

Spending Time Abroad

Does it matter for intercultural competence development?

EAIE Glasgow 2015

Dr. Ursula Brinkmann, Intercultural Business Improvement

Session chair: Dr. Leo Klienbannink, Lecturer Internationalization Rotterdam School of Business

Spending Time Abroad



How do students develop?

- Where does their experience abroad take them after graduation?
- Hard to predict – let alone control

Spending Time Abroad

But we can now be much clearer on

- what students can learn and develop, and
- how we can support them in this process



Overview of my presentation



1. Defining intercultural competences
2. Measuring intercultural competences
3. Developing intercultural competences

1. Defining Intercultural Competences

Intercultural competences –
a mystifying concept?

- a) Knowledge or Competences?
- b) Should there be one or several intercultural competences?
- c) Intercultural competences **and** Intercultural effectiveness!



1. Defining Intercultural Competences

Which intercultural competences have you identified?



1. Defining Intercultural Competences

Intercultural Readiness

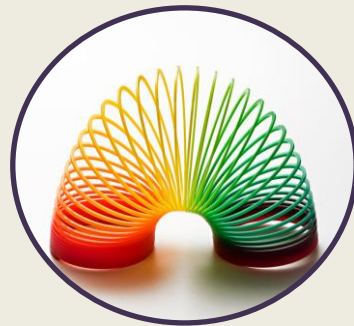
- The Intercultural Readiness Approach models the **process** of interacting with people from other cultures
- It works with four intercultural competences

1. Defining Intercultural Competences



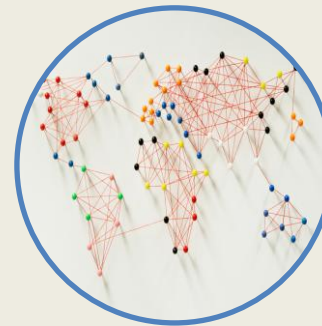
Intercultural Sensitivity

- How aware are we of different perspectives and signals?



Intercultural Communication

- How well do we adapt how we communicate across cultures?



Building Commitment

- How capable are we of bringing people together around shared goals?



Managing Uncertainty

- How well do we deal with the uncertainty of intercultural interactions?



Four competences that make us interculturally more effective

1. Defining Intercultural Competences

Why is Intercultural Sensitivity important?

Kealey (1989)	Twelve challenges for expatriates. Only <i>empathy/respect/ tolerance</i> consistently correlates with mastery of all 12 challenges.
Hechanova et al. (2003)	Empathy helps expatriates to adjust
Mol et al. (2005)	Empathy helps expatriates to perform
Lyubovnikova, Napiersky, Vlachopoulos (2014)	Intercultural Sensitivity, as assessed by the IRC, enhances performance of MBA teams
Thomas & Fitzsimmons (2008)	Empathy or intercultural sensitivity seems to be one of the most robust predictors of effective intercultural interaction.

1. Defining Intercultural Competences

Why is Managing Uncertainty important?

- Sorrentino et al. (2008)
- Uncertainty-oriented people feel at home in uncertain situations: They see such situations as a welcome challenge to clarify what is going on, to dig deeper and analyse.
 - They have a strong need to know and to understand. Uncertain situations fuel this need.
- Arasaratnam et al. (2007/2010)
- Sensation-seekers get a kick out of intercultural situations because there is no script
 - Sensation-seekers look for intercultural situations and so get critical learning opportunities.

Overview of my presentation

1. Defining intercultural competences
- 2. Measuring intercultural competences**



2. Measuring Intercultural Competences

Intercultural Readiness Check©

- Self-assessment questionnaire
- Assessing the four intercultural competences
- Developed and maintained in cooperation with the universities of Groningen, Gent, Amsterdam and Toronto
- Checked and improved in a 15-year-series of studies

2. Measuring Intercultural Competences

Intercultural Readiness Check: Reliability

- 2009: Major new analysis based on data from more than 10,000 respondents
- Factor analyses used to test and improve the scales
- The scale assessing Intercultural Communication had to be re-designed during 2009.
- All four IRC scales are now exceptionally reliable.

Scale	Items	Reliability score
Building Commitment	20	.90
Intercultural Sensitivity	10	.82
Managing Uncertainty	14	.80
Intercultural Communication	13	.83

2. Measuring Intercultural Competences

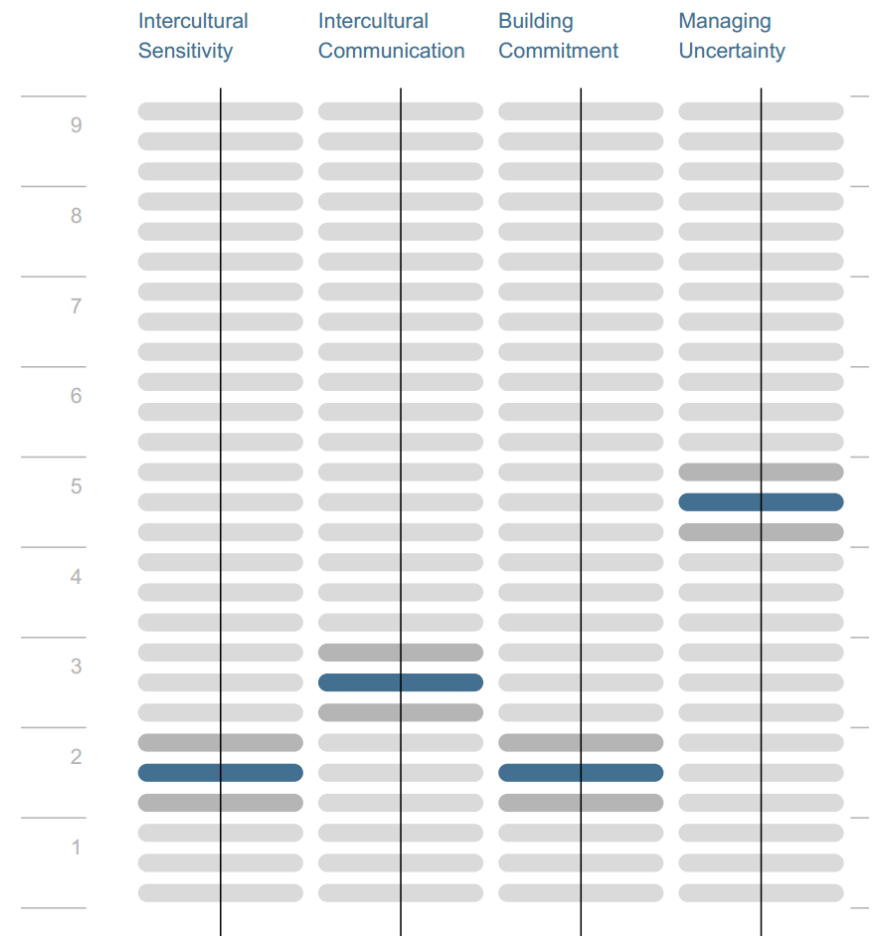
Intercultural Readiness Check: Validity

- Most recent analysis: Data from 30,000 people
- Correlations of competence scores with several independent measures.
 1. Personality measurement
 2. Biographical data (age, gender, education, management level)
 3. Previous time spent abroad
 4. International Orientation Scale
 5. Number of languages spoken
 6. Attitude toward diversity
 7. Perception of group dynamics in teams

2. Measuring Intercultural Competences

IRC results

- Shown on a scale from 1 to 9
- Detailed and practical feedback



2. Measuring Intercultural Competences

Institutions certified to use the Intercultural Readiness Check



- Ashton Business School
- University of Warwick
- Applied University of Amsterdam
- Rotterdam Business School
- Hanze School of Applied Sciences
- Applied University Arnhem and Nijmegen
- Applied University ZUYD
- Stenden
- Driestar Educatief
- University of Carleton, Ottawa

2. Measuring Intercultural Competences

Questions these institutions address with the Intercultural Readiness Check

- How do our students compare to students in general?
- How can we assess, and keep track of student development?
- How can we best support our students, what do they need from us?
- How can we assess whether our interventions / Study Abroad programs are effective?



1. Defining Intercultural Competences

Over to you

- How do you currently keep track of students' development of intercultural competences?
- Which issues have you experienced?
- Which solutions developed?

Please discuss at your table (5 minutes)

We'll ask each table to summarize



Overview of my presentation

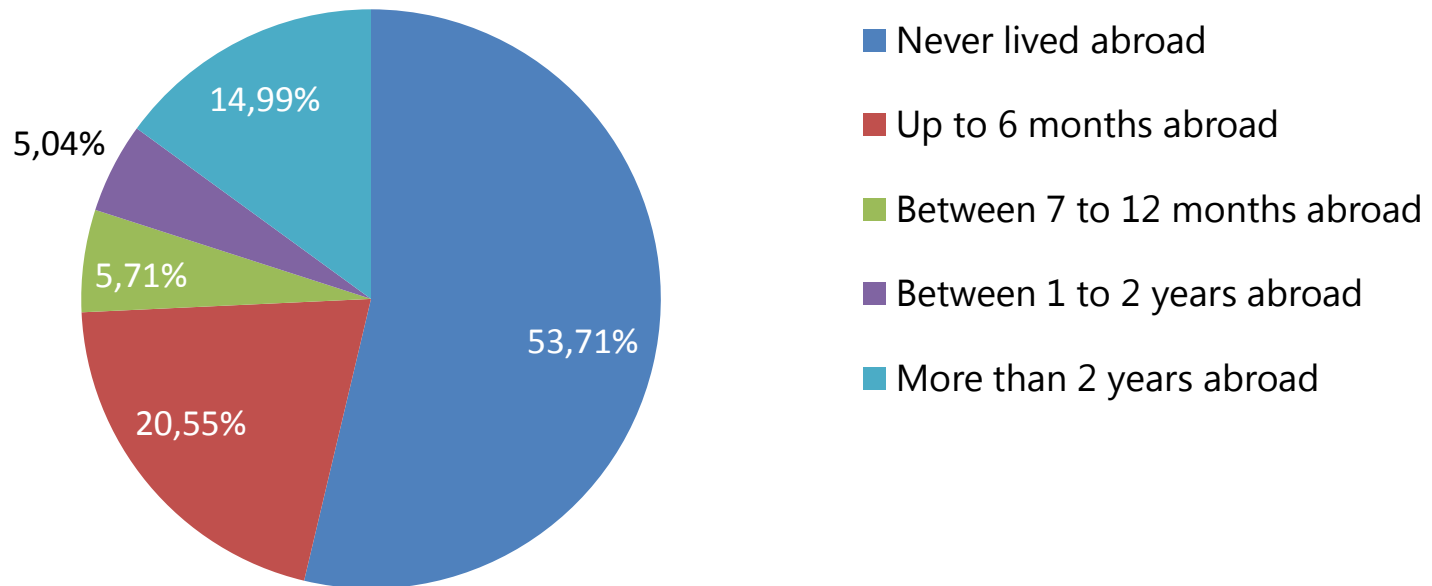


1. Defining intercultural competences
2. Measuring intercultural competences
3. **Developing intercultural competences**

2. Developing Intercultural Competences

IRC data from 2102 students: 840 male, 1260 female

Amount of time these students had spent abroad

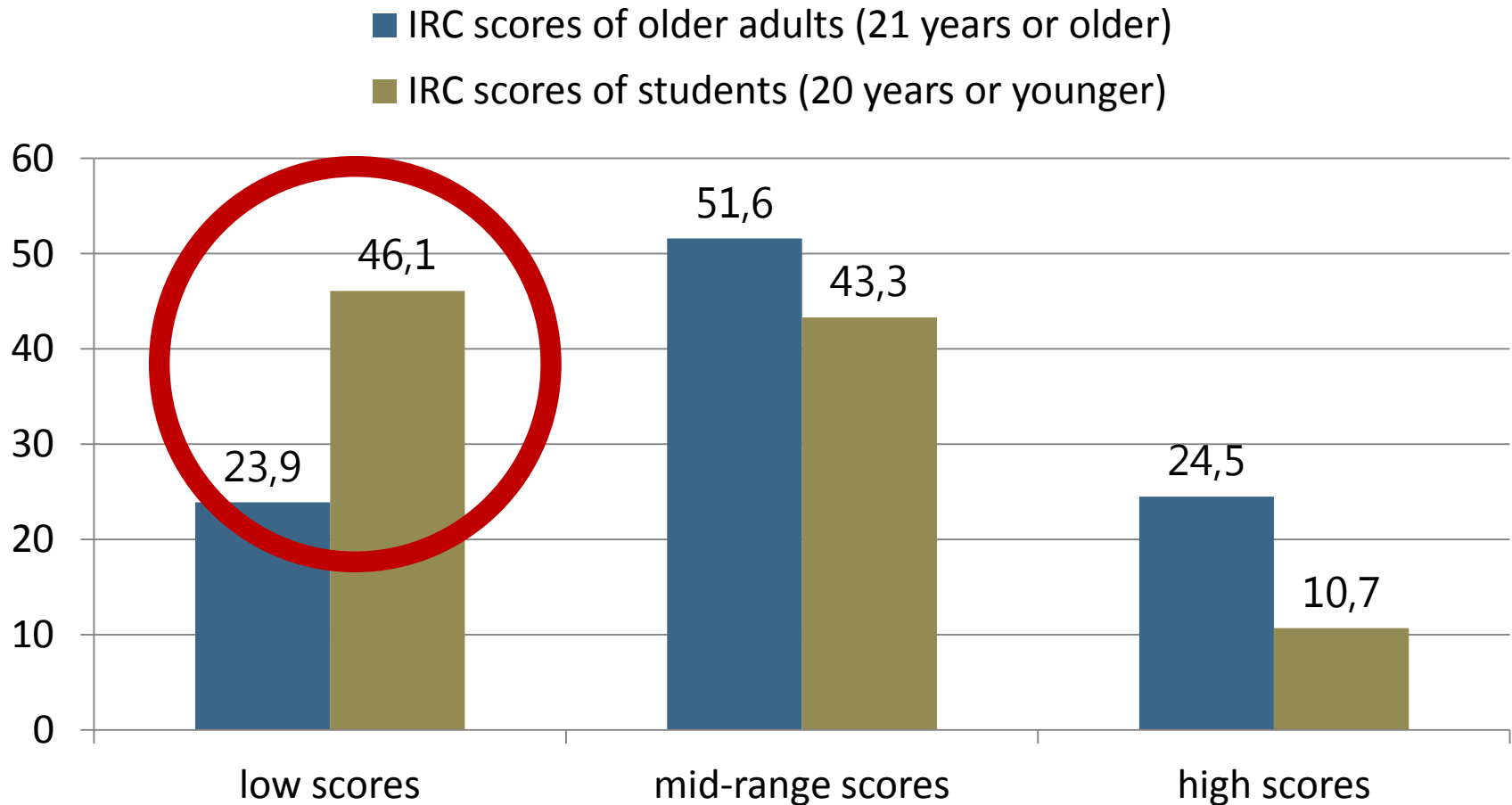


3. Developing Intercultural Competences

What do the Intercultural Readiness data tell us about the effects of Study Abroad on intercultural competence development?



3. Developing Intercultural Competences



3. Developing Intercultural Competences

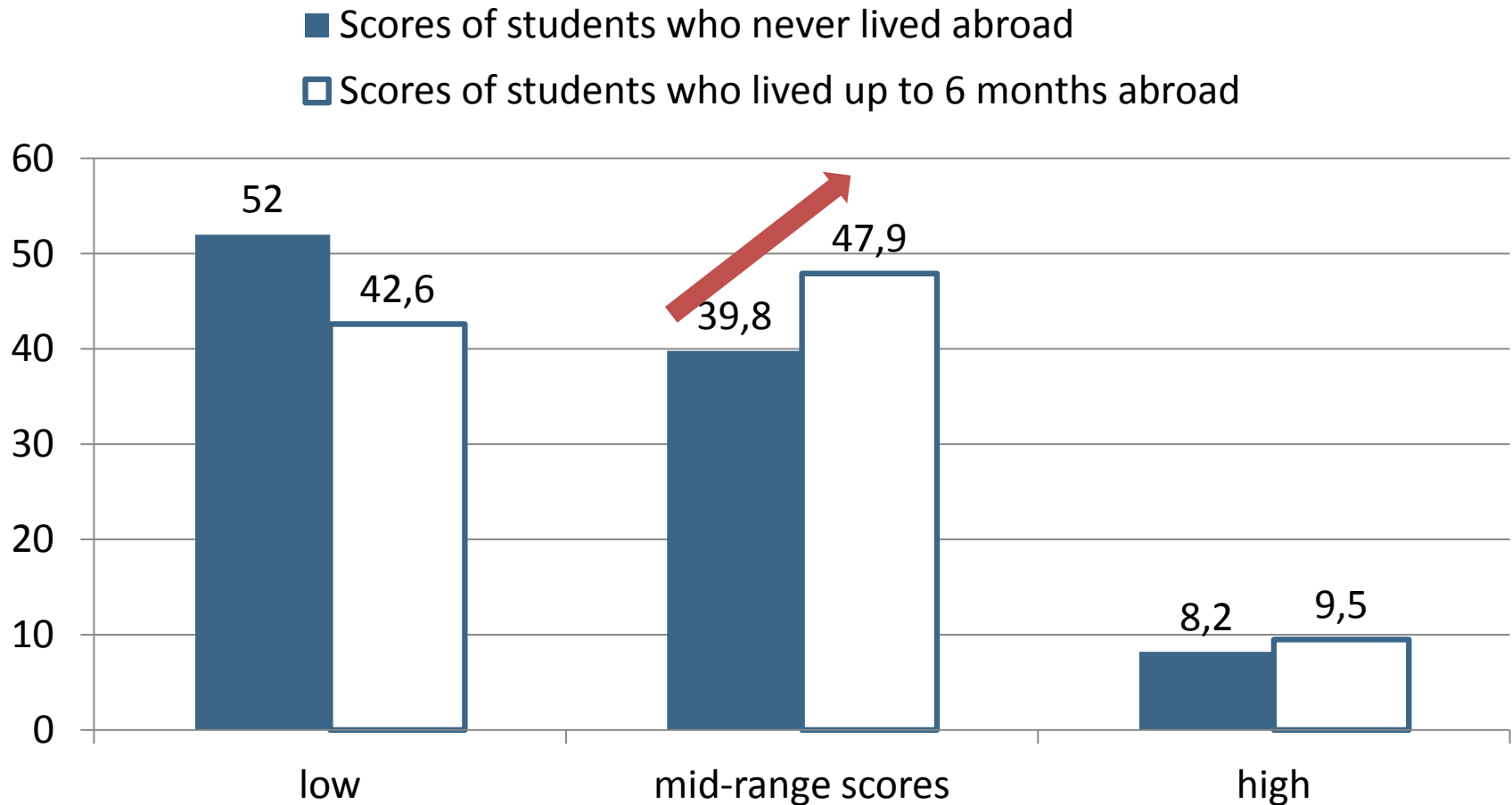
Do students become interculturally more competent the longer they stay abroad?

3. Developing Intercultural Competences

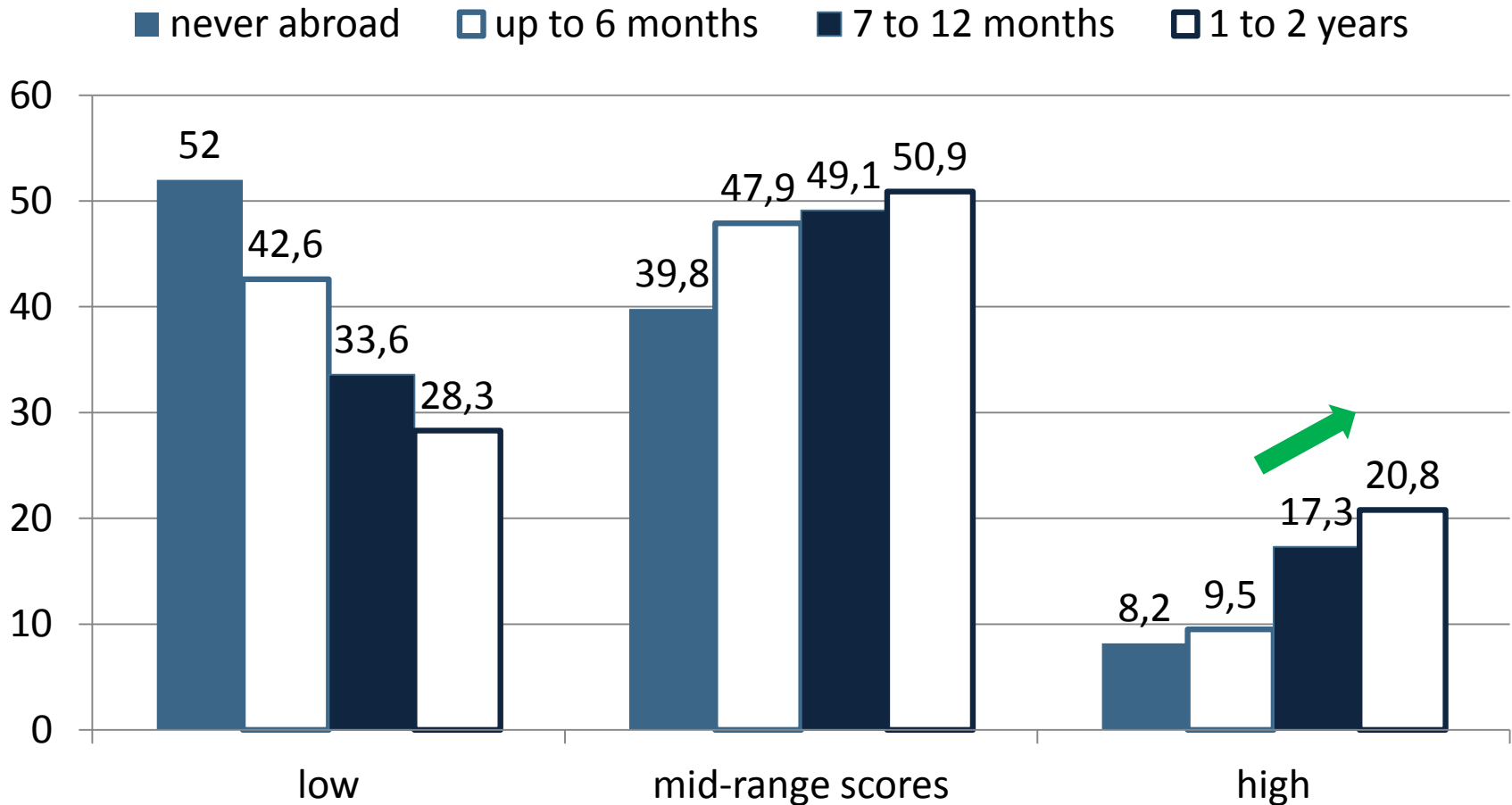
Percentage of students who **never lived abroad** with low/medium/high competence score



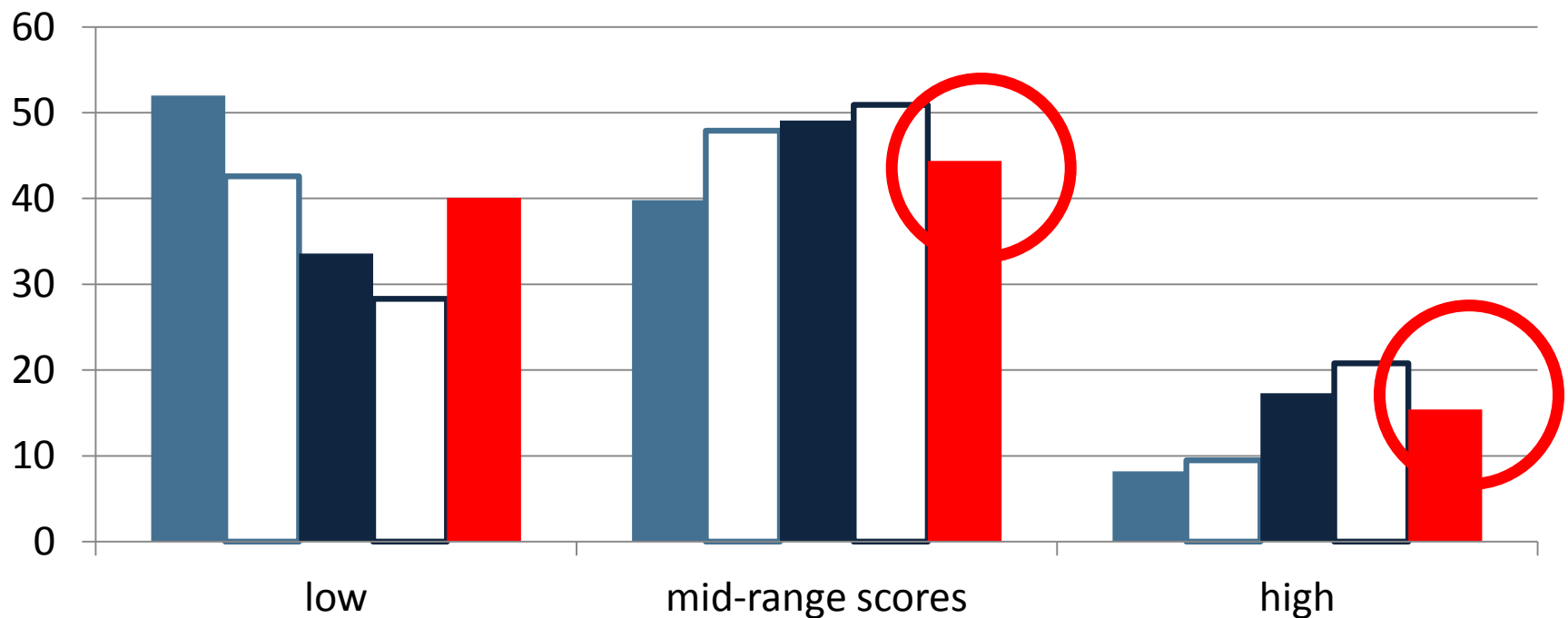
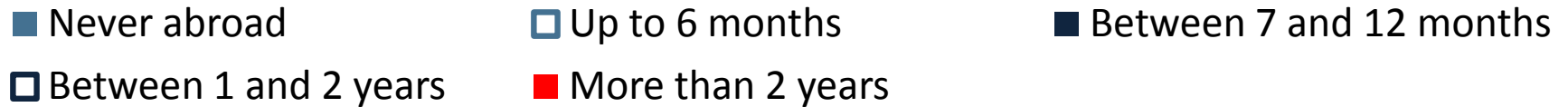
3. Developing Intercultural Competences



3. Developing Intercultural Competences



3. Developing Intercultural Competences



3. Developing Intercultural Competences

Results

- Students who spent **some time** abroad score higher on Intercultural Sensitivity than students who **never** lived abroad

But:

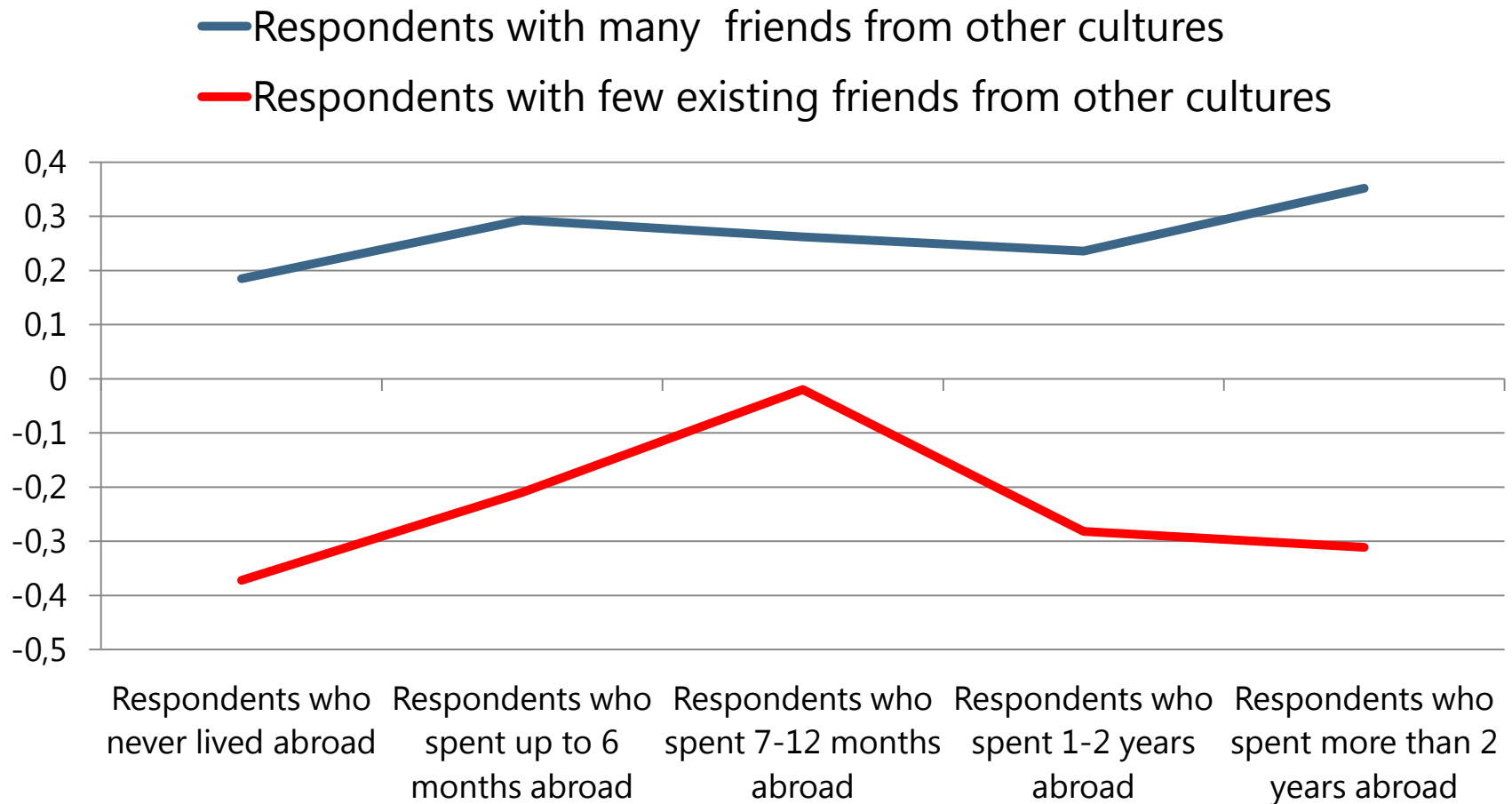
- With more than 2 years abroad, students show **lower** competence scores
- We found similar results for the other competences

3. Developing Intercultural Competences

Why do scores first go up, then down again?

- Let's look at **one finding** from older adults

3. Developing Intercultural Competences



3. Developing Intercultural Competences

Our data show that competence scores differ significantly depending on **how many friends** from other cultures people have

- People with many friends from other cultures steadily become interculturally more comp the more time they spend abroad
- People with few friends from other cultures benefit from time abroad up until their first year
- Then go down again

3. Developing Intercultural Competences



3. Developing Intercultural Competences

To sum up:

- Intercultural competences can be defined, measured and developed
- This allows for assessing and keeping track of student development
- The Intercultural Readiness database helps to identify which external factors – in particular, friends from other cultures – play a key role
- Assessment and research help to better understand what students need, and how they can be supported in their development of intercultural competences

Contact details

ursula@ibinet.nl

www.interculturalreadiness.com