

Cross-cultural Experience at Home: Kiwi Students' Reflections on being ExcelL Volunteers

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It has been well recognised that international students can be a useful source for domestic students to learn about other cultures without the expense of travelling overseas. This paper looks at the flow-on effect of ExcelL, which provides cross-cultural communication training for international students, on Kiwi students. About 3-5 Kiwi students are recruited as volunteer helpers each time an ExcelL programme is run. These Kiwi volunteers are used as references for New Zealand culture during ExcelL training at Victoria University of Wellington. They also role-play New Zealand scenarios and act as group leaders during practice. The paper will examine the reflection logs of ExcelL Kiwi volunteers and analyse their growth in cross-cultural understanding as a result of helping international students. The paper will show that ExcelL has hugely increased Kiwi volunteers' knowledge of other cultures and contributed to the volunteers' leadership skills development. The paper also hopes to further support that institutional intervention through programmes like ExcelL can help promote interaction between international and domestic students on campus.

Cross-cultural communication, domestic students