingual (English/Spanish) = 1	Other = 1 (Portuguese)
Language taught	Spanish = 5	ESL = 1	
Grade level	Middle School = 1	High School = 4	University = 1
Years of teaching experience	1 – 2 years = 2	2 - 5 years = 1	More than 5 = 3
Highest degree earned	Bachelor’s = 4	Master’s = 1	Doctorate = 1
Previous study abroad experience	None = 4	1 experience = 1	2 experiences = 1
Family obligations	Single = 3	Married, no children = 1	Married with children = 2

Appendix 2. Participant Profiles.

Participant #1	A 20–30 year-old Hispanic female, bilingual speaker of Spanish and English, Spanish teacher at the high school level, 1-2 years of teaching experience, Bachelor’s degree, no previous study abroad experience, married with no children.
Participant #2	A 20–30 year-old Caucasian female, native speaker of English, Spanish teacher at the high school level, 1-2 years of teaching experience, Bachelor’s degree, 1 month-long study abroad experience, single with no children.
Participant #3	A 20–30 year-old Caucasian female, native speaker of English, Spanish teacher at university level, 2-5 years of teaching experience, Master’s degree, no previous study abroad experience, single with no children.
Participant #4	An over 40 year-old African-American female, native speaker of Portuguese, ESL teacher at high school level, more than 5 years teaching experience, Bachelor’s degree, 2 previous study abroad experiences, married with children.
Participant #5	An over 40 year-old Caucasian female, native speaker of English, Spanish teacher at middle school level, more than 5 years of teaching experience, Bachelor’s degree, no previous study abroad experience, married with children.
Participant #6	An over 40 year-old Caucasian female, native speaker of English, Spanish teacher at high school level, more than five years of teaching experience, Doctorate degree, no previous study abroad experience, married with no children.
Advisor	An Associate Professor of Spanish and Pedagogy, Doctorate in Second Language Acquisition, author of university level texts, 8 years experience directing study abroad programs.

Appendix 3. Final Project Rubric.

	Excellent (5 pts)	Good (4 pts)	Average (3 pts)	Poor (2 pts)
Promotes an understanding of the practices, products, and/or perspectives of the TL culture				
Allows students to further their knowledge of other disciplines				
Targets the different modes of communication				
Promotes active learning				
Incorporates a facet of modern technology				

Appendix 4. Program Evaluation Transcripts.

What were the most positive and most negative aspects of your study abroad experience? How do you think this program can be improved?

Positive Aspects:

- The degree of immersion into the culture was superb! This was enhanced by my placement without a roommate in a Mexican home! Actually visiting archeological sites accompanied by one of the primary archeologists is first-hand experience! The inclusion of living people made the whole experience real!
- Without a doubt, living with a host family and going on excursions and incorporating guest lectures and guides from the host culture rather than learning in a daily classroom/U of Delaware instructed environment has given us the optimal results: assimilation. Culture from every discipline and angle and appreciation for family life. All Spanish teachers should do this, even University instructors.
- Living with a family and speaking only Spanish with them: the best! Each speaker/guide provided info which fostered increased cultural understanding.
- My family. I feel as if my Spanish has improved light years. Being close to the city and somewhat close to the excursions, the money it cost to come on this trip was little in comparison to all that was offered excursions and expert lectures, the small numbers and the family-like atmosphere.
- The most positive experience I had was the love and attention I received from my host family. I also appreciate my professor who is very patient and

knowledgeable. In the future, I suggest an assistant to Dr. Cubillos, especially if the group is larger than 6. People do get sick. An assistant would help run the program smoothly.

- Mérida 2000 was one of the best decisions of my life. Not only did I further my connections to Mexico, the Yucatecan peoples and cultures, but I also developed hopefully lasting friendships with five other terrific colleagues.

Negative Aspects and Suggestions for Improvement:

- Getting sick and being left behind on the weekend excursion to Tulúm and Playa del Carmen. Not knowing exactly what was going on (especially when there were changes to the schedule). Solutions: Rent a cell phone for Jorge and send a co-director. It would have solved all the problems. It is a lot of admin.
- Inordinate number of sickness/incidents for the number of teachers involved (which probably explains why our students are the way they are!)
- Avoid Pancho's food with beans at all costs!
- The negative aspect was the heat! Thanks for assuring an air-conditioned room! It is important to do an adequate job of forewarning potential participants. I recommend also that announcements/decisions re: participants be made earlier. Consideration should also be given to having a student-assistant handle some of the administrative matters, thus freeing up the professor for more consultation and individual assistance.
- We were loaded with information daily and did not have enough time to process the information. A 30-day trip

would be better, thus allowing students time to process all the information, and perhaps not so much emphasis on the project, rather on the experience.

- The published schedule should be followed. When changes take place, new schedules should be announced and distributed to all participants. Directions to all sites should be included.

Did you have a good relationship with your host family? Please elaborate.

- Very kind, generous people. Made me feel as if it was my home too.
- My host family did everything to make me feel welcome and part of the family. I really enjoyed staying with them.
- My host family was very helpful, willing to sit, talk, and listen. Every question I asked, they were more than willing to answer. Patience was the key. They told me to call any hour of the night and often asked me to participate in family events.
- Major improvement in my speaking/comprehension abilities. Major improvement in amount of vocabulary/colloquialisms and an acute appreciation of Yucatecan culture. Wonderful people.
- Terrific speakers/tours.
- Very good trips and speakers

Overall Assessment of the Study abroad Program

(5=Excellent; 4=Good, 3=Acceptable, 2=Weak, 1=Inadequate)

Score	Votes
5	4
4	2 (youngest participants)
3	0
2	0
1	0

Appendix 5. A Year Later (Summary of Responses to Follow-Up Survey).

Number of Participants that Completed Follow Up Survey: 5¹¹

1. Looking back, what aspects of SPAN667 do you think were the most helpful to you (mark all that apply, and comment if possible):

Item	Total Number of Responses
The pedagogical training on the national standards ¹²	1
The training on the use of technology	3
The information learned about Mexico and its culture	3
The linguistic immersion per se	3

Comments:

- Not to diminish the work on the standards: technology and immersion were the most important to me professionally as they were (are) areas in which I was in the most need.
- Although I did know quite a bit about Mexico beforehand, the amount of new information acquired was incredible; experiences first-rate with experts in their fields.

2. What lasting impact (if any) has SPAN667 had on you as a teacher?

- Confirmed desire to find ways to deliver more cultural components in lessons
- Reaffirmed already positive opinion of the Mexican peoples
- Much more aware of the potential of technology in the classroom

References

ACTFL Foreign Language Teacher Standards Writing Team. *ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers*. October 19, 2002. Available on line: <http://www.actfl.org>. Last accessed on June 17, 2003.

Boots-Ebenfield, M. N. (1995). *The Pragmatics of Grammatical Aspect in the Interlanguage of American College Students of Russian: An Analysis of Oral Proficiency Interviews before Study Abroad. What Our Students Can Tell Us About Teaching Russian Aspect*. Doctoral dissertation, Bryn Mawr College.

Bragger, J. & Rice, D. (1998). "Connections: The National Standards and a New Paradigm for Content-Oriented Materials and Instruction." In J. Harper, M. Lively, & M. Williams, (Eds.), *The Coming of Age of the Profession. Issues and Emerging Ideas for the Teaching of Foreign Languages* (pp. 191-217). Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Brecht, R., Davidson, D., & Ginsberg, R. (1995). "Predictors of Foreign Language

Gain During Study Abroad." In B. F. Freed, (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 37-66). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Brech, R. & Robinson, J. (1995). "On the Value of Formal Instruction in Study Abroad: Student Reactions in Context." In B. F. Freed, (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 317-334). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Carroll, J. (1967). "Foreign Language Proficiency Levels Attained by Language Majors near Graduation from College." *Foreign Language Annals* (1), 131-151.

Chieffo, L. & Zipser, R. (2001). "Integrating Study Abroad into the Foreign Language Curriculum." *ADFL-Bulletin* 32(3), 79-85.

Cumming, A. H. (1994). "Writing Expertise and Second-Language Proficiency." In A. H. Cumming (Ed.), *Bilingual Performance in Reading and Writing* (pp.173-221). Ann Arbor: Language Learning/Benjamins.

De Keyser, R. (1991). "Foreign Language Development during a Semester Abroad."

In Freed, B. (Ed.), *Foreign Language Acquisition Research and the Classroom* (pp.104-119). Lexington, Mass.: DC Heath and Company.

Delaware Department of Education. "Delaware Educational Personnel 1996-1997." Available on line: <http://www.doe.state.de.us/reporting/personnel.htm>. Last accessed on June 17, 2003.

Dyson, P. (1988). *The year abroad*. Oxford: Oxford University Language Teaching Centre.

Freed, B. (1995). "What Makes Us Think That Student Who Study Abroad Become Fluent?" In B. F. Freed, (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 123-148). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Glisan, E. (1996). "A Collaborative Approach to Professional Development." In Lafayette, R. W. (Ed.) *National Standards: A Catalyst for Reform. ACTFL Foreign Language Education Series*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Guntermann, G. (1995). "The Peace-Corps Experience: Language Learning in Training

• Met and shared many terrific experiences with some great colleagues. Increased awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses

• Aside from random phone calls from X (my host mother), there are many advantages. I still use the website I created in teaching my 107 course, the realia I collected and the entire experience has increased my awareness and participation in the various study abroad programs at U of X and made me a better recruiter.

3. Would you recommend a similar experience to a colleague? Why or why not?

• Yes, of course. I learned a lot. All teachers should try this at some point.

• Certainly. It was a great experience. I would do it again in a heartbeat!

• YES! Mérida is fantastic and my host family was incredible. I would recommend this type of program to any teacher.

• Absolutely, and I have. There is no better teacher than first-hand experience. There is no better way to undo stereotypes we may hold of certain peoples than to have the experience of living among them. I have been surprised by the attitude that many of my colleagues hold towards Mexico in general. These same people have not ventured into real Mexico, nor have they bothered to awaken themselves to the wealth of history and knowledge abundant through the natives/peoples of the Americas. They will be missing out, but more importantly, so will their students.

• ABSOLUTELY! I have spoken with many TAs about it and I believe I recruited one at least. I wish I had the opportunity when I was in grad school! It is necessary that we gringos keep up on our Spanish and there is no better way than to study abroad and live with a host family.

- and in the Field." In B. F. Freed, (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 149-169). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Hoffman-Hicks, S. D. (1999). *The Longitudinal Development of French Foreign Language Pragmatic Competence: Evidence from Study Abroad Participants*. Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University.
- Howard, M. (2001). "The Effects of Study Abroad on the L2 Learner's Structural Skills. Evidence from Advanced Learners of French." *Eurosla (European Second Language Association Conference) Yearbook* (1), 123-141.
- Hubner, T. (1995). "The Effects of Overseas Language Programs: Report on a Case Study of an Intensive Japanese Course." In B. F. Freed, (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 171-193). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Hudson, D. R. (2001). *Grade Point Average as a Predictor of Academic Achievement for a Credit Abroad, Language Acquisition Course (Mexico)*. Doctoral dissertation, The University of Southern Mississippi.
- Isabelli, C. A. (2001). *The impact of a Study Abroad Experience on the Acquisition of L2 Spanish Syntax: The Null Subject Parameter*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- Kalivoda, T. (1987). "Advanced-Level Instruction Overseas-An Analysis of Teacher Priorities for Curriculum Design." *Hispania* 70(1), 181-186.
- Knight, S. & Schmidt-Rinehart, B. (2002). Enhancing the Homestay: Study Abroad from the Host Family's Perspective. *Foreign Language Annals* 35(2), 190-201.
- Lafford, B. (1995). "Getting into, Through and Out of a Survival Situation: A Comparison of Communicative Strategies Used by Students Studying Spanish Abroad and 'At Home'." In B. F. Freed, (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 97-121). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Lapkin, S., Hart, D., & Swain, M. (1995). A Canadian Interprovincial Exchange: Evaluating the Linguistic Impact of a Three-Month Stay in Quebec." In B. F. Freed, (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 67-94). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- López Ortega, N. R. (2002). *The Development of Discourse Competence in Study Abroad Learners: A Study of Subject Expression in Spanish as a Second Language*. Doctoral dissertation, Cornell University.
- Marriott, H. (1995). "The Acquisition of Politeness Patterns by Exchange Students in Japan." In B. F. Freed, (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 197-224). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Martinez-Lage, A. & Herren, D. (1998). "Challenges and Opportunities: Curriculum Pressures in the Technological Present." In J. Harper, M. Lively, & M. Williams, (Eds.), *The Coming of Age of the Profession. Issues and Emerging Ideas for the Teaching of Foreign Languages* (pp. 141-167). Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Masgoret, A., Bernaus, M., & Gardner, R. (2000). "A Study of Cross-Cultural Adaptation by English-Speaking Sojourners in Spain." *Foreign Language Annals* 33(5), 548-558.
- Miller, L. & Ginsberg, R. (1995). "Folklinguistic Theories of Language Learning." In B. F. Freed, (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 293-315). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Milton, J. & Meara, P. (1995). "How Periods Abroad Affect Vocabulary Growth in a Foreign Language." *I.T.L.; Review of Applied Linguistics* 107-108, 17-34.
- National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (1996). *National Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*. Lawrence, KS: Allen Press, Inc.
- Owen, J. S. (2001). *"Interlanguage Pragmatics in Russian: A study of the Effects of Study Abroad and Proficiency Levels on Request Strategies"*. Doctoral dissertation, Bryn Mawr College.
- Phillips, J. (1998). "Changing Teacher/Learner Roles in Standards-Driven Contexts." In *The Coming of Age of the Profession*. J. Harper, M. Lively and M. Williams, Eds. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Polanyi, L. (1995). "Language Learning and Living Abroad: Stories from the Field." In B. F. Freed, (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 271-291). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Regan, V. (1995). "The Acquisition of Sociolinguistic Native Speech Norms: Effects of a Year Abroad on Second Language Learners of French." In B. F. Freed, (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 245-267). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Rissel, D. (1995). "Learning by Doing: Outcomes of an Overseas Summer Project for Teachers." *Study Abroad: Research on Learning Language and Culture in Context*. Proceedings from RP-ALLA '95 (pp. 161-182).
- Ryan, J. M. & Lafford, B. A. (1992). "Acquisition of Lexical Meaning in a Study Abroad Environment: Ser and Estar and the Granada Experience." *Hispania*, 75(3), 714-722.
- Siegal, M. (1995). "Individual Differences and Study Abroad: Women Learning Japanese in Japan." In B. F. Freed, (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context* (pp. 225-244). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- St. Martin, G (1980). "English Acquisition: The Effects of Living with an American Family." *TESOL Quarterly* 14, 388-90.
- Talbur, S. & Stewart, M. (1999). What's the Subject of Study Abroad?: Race, Gender, and "Living Culture". *The Modern Language Journal* 83(2), 163-175.
- Von Hoene, L. (1999). "Imagining Otherwise: Rethinking Departments of Foreign Languages and Literatures as Departments of Cross-Cultural Difference." *ADFL-Bulletin* 30(2), 26-29.
- Wilkinson, S. (2000). "Emerging Questions about Study Abroad." *ADFL-Bulletin* 32(1), 36-41.
- Wipf, J. (1988). "Professional Renewal through National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institutes: The Purdue Experience." *The Modern Language Journal* 72(1), 37-41.

Endnotes

- 1 For a review of the articles available on the subject, please refer to the summary table in Table 1.
- 2 Funding for this initiative issued from a grant provided by the International Council of Delaware, and from matching funds provided by the participants' school districts and their individual schools.
- 3 Because it has been shown to correlate with oral skill development, written output was used to analyze the linguistic gains of participants in this investigation. Written samples were also preferred over oral samples, since they offered the researchers greater convenience and objectivity. For additional information on the connection between writing expertise and

overall second language proficiency, see Cumming, 1994, p. 173.

- 4 This course highlighted two of the 5 C's (Cultures and Connections), not to the exclusion of the remaining three (Communication, Comparisons, and Communities).
- 5 The Pre-Treatment composition topic was as follows: Instructions: Write a one page essay on the following topic: "My reasons to participate in this Study abroad Program." Be sure to include: 1. Your personal antecedents (language history, foreign travel, and any other personal language learning experiences); 2. When and how you found out about this program, and also, how you decided to participate in it; 3. Your plans and expectations (tell us what you want to achieve); and 4. Your questions or concerns about this program. Time to write: 30 minutes. Time to edit: 15 minutes. (Note: Instructions were given in Spanish).
- 6 For more details, photos, and program schedule, please refer to: <http://www.udel.edu/cubillos/span667.html>
- 7 The Post-Treatment composition topic was as follows: Instructions: Write a one page essay on the following topic: "My experiences in the Mérida Program." Be sure to include: 1. A summary of your activities while in México; 2. An account of one of your most memorable moments while abroad; 3. How you plan to use what you learned there; 4. What recommendations would you make for future participants? Time to write: 30 minutes. Time to edit: 15 minutes. (Note: Instructions were given in Spanish).
- 8 Two of the participants chose to develop two separate projects for their final assignment.
- 9 See Endnotes v and vii
- 10 For an excellent study on ways to maximize the home stay experience, see Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002, p. 197.
- 11 Participant #6 moved out of state, and was unavailable for comment.
- 12 The low rating for the pedagogical training on the national standards can be attributed to the fact that participants were already familiar with this information. It should not be interpreted as a negative perception of the standards themselves.