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Objective

Evaluate student knowledge gain and skill development from participation in a study abroad opportunity.



Introduction

Short-term, faculty-led, field-based international learning experiences facilitate student development, globalization, and global competitiveness.

A need for globally minded employees is necessary.

Due to lacking international experiences, companies have been shown to lose international business opportunities.

Cross-cultural-skills, global understanding, and career skills have improved after participation in a study abroad program.

Employees with international experience are good communicators, team players, work well in diverse groups, and are good problem solvers.

There is a need for students to communicate the benefits of their experience to potential employers.

A need for employers to become educated on what employees with international experience can do to improve the company.



Materials & Methods

14 day faculty-led equine business study learning experience in Ireland (n=16).

Once arrived, students participated in cultural activities and educational stops to farms, a university, feed research company, horse produce development company, and event facilities.

Students participated in daily journaling, group blogging, and equine and agriculture business lectures.

After returning, students completed a post-test, career skillset questionnaire, and a global awareness questionnaire.

Data analyzed with Microsoft excel and GLM of SAS. Means using LSMEANS were separated with PDIFF. Results significant when P<0.05.

Results

Figure 1. Student demographics.

Demographics	
Female	81.25%
Male	18.75%
Sophomore	56%
Junior/Senior	31.5%
Graduated	12.5%
Avg. GPA	3.35
Hometown Size <10,000	63.75%
Career Goal : Veterinarian	50%
Career Goal: Animal worker/non veterinarian	43.75%

Figure 2. Student favorable responses to discussing experience in either an interview or on a resume.

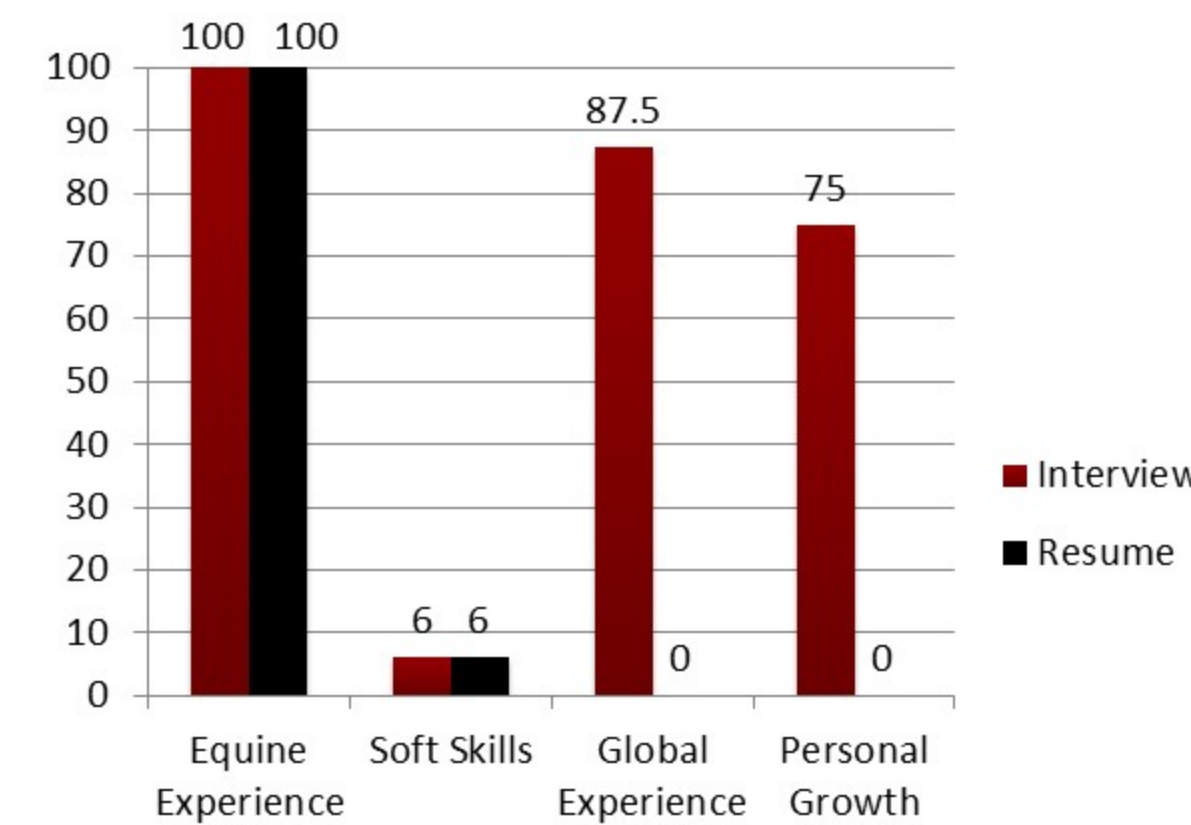


Figure 3. Example of blog entry.

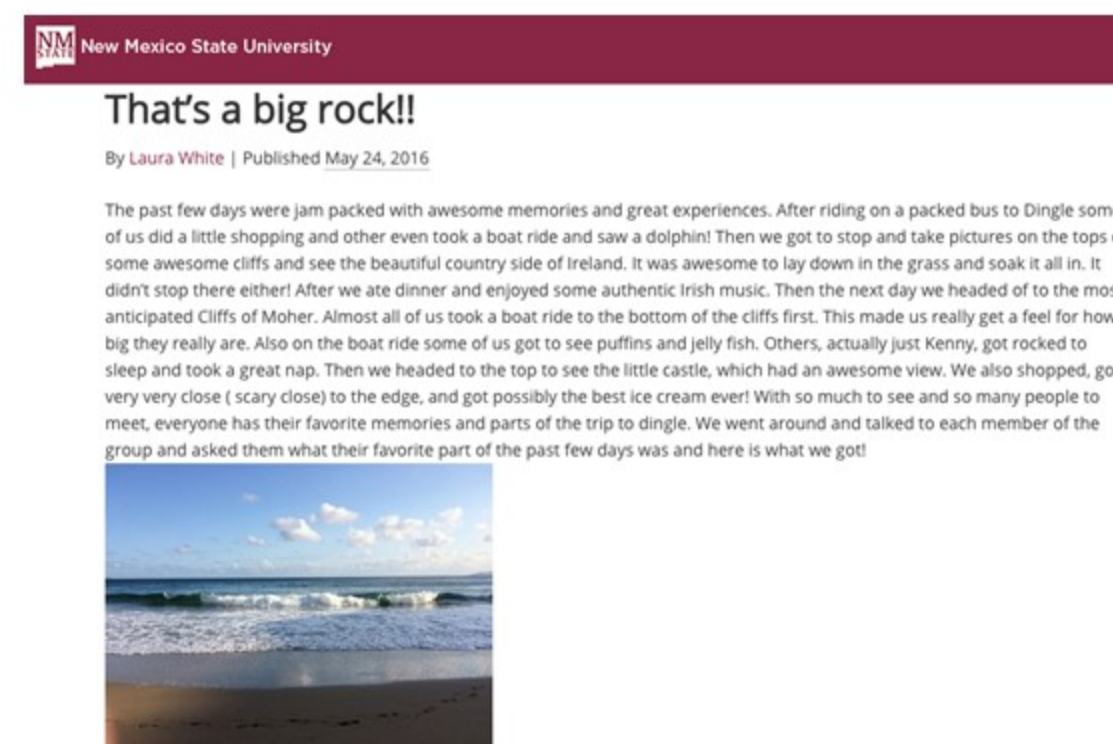


Figure 4. Student responses regarding the importance of career skills to future and enhancement by study abroad experience.

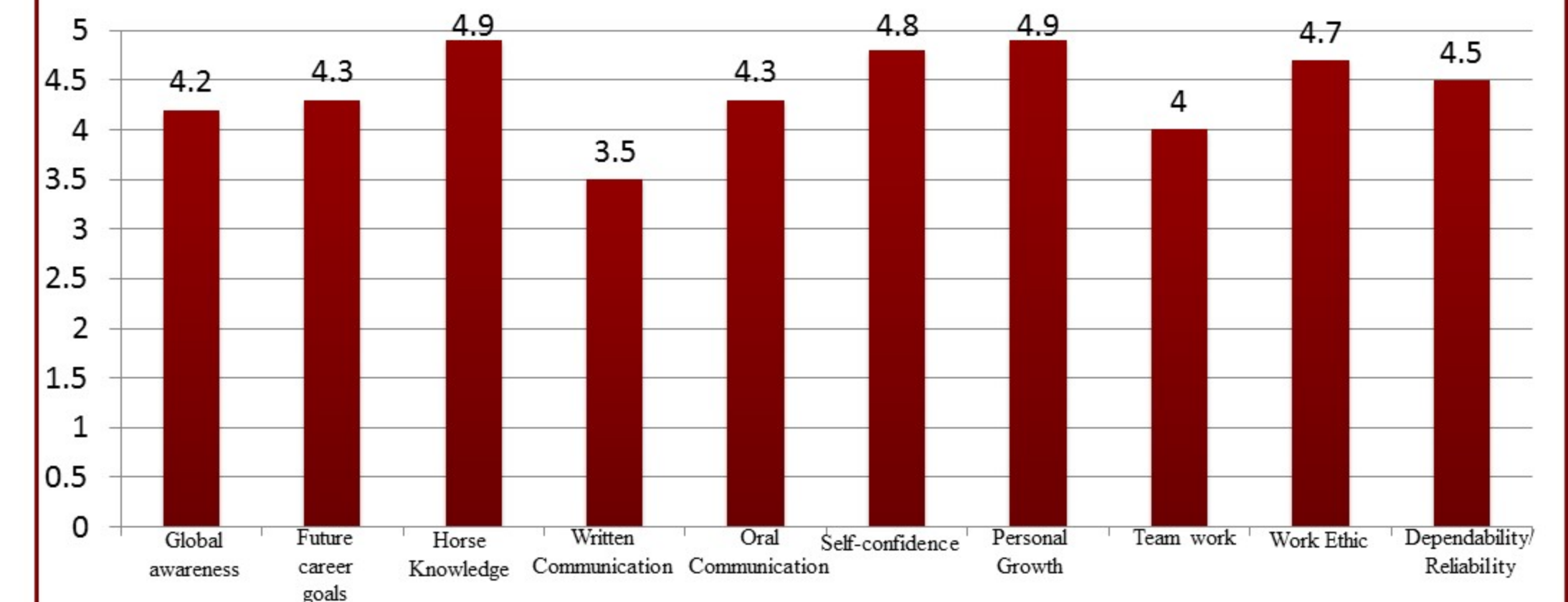
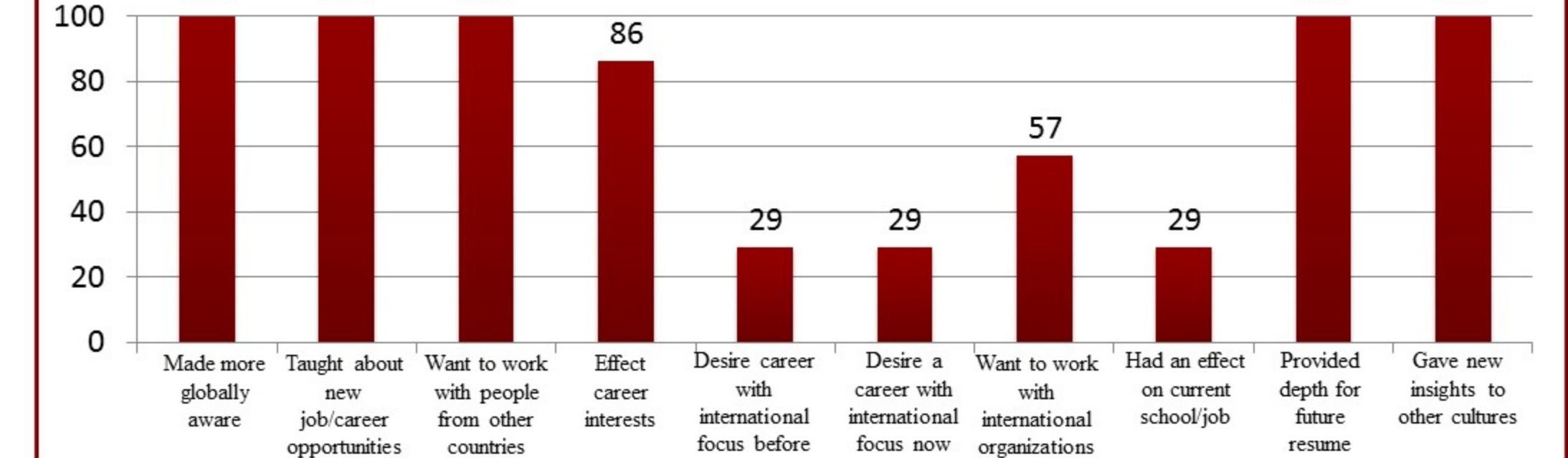


Figure 5. Post Study abroad student responses to global researcher-designed questionnaire(%).



Conclusions

Students increased global awareness, oral communication, self-confidence, dependability, reliability, marketing skills, and horse-knowledge.

Students rated work ethic, horse knowledge, self-confidence, and personal growth as the most important skill sets for a future career.

Students indicated that written communication and team work were least impacted by the experience.

All students indicated they would report this experience on a resume, but none would report it on a resume.

More work is needed to help students relay the benefits of a study abroad experience to potential employers.