



A New Need: Cross-Cultural Competence and the United States Military Academy

COL(R) Gayle L. Watkins, PhD

gwatkins@beetrix.com

845.265.2045

Randi Cohen, PhD

rcohen@beetrix.com

617.247.4414

beetrix[™]_{llc}
RESEARCH & CONSULTING



“In the 21st century, military strength will be measured not only by the weapons our troops carry, but by the languages they speak and the cultures they understand.”

- President Barack Obama

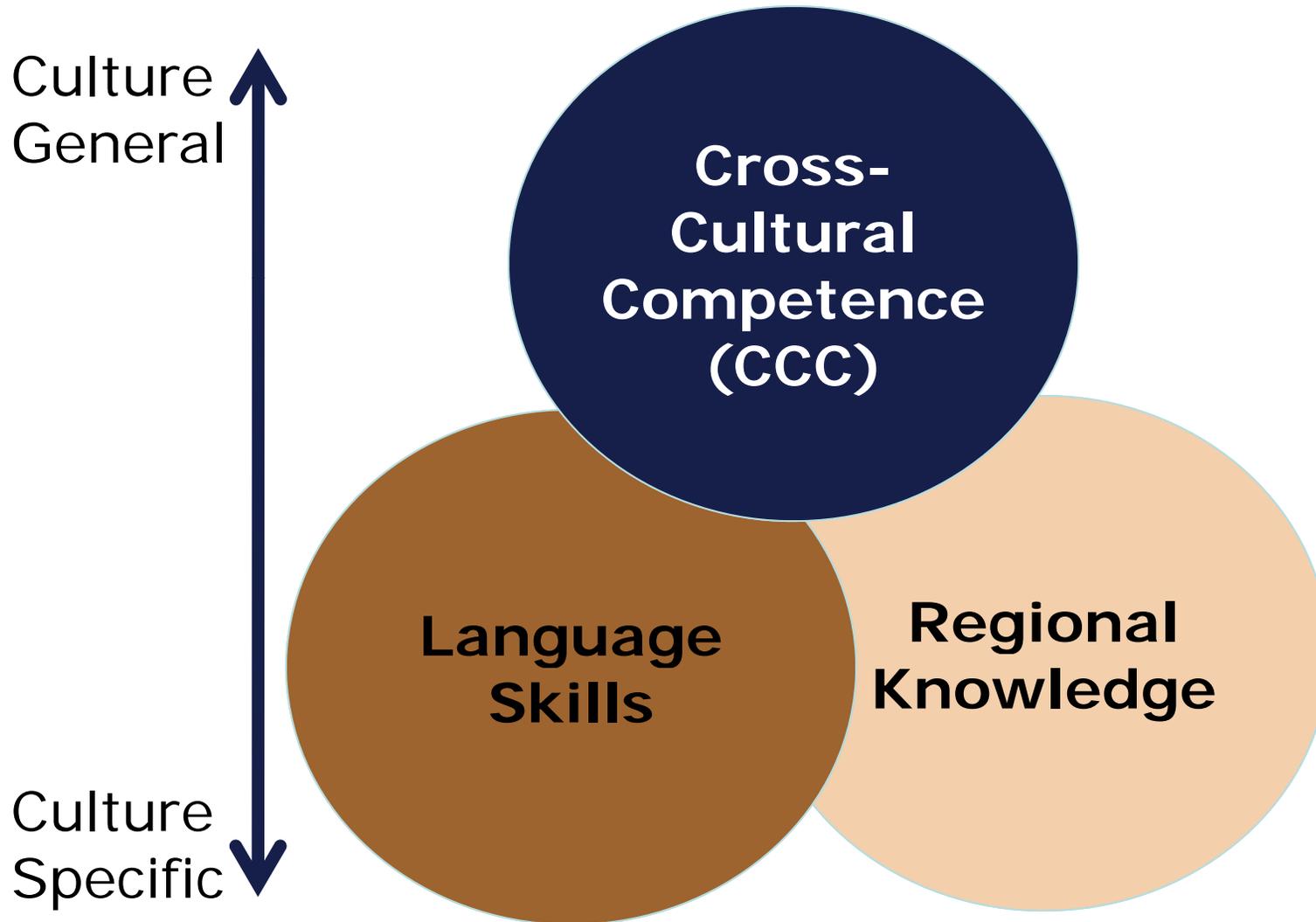


Today, Cultural Skills Are Required at the Lowest Levels of Officer Ranks

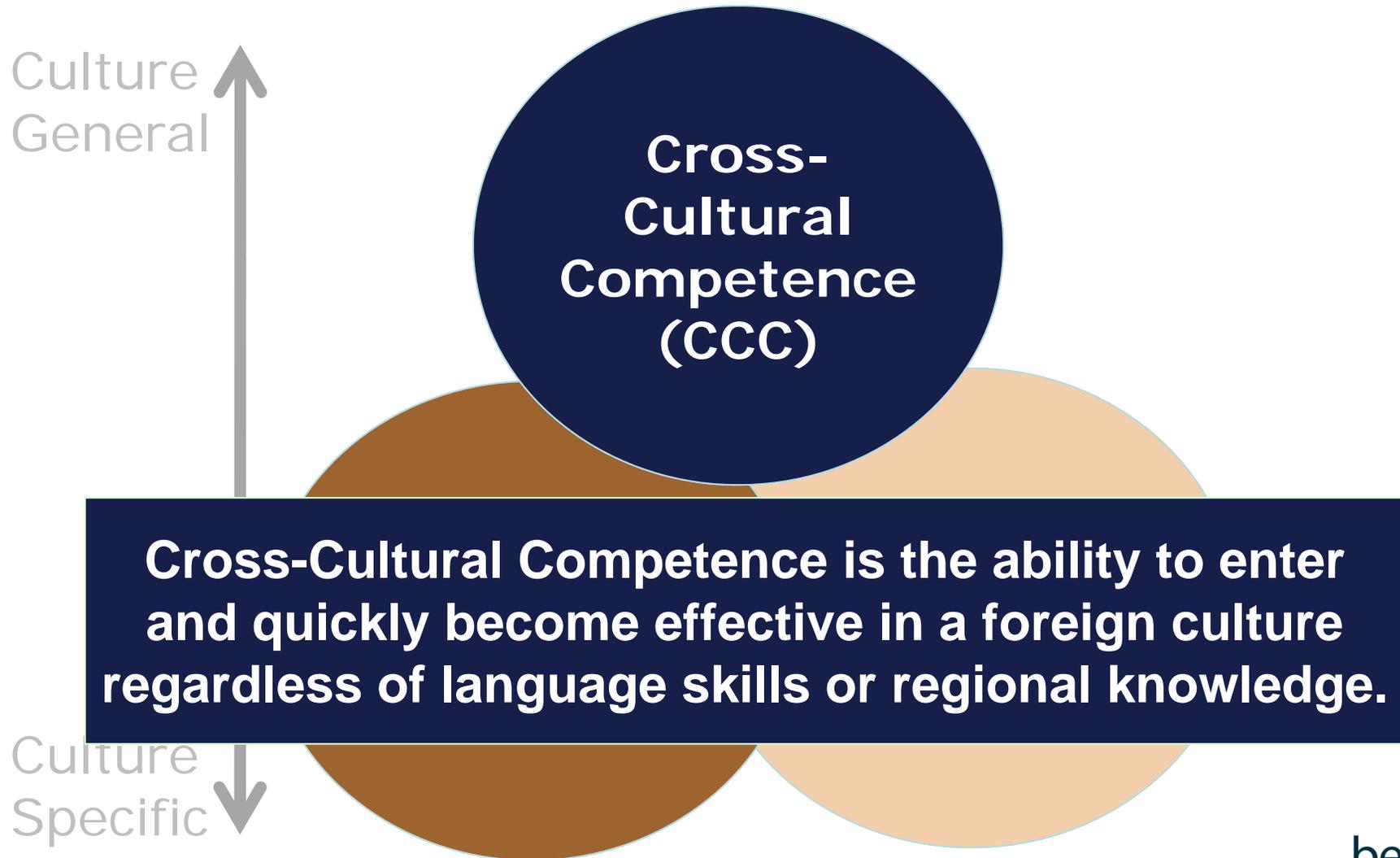


Photo source: US Army on Flickr.com

The Components of Cultural Understanding



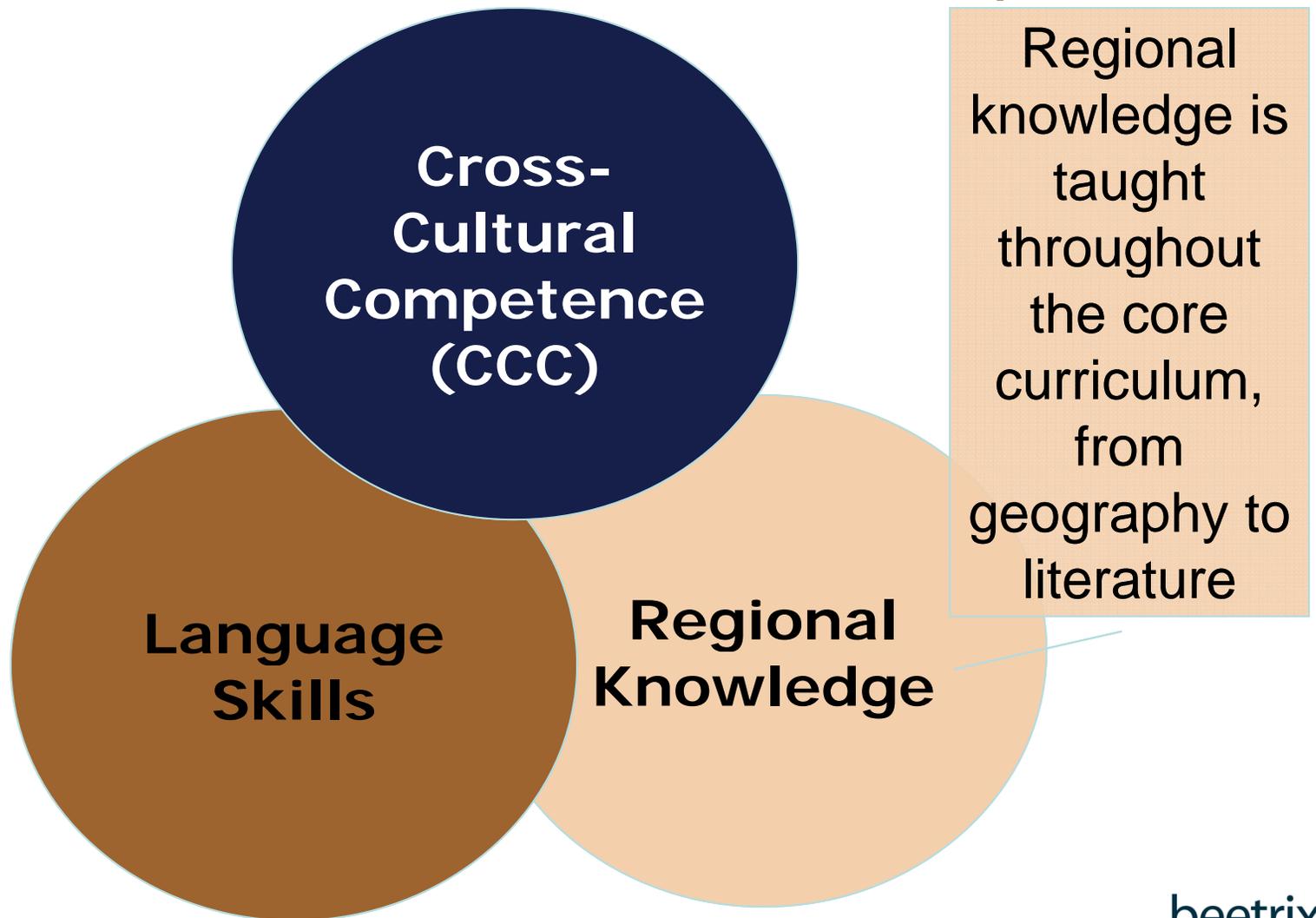
The Components of Cultural Understanding



The USMA Core Curriculum Specifically Addresses Two of the Three Components

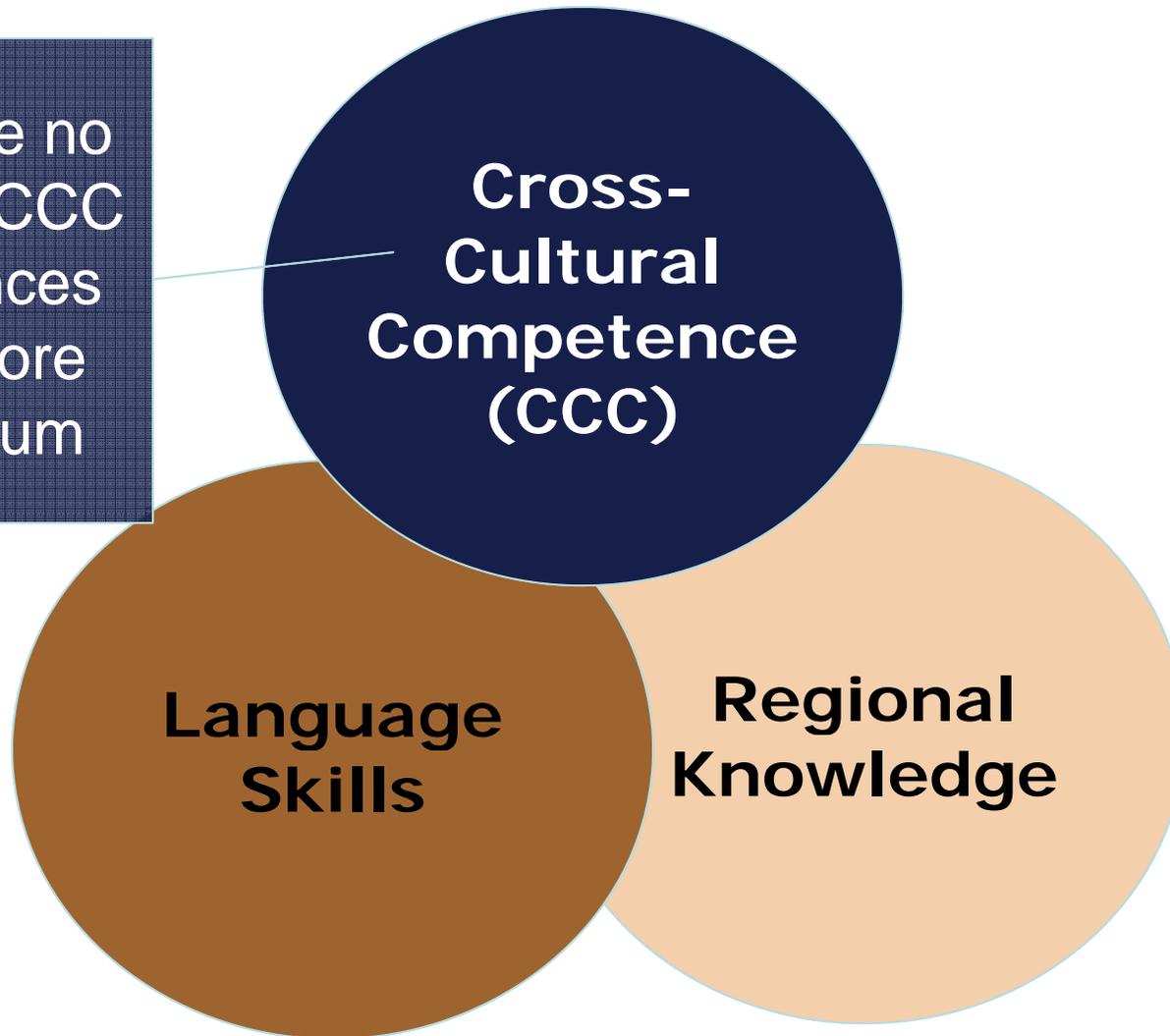


The USMA Core Curriculum Specifically Addresses Two of the Three Components



But CCC Must Be Learned Indirectly By Cadets

There are no required CCC experiences in the Core Curriculum



Hypothesis: CCC Can Be Developed Before Commissioning Through Existing Academic Programs

- Do USMA's international Academic Individual Advanced Development (iAIAD) opportunities increase cadets' general culture skills?
- Do some iAIADs do this more than other activities?
- Does how a faculty member frames the iAIAD change how cadets perceive the experience?
- Do iAIAD effects extend beyond graduation?



USMA International Academic Individual Advanced Development (iAIAD) Program

- Who
 - 500+ cadets per year
 - When
 - Spring Break (one week)*
 - Summer (2- to 6-weeks)
 - Where
 - Western countries
 - Non-western countries
- What
 - Working for American organizations
 - Staff rides and tours
 - University classes
 - Immersion with NGOs
 - Foreign military schools

* Due to the shorter length of Spring Break iAIADs, we did not include them in this study

Collected and Analyzed Data from Multiple Populations Using an Array of Methods

Operational Commander Interviews

Identified Success Skills

Underlay all parts of study

Cadet iAIAD AAR Analysis

Led to OIC and Alumni Surveys

Identified iAIAD segments

Surveys & Focus Groups

Cadet, pre- & post-AIAD

Alumni

Operational Commanders Emphasize that CCC Is Critical to Junior Officer Success Today

The vast majority of Commanders placed CCC among the very top skills today's junior officer (JO) needs

"I don't want my junior officers to experience combat shock and culture shock at the same time."

"CCC is...part of being a warrior."

"Essential"

"Huge"

They Stressed The Direct Military Value of Junior Officer CCC to Their Units

Cdrs described CCC as a

“Combat Multiplier”



“Big C, Little I”

Cdrs said language skills are ‘irreplaceable’ but they are a subset of CCC and are therefore not sufficient

“Vitaly important”

“Imperative”

“Jerks that speak Arabic won’t be as successful as a good ol’country boy from Iowa who knows no Arabic but is culturally competent.”

Commanders Identified Five CCC Skills that JOs Should Demonstrate

Increasing Complexity & Importance-->



But Commanders Noted the Challenge of Fitting CCC Development In Before Deployments

Officer Basic Course

- Weapons certification
- Maintenance of vehicles and equipment
- Communications
- NBC defense
- Call for fire
- Land navigation
- Training management
- Platoon tactics
- Leadership
- Physical fitness

Pre-Deployment Collective Tasks

- OP/CP Operations
- Mounted and Dismounted Patrolling
- TOC Operations
- Patrolling in Urban Terrain

Pre-Deployment Individual Training

- Customs and Basic Language Phrases
- Survival Skills
- Observation and Reporting Procedures
- Vehicle, Aircraft, Water Craft, Weapon, Uniform, and Insignia Identification
- Field Sanitation
- Rules of Engagement (ROE)
- Safety
- Stress Management
- Identification of Mines; Handling Procedures
- First Aid and Evacuation Procedures
- Terrorism Prevention Skills
- Reaction to Hostage Situations
- Handling of Detainees
- RTO Procedures

Post iAIAD Summary: The Trips Changed Cadets, Some Quite Profoundly

In general, compared to cadets that went on other summer programs, cadets that went on iAIADs:

- Showed increased measures of CCC
- Showed a more complex, sophisticated understanding of their own culture
- Practiced some of the five Success Skills
- Retained effects after commissioning

The more non-Western the iAIADs' location and immersed its activities, the more cadets got out of their experience.



iAIADs In Cadets' Own Words

“The trip of a lifetime”

“Tremendous value”

“Once in a lifetime”

“Broadening”

“Educating”

“Defining”

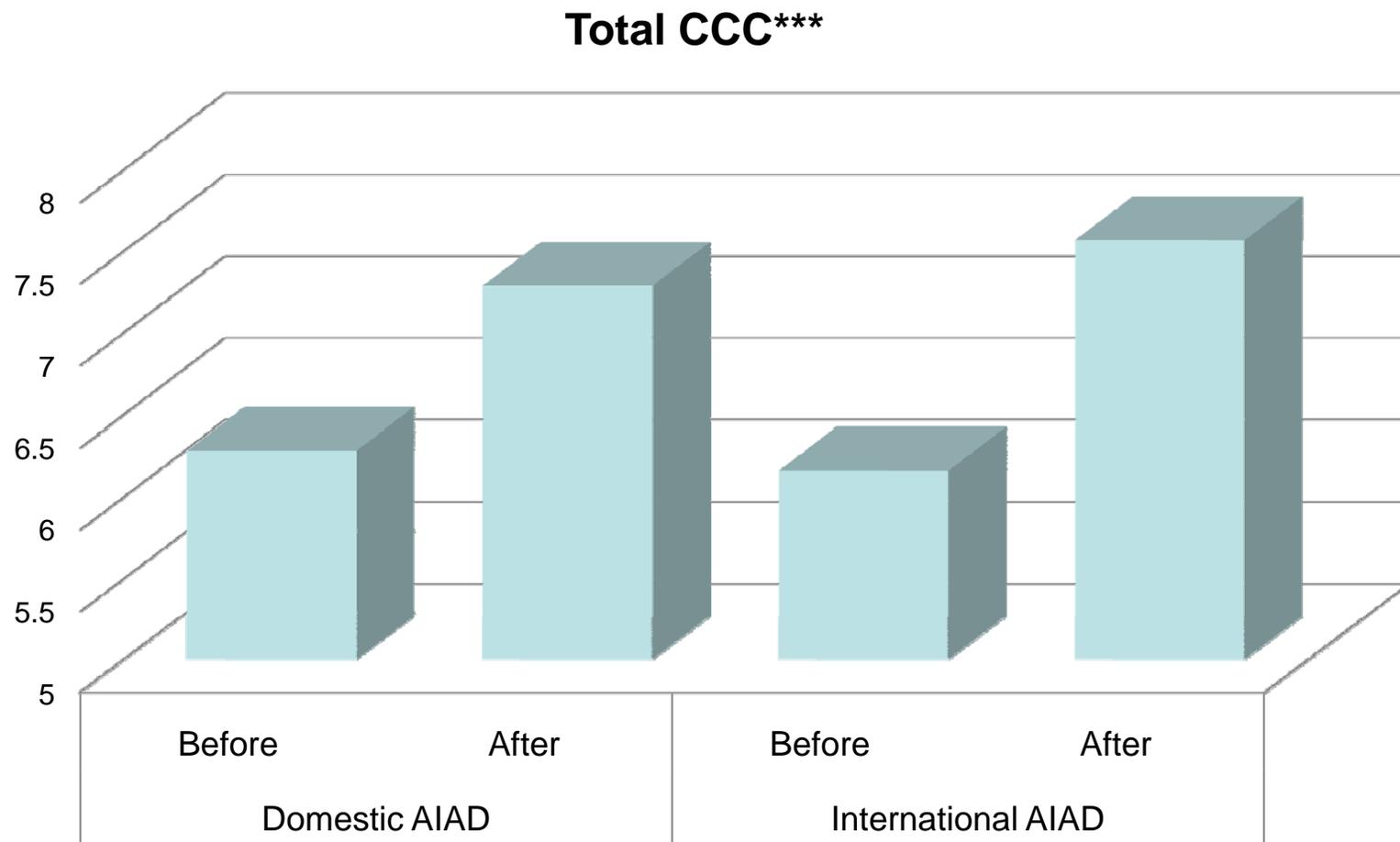
“Challenging”

“Fulfilling”

“Shapes who I am and what I will become”



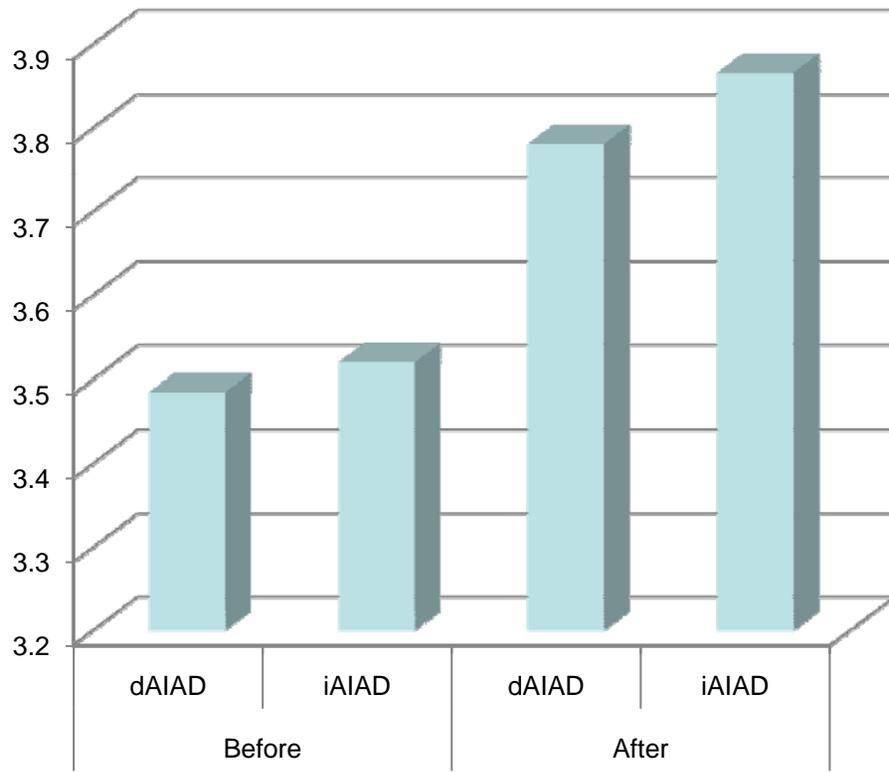
Post-iAIAD, Cadets Had Higher Levels of and Greater Improvement in CCC



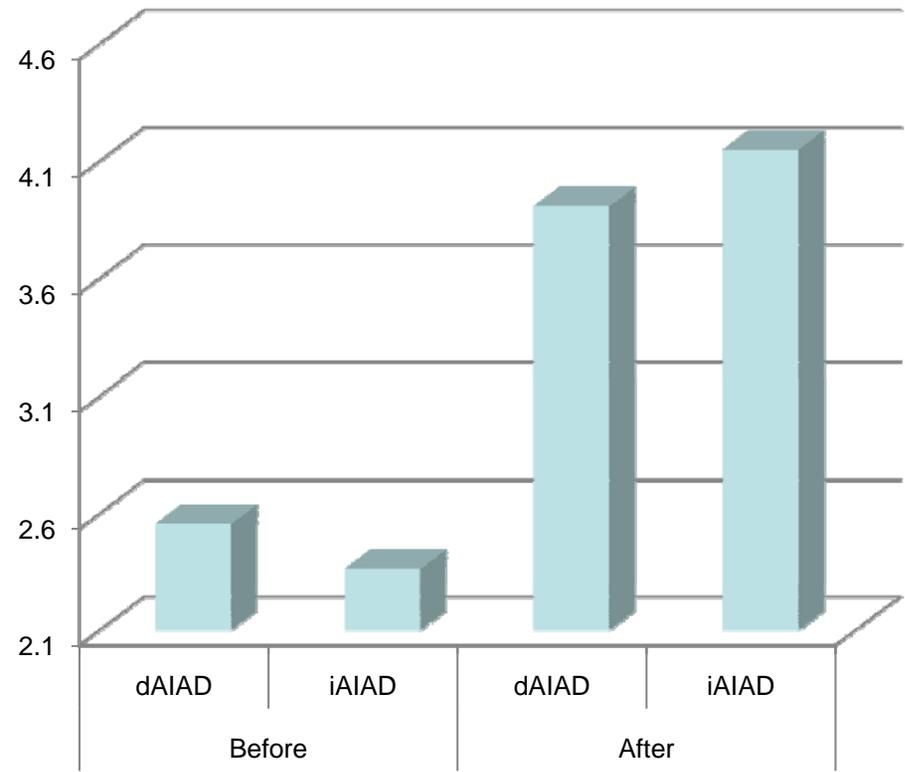
Mann Whitney U Test ***P<.001 N=791 CCC measured using CQS

These Differences Were Stable When CCC Was Divided into Motivation and Knowledge

Behavioral CQ*



Knowledge CQ***



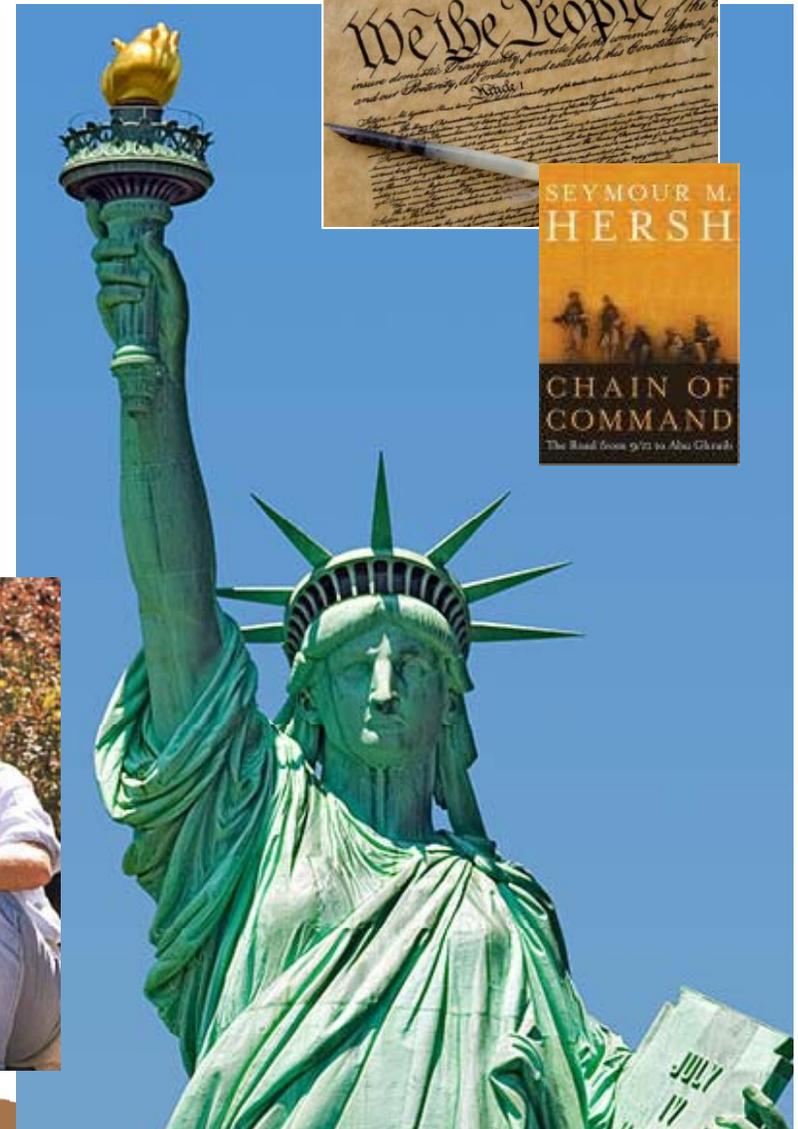
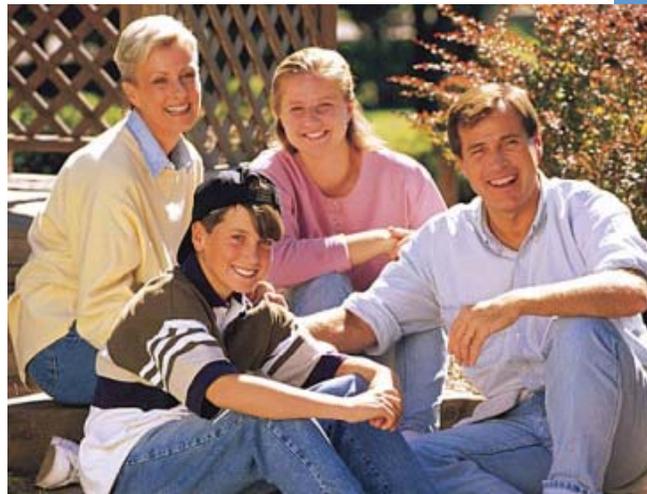
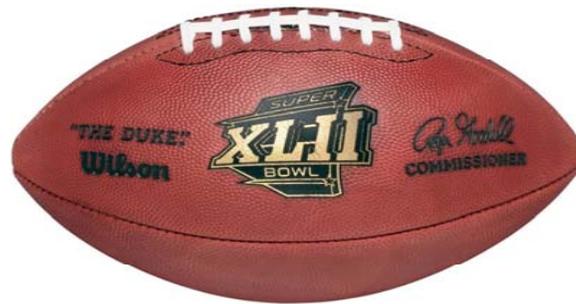
■ Behavioral CQ*

■ Knowledge CQ***

Mann Whitney U Test ***P<.001 *P<.10 N=791

Pre-AIAD, Cadets Had A Predictable and Simplistic View Of U.S. Culture

Patriotism, Competition through Sports, Idealistic View of U.S. Technology and Family



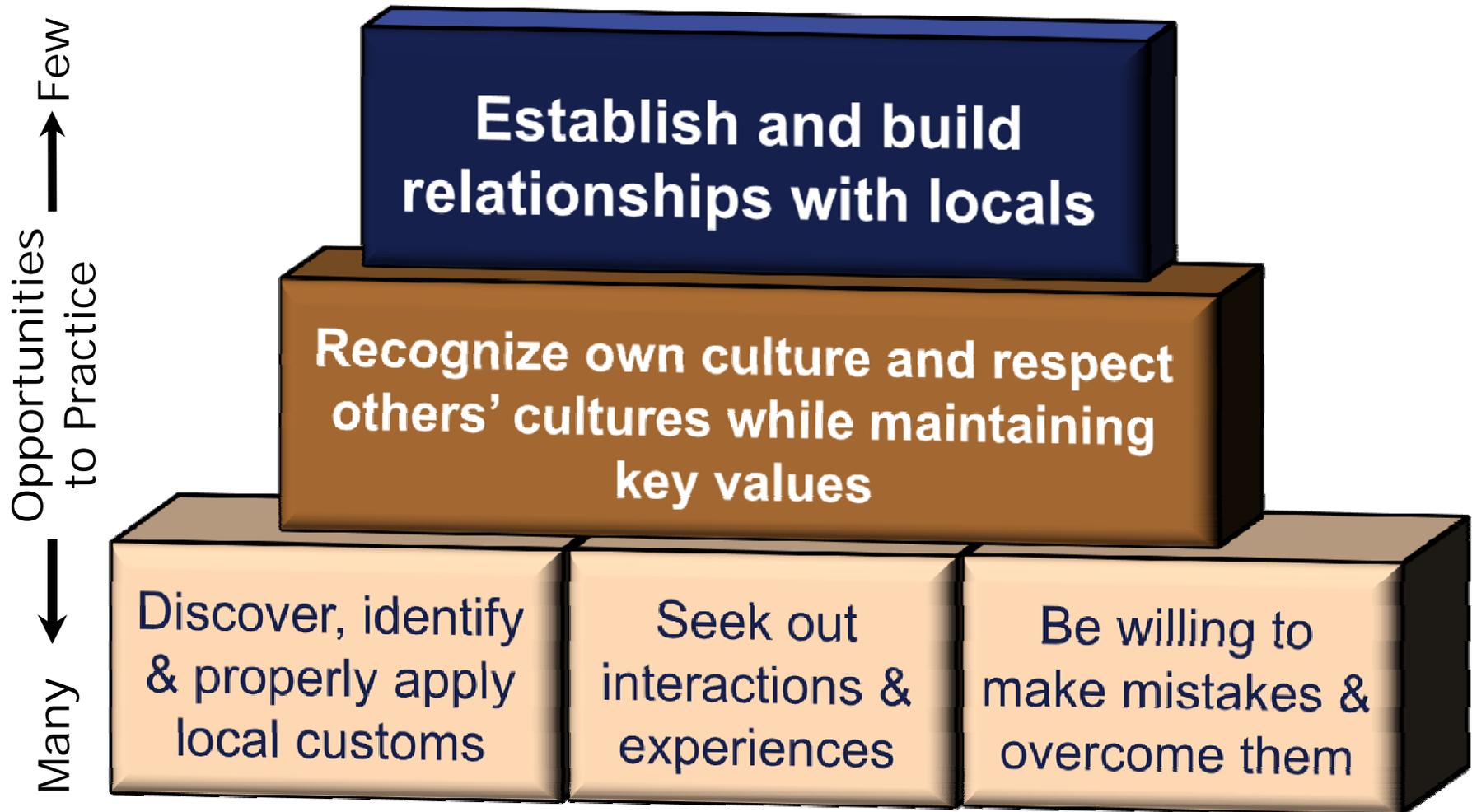
Post-AIAD, Cadets' View of U.S. Culture was More Sophisticated and Complex

Now aware that:

- The American way of doing things may not be appropriate elsewhere
- American diversity is distinct
- Sports create connections
- Relationship with technology viewed with more nuance



iAIADs Enabled Many Cadets to Practice Four of the Five CCC Skills



Most Cadets Noticed and Tried to Apply Basic, Local Customs

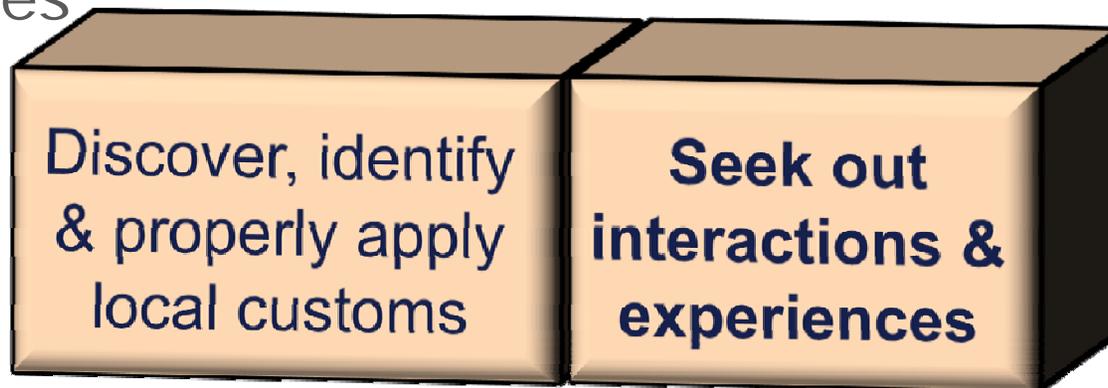
- How and whom to acknowledge publicly
 - Greeting elders
 - Modestly acknowledging members of the opposite sex
- When and where to pay for purchases/meals
- Make and interpret hand gestures
- Participate in a local meals
- Accept hospitality graciously



Majority of Cadets Reported a Strong Desire to be Involved with Locals

Most expressed a sincere willingness and curiosity to engage with locals:

- Sought wide range of eating experiences
- Played sports with locals
- Dressed in indigenous clothes



Majority of Cadets Reported Making Mistakes or Cultural *Faux Pas*

- Dressing/behaving inappropriately when visiting religious/sensitive sites
- Insulting locals through seemingly inconsequential actions
- Making nationalistic jokes

Recognized & Corrected

Making mistakes helped cadets achieve some degree of cross cultural learning and growth.



Many Cadets Noticed Cultural Differences and Reflected on Their Own Culture

Cadets described interactions that could have prompted their negative or angry reaction but did not. Instead, they reflected on the cultural differences that led to the awkward moments.

Recognize own culture and respect others' cultures while maintaining key values

“They want the same things out of life that we as Americans, a lot of people want.”

“We would always walk inside a hut with our shoes on... At first I didn't see the big deal about it, but when I started thinking about it...it showed that the people take pride in their houses and they want to keep them clean.”

Some Noted Culturally Jarring Topics That Conflicted with Strongly Held U.S. Values

Treatment of minorities

“...there was a poster on the wall ..it said that the Vietnamese people [mustn't] arm ethnic minorities. Ethnic minorities, they're not treated as fairly as traditionally ethnic Viet people.”

Treatment of children

“...When the kids would get out of hand...teachers would just go around smacking the kids.”

Gender/Sexuality

“We'd be walking with the girls in our group and the guys would like whistle at them and kiss at them.”

“The first day of class and girls are on one side and boys on the other and that's the way it is, no matter what.”

Treatment of women

US International Politics

Relationship Building Was the Rarest and Most Difficult Skill for Cadets to Practice

Establish and build relationships with locals

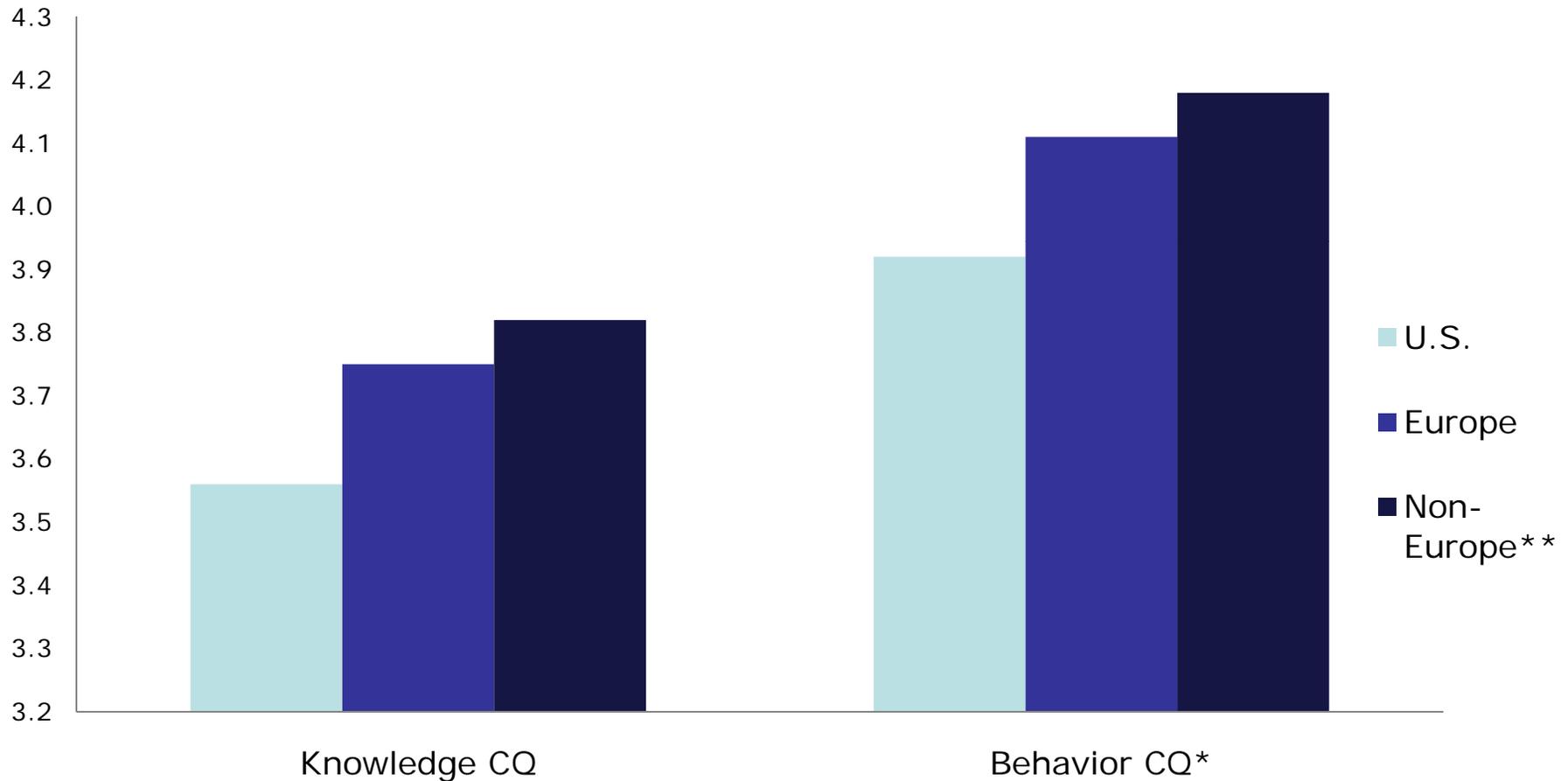
Only a handful cadets that were immersed with NGOs had the opportunity to build functional relationships with locals.

& properly apply local customs

interactions & experiences

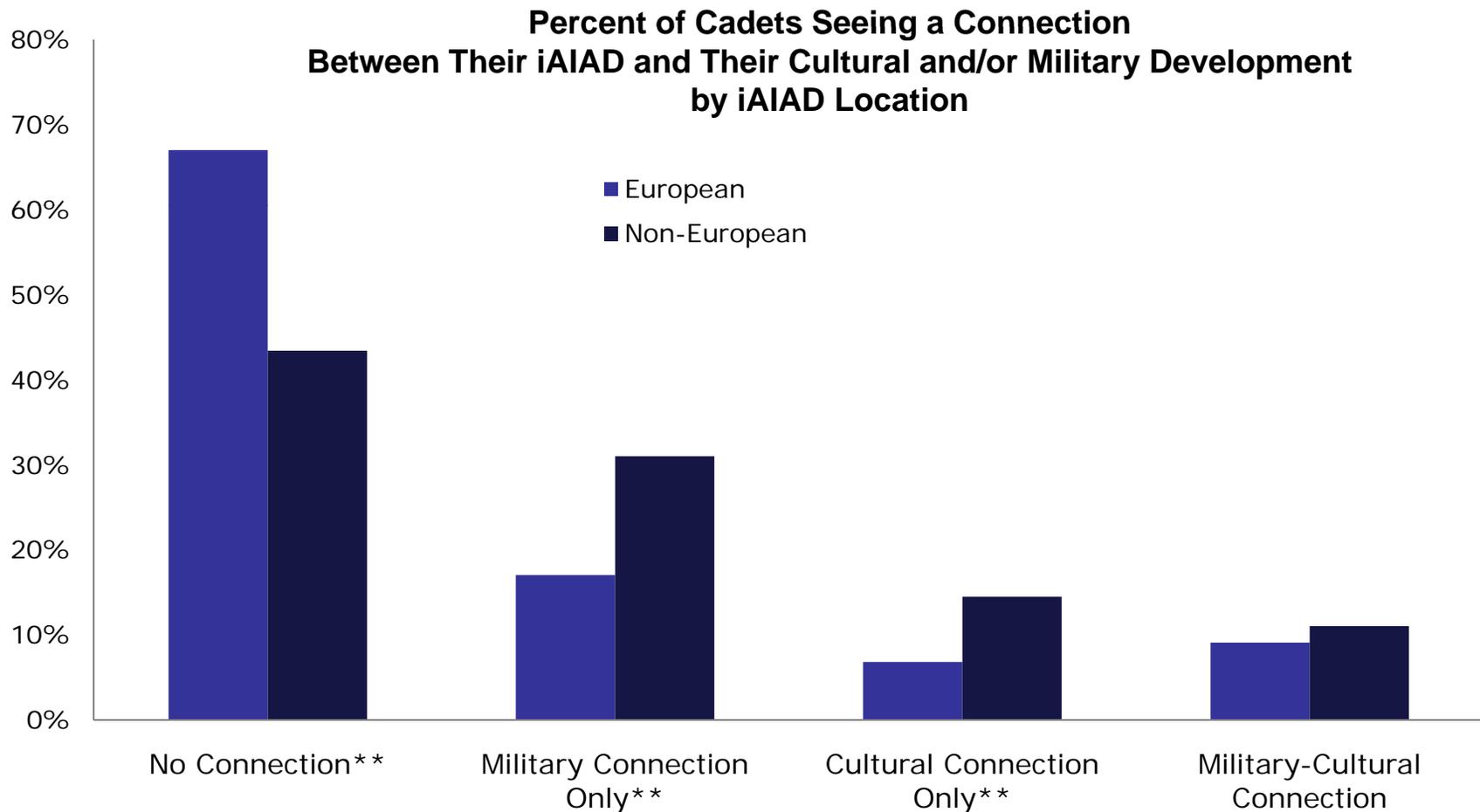
make mistakes & overcome them

Non-Western iAIADs Increased Cadet Cultural Skills the Most



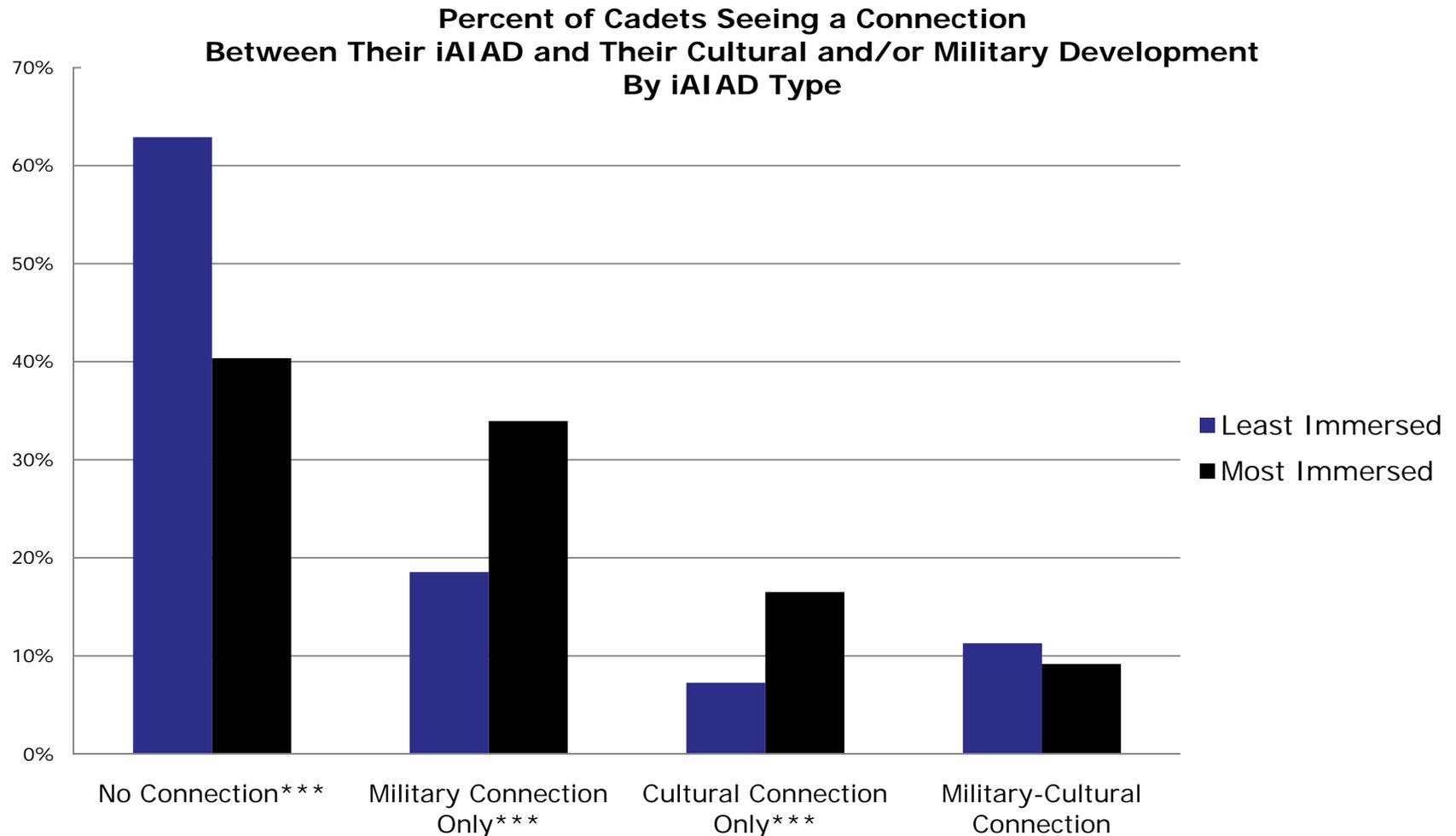
N=264 ** p<.02 * p<.03

Non-Western Locations Also Enabled Cadets to Recognize the Cultural Skills They Were Using



N=272 **p<.02

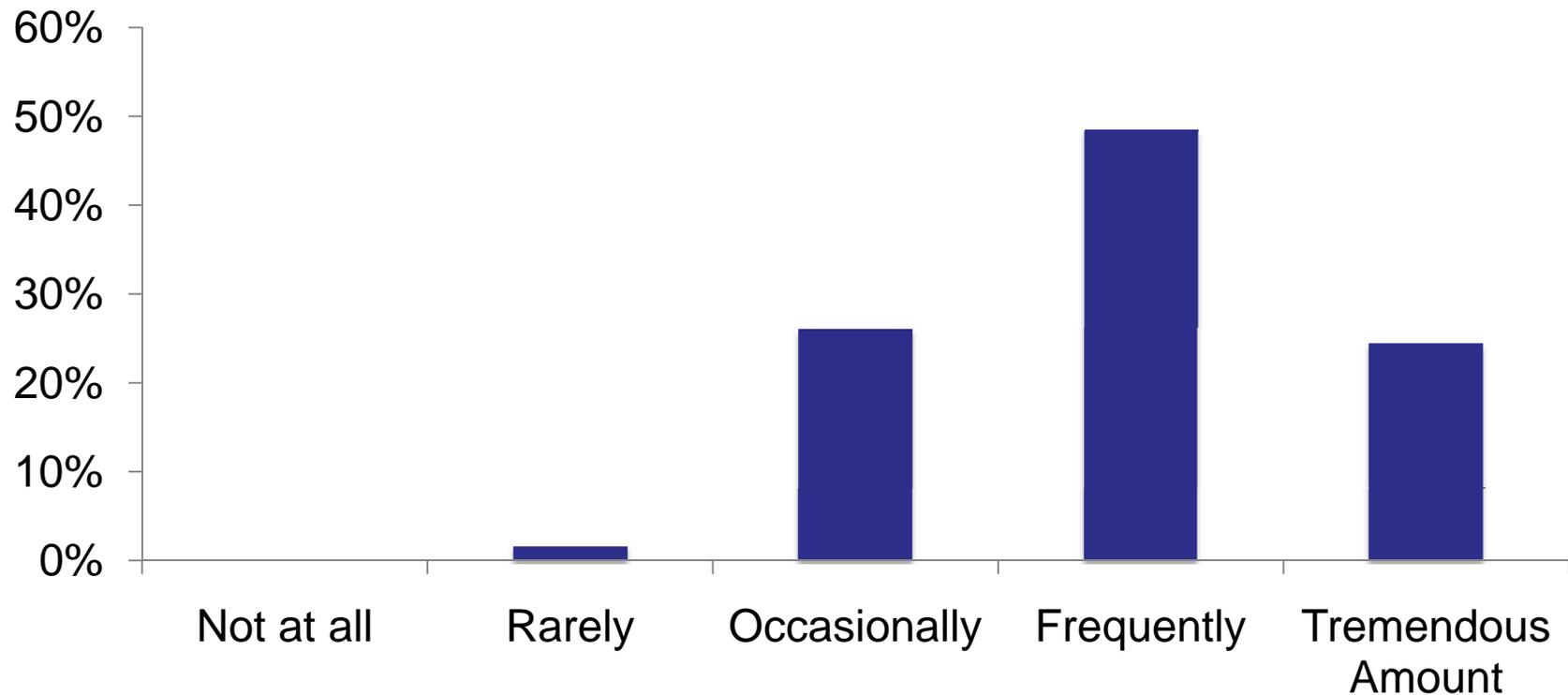
The Most Immersed Cadets Saw More Connections



N=272 ***p<.006

After Commissioning, iAIADs Continue to Stay with Graduates*

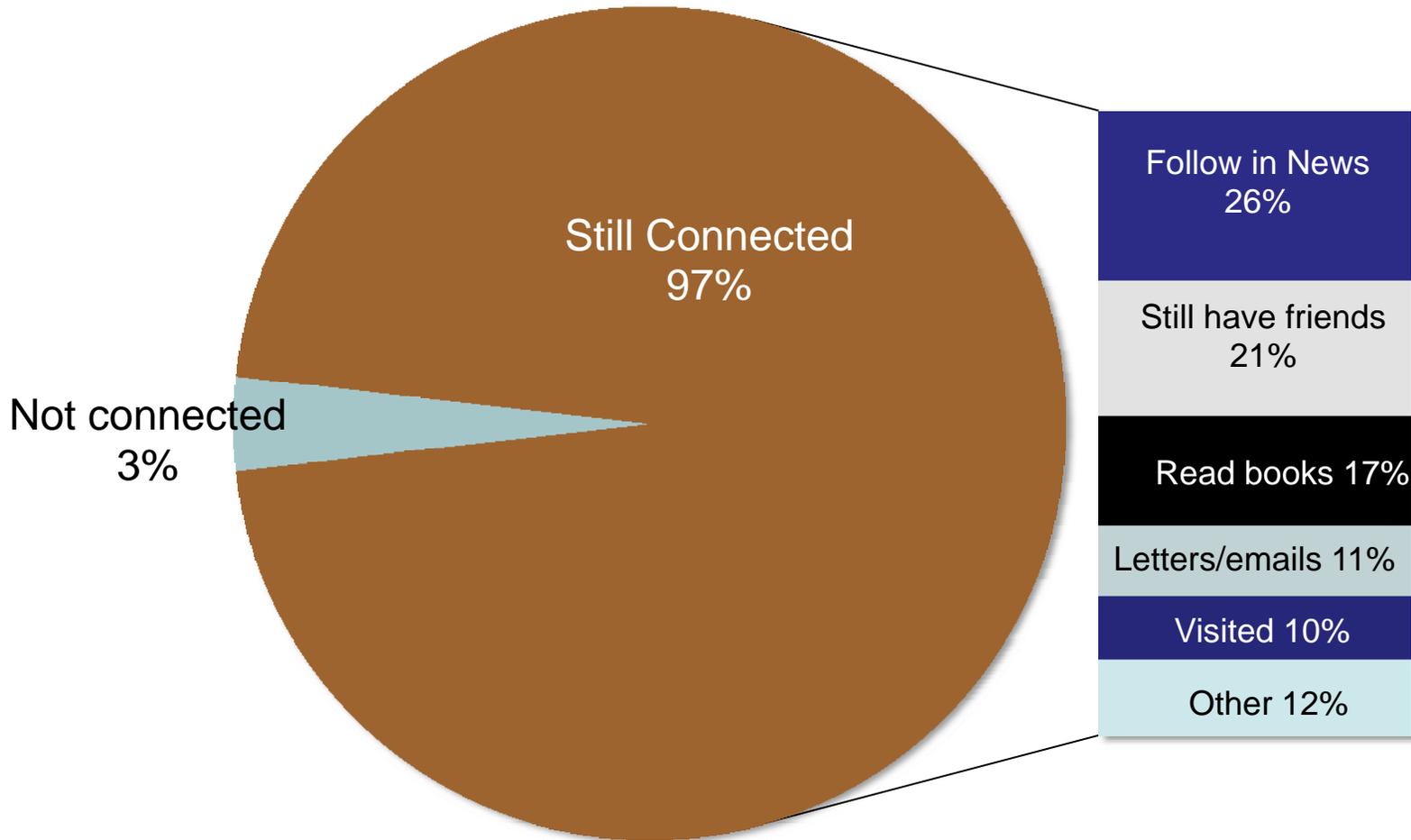
How often have you thought about your iAIAD experience(s) since graduation?



N=66

*Graduates were between 2-8 years distant from their AIAD

Graduates Continue to Be Connected to the Location of their iAIAD



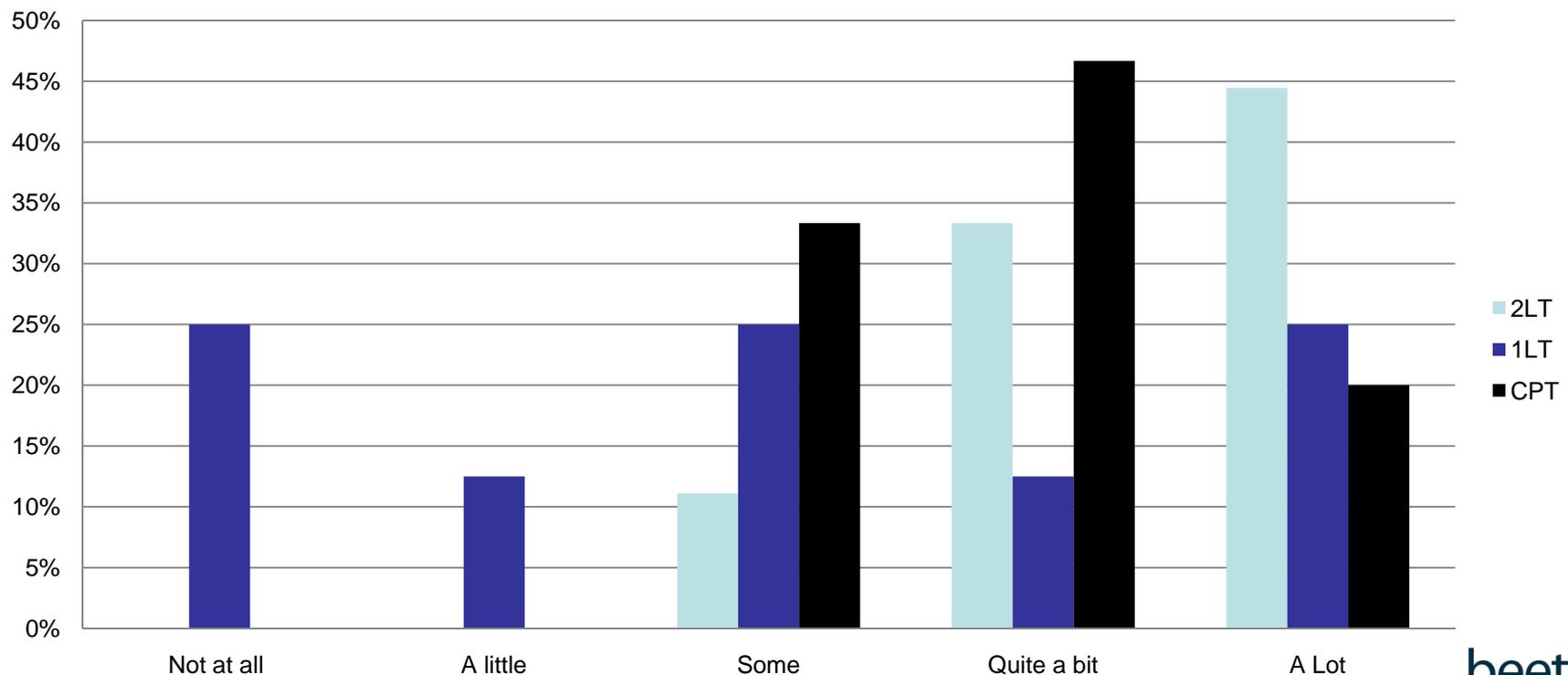
Responses to "In what way are you still connected to the location of your AIAD experience?"

N=66, Multiple responses allowed

Alumni Perceive a Link Between their iAIAD Experience and Subsequent Performance as Officers

90% of alumni perceive a moderate to strong positive relationship between their cadet AIAD and their performance since graduation. 60% of respondents felt their AIAD had contributed either quite a lot or a lot to their performance as an officer.

How Much Have Your iAIAD Experiences Contributed to Your Performance as an Army Officer?



Research Question Review

Can CCC Be Developed <u>Before</u> Commissioning Through Existing Academic Programs	Yes, through iAIADs
Do USMA's international Academic Individual Advanced Development (iAIAD) opportunities increase cadets' general culture skills?	Yes
Do some iAIADs do this more than other activities?	Yes, iAIADs to non-Western countries
Do iAIAD effects extend beyond graduation?	Yes, at least 5 years

Culture Shift Required to Emphasize iAIADs over MIADs

- Many deployed graduates (and a number of Commanders) felt that pre-commissioning overseas experiences were more valuable to JOs than many of the military training schools and opportunities such as Airborne School, Air Assault School, CTLT
- Some would advocate expansion of AIAD program even at the expense of MIADs

“Military training has a big role...but a lot of it you can get more out of once you are graduated from here. Whereas the ambassadorial role, a very unique opportunity to take those AIADs that we have,... puts things in perspective for people and gives them a better idea of how the world views West Point or the Army. And I think that’s more valuable in the long run.”

iAIAD Recommendations

Who gets to go?

- Prioritize certain cadets for iAIADs to reduce selection bias
- Expand international IAD opportunities as much as budget and time constraints allow

Where to go?

- Prioritize travel to non-European cultures
- Emphasize opportunities that moves cadets out of their comfort zone

What to do while there?

- Emphasize as much immersion as possible
- Include a range of diverse activities
- Avoid tourist spots
- Provide opportunities for cadets to go out on their own
- Work with other contacts
- Experience diversity of country/region
- Interact with host country's and US military

iAIAD Recommendations

Institutional support

- Frame iAIADs as an essential academic *and* military exercise
- Help cadets recognize their culture first – at USMA

Remove planning distractions

- More guidance and details of how to prepare (including rules on alcohol consumption) will reduce anxiety and distraction

Model pre-trip preparation

- Require cadets to read up on new culture beforehand
- Have a formal class on the culture of the destination
- Make cultural preparation a priority for cadets
- Facilitate cadets to meet one another

The role of faculty

- Prepare cadets for making and coping with mistakes
- Facilitate military links in the destination
- Enhance cadets' CCC skills

Alternatives for Developing CCC

While at USMA...

Interact With
Foreigners

- Provide cadets with the opportunity to interact individually with foreign nationals who are at USMA
- Take cadets to enclaves of non-Western people in the Greater NY area
- Enable cadets to be personally involved and engaged while:
 - trying truly foreign food
 - starting a conversation/attempting to communicate in another language
 - visiting a religious place
 - personally interacting with foreigners
- During and/or after relevant experiences, frame and encourage reflection on the experience

Enable relevant
experiences

Encourage
reflection

SPC. BRIAN SCHROEDER

