Article

"But I wanted to appear happy": How using arts-informed and mixed methods approaches complicate qualitatively driven research on culture shock

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Abstract

The study of culture shock has been limited in terms of the use of mixed methods research and arts-informed approaches. The purpose of this research was to expand upon the understanding of culture shock through the use of a mixed methods research design that included arts-informed, qualitative, and quantitative procedures. This study used a concurrent parallel design where all three data types were collected simultaneously, analyzed separately, and then analyzed together. It is based on an information-rich sampling of 10 undergraduate students participating in a short-term study abroad program based in the United States of America that traveled to a South American country. All data were collected throughout the duration of the program: self-portraits and explanatory artist statements, open-ended reflective journals, and responses to a modified version of the Revised Sociocultural Adaptation Scale. The analyses of each of these sets of data (i.e., the initial analysis stage) revealed a complexity of emotions that students experienced as part of their culture shock, the impact of interacting with others, and their heightened experience of culture shock upon returning home. The integration of these findings resulted in a reconsideration of the qualitative data to highlight the importance of interactions with locals while abroad as being particularly important to alleviate culture shock. The article concludes by considering the implications of the arts-informed data and the use of a mixed methods research design for the interpretation of the qualitative data and for qualitative researchers in general.

Keywords: arts-informed research, mixed methods research, qualitative research, integration, culture shock

Culture shock is a phenomenon with which many people have some familiarity, whether through cross-cultural encounters at home, or through traveling to other countries. In a cross-cultural encounter, culture shock is defined as the reactions to "the loss of perceptual reinforcements from one's own culture, to new cultural stimuli which have little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of new and diverse experiences" (Adler, 1975, p. 13). Culture shock then is the result of a gap in one's expectations about (Pitts, 2009), or the distance between (Mumford, 1998; Searle & Ward, 1990), the cultures involved. Large gaps in these expectations then can have a significant impact on one's experience with another culture (Vande Berg, 2007).

In general, culture shock is part of a larger process where one's expectations (Pitts, 2009), beliefs about the other culture (Mumford, 1998), and the characteristics of one's interactions with another culture impact the extent of the culture shock experienced. Then, the person responds to the new culture (e.g., accepting others' values into one's own belief systems, changing one's perceptions of the other culture) in response to these feelings of culture shock (Pitts, 2009; Ward & Kennedy, 1994). This process of culture shock is repeated with new cross-cultural interactions in the future (Pitts, 2009), and, in the case of traveling abroad, when the person returns home and must adjust back to life there (Gaw, 2000).

Literature on culture shock dates back to the 1950s when the focus was on the mental welfare of immigrants and refugees (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008). Original studies also addressed the negative effects (e.g., depression, anxiety) of cross-cultural movement for international education, immigration, and work (Zhou et al., 2008). More recent studies no longer characterize individuals as passive victims of the inevitable trauma (i.e., culture shock) that these cross-cultural interactions produce (e.g., Wielkiewicz & Turkowski, 2010). Instead, people who travel abroad are seen as proactive in their ability to prepare for culture shock (Zhou et al., 2008), as well as in their abilities to manage and to change while experiencing it (e.g., Pitts, 2009). The study of culture shock has also shifted to investigating the impact of motivation to learn about other cultures (e.g., Rudmin, 2009), understanding culture shock within a larger process of acculturation, or adjusting to new cultures (Berry, 2006; Ward & Kennedy, 1994), and identifying how experiences with culture shock extend much earlier than international travel to cross-cultural interactions with immigrants in one's home country (Moufakkir, 2013).

Culture shock has been studied for many reasons. For example, researchers have investigated the impact of culture shock on the use of student services at higher educational institutions (Gaw, 2000), and the potential for an increase in depression and alcohol use (Gaw, 2000). Experiences of culture shock also might positively impact one's self-learning and develop new value systems (Paola & Lemmer, 2013). In attempting to predict how interpersonal relationships impact culture shock, research has shown that relationships with other nationals while abroad (Ward & Kennedy, 1994) as well as high involvement with people of the host culture (Chang, Yuan, & Chuang, 2013) promote better adjustment to new cultural environments.

Research on culture shock in relation to international educational experiences specifically has been used for several purposes including changing instructional pedagogy and identifying specific strategies to aid in the adjustment upon returning home. Some research suggests that local communities and/or institutions that host international programs need to adjust their practices in order to address the culture shock of their visitors. For example, Sayers and Franklin (2008), instructors in human resource development, changed their course assignments and pedagogy in order to address the culture shock experienced by international students. Other research has suggested specific strategies to help with the culture shock experienced upon returning home, such as targeting outreach for counseling and supportive services (Gaw, 2000) and hosting more group-based discussions to share with others any difficulties that they are having with adjusting to being back at home (Wielkiewicz & Turkowski, 2010).

Despite the long history of research on culture shock, there is a clear methodological gap in the literature. Much of the earlier work was qualitatively based (e.g., Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960). By the 1990s, there was a significant increase in quantitative research, particularly around the development of instruments to measure the effects and outcomes of culture shock (e.g., Kelley & Meyers, 1995; Mumford, 1998; Searle & Ward, 1990). Some researchers have combined qualitative and quantitative procedures through ethnography (e.g., Jackson, 2008) and case study (e.g., Medina-López-Portillo, 2004), but they were more focused on the issue of cultural competence than culture shock directly. Other researchers have taken a practitioner action research focus (e.g., Sayers & Franklin, 2008). There are limited studies that specifically investigate culture shock utilizing either mixed methods or arts-informed approaches. The implications of using limited approaches in any line of inquiry result in investigating a problem from only a single angle. As a result, we can only investigate information that is connected to those lines of inquiry. By instead engaging in multiple forms of inquiry, we can explore information that which is not accessible through a single approach alone.

To address this methodological gap, I designed a mixed methods research study that used arts-informed, qualitative, and quantitative approaches to investigate the experience of culture shock among undergraduate students in a short-term international study abroad program. Specifically, I collected reflective journals, self-portraits, and responses to a quantitative instrument from students throughout the course of a study abroad program. The purpose of the study was to enhance understandings of culture shock vis-à-vis methods not commonly used in the literature. Based on the preliminary results of that study, I argue that mixed methods research designs that utilize arts-informed research approaches can serve to complicate and to extend the analyses of qualitatively driven research.

First, I provide a brief discussion of three frameworks upon which this research is based: arts-informed inquiry, mixed methods research, and dialectics. Then, I detail the context of the program and students involved with this research. Next, I discuss the methodological design and the procedures for data collection and analysis. This research draws from several rounds of analysis of the data, which I grouped into the initial analyses of each data set and the integration analysis (which involved the comparative analysis of the results from the previous stage). I provide a discussion of some of the relevant results. I spend particular time on the integrated analysis because this is where one can see the impact that the other data sets had on the interpretation and use of the qualitative data. Then, I conclude with some of the implications of this study for culture shock and for qualitative researchers. I also address several of the limitations of this research to be considered when interpreting these results and in future studies.

Frameworks

This research is based on three frameworks: arts-informed research, mixed methods research, and dialectics. These frameworks shaped the methodological design, data collection, and analysis procedures.

Arts-Informed Research

Arts-informed research is inquiry in which art influences but is not central. It could be considered an "enhancement" or its own method within a qualitative research study (Cole & Knowles, 2008). Conversely, arts-based research is characterized by the centrality of artistic processes to the overall inquiry (Austin & Forinash, 2005; Leavy, 2009; Ledger & Edwards, 2011; Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gouzouasis, & Grauer, 2006; Slattery, 2003).

Arts-informed research shares many of the same concerns for integrity and quality as arts-based researchers do, such as the importance of the researcher's self-reflection throughout the process, and being open to the creative process in using art (Cole, 2004). Arts-informed research could

address Ardra Cole's (2004) call for "words plump and dripping with life juice, compelling and evocative images, representations that drew readers and viewers in to experience the research 'text'" (p. 16). However, arts-informed inquiry differs in its concerns for accessibility for the audience. Whereas arts-based research can create art for the sake of scholarship, or more standalone art pieces based in extensive artistic training (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2007), arts-informed inquiry does not produce art work for this purpose. Instead, these researchers are more concerned with the advancement of knowledge than aesthetically pleasing artifacts (Cole & Knowles, 2008), or "accessible art" as Cole calls it (Cole, 2004).

Arts-informed inquiry was used in this study for several reasons. First, I believe that this approach to the study of culture shock can help make the literature on this concept more accessible (Ledger & Edwards, 2011). Second, the use of artistic practices can uncover aspects of a phenomenon not accessible through other means (Bagnoli, 2009; Ledger & Edwards, 2011). Third, artistic practices have been shown to help individual process difficult experiences when they create the art themselves (Elliott, 2011; Ledger & Edwards, 2011). For example, psychological research studies have utilized visual methods to address pathologies, to identify stages of development, to assess emotional state and needs, and to provide therapy (Bagnoli, 2009). It was for these reasons that I designed this study of culture shock to include an arts-informed component.

Mixed Methods Research

I conceptualize mixed methods research as the intentional mixture of multiple research approaches (e.g., arts-based or arts-informed, qualitative, quantitative) within a single study (Shannon-Baker, 2015). Mixed methods research designs are generally used in order to explore more complexities of a phenomenon than might have been possible by using only one approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Morse & Niehaus, 2009). As discussed above, much of the culture shock research to date has used either qualitative or quantitative research approaches. I speculate that the use of multiple methods in a single study holds promise for expanding the pre-existing frameworks for culture shock. It was for this reason that I chose an overall mixed methods research design for this study.

Dialectics

The dialectical perspective is characterized as a "respectful dialogue" (Greene & Hall, 2010, p.124) among theoretical paradigms, conceptual frameworks, data sets, and other parts of the inquiry process depending upon how the researcher implements the perspective (Shannon-Baker, 2015). Dialectics has been used in mixed methods research based on the belief that diverse perspectives are critically important in investigating the complexity of a phenomenon (Greene & Caracelli, 2003). In particular, dialectics emphasizes divergence (Mathison, 1988) within the data and new conclusions that are born out of this dialogue (Shannon-Baker, 2015).

In particular, dialectics informed this study at the integration stage by the careful consideration of how the results of the data sets informed one another, and in how to integrate the text and visual data. Also, given that dialectics emphasizes that multiple perspectives of a phenomenon have something to offer the inquiry (Shannon-Baker, 2015), I used both my own analysis of the data and students' own interpretations. Finally, a dialectic approach, considering issues of validity, encouraged me to discuss any potential divergences, and why they might be there.

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Research Context

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The research discussed here is based on a short-term (10-day) study abroad program to a South American country. The program was embedded in a semester-long course about the educational system and culture of the country. This course was based at a university in the Midwestern United

States of America. While abroad, the students volunteered, observed, and taught in primary schools, and engaged in culturally based tourist activities.

As a co-leader in the program, I helped to recruit and to select students for the program. Another co-leader, not involved in the study, was in charge of organizing the course syllabus and grading assignments. Although I led two discussions in the course, I assumed the role of a participant-observer during most classes (Patton, 2002). I characterize my role in this way because I was not part of the student group studying abroad, but could take part in their conversations.

Of the 18 students in the study abroad program, 12 agreed to participate in the study, and 10 students' work were analyzed; the two were excluded because they did not complete all the course assignments. Of these 10 students, eight were education majors, whereas the remainder were from various other degree programs. Two students were male, and two were students of color. This sample was based on a "concurrent, identical sampling design" because the same sample was used for the collection of each data set (Collins, Onwuegbuzie, & Jiao, 2007). The sampling strategy used was "intensity sampling," which uses "information-rich cases" (Patton, 2002, p. 234). Due to my familiarity with the students and their international program, I was better able to collect genuine and rich data than if I had been an outsider. This also helped to collect more valid information about the students' experiences of culture shock, which can be a sensitive topic. Additionally, my own experiences with culture shock related to my varied international involvement stressed the importance of having someone to relate to when sharing the difficult and overwhelming nature of culture shock.

Methodological Design and Procedures

The study used a concurrent parallel mixed methods research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) that combined arts-informed, qualitative, and quantitative data. The goal of this study was to identify a more complex understanding of students' experiences of culture shock in international education programs through the use of multiple methodological approaches. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the affiliated university.

Concurrent Parallel Mixed Methods Research

In a concurrent parallel mixed methods research design, researchers collect various types of data using multiple methods at the same time in order to be analyzed separately at first and then integrated and analyzed further later (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). That these sets of data are collected at the same time and do not influence the collection of the other data sets is what distinguishes this design from other mixed methods research designs. This type of design is generally used to investigate divergences and convergences in the data sets (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). I also used this design because, due to the short length of the program, collecting the various data sequentially would not have been feasible.

Data Collection Procedures

All of the data collected were from students' reflective journals written before, during, and after their time abroad. The journals comprised open-ended questions (qualitative data), a prompt to draw a self-portrait (arts-informed data), and a quantitative survey. Other written prompts and class activities that did not directly address culture shock were not included in this research.

Qualitative data. The qualitative data took the form of open-ended questions in order to allow the students to discuss what was important to them. Before traveling, the students were asked to reflect on their expectations about the trip and any anxieties they had. Then, within 2 weeks of returning, students were asked to reflect on how well they were adjusting back to being home. These prompts provided a forum to gain insight into the students' experiences, to help them work

through difficult experiences (Hatch, 2002), and to maintain contact with each student throughout the program. Individual interviews were not possible due to time restrictions.

Arts-informed data. Shortly after the trip began, students were asked to draw a self-portrait depicting their emotions at that time. The students were asked to include an "artist statement" that elaborated on their artistic choices of representation, including color choice and the use of symbols. The purpose of the artist statement was to create a space for the students to provide an analysis of their own portraits because individual interviews about their portraits were not possible. In general, self-portraits have been used in studies to help participants think more holistically about themselves (e.g., Bagnoli, 2009; Muri, 2007). For example, self-portraits have been used to help participants condense their experiences, emotions, and identities into visual metaphors (Bagnoli, 2009), and to develop more awareness of their own emotions (Muri, 2007). Images also have been used to get beyond typical responses given in interviews (Bagnoli, 2009).

Quantitative data. The quantitative data came from a slightly modified version of the Revised Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS-R) (Wilson, 2013), originally developed by Ward and Kennedy (1999). This 41-item scale was designed to assess students' adaptation to culturally based activities and skills such as understanding humor, being able to relate to the local population, communication, and so forth. It consisted of a 5-point rating scale asking students to identify the level of difficulty experienced (*none* to *extreme difficulty*) with each activity/skill. This scale generated scores that yielded a strong internal consistency, $\alpha = .92$ (Wilson, 2013).

The scale also included an item asking students to quantify their overall feelings of culture shock on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 represented no culture shock at all, and 10 represented extremely high levels of culture shock. I provided a definition of culture shock to establish a consistent frame of this concept among the students. This item was added to obtain a general sense on how the students would quantify these feelings and more directly address culture shock than the scale itself offered. As part of a journal, students took this scale online and wrote about why and how they responded to the scale.

Analysis Procedures

The analyses reported here took place in two main stages: the initial stage and the integration stage. After all of the arts-informed, qualitative, and quantitative data were collected, I analyzed each separately (described in more detail in the next section). Then, for the integration stage, I consolidated themes through the use of a side-by-side analysis matrix. Additional integration strategies were later applied and those findings are beyond the scope of this article.

Initial analyses. First, I analyzed the arts-informed data (e.g., the self-portraits and artist statements) using the critical visual methodology (Guillemin & Westall, 2008; Rose, 2001). This method of analysis is based on three principles. First, the researcher must take the images seriously, not as a "distraction" from "real science" (Prosser, 1998, p. 98). Second, the researcher should discuss the images in terms of the context of their creation because "visual representations both depend on and produce social inclusions and exclusions" (Rose, 2001, p. 16). Third, the analyses of the images must be situated within the context of the analyzer(s). In other words, the analysis needs to be discussed in the context of how the subjectivity of the analyzer influenced it. The following are questions from this methodology that were used (Guillemin & Westall, 2008):

- What is being shown? What are the components of the image? How are they arranged?
- What relationships are established between the components of the image?
- What use is made of color? What colors are used? What is the significance to the drawer of the colors used?
- What do the different components of the image signify? What is being represented?
- What knowledges are being deployed?

- Whose knowledges are excluded from this representation? (p. 125)

Using these questions, I analyzed the self-portraits for themes.

Then, I reread the images with their artist statements. I was interested in how students wrote about their self-portraits. For example, why did some students choose more abstract portrayals of themselves? Did the students use color intentionally? I used these artist statements as a student-generated analysis of their own self-portraits. As a result, I compared these statements to my own analysis using the critical visual methodology.

Next, I analyzed the text-based qualitative data (i.e., the open-ended journals) using a general, interpretive-based approach with open coding (Hatch, 2002). I used a "contextualizing" strategy to ensure that codes were grounded in their original contexts (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 253). This approach to coding utilizes a journaling process on the impressions gleaned while reading and rereading the data (Hatch, 2002). After reading through the data, I read through again for potential themes, keeping a journal of my thoughts. Then, I attempted to code the data, refining and condensing the codes and recoding as I went along.

Finally, once the qualitative data were analyzed, the quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS. Due to the small number of students in the sample from a quantitative perspective, I was not able to use inferential statistics. Thus, the focus here is primarily on descriptive statistics, that is students' overall scores, and the mean and mode for specific prompts in the scale.

Integration analysis. For the integration analysis, I created a matrix of the major themes or important points from each of the data sets—arts-informed, qualitative, and quantitative. An example of this matrix is presented below in Table 1. I considered what, if any, representations of each theme were present in the other data sets. For example, was the landscape of the town in which the students lived (a recurring image in students' self-portraits) also represented in the qualitative and/or quantitative data? I considered whether there were other interpretations of the themes, and its frequency across the data sets. Then, I identified where there were similarities, differences, and/or conflicting representations among the data sets, such as one set identifying no or "not much" culture shock, while another set indicated greater culture shock. Finally, I speculated on why these divergences might have occurred and the potential nature of the relationships among data sets. Although there were a number of themes from each set that provoked intriguing discussions with the other data sets, due to space constraints, I focused on a few examples in this article.

Table 1

Example of the Integration Matrix

	Arts-informed data	Qualitative data	Quantitative data
Theme from and notes from other data sets	*Contrasts City v. town	Pace in city was too fast; differed with coming home	64.7% felt very to extremely competent in adjusting to pace of life
	(Not represented in self-portraits)	Compared US and foreign country; large impact on reverse culture shock	(Not in the survey)

*Indicates the origin of the theme used to analyze across the data sets

Results and Discussion

Initial Analyses

In this section, I discuss the findings after the initial stage of analysis when each of the three data sets (i.e., arts-informed, qualitative, and quantitative) were analyzed separately. The themes found in my own and the students' interpretation of their self-portraits revealed the importance of highlighting contrasting features in their experience and emotional reactions, their desire to "appear happy" in their portraits, and the powerful impact that the landscape (and locals' relationships with it) had on the students. To represent differences between my own interpretations and those of the students, I use quotes around the words, phrases, and statements that originated directly from the students' discussions of their self-portraits. All student names in this analysis are pseudonyms. The themes that I found in analyzing the students' written journals were explaining the potential causes for their initial feelings of culture shock, the impact of interactions with others, and experiencing strong culture shock upon returning home. Finally, the quantitative data identified that students felt very to extremely confident in their ability to respond to emotions and build relationships, that most felt competent to some extent in the language, and that most felt mild to moderate culture shock while abroad.

Arts-informed data. Students used three recurring themes in their self-portraits: highlighting contrasts in their experiences, wanting to appear "happy," and the landscape.

Highlighting contrasts. Most students displayed various contrasts in their self-portraits. These were based in emotions (e.g., "happy" vs. "sad" and/or "confused"), comparing local and U.S. children, and between the small town in which they spent most of their time and the city that they visited before returning to the United States of America. In some cases, these contrasts were explicit, such as a smiling face with tears. In other cases, like James's portrait (Figure 1), differing colors were used to signify a range of emotions.

Figure 1. James's self-portrait**.**

In his self-portrait, James used yellow to refer to his "excitement and nerves" about interacting with locals. Red shading on one half of his face refers to the busyness and "fire" of the city the group visited. In contrast, he described the town in which they stayed as "more rural and calm," the people "sweet, kind and welcoming." To represent the "calm and cool sense" of the town, he used blue shading for one half of his face. Then, he used a permanent marker for his hair and upper head to signify "the society [he has] been raised in and how it lingers and creates somewhat

of a disconnect." Finally, he used purple shading to signify his nervousness about being out of the country for the first time.

I speculate that the recurrence of drawing contrasts reflects students' process of attempting to make sense of their new cultural environment. In some cases, these contrasts highlighted how their preconceptions about the local community were inaccurate. For example, students wrote about how they expected to encounter the same level of apathy toward school that they have found in classrooms in the United States of America. However, they instead found that the classrooms abroad were filled with students eager to learn and very active. Thus, the self-portraits became a space for students to think about these occurrences, and possibly reconcile their expectations with what they actually witnessed and experienced.

"Appearing happy." This desire to portray themselves as "happy" was very strong; all self-portraits had some kind of happy or positive imagery such as a smile or open arms. Molly's self-portrait, for example, shows her smiling but with tears coming down her cheeks (Figure 2). Tears coming from both of her eyes symbolized her "sadness" and "weary" feelings "about the people [she met]. Some of the living situations and the looks of the kids caused [her] to feel sadness for them because of [her] knowledge of how many students live in America." Faith, a friend of Molly, also depicted a tear on her face in her self-portrait.

Molly provided a possible explanation portraying herself as both "happy" and "sad." In her artist statement, she explained that she was showing "appreciation," and that she was "grateful" for the opportunity to go abroad to help others. Although several portraits also had visual cues or used color to signify emotions such as sadness, confusion, and being overwhelmed, even these signifiers were portrayed alongside other emotions.

Figure 2. Molly's self-portrait.
Note. The box above her head is where she penciled her name, which was blocked out for anonymity.

This theme in particular is complex and warrants future research. I would characterize my own experiences of culture shock as inclusive of a variety of emotions including a strong sense of belonging and feeling intensely like an unwelcome outsider. Thus, my own experiences might have drawn me to the instances when students talked about experiencing a variety of emotions in their artist statements. However, the literature on culture shock supports a complexity of emotions experienced by people during and after cross-cultural interactions (e.g., Burgoon, 1993; Furnham, 2010).

Depicting the local landscape. Finally, the landscape of the location clearly impacted the students—more than one half included some reference to the mountains and/or valleys in the area. These also served to contrast against the bustling city that they visited, and perhaps also their home cities. For example, in Desiree's self-portrait, she made her shoulders resemble the mountains that they saw in town (Figure 3). In her artist statement, Desiree explained how these mountains symbolized the difficult paths that the local people had to go through, particularly regarding their education. She also explained that her depiction of the mountains as a body part was intended to signify the local people's connection to the land and how it was "embedded" in their culture.

Desiree depicted herself as a series of puzzle pieces to portray the different aspects of her identity: the desire to travel and the desire to teach. She reported that she went on the trip to "confirm" whether teaching abroad should be her career choice—hence the question marks for eyes. I also speculated that what she saw in her future was unknown, and this thus influenced her use of question marks for her eyes in particular. The "rising sun" in her chest symbolized the "new possibilities that are on the horizon for the students" that she met. Her "braid and gold beads around [her neck were used] to convey [her] feeling of belonging" in the local community. Her half smile "communicates wanting more," or how her smile "can only be whole" once she returns.

The strong connection between the local community and their land was a theme that was repeated throughout the program's coursework. Students read about it in a novel, where the heroine returns to and accepts her indigenous routes by becoming closer to the land. I believe this stuck the students, and, thus, was represented throughout their self-portraits, because it seems to contrast their experiences in their urban-based university. In fact, students only referred to the landscape when representing the town in which they stayed (as opposed to the capital city that they visited).
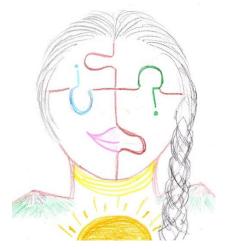

Figure 3. Desiree's self-portrait.

Qualitative data. The student journals revealed three themes regarding how students' talked about their experiences abroad and with culture shock: explaining their initial feelings of culture

shock, documenting their emotional reactions to their relationships with locals and their peers, and identifying a stronger experience of reverse culture shock when they returned home.

Causes for their initial culture shock. Although most students described a happy "excitement" upon first entering the country, they also identified feelings of confusion, anger, and being overwhelmed. They argued that these feelings of culture shock were the result of different aspects to their experience and beliefs. I identified three subthemes that they identified as the cause of their culture shock: pre-conceived notions of what they would experience; the drastic difference of the landscape abroad compared to their home cities; and other barriers based on limited foreign language skills, the beliefs of the society one had "been raised in" back home, and "cultural and social gaps." For example, Michelle discussed being held back from interacting with others as a result of her effort to photograph her experiences. Faith described how the landscape seemed "unreal." She and others noted their surprise and confusion at how connected the local people were to the land. For other students like Gina, their low expectations for the English level of the students were met with "surprise" at how much the students actually knew.

Documenting their interactions with others. In talking about their interactions with locals and peers in the program, the students reflected on their emotional reactions to these relationships, and how being "outside of their comfort zones" positively impacted their experiences of culture shock. Through their interactions with locals, they noted feeling very "welcomed" and "appreciated." Desiree revealed that she wanted to feel like she "belonged" despite spending much of her time being guided and translated for when going out to eat or interacting with others. A number of students talked about the "pride" that the locals had for their country and their indigenous identities. In Molly's case, for example, she experienced difficulties reconciling how "content [the children were] with how they lived," that they seemed "unfazed" despite living in poverty. This led me to believe that Molly had anticipated finding the local children to be sad or upset in some way about their lives.

The students also wrote about how they "stepped outside of their comfort zones" to trust the "small amount" of foreign language skills that they had, to participate in events, or to interact with locals despite their "struggle to communicate." For Molly, stepping outside of her comfort zone helped her culture shock "get easier" over time. Finally, a number of students discussed how their relationships with their peers grew stronger. James, in particular, discussed his belief that he "would become an acquaintance of all, but not really a 'friend' of any" of the others in the group. Instead, he found that "the experience of being out of their comfort zones and yet being together created a bond."

Strong feelings of reverse culture shock. Finally, the last category relates to experiences of culture shock coming home, also known as reverse culture shock. Indeed, I was surprised to find that most students, even those who wrote that they did not experience culture shock initially, identified having strong feelings of culture shock upon returning. They described this reverse culture shock as feeling "strange," "overwhelmed," "shocking," "weird," and "disoriented." A number of students discussed their shock at the "large bright screens everywhere" and the drastic change in prices in the airports. Desiree reported that she "felt like a stranger in [her] own life." Faith wrote about how it was strange to hear English in her classes and be "able to tell what everyone was talking about." For James, the depth of the relationships between the children with whom he interacted while abroad, how they "loved each other in the most connected way," had a profound impact on him. He wrote, "It made me question the validity and depth of any relationships I held back home!"

For the education students, they seemed to experience the most difficulty "adjusting" back to U.S. classrooms for their student teaching. Seth wrote, "Students here lack the respect that students [they met abroad] had for their teacher." Molly noted that while abroad, "students were more

willing to work hard in the classroom" despite having "one teacher for two grades." Faith had the hardest time with adjusting to the different reactions from students on her presence in the classroom. She wrote that she had been used to being greeted by every student, but in her student teaching, "not a single student even looked up to say hello. [It] made [her] miss the reaction [she] would receive when we would visit a school" while abroad.

Quantitative data. According to the SCAS-R, all students felt that they were very competent (4) or extremely competent (5) in "accurately interpreting and responding to emotions" and "building and maintaining relationships." Most students (76.5%) felt either slightly ($n = 5$) or moderately ($n = 8$) competent in understanding and speaking the foreign language. The same percent of students felt up to moderately competent in reading and writing in the foreign language. In terms of overall culture shock, 41.2% ($n = 7$) of students felt mild culture shock, and 35.3% ($n = 6$) felt moderate culture shock while taking the survey at or near the end of their time abroad. Most students (71%) had seldom ($n = 9$) or no ($n = 3$) experience working cross-culturally before the study abroad program. Similarly, most had seldom ($n = 6$) or no ($n = 6$) work with people whose primary language used was not English. It is important to note that most students in the class took the survey anonymously ($n = 17$). As a result, it is not possible to pull out the data for those students whose journals were analyzed for this study. This should be taken into account when interpreting these results.

Integration Analysis

This integration analysis was based on examining how each of the data sets supported, did not support, or even contradicted each of the themes that I found during the initial stage of analysis. This resulted in a large matrix comparing themes and notable quantitative findings across the data sets, all of which cannot be discussed here. Instead, I have chosen an example of a theme or notable finding from each set of data (i.e., arts-informed, qualitative, and quantitative). The examples discussed here are intended to highlight the complex interplay among interpreting the data sets in order to explore the phenomenon of culture shock.

Arts-informed theme: highlighting contrasts. The theme of "highlighting contrasts" from the arts-informed data had differing representations in the other data sets. For example, one of the contrasts highlighted in the self-portraits was the difference in the way of life between the town and city visited. An example of this can be seen in Figure 4, a detail taken from Helene's self-portrait. Although students wrote about an "overwhelming" difference in pace between the city and town life, 64.7% of students felt very to extremely confident in adapting to the change in pace ($n = 8$). This discrepancy could be due to a number of factors. It is unclear whether the students responded to the survey considering the change in place from home to the foreign country in general or between the city and town. It is possible that they quantified this skill based generally on the former. Similarly, although some students noted difficulty in getting back to the pace of their "normal" lives upon returning, this was not captured in the quantitative data.

Interestingly, the contrasts between the United States of America and the country that they visited were not captured in students' self-portraits (with the exception of James's self-portrait discussed above in Figure 1). A re-examination of the qualitative data showed that many of these comparisons were made when they mentally began considering home, which seems to have occurred after the self-portraits were assigned or once they returned home. For example, Faith noted in her final journal that she did not even listen to U.S. American music while she was abroad. I speculate that the time abroad was both too short and very busy for the students to be as homesick as they would have been if they had been alone or away for a much longer period of time.
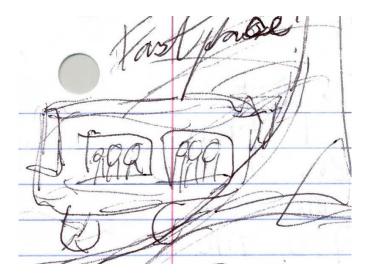
Figure 4. Detail of Helene's self-portrait.

Note. This detail shows a crowded bus in the city with the phrase "fast pase!" [sic] written above.

Qualitative theme: interactions with others. One theme from the qualitative analysis that had complex relationships with the other data was the students' interactions with others. Based on the qualitative data, the students had unique experiences in their interactions between the two groups, which supports the literature on culture shock that emphasizes the importance of providing supportive interactions with both groups in order to alleviate some culture shock (e.g., Chang et al., 2013; Pitts, 2009). However, the extent to which this was supported or addressed in the other data sets is varied.

Notably, in the SCAS-R, some prompts are unclear as to which interactions the students' should have been considering—those with one another or with locals (cf. "interacting at social events"). For example, did the students feel very or extremely competent in their ability to "build and maintain relationships" with their peers or with locals? As a result, it is difficult to interpret how students quantified their abilities to interact with certain groups of people while abroad.

Examining the arts-informed data revealed no explicit references to students' interactions with their U.S. American peers. Instead, their interactions with locals, and particularly their desire to blend in was a represented in many students' self-portraits. Given that the students completed their self-portraits relatively early in their time abroad compared to the bulk of the other data, these findings led me to question whether the sense of belonging is only particular to their relationships with locals, or at least initially. Perhaps these interactions are more critical in students' initial stages of culture shock, and their peer group relationships become more important later.

Quantitative finding: moderate competency in the foreign language. Finally, a result of the quantitative analysis that provoked intriguing dialogue with the other data sets concerned how students' quantified their competencies in the foreign language used while abroad. As discussed above, most students considered themselves up to moderately competent in their understanding and use of the foreign language. However, the data from the self-portraits indicate students' struggles with the language, even depicting "random letters" to show how they felt when locals spoke like in a detail from Andrea's portrait (Figure 5). The qualitative data indicated that this difficulty with the foreign language was a significant problem to students at first. With time, however, they felt more comfortable with some of their language skills and also their nonverbal communication skills. Thus, it is possible that the quantitative survey captured the result of the

development of their language abilities. They likely felt more comfortable with these skills at the end of their time abroad when the survey was administered.
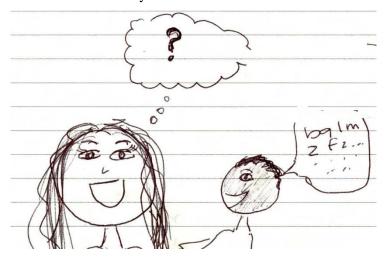

Figure 5. Detail from Andrea's self-portrait.
Note. This detail shows Andrea on the left having difficulty attempting to understand what a child on the right is saying to her.

Conclusions

In this article, I have discussed some of the preliminary findings from a pilot study examining undergraduate students' experiences with culture shock related to their participation in a study abroad program. I designed this mixed methods research study using arts-informed, qualitative, and quantitative approaches in order to explore aspects of culture shock not typically discussed in the literature, considering that mixed methods research and arts-informed designs generally have not been used. Although I used various methods, I characterized the pilot study as qualitatively driven given my own training in this form of inquiry, and that all of the data were nested within the students' journals. Thus, I saw the benefits of using various approaches to provoke further lines of inquiry, and exploring the nuances that only imagery from the self-portraits or the integrated analyses that mixed methods research only could provide.

Overall, this multi-pronged approach provided a more nuanced understanding of culture shock, including indicating the possibility of different aspects of the experience of culture shock being more salient at various times throughout the program. As discussed above, the arts-informed data provided a more complex insight into the potential impact of students' interactions with locals in a foreign country during the beginning stages of the trip. The qualitative data then provided a narrative of how students worked through their experiences, including those interactions and the elements that promoted their development. Finally, the quantitative data allowed for the quantification of specific social skills, possibly showing the result of the change over time of students' language competency. The affordances of each of these approaches are importantly tied to how they were designed and when they were implemented. However, each approach offered a unique perspective on students' experiences of culture shock.

In particular, the arts-informed data showcased the importance of cultural immersion and a sense of belonging to the local community that was not as strongly captured via the qualitative data. In the self-portraits, one can see the students literally take on cultural elements such as clothing and hair styles in an attempt to mitigate the "obviousness" of their being from the United States of America (e.g., Figure 3). The arts-informed data also uncovered a complexity behind the "happiness" and "excitement" that seemed to proliferate the students' journals. The theme of

"wanting to portray themselves as happy" (despite also experiencing a range of other emotions even simultaneously) was an intriguing inference given that the literature on culture shock does not contain much discussion of the impact of how students are perceived by others. In the students' self-portraits, these contrasting emotions were juxtaposed on their faces, whereas they represented them more subtly in their journals.

It is pertinent to discuss some of the study limitations. For example, the analysis of the self-portraits provided here might be considered superficial. However, this is a result of my own hesitancy to assign meaning to the students' images. I have attempted to rely heavily on their own interpretations while also offering my own speculations. More in-depth writing or interviews might have established a deeper dialogue about their experiences, as well as any impact that drawing the self-portraits might have had on the students' understandings about their experiences abroad. Indeed, not including interviews in this study might be considered an example of "observation bias" under the argument that without them, I have collected an "insufficient" amount of data from the students (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007, pp. 235-236)

In this study, the arts-informed methods and the integration of all three forms of data in a mixed methods research design opened up new lines of inquiry on the topic. In some cases, comparing the data sets prompted a further investigation of the qualitative data. These approaches can help to uncover nuances missed via qualitative coding by providing more context and other ways of looking at the same problem or topic. The combination of these three methods strengthened the study's ability to capture more information about this phenomenon called culture shock. This combination also seemed to exemplify several purposes for using a mixed methods research design, such as to identify complementarity or to expand upon pre-existing literature (Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). Thus, arts-informed and mixed methods research approaches have much to offer qualitative researchers.

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