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# Teacher preparation for the global stage: International student teaching

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TEACHER PREPARATION FOR THE GLOBAL STAGE:  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TEACHING

Jacob B. Chacko

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As globalization lessens the distance between peoples and diversifies the common classroom, Teacher Education (TE) programs lag behind in producing globally-minded educators. One approach used by some TE programs to remedy this issue is to offer International Student Teaching (IST) experiences. While the literature related to these programs is rather positive, information related to why students choose to participate in IST experiences and the challenges they encounter while abroad is limited. This study attempts to fill this gap in the literature. Drawing on interview data from current (n=3) and former (n=2) participants, as well as two program administrators, this multiple case study utilizes a cross-case analysis to draw conclusions within and between the cases. Programmatic recommendations that are applicable to both faculty members and study-abroad professionals are included.

TEACHER PREPARATION FOR THE GLOBAL STAGE:  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TEACHING

JACOB B. CHACKO

A Thesis Submitted in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

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TEACHER PREPARATION FOR THE GLOBAL STAGE:  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TEACHING

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This thesis is dedicated to Mia and Emily; thank you for your inspiration!

J. B. C.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

When the church bells rang and *Habemus Papam* was declared in Rome, Italy, as the new pope was elected, it was also proclaimed simultaneously all over the world. In fact, it was proclaimed to just about anyone who owned a smartphone, television, radio, or computer with internet. We live in a world of technological advances that significantly lessens the distances between individuals and nations. Such interconnectedness is leading to globalization. Zhao (2009) defines globalization as “the increasing free movement of people, goods and services, information, and money across national borders and physical distances that are traditionally limited by their movement within political, economic, and geopolitical boundaries” (pp. 101-102). The realm of education is no stranger to this phenomenon. American classrooms are changing in ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity. Educators need to be able to address different learners in their classrooms; thus, teacher education (TE) programs need to rethink teacher preparation.

To prepare teacher candidates for the evolving 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms, teacher education programs are slowly making strides to globalize their programs. International student teaching (IST) is one of the approaches to this challenge. IST is the preparation of teacher candidates to teach in a rapidly diversifying world via an international placement. Like domestic student teaching, IST seeks to equip teacher candidates with pedagogical

knowledge, context, and experience to be successful first-year teachers within global and multicultural contexts. Allaman (2012) claims traditional teacher education programs face challenges in preparing future teachers for diverse classroom. Kholer (2012) argues that teacher candidates who have successfully completed IST experiences develop cross-cultural sensitivity, a commitment to social justice, and the pursuit of cultural diversity. IST has the potential to aid teacher candidates in overcoming this challenge.

### **Purpose of the Study**

As a 21<sup>st</sup> century pedagogue, teacher candidates have to adapt to new standards, policies, and ever-changing classrooms. Participating in an IST program can prepare the teacher candidate with a multitude of cultural and global perspectives. IST is well documented in literature as being associated with the development of self efficacy, pedagogical content knowledge, and cultural understanding (Allaman, 2012; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Quinn, Jarchow, Powell, Barr, & McKay, 1995; Ozek, 2009; Mahon & Cushner, 2002; Sahin, 2008; Lee, 2011; Alfaro, 2008; Stachowski & Sparks, 2007; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). Sahin (2008) explained that not only did the IST teacher candidates have a cultural awakening, but they developed a strong sense of self and pride in their own education system.

The purpose of this study is to discover why students participate in IST, what challenges are associated with IST, and how did their IST experience influence the development of a global teaching perspective. Three main participants were interviewed prior to departure, during the program, and after they return from their international student teaching experience. This study will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What factors influence teacher candidates' decisions to participate in IST?
2. What types of challenges did participants experience during IST?
3. How does IST contribute to the development of a global perspective?

### **Significance of the Study**

Much of the literature related to IST focuses on the benefits of IST as they relate to teacher preparation. However, there is little information in the current literature related to the reasons why teacher candidates elect to participate in IST, the challenges teacher candidates face while abroad, and how IST contributes to the development of a global perspective. This information is vital in order to understand the IST program as a whole. Although research on the benefits of IST provides crucial information on successful IST candidates, the aforementioned aspects holistically represent the program to all stakeholders.

The results of this study will be beneficial to not only the university and professors but most importantly, to the teacher candidates. This study will give the participating teacher candidates a chance to reflect on their experience. Future participants of the IST experience can look to this study for further information before deciding to participate. This study will provide insight into factors that influence teacher candidates' decisions to participate in IST, suggest aspects of personal and professional growth, and highlight potential challenges teacher candidates may face while abroad. As it provides participants the opportunity to reflect and make sense of their experiences, it will also provide valuable insights into international student teaching for potential participants, faculty members, and university administrators.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The development of a global perspective is thought to be a benefit of IST (Mahon & Cushner, 2002). This phenomenon of global perspective has been examined in the literature review. Hanvey (1979) discusses five dimensions that individuals can develop in attaining a global perspective. These include, but are not limited to, perspective consciousness, state of the planet awareness, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choices.

Perspective consciousness is based on the notion of being aware of one's perspective in relation to the world. Hanvey (1979) describes that this goes beyond the notion of an opinion. Different experiences and influences affect the development of this perspective as well as the realization of multiple perspectives is vital. State of the planet awareness directly reflects on the understanding of global trends. Hanvey argues that this does not come from direct experience. Keeping oneself informed via media outlets on global issues, trends, and topics are valuable.

Cross-cultural awareness details the experiences of different peoples and societies. Hanvey (1979) explains that this awareness is focused on the diversity of ideas and practices of others in comparison to one's own. The knowledge of global dynamics awareness situates around change, global change. The need to understand how global systems produce change is key. This leads to the last dimension of awareness of human choices which examines the problems of choice; understanding the results and/or consequences of human choice in terms of peoples and nations.

This study utilizes Hanvey's (1979) dimensions of attaining a global perspective as the guiding framework. As Merryfield (2000) suggests, simply taking part in an

experience does not equate being multicultural or having a global perspective. While teacher candidates who participate in IST have the potential develop these dimensions, how they utilize and actualize their experience determines what kind of teacher they might become. IST can be a catalyst for obtaining such global perspectives and thus this study uses these dimensions to explore the experiences of teacher candidates while participating in IST.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Teacher Candidate:* Teacher candidate is the term used to describe student teachers in this study. These individuals are in the process of learning what it is like to be a teacher. They put into practice the knowledge and theories learned in practicum experiences known as student teaching.

*Student Teaching:* Clement and Outlaw (2002) describe student teaching as a capstone experience. The teacher candidate has the opportunity apply what they learned in the teaching field in a practicum experience. “The time when the student teacher applies theories, practices management, and develops effective teaching strategies” (p. 180).

*International Student Teaching:* Just like student teaching, international student teaching has a similar definition but with a global twist. Kissock (1997) suggests that international student teaching experiences have universal traits as domestic student teaching. They have the added possibility of obtaining a global perspective or world view. International student teaching has been used interchangeably with phrases such as overseas student teaching, global student teaching, pre-service overseas student teaching, international student teaching practicum, and more.

*Global Perspective:* Hanvey (1979) defines the global perspective as “a variable trait possessed in some form of degree by a population, with the precise character of that perspective determined by the specialized capacities, predispositions, and attitudes of group’s members” (p. 162).



## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter examines the literature relevant to the purposes of this study. The chapter is divided into four sections: (1) current status of international student teaching, (2) benefits of international student teaching, (3) challenges of international student teaching, and (4) study abroad intent.

#### **Current Status of International Student Teaching**

Several types of programs exist for student teaching abroad at different universities. Quezada (2004) details the different types of experiences available to teacher candidates for teaching overseas: (a) Department of Defense schools, which are mainly for the military families of US soldiers based in the specific foreign country; (b) Department of State schools, which are international schools modeled after the American School system attended by American nationals, international students, and locals; and (c) host country schools, which are local public schools primarily attended by the locals. This review found that TE programs integrate American teacher candidates into the host country schools.

Quezada (2004) describes different consortiums that are in existence for IST: the Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching (COST) program, Foundation for International Education, International Teacher Education Consortium, Pacific Region Student Teaching Program, University of San Diego—School of Education Global (SOE-

Global) project, and the Christopher Newport University-Newport News, Virginia, programs. Mahon and Cushner (2002) described the survey results from participants' experience in the COST program. They argue that IST is a catalyst that enables teacher candidates to interact with their students, colleagues, the community, and the world. Teacher candidates are thrust into an environment in which they not only have to adapt to the surroundings but also their teaching.

Along with the above programs, professors and colleges of education build partnerships with their counter parts in other countries. A number of institutions in the Midwestern United States have direct partnerships that provide opportunities for international student teaching. Landerholm and Chacko (2012) discussed university partnerships at Northeastern Illinois University and local schools in South Korea. Teacher candidates taught eight weeks in the United States followed by four months in South Korea. Although participants only taught English conversation, this overseas experience has gained momentum throughout the College of Education since its inception in 2009.

This section reviewed the various programs and types of IST experiences that are available to teacher candidates. International partnerships among colleges of education and individual professors were explored. The next section will discuss the benefits of IST experiences explored in this literature review.

### **Benefits of International Student Teaching**

The benefits associated with IST are well-documented in the literature. Hanvey (1979) identifies the five dimensions of global perspective as perspective consciousness, state of the planet awareness, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics,

and awareness of human choices. The literature review found that the benefits of IST are in parallel with Hanvey's dimensions of global perspective. IST participants have the opportunity to see how teaching is done in a different country, thus creating opportunities for diversifying perspectives, awareness of global issues, degrees of cultural awareness, awareness of patterns of change, and the direct effects of one's own actions (Hanvey, 1979). Teacher candidates have the opportunity to enhance their global perspective while participating in IST. In turn, they can supplement these ideas and methodologies into their teaching styles and into their own classrooms.

Lee (2011) described the experience of 15 teacher candidates from China who participated in a 6-week language immersion in Auckland, New Zealand. Lee explained that along with culture, teacher candidates also picked up a new language (sometimes more than one), a re-defined understanding of their own culture, changes in cultural perceptions, and different teaching methods. Lee argues that this experience serves as a great exchange of cultural information and teacher candidates can gain a great deal of pedagogical content knowledge.

Teacher candidates learn quickly to adapt to their environment through classroom experience. Maynes, Allison, and Julien-Schultz (2012) described the experiences of Canadian teacher candidates on their international experience teaching on the Masai Mara of Southern Kenya. They found even when there was a lack of or no resources, teacher candidates were creative in their own methods and adopted alternative methods learned from their Kenyan cooperating teachers. The aforementioned benefits suggest that teacher candidates have the potential to gain innumerable life experiences and teacher preparation on a global scale.

While teaching abroad, teacher candidates can develop an understanding of how students in other cultures learn in their particular cultural and societal context. Malewski and Phillion (2009) explained the experience of 39 teacher candidates who took part in a non-teaching study-abroad trip to Honduras. They discovered that teacher candidates developed an understanding of what it is like to be a cultural outsider and were open to supplementing their instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. When individuals develop some understanding of other cultures, it can lead to their understanding of the impact of social and cultural contexts of a learning environment on students' learning (Lin, 2011). Additionally, teacher candidates may feel what it is like to be an ethnic minority in an educational setting and as a result, may be more sensitive to his or her students' needs and better able to create a culturally diverse classroom (Allaman, 2012). Clement and Outlaw (2002) explain that teacher candidates have unique opportunities to see how different cultures help ethnic minority students learn. In-turn the teacher candidates can utilize these methods in their own classrooms.

Kissock (2007) described the universal traits of domestic and international student teaching: teacher candidates should experience their internship in a setting outside of their comfort level. Cushner and Mahon (2002) reiterated the importance of a different setting in the sense of its effects on the teacher candidates' development of intercultural and international development. The study also discovered that, through international experiences, student teachers developed a sense of self efficacy and global mindedness. International student teaching has been suggested as one option for preparing teacher candidates to be more effective in working with diverse populations.

This section discussed the benefits of IST as found in the literature review. The benefits of IST include an opportunity to learn a new culture and language, variety of pedagogical skills, development of multiple perspectives, potential for a global perspective, etc. With benefits also come challenges. The challenges of IST are discussed in the next section.

### **Challenges of International Student Teaching**

Some studies have identified challenges associated with IST. Val and Tennison (1992) suggest that a possible critical issue when students go abroad is dealing with culture shock. They noted culture shock can range from simple disorientation to dysfunction in the new society where the teacher candidates are placed. Oberg (1960) describes culture shock in several stages, ranging from the honeymoon stage to the adjustment stage. Culture shock can be counteracted with cultural literacy orientation program implementation both prior to leaving the USA and arriving in the host country. In a review of the student teaching overseas project at Indiana University, Bloomington, Stachowski and Sparks (2007) propose that teacher candidates need to be prepared well before they leave for the host country. They should be knowledgeable of the culture, people, food, and education system. Stachowski and Sparks also advise that teacher candidates should be held accountable for much more than just teaching in the international country. For example, participants should engage in extracurricular activities, social gatherings, cultural events, and become fully immersed in the setting.

Along with culture shock, some teacher candidates may have disorienting experiences. Trilokekar and Kukar (2011) described the experiences of five participants from Canada who participated in an IST program. They discovered instances where the

teacher candidates experienced outsider status and disorientation. Comments of skin color and simple body language displayed by individuals of the host country were common types of dissonance faced by the participants. Living in a culture very different from one's own can create a space for learning as well as dissonance. This may be the first time individuals are forced to survive on their own and encounter ideas and perspectives vastly different from their own or their home nation or belief system. For teacher candidates, outsider status can be an important lesson on working with a classroom of diverse students.

Another challenge for IST participants is funding with access to IST often limited to certain universities and teacher candidates from higher socioeconomic-status. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, only 15% of our nation's educators identify as Black or Hispanic (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). These figures can be mirrored to the representation in TE programs. Kholer (2012) argues that teacher candidates who come from low socio-economic status typically are not inclined to participate in study abroad. This phenomenon will be later discussed in this chapter under Intent.

Challenges with the cooperating teachers have also been reported. A key figure that can help the teacher candidate through these issues is the cooperating teacher. Yang (2011) reported that not enough support was provided by the cooperating teacher. Similar to domestic placements, the amount of work the cooperating teacher carries out left little time to support the teacher candidate. All the while, the cooperating teacher's role is vital in the student teaching process.

Another challenge faced by teacher candidates occurs after they return to their home country. Maynes, Allison, and Julien-Schultz (2012) noted that the teacher candidates had trouble re-connecting with family and friends who had not travelled abroad. This experience made their transition back into their home culture difficult. Upon returning from the Masai-mara in Africa to Canada, the participants indicated in their journals that it was very difficult to reconnect because no one understood the magnitude of change that occurred within them as an individual and as an educator.

The literature review documented several challenges encountered by teacher candidates while they participated in IST. These ranged from disorienting experiences, lack of support financially and pedagogically, culture shock, and re-adjustment back in the native country. The next section will explore the reasons why teacher candidates decide to participate in IST.

### **Study Abroad Intent**

The literature on intent for IST is limited; thus, the review of literature turned to study abroad. A handful of studies (Rust, Dhanatya, Furuto, & Kheiltash 2008; Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2009; Salisbury, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2011) have identified some reasons for participating in study abroad experiences in post-secondary institutions.

Individuals study abroad for various reasons. Rust et al (2008) analyzed the results of The Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshman Survey (n=400,000). The study identified a profile of students most inclined to study abroad as being largely female, having high SAT scores and GPAs, attending liberal arts schools and high-status institutions of higher learning, attending private schools, and coming

directly from high school to college. Rust et al (2008) argued that intent was not highly dependent on major and field of study. They also explain that students who were actively involved in campus, community, social, academic, and diversity activities were more likely to study abroad.

Variables such as an individual's interactions, background, and type of university also affect intent to study abroad. Salisbury et al (2009) analyzed the results of The Wabash National Study on Liberal Arts Education, a longitudinal study. "The study involved n=3081 freshman students from 19 different universities that completed paper and pencil instruments" (p. 125). The data revealed that socioeconomic status positively influenced the intent to study abroad, students with diverse interactions and co-curricular involvement were more likely to study abroad, students in social sciences majors are more likely to study abroad, and compared to European-American students, Asian-American students were significantly less likely to study abroad. The study also noted that "minority students disproportionately enroll at community colleges or attend college part-time" (p. 138). These students were less likely to study abroad than traditional university students due to lack of programs.

Several other factors also influence study abroad intent. Salisbury, Paulsen, and Pascarella (2011) analyzed data from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts which consisted of 6,828 participants from 53 different institutions. Salisbury et al. (2011) detailed the notion of intent while exploring variables based on race. They explained that factors affecting intent to study abroad include, but are not limited to, standardized test scores, institutional/federal grants, institutional/federal loans, parents' education, and socioeconomic status. ACT scores did not affect intent on study abroad for European



American students but negatively affected African-American students. Asian-American and Hispanic students were more likely to study abroad when receiving federal grants and loans vs. their European American counterparts. Rust et al., adds that white students tend to seek out study abroad experiences to increase cross-cultural educational experiences, whereas minority students participate in cross-cultural experiences on a daily basis due to their limited numbers represented in institutions of higher learning. Thus, the intent for study abroad for minority students may be less.

While the research on the benefits of IST is well documented (Alfaro, 2008; Allaman, 2012; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Lee, 2011; Mahon & Cushner, 2002; Maynes, Allison, & Julien-Schultz, 2012; Ozek, 2008; Sahin, 2008; Satchowski & Mahan, 1998; Satchowski & Sparks, 2007), the research inclusive of the challenges of IST remains sparse (Chan & Parr, 2012; Malewski & Phillion, 2008; Quezada, 2004; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Yang, 2011). Further exploration on the challenges of international student teaching is important for the benefit of current and future programs. The review of literature also resulted in a gap of information regarding the reasons why teacher candidates participate in IST. These are the questions explored in this comparative case study.

This chapter detailed the literature review on IST. Gaps in the literature led to further review of study abroad literature. The benefits and challenges of IST, the current status of IST, as well as the intent for study abroad were reviewed. The next section will discuss the methodology of this study.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter will explain the methodology utilized in this study to explore the research questions as well as identify the research design. The following topics will be discussed: qualitative case study design, subjects and research setting, data collection methods and procedures, data analysis procedures, validity and reliability, and ethical concerns.

#### **Qualitative Research Design**

In case study design, the interest is more on the process of the study than the outcome, with the researcher as the instrument who collects and interprets the data (Merriam, 1998). Ambiguity, sensitivity, and good communication skills are characteristics vital to the role of the researcher in a qualitative case study. There are advantages and disadvantages to this design. An advantage is that a rich amount of content is acquired from the study that gives a thorough explanation of the phenomenon. The participants get to tell their story through interviews, documents, observations, among other methods that are crucial for study validity (Merriam, 1998).

This study utilizes a qualitative multiple case study design, specifically, a comparative case study. Yin (2003) describes a case study as an “empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). Yin

explains that in a comparative case study design there can be a literal or theoretical replication. The case here is the international student teaching experience and five participants are the main focus of this study. Thus a literal replication is applied. Yin (2003a) argues that findings from multiple case studies are more significant based on the ability to replicate the studies, thereby making the study more sound. Yin (2003a) notes a number of limitations within the case study methodology. Bias is one of the limitations to this approach. The researcher is the sole interpreter of the data, thus readers of the final report should be aware of bias. The aforementioned qualities of researchers are vital in counteracting these biases: Ambiguity, sensitivity, and good communication skills.

This study focuses on international student teaching experiences using a comparative case analysis. Two key informants, university administrators, provided background program information. Three research questions formed the base of this study:

1. What factors influence teacher candidates' decisions to participate in international student teaching?
2. What types of challenges did participants experience during IST?
3. How does IST contribute to the development of a global perspective?

### **Research Setting**

The IST program takes place in Southeastern England and is a partnership between Central University and Saturn University. Central university is located in the Midwestern, United States and Saturn University is located in Southeastern, England. Teacher candidates finish eight weeks of student teaching in the Midwestern, United States and eight weeks of student teaching in Southeastern, England. Once the teacher

candidates arrive in Southeastern England, they attend a week of orientation at the Saturn University campus. Orientation consists of the British curriculum, school structure, program and Saturn University supervisors' expectations, etc. The teacher candidates are placed in public primary and secondary schools in Southeastern England.

### **Participants**

The participants of the study are teacher candidates: three teacher candidates who participated in IST during the time of the study, two former teacher candidates who previously participated in IST, and two key informants, university administrators of the IST program, who provided additional information. All participants and schools have been assigned pseudonyms. Table 1 provides the demographics of the participants to include age, major/department, sex, and race.

Table 1

#### *Participant Demographics*

Name	Age	Major	Sex	Race
Rita	25	Elementary	Female	Black
Jamie E.	26	History	Male	Latino
Todd	22	History	Male	White
Karen	During IST: 29 Time of study: 30	Early childhood	Female	White
Lucia	During IST: 21 Time of study: 23	Elementary	Female	White

Rita is a black female from the Midwestern United States. She studied elementary education and finished her “American” student teaching at an urban elementary school in the Midwest. Rita was participating in her international student teaching experience at the time of the study and was placed at a public primary school in

Southeastern England. She had recently graduated with her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Central University in the Midwestern United States. She is currently not teaching.

Jaime E. is a Latino male from the Midwestern United States. He studied history education and finished his "American" student teaching at a Midwestern suburban high school. Jamie E. was participating in his international student teaching experience at the time of the study and was placed at a public secondary school in Southeastern England. He had recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in secondary history education from Central University in the Midwestern United States. He is currently teaching history at the high school level in the Midwestern United States.

Todd is a white male from the Midwestern United States. He studied history education and finished his "American" student teaching at a rural high school in the Midwest. He was participating in his international student teaching experience at the time of the study and was placed at the same public secondary school in Southeastern England as Jaime E. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in secondary history education from Central University in the Midwestern United States. He is currently substitute-teaching at a public school In the Midwestern United States.

Karen is a white female who participated in the England IST program in 2012 and graduated with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education from Central University in the Midwestern United States. At the time of the study, she was a pre-kindergarten teacher at an elementary school in the Midwestern United States. She is currently teaching at the same school.

Lucia is a white female who participated in the England IST program in 2012 and graduated with a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Central University in the Midwestern United States. At the time of the study, she was a graduate student in the School of Teaching and Learning at Central University in the Midwestern United States. She is currently enrolled as a graduate student at Central University.

### **Key Informants**

Connie is a white female administrator in the School of Teaching and Learning at Central University in the Midwestern United States. She works with student teachers and promotes the IST program. She is also the primary contact for elementary education students in the IST program. She coordinates with her counterpart at Saturn University in Southeastern England, as well as the university supervisors from Saturn University who observe the teacher candidates. Connie corresponds with the teacher candidates electronically while they are engaged in their IST experience.

John is a white male administrator from the history department at Central University in the Midwestern United States. He works with student teachers in the history education program and promotes the IST program. John is the primary contact for history education students in the IST program. He coordinates with his counterpart at Saturn University in Southeastern England, as well as the university supervisors from Saturn University who observe the teacher candidates. The teacher candidates respond to questions bi-weekly in an online format; John monitors and evaluates these posts. He also monitors blog posts made by the IST history education teacher candidates; the blog posts are required by the history education program.

## Methods and Procedures

Data for this study consisted of participant interviews, blog posts, and online reflections. The qualitative data were collected via interviews and documentation. These two methods as well as the data collection procedures will be further explained below.

Table 2 depicts which data collection method was utilized from which participant.

Table 2

### *Data Collection Methods*

Participant	Phase I interview	Phase II interview	Phase III interview	Online Response Posts	Blog Posts	Field Notes
Rita	✓	✓	✓			✓
Jamie E.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Todd	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Karen	✓					
Lucia	✓					
Connie	✓					
John	✓					

### **Interview**

Merriam (1998) suggests that interviews are beneficial in obtaining data of past experiences as well as for behavior that cannot be observed. Since observations were not used in this study, interviews were the primary method of data collection. A semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix) was utilized in this study. Semi-structured interviews leave room for flexibility and an opportunity for both the participants and the interviewer to elaborate on aspects of the interview where needed. While some questions are structured, this method allows the researcher to freely explore interviewee responses and create questions on the spot to follow up and further examine nuances (p. 74). Yin

(2003a) argues that open-ended interview questions allow respondents to not only divulge the information sought but also to identify key informants to be interviewed and produce documents or other evidence pertinent to the study. Yin argues while there are many kinds of questions that can be asked, leading questions should be avoided because it can show bias and assumption on the part of the researcher. By asking interpretive questions, more information can be divulged by the interviewee and produce documents as mentioned above. This study utilized a semi-structured interview format to gather rich descriptions on the lived experiences of all participants.

### **Documentation**

This study used field notes taken by Rita during IST, blog posts made by Jamie E. and Todd during IST, as well as online response posts made by Jamie E. and Todd during IST. Rita kept field notes during her experience in England. She described interactions with her students and reflections of her lessons. Jamie E. and Todd were required by the history department to tell their story via an online blog. They posted pictures and weekly happenings in and outside of the classroom. They were also required to provide online response posts. The university supervisor from Central University posted questions on an online format and they had to provide detailed responses. Yin (2003) suggests that documents (blog posts, field notes, news paper articles, etc.) are used to corroborate evidence found in interviews and observations. During an interview, a subject may reveal additional evidence. It can be a newspaper clipping, picture, article, or some physical material than can add information to the research study. Reviewing the document and comparing it with the interview notes may strengthen the results of the study. Using documents also has its limitations, including that the documents are often



personal items, such as diaries, and are a form of bias themselves. Other limitations include authenticity of the documents and limited usability due to it being created for non research purposes. However, documents are great source for rich descriptive information and can be useful in case study research (Merriam, 1998).

### **Procedures**

After IRB approval was granted, an electronic letter (including the informed consent letter) about the study was sent to Connie and John from Central University, administrators of the IST programs at Central University. Connie is an administrator from the department of Teaching and Learning and John is an administrator from the department of History. Upon receiving their consent, a face-to-face interview was conducted with both individuals.

Their interview occurred at their office space at Central University in Midwestern United States. The interview focused mainly around background information about the program, experience of past participants, logistics of the program, history of the program, and general trends in enrollment. Connie provided contact information for all teacher candidates participating in the IST program for the Fall 2013 semester in the School of Teaching and Learning. John provided the contact information for all participating teacher candidates in the IST program for the Fall 2013 semester in the history education department.

A letter explaining the study along with the consent letter was then sent to all participating teacher candidates. Upon further research of the program through the university website and informal conversations with professors in the department of curriculum and instruction, two more participants (Karen & Lucia) were identified as

former participants of the IST program. They were interviewed in the early stages of the study. Karen was interviewed via Skype and Lucia was interviewed face-to-face at a public space on the campus of Central University. They provided information on their IST experience including why they participated, how they felt the experience impacted them professionally and personally, and what they felt they learned from this experience.

Along with Karen and Lucia, three current teacher candidates—Rita, Jamie E., and Todd—returned the informed consent forms. All participants signed the consent form and agreed to participate in the study and granted permission to audio record during live and Skype interviews. Rita, Jamie E., and Todd were interviewed three times. One interview was conducted before IST (Phase I), one interview during IST (Phase II), and one interview after returning home (Phase III). The interview before IST (Phase I) primarily focused on the experience of the teacher candidate thus far in student teaching in the Midwestern United States. Participants discussed their interest in a teaching career, their student teaching placement in the United States, and their expectations for the IST program. For Phase I, Jamie E., Todd, Connie, and Lucia were interviewed face-to-face at a public space on the campus of Central University. Rita was interviewed via Skype.

The interview during IST, or Phase II, focused on their experiences while living in Southeastern England. Participants discussed what they were doing in their IST, host families, adjustment to life, and travel experiences. This interview was conducted via Skype for all three participants while they were in Southeastern England.

The interview after returning home, or Phase III, primarily focused on the manner in which participants processed their international experience. Participants discussed

events that occurred after the Phase II interview, returning to the United States, and reflecting on their overall experience. This interview was conducted via Skype for all three participants after they returned to the Midwestern United States.

The interview protocol (see Appendix A) was looked over by the principal investigator and subject matter experts, who are the members of the thesis committee, for content validity. Thus, the protocol fairly examines the aspects of IST researched in this study. The collected data were analyzed to find common themes. The themes were coded and recommendations were made based on the results of the study.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

A constant comparative method was used for data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Merriam (1998) explains the constant comparative analysis method in which the data from different sources are compared and used to build concepts. This method is important in this study to identify similar concepts and themes from the different participants. An open coding method was utilized in the analysis of the data. Corbin and Strauss (1990) describe open coding in which the researcher minimizes subjectivity and bias through constant comparison of concepts derived from analysis. The concepts are categorized based on similarities and differences and themes emerge. Although this method is used for theory building, and specifically grounded theory research, it is beneficial in this comparative case study.

Strauss and Corbin (1997) explain that the analysis and constant comparison of the data during data collection procedures is vital process for the constant comparative method. Merriam (1998) states that analysis of data is an important process in qualitative



interpretation by the researcher. This study used the member checking method.

Following data analysis, the researcher did individual member checks to ensure that the true meaning of the participants' experiences was captured. After each interview, the researcher transcribed the audio-recorded interview. The transcriptions were then sent electronically to each participant to check for accuracy. The principal investigator also had access to the data to eliminate researcher bias.

Yin (2003) describes that, with reliability, replication is the ultimate concern. This chapter details the methods and procedures followed to conduct this study. The study is also a literal replication of five subjects. The findings from this study eliminated threats to reliability. Merriam (1998) explains member checking is another way to make the study credible. Participants of the study are able to read the transcripts and the qualitative report for fact checking. Readers of the report can be assured of the credibility of the study.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study involved human subjects, thus ethical considerations about informed consent and confidentiality of the subjects were vital. The researcher was prepared via coursework in research methods and IRB training prior to beginning this study. Mentorship from the principal investigator also prepared the researcher for this study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the beginning of the study. The nature of the study and all requirements for the study was explained to the participants.

Participant confidentiality was kept through the use of pseudonyms. As per the IRB details, all audio recordings were kept in a password-protected computer belonging to the researcher. All consent forms and transcripts were kept in a locked filing cabinet

in the office of the principal investigator of the study. In order for the participants to feel comfortable throughout the study, the researcher did member checking with them to ensure correct interpretation of the data collected. Involving the participants in the analysis helped to validate the findings and allowed them to have a voice in the study.

This chapter explored the data collection methods and procedures of the study. Qualitative case study research was defined and identified for this study. Interview data and document data were mined, coded, and analyzed to find similar themes. The procedures, methods of the study, analysis, as well as the ethical considerations were outlined.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the findings of this study. First, the participants' intent to take part in IST is detailed. Second, the types of challenges participants faced while abroad is discussed. Finally, the ways in which IST contributes to the development of a global perspective is explained.

#### **Intent**

The first research question explored the participants' intent on joining IST experiences. This study found a variety of reasons as to why students choose to participate in IST. Their intent to join IST was influenced by the ways in which they found out about the program, prior experience abroad, learning about new education systems, and cultural immersions.

During the Phase I interview, candidates were asked how they found out about this program. Rita, Lucia, and Jamie E. had one-on-one encounters with the key informants. Jamie E. described his experience, "This program was out of the blue...John personally came to talk to me and recommended it and I applied. I think anytime a professor recommends you for a program, you should take advantage and apply." His interest was sparked directly by John's recruiting. Lucia and Rita had similar experiences. Lucia missed her student teaching meeting and met with Connie one-on-one. Connie provided more information about student teaching and IST, and Lucia

instantly became interested. Rita found out about the program via the College of Education website and sent questions to Connie. Rita later met with Connie and her interest was peaked. Karen and Todd discovered the program during informational meetings about the student teaching process. John and Connie attended these meetings and presented the idea of IST and Karen and Todd's interest was piqued. Direct and indirect recruiting at study abroad fairs, presentations at student teaching meetings, and via using the world-wide-web, Connie and John are able to recruit students each semester to participate in IST.

The participants also told their reasons for participating. Karen and Jamie E. had prior experiences in study abroad. Karen explained, "I had done this before in a different school for Spanish. I had a really good experience. The opportunity came up here [Central University] and there were weekend trips. I knew it would be a unique experience." Jamie E. also discussed his study abroad trip to Mexico and also a personal trip to Italy. Prior experience was one of the reasons for both Karen and Jamie E's intent to participate.

Rita had very specific reasons for joining the IST experience, which included her love for travel but more importantly to experience a new education system. She shared, "I also want to see how the education system is in different countries. How do they implement curriculum in the classrooms? What are their standards? How do they handle behavior?" She said that she wanted to take what she learned and merge it with her classroom one day when she teaches in the USA.

Different cultural experiences were also an influencing factor of intent. Jamie E. explained this factor:



I love meeting new people. I love learning about people's culture through learning their history and FOOD! I love food; you can learn a lot about a person and where they come from by sitting down and sharing a meal with them.

He was excited to not just teach abroad in England but take the opportunity to travel.

Outside of the weekend excursions provided by the program, all five IST participants travelled to many neighboring countries.

### **Challenges**

The second research question explored the types of challenges faced by the teacher candidates while participating in IST. This section is divided into three parts: anxiety, adaptation, and teaching.

#### **Anxiety**

Rita, Jamie E., and Todd mentioned during the Phase I interview that they really did not know what was going to happen once they arrived in England. Jamie E. said, "I think the biggest challenge is not really knowing what to expect." They knew they were going to meet with all the other IST members and take a cab to their homestay. But as far as their school placement, curriculum, teaching content, how they were going to school, etc., remained a mystery. One thing that all participants mentioned, including Lucia and Karen, was that they were relieved to speak with their host family before arriving in the United Kingdom (UK). During Phase I interviews, the unknown was highlighted as the main challenge.

Transportation was another topic for anxiety. Rita explained her morning routine: "I take the 7:00AM train, but sometimes it's late...Then I get on a bus which goes to the school. Being dependent on the bus and train schedule is difficult." Lucia echoed the same thoughts: "I had to commute an hour and transfer three buses to get to my

placement. There were times when I missed the bus or the bus didn't come or came late." Jamie E. also mentioned having to travel by train then transfer to a bus. He rode the bus with his students because there were no school buses in England. Later, in an online prompt from his university supervisor in the United States (USA), Jamie E. said, "An aspect I recommend from the US system to adapt in England is having school busing for students." Todd was at the same school as Jamie E. and shared the same commute, although they live separately in different home-stays.

Another anxiety topic was the curriculum. Rita spoke of having to learn the English curriculum within one week. Rita, Jamie E., and Todd mentioned in their interview that since they student taught in the USA until the day before leaving for England, they did not have sufficient time to research too much about the curriculum. However, as soon as the participants arrived in England, they had a 2-day orientation during which they were taught the British curriculum and program expectations. Thus, the anxiety challenge slowly turned to adaptation.

### **Adaptation**

Prior to Phase I interviews, Connie and John explained challenges relating to adapting in the new environment. In terms of a study abroad challenge, Connie said:

One of the greatest is when they arrive. In the whole history of our program we had one student return in the first two weeks. She just could not stay. Otherwise they work through the homesickness. Transportation is also a big thing. Panicking about where to be at and what time and how to get there.

In his interview, John echoed Connie's thoughts via responses he received from teacher candidates about the first couple of weeks while abroad. He said that teacher candidates wrote in their blogs and online posts about adapting to their surroundings and British

vernacular English. The teacher candidates eventually adapted to their surroundings and started to acclimate.

Rita shared what she missed most in the Phase III interview: “I used to be able to hop on a train and go anywhere and everything was in walking distance. Here [USA] everything needs to be driven to.” Todd added, “I miss the milk, the rail system for sure. Over here you have to drive everywhere.” Jamie E. detailed, “I miss being at the school and with my students. I miss my host parents and their incredible hospitality. I so miss the easy going life style that I saw in Europe in general through my travels.” By the time the three current IST participants returned to the USA, they had begun to adapt with their environment.

### **Teaching**

Placement was the first challenge discussed by both Connie and Karen. Karen had a placement problem when she arrived in England. She was first placed in a school setting outside of the age-range required by her department at Central University. Karen contacted Connie immediately and Connie, with the help of her counterpart at Saturn University, was able to immediately find a new placement for Karen. Connie explained, “Sometimes students were misplaced. We need them in their right placement for certification and we simply found them a new placement.” After the placement issue was resolved, many participants were concerned with the amount of teaching.

One of the differences from student teaching in England versus student teaching in the United States was the amount of observation. Connie mentioned this in the interview,

They [the English] believe in modeling quite a bit, lots of observing and the teacher candidates will slowly take over one or two lessons a day. Eventually they may take over more but by and large the British system is not like ours.

John echoed the difference of student teaching in the two countries in his interview: “In England you observe the master teacher and you learn by observing the master teacher and so they are not as immersed as you might say in teaching as they are here.” During her experience, Lucia felt that she didn’t get to teach as much because her cooperating teacher was busy preparing the students for a national exam. Lucia explained,

I felt like a teacher’s aid. My cooperating teacher [CT] was way too busy preparing students for the SATS test and I didn’t get to teach as much. In the USA, my CT was also preparing students for national exams but I took control over the class. The CT in the USA made sure that my lessons were aligned with the standards for the exam.

Karen and Lucia pointed out that they taught significantly less in England.

Jamie E. and Todd also discussed fewer hours of teaching compared to the United States. Todd explained that he taught roughly the same amount of hours in England compared to the USA, but he noted that many of his hours in England were spent assisting in extracurricular classes and in planning periods. Jamie E. mentioned that he taught more after the second and third week in England but still significantly less than in the USA. However, Rita explained that she taught more in England: “I taught right away. The students were grouped in ability levels so there was a lot of co-teaching. My first day there, I taught a math lesson and was able to teach my group of students.”

A variation in English education was the content. Karen explained in the Phase I interview,

I could not teach them phonetics because I don’t speak like them. Also, it took some adjustment teaching religious education. Fortunately, it aligned with how I grew up; there was no conflict. It was a public school and the students who didn’t

follow the religion went out of the room to read a book or something. There were nativity plays and carols. The students and faculty were horrified when I told them we didn't do nativity plays here in American Schools Haha.

Karen highlighted that it was very different teaching about Christianity in the school.

She also pointed out that from her group of IST participants no one else taught religious education. Rita also taught at the primary level and mentioned religious education in the schools. She took an observant role during these lessons: "My class had carol service in the church and they performed for the parents. Then they did a nativity play, it was different." Another nuance that Lucia noticed was that there were no textbooks. The teachers created their own materials, such as worksheets, and students would keep these things in their notebooks or folders.

Lucia briefly mentioned the supervision aspect of the IST program, she said,

She [England university supervisor] came twice .. the first time I was not teaching...so that was strange. She came to see my class. I met with her after...and it was strange. She came the second time.. She walked around for five minutes and met with me after.. I didn't get much feedback. She didn't say you did this well... she said basically.. your class is great.. I hope you are having a great time

The university supervisor from Saturn University in England does observations just as the university supervisors from Central University. They also assign a grade for the student teaching portion in England. In the interview with Connie, she explained that half of the student teaching grade was assigned by the university supervisor from the United States and the other half from England. Two of the participants shared frustration with university supervisors in the United States not being supportive or helpful with the student teaching process.

## Global Perspective

The third research question sought to explore the ways in which IST contributed to a global perspective. The themes identified in the findings were diversity, pedagogy, and self-efficacy.

### Diversity

The participants described that they wanted to use the IST experience to be able to learn something new, something that they could use as first-year teachers in their prospective classrooms. When comparing the interview data from Phase I to Phase III, one of the changes that occurred was this view of diversity. During Phase II interviews, Rita talked about the differences in her classroom, “It’s just socioeconomic diversity and learning ability diversity. I don’t think I’ve seen other race students here.” Other than race, she described socioeconomic and learning ability diversity. Jamie E. discussed his experience, saying,

There are a lot of Polish students in my class and there are Indian and Middle Eastern as well. There is some what of a diverse population but ethnically its mostly white British. There is socioeconomic diversity. A lot of students come from lower socioeconomic status and single parent homes.

He discussed linguistic and cultural diversity as well as socioeconomic status. Family structure was also a variable he noted in his observations. The participants’ perceptions on diversity changed from Phase I interviews. Whereas race was seen more as a black-and-white skin color, they were now acknowledging other types of diversity. During Phase II, they also identified family structure as an additional type of diversity in the classroom.

## **Pedagogy**

All the participants mentioned that they wanted to bring something back from England to use in their teaching. One of the ways this was accomplished was through their travels while in England. Connie and John both mentioned that, while participating in IST, the teacher candidates have the opportunity to go on trips designed for them and led by the university supervisor of Saturn University. Karen shared her experience, saying, “The weekend trips to the different sights in England was an added bonus, that’s why I did it too [referring to why she joined]. I got to know the university supervisor better. It was great to have those breaks.” Todd detailed further about some of these weekend excursions: “It’s busy during the week with school work, similar to the USA. In the weekend there’s lots of trip...London, Oxford, Stratford, Paris, Stonehenge.” Some of the trips were planned by the students themselves. Jamie E. and a group of the IST participants travelled to Dublin, Ireland, whereas Todd and Rita went with a different group to Amsterdam.

The participants used the travel experiences to bring back physical and anecdotal memorabilia for their future American classrooms. Jamie E. explained,

I want to tell them [future students] about my experiences. I specifically bought a flag from every country I went to and other cultural memorabilia. I walked up to the top part of the Eiffel tower just as Hitler did back during the war. I drove by trenches which are still there in parts of France. I took pictures and can use these when I teach these aspects of history.

By visiting historic trenches and other facets of history, he said that he will be able to bring the content knowledge to life from his lived experiences through this IST program. Lucia had a similar experience that supplemented her teaching ability and her

understanding of English language learners. During her participating year, Lucia and fellow IST members travelled to Germany.

I was put in a way where I couldn't communicate. In Germany, my friend got sick and neither she nor I could talk to anyone...we tried gestures but nothing worked. People couldn't understand us...so I can think of things like the students who come here [USA] I can kind of understand their situation.

She felt empathy with English language learning students in American classrooms.

Since Jamie E. and Todd were at the same school, they both discussed a skill-based system at the school for student achievement. Todd described,

Students are divided by levels. I teach year eight and year nine the most. These students are at levels four, five, six, and seven. Each lesson has different objectives for each level that the students have to meet. The higher the number of the level the more in-depth and intense the objectives are.

Jamie E. added, "The increasing levels have more abstract challenges such as students interpreting and analyzing the lecture. Students should eventually be able to analyze and critically discuss the topic at hand." Jamie explained that the skill level was determined based on comments from previous teachers, exam scores, and achievement tests.

### **Self-efficacy**

When reflecting on her experience, Lucia mentioned that she learned so much about her-self and became a completely different person. After her encounter in Germany and finding help for her sick friend, she explained that she felt like anything was possible. She felt more confident in her abilities, not only as an educator but as an individual. Rita also came to this realization after her teaching experience. A unique experience Rita had was being allowed to teach all levels in the primary school, from reception [kindergarten] to year six [fifth grade in USA].

In Phase III interviews Rita described her experiences learning about herself,



I learned how tough I am on myself. I am calmer than I thought I was. I am more accepting of things than I thought I was. I believe in myself more. I learned how to build parent-teacher relationships more.

Rita did a lot of self discovery and was able to find herself through the IST experience.

Lucia, Karen, Rita, Jamie E., and Todd all described learning about the cultures of England and the several countries they travelled to. They explained how different pedagogical experiences diversified their identity as an educator in a global sense.

This chapter has described the findings of this study. The factors of influence as to why teacher candidates join IST experiences were explored. The types of challenges encountered while participating in IST were explained. The ways in which IST contributes to a developing global perspective were highlighted. Chapter V includes the implications of these findings.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This chapter includes the findings of the study. Each research question is individually examined, and programmatic recommendations are suggested. Utilizing open coding method with constant comparative analysis the following themes have emerged and are discussed in this section: (1) intent, (2) challenges, and (3) global perspective.

#### **Intent**

Factors that influenced intent include participant recruitment, prior experiences, learning about different education systems, and immersing in cultural experiences. The review of literature explained that factors of intent mainly related to measures of human, financial, social and cultural capital (Rust et al., 2008; Salisbury et al., 2009; Salisbury et al., 2011). Although some of these factors were explored in the study, the participants provided mostly non-academic related responses. Information from this study revealed that participating in IST was related to the opportunity to try something new, to have an experience of a lifetime, to gain cultural experiences, and to obtain a global perspective. These reasons themselves have great value.

Teacher candidates have various reasons to go abroad. As you can see by the results of the study, the main factor here was they were interested in traveling or were directly recruited by the program administrator. In my interview with Lucia, she

mentioned that had she not met with Connie, she would not have even thought about doing this IST program. In order to successfully recruit students for IST experiences, program administrators need to not only advertise in large group settings, but also smaller classroom sizes and identify potential candidates. One of the ways to get more students interested is by using past participants to attend education courses to speak about their experiences. The teacher candidates will be able to relate to participants' experiences.

I think that this theme of "intent" is congruent with Hanvey's (1979) dimensions of attaining a global perspective. Teacher candidates have various reasons to participate in IST and therefore show characteristics of perspective consciousness. They are showing interest in cross-cultural awareness. Just by choosing to participate alone, they are demonstrating their awareness of global dynamics and how that comes into effect in a diverse classroom.

### **Challenges**

The participants discussed many challenges. Some of the challenges discovered were anxiety-related topics that are expected during study abroad. It should be noted that quite a few academic challenges were reported in this study. Placement was a concern discussed by Karen. Although this challenge was remedied quickly, placement needs to be addressed by the administrators in order for teacher candidates to full-fill teacher licensure requirements in the United States. The requirements for teacher licensure have direct programmatic implications on IST.

The type of teaching was also a challenge. Jamie E., Lucia, and Karen described during their interviews that there was a lot less time teaching in England. Although Connie and John had mentioned this nuance as the style of student teaching in England, it

has affected the student teachers. In this program, IST participants must finish eight weeks in the USA and eight weeks in England. The lack of teaching time can greatly affect teacher preparation. During her interview, Lucia mentioned that her CT did not allow her to teach due to exam preparation, even though she went through the same training in the United States.

Another challenge that had serious implications on the IST experience was the distance of the schools. With the exception of Karen, all participants travelled at least one hour to their schools from the homestay location. Rita and Lucia mentioned that there were times when they were late to school. Although the school accepted this due to the fact that these candidates were foreign to the nation, this problem can be easily solved by finding homestays and/or school placements that are within reasonable distances.

Anxiety was an overall challenge that all of the participants reported. In the literature review, Stachowski and Sparks (2007) discussed the importance of teacher candidates being prepared well before embarking on IST experiences. Rita mentioned in her interview that all the members of the IST experience met only once before leaving; during this time, the logistics of the program were discussed. Jamie E. and Todd met informally with John about preparing to go abroad. Going into the unknown without proper training can build up anxiety. Although this challenge is not necessarily negative, it has serious implications on the participant and the program as a whole.

Recommendations to remedy this situation are proposed later in this chapter.

As mentioned in the findings chapter, Lucia brought up supervision. While Connie mentioned that the university supervisors from Central University were aware of the IST program and would work with the teacher candidate in finishing their American

teacher licensure essentials, there was a disconnect. Two participants of the study shared frustrations about the lack of support from the American university supervisor. Lucia shared the lack of feedback from the university supervisor in England. It appears that supervision was not sufficient to help student learning in her case. Supervision is a vital part of student teaching. Teacher candidates not only self-reflect during this time but should be given adequate support and feedback from their supervisors and cooperating teachers. Further research needs to be conducted on this aspect of IST and thus, I have recommended this as a topic of study for the future.

### **Global Perspective**

Many of the teacher candidates started the interviews with discussing how excited they were to try something new or different during the trip. A very important factor that added to this global perspective was being immersed in this “different” experience. Cushner and Mahon (2002) discussed the importance of teacher candidates to being out of their comfort zone. Jamie E. described these thoughts in his interviews: “I think as a future educator you have to be as versatile as possible. Going to other countries and seeing their ways of teaching and comparing and contrasting to the American way will put me ahead of other educators.” During the Phase III interview, he recommended this experience to all teacher candidates and tried to debunk the notion of not finding a job after coming back to the United States.

Malewski and Phillion (2009) describe that teacher candidates develop an understanding of outsider status while participating in IST. Lucia’s experience comes to mind her. Her empathy for ELL students in the USA was impacted by her encounter at the airport in Germany. Traveling also can be a contributing factor to developing

perspectives. Karen described her last days in England: “I cried when I left. It just changed my perspective on traveling and living with strangers. It changed some of the ways that I thought about teaching as well.” This echoes the change that several participants went through while participating in the program. During member checking, several participants mentioned that they saw how much they grew based off of the Phase I and Phase II interview responses.

Cushner and Mahon (2002) also suggest that a strong benefit teacher candidates obtain is self-efficacy. This was echoed in several of the Phase III interviews. Through her short disorientation with the language experience, Lucia learned about survival through travel. Rita discussed her ability to believe in herself more and her tolerance and openness to many ideas. Going through this international experience and building a strong foundation on the sense of self and the development of a global perspective are aspects of successful teacher preparation. Teacher Candidates from this study began to develop a global perspective.

The guiding framework of the study, Hanvey’s (1979) dimensions for obtaining a global perspective is aligned with this theme and the findings. Teacher Candidates have demonstrated skill sets that prepare them to teach in a globally diversifying classroom. Although, Merrifield (2000) says that having IST experiences alone does not make one a global educator, I think that these authentic experiences are crucial to the development of teacher candidates. In order for administrators, faculty, and university officials to maximize the opportunity for teacher candidates to fully experience and benefits from IST, I propose the following recommendations.

## **Recommendations for International Student Teaching**

### **Cultural Literacy Orientation**

Kissock (1997) describes the IST orientation as a two-stage process. The first stage occurs when the teacher candidates are searching for the location and determining where and if they want to take part in this experience. This orientation session is the question/answer session about requirements for university, teaching licensure, job placements, and so forth. It is more for generating interest amongst students. The second orientation occurs after students have been admitted into the program. Kissock (1997) details that teacher candidates should be given as much information about the experience while understanding that some things cannot be answered without having gone through the program. While teacher candidates should research on their own about the country they will be placed, the orientation program should also cover this type of information to include cultural norms, daily life, brief history, language, and the like. To gain a different perspective on the IST experience, past participants should be invited as guest speakers to tell their story.

Along with the cultural literacy orientation, it is very important to provide information on the model of education and expectations for student teaching in the host country. The teacher candidates should have a clear understanding of what is expected of them at the host country school. The cultural literacy orientation programs provide the opportunity for teacher candidates to meet each other and start building a relationship before going abroad. Acquainting one another may lead to a strong support system while abroad outside the university system. While one can never be too prepared, it is vital to

have these orientations in place to immensely acquaint teacher candidates with their IST program.

### **Diverse Field Experience Prior to Student Teaching**

Field experiences can determine the quality of the teaching force (Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002). It is therefore critical that teacher education programs provide pre-service teachers with a learning experience during which they can connect theory to practice. Diverse field experience serves as a great vehicle for teacher candidates to understand their own identities and values systems (Brown, 2005; Whittaker, McDonald, & Markowitz, 2005) and confront their own prejudice, bias, and fears. At the same time, they get to expose themselves to diversity if they are to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to successfully work with children of diverse backgrounds. This is especially true when teacher candidates are encouraged to talk about issues not in the stand-alone multicultural education course or the literacy course in which they learn the strategies to teach ELLs or students with various abilities but in all courses (Lin, Lake, & Rice, 2008).

Seidl and Friend (2002) argue that to prepare teacher candidates for diverse student populations, there is a need for teacher candidates to engage themselves in cross-cultural experiences. It is without a doubt that diverse field-based experience should be integrated in teacher education programs. Furthermore, one semester of such experience will not be sufficient to prepare them for the ever-changing contexts of classrooms. Nevertheless, the choice of school is also a factor to consider when teacher candidates are placed.



### **Domestic Student Teaching Requirement**

Teacher candidates should first finish at least half of their student teaching in the United States before going overseas, as suggested by the literature (Alfaro, 2008; Clement & Outlaw, 2002; Quezada, 2004; Vall & Tennison, 1992). This can boost teacher candidates' confidence before they teach in a foreign nation. The previous experience in a school setting can help them acclimate to their new surroundings. This allows the teacher candidates to become accommodated with their role before being thrust into the position in an unfamiliar landscape overseas. This also assures that they complete all licensing requirements for their home country

### **Academic Work**

A crucial part of IST is that teacher candidates should still be required to do academic work while abroad. Reflection is an important part of teaching and learning (Lin et al., 2008). Stachowski and Sparks (2007) noted the importance of reflective reports during IST as valuable for the teacher candidates in critically reflecting on their experiences both in and outside of the classroom. Therefore, engaging teacher candidates in reflection on a regular basis definitely will help not only their skills to think analytically and critically but also their own identities and values as well as pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of learners. This can be in the form of a blog, a question/answer essay, a video diary, and the like.

To help teacher candidates gain international perspectives and broaden their world views, the aforementioned tactics are just a few approaches that can easily be implemented in teacher education programs. Nevertheless, teacher candidates need to be constantly supervised by faculty or staffs who understand the global systems from the

international host university and school as well as their home university. The better we prepare our teacher candidates before they start their adventure, the more likely they will be to succeed personally and professionally in the foreign nation.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Sample size was a big problem for the study. I learned as a researcher that not everyone will want to participate in a research study. Finding key informants helped to contact the subjects and get more resources such as past participants. This study followed only a small number of teacher candidates participating in the IST experience. The population of the study was limited; therefore, the sample size was extremely limited, thus a threat to transferability is eminent.

### **Further Research**

This study explored the phenomenon of international student teaching. Below are some recommendations for further research.

1. A longitudinal study on the effects of IST on the first year of teaching and beyond.
2. An extension of this study to incorporate other data collection methods. The use of video diaries and researcher observation visits at the domestic placement and international placement.
3. A quantitative study on attitudes towards international student teaching.
4. A focus on the supervision aspect of international student teaching. To include data collection via interview of university supervisors of all participating institutions.

## **Conclusion**

The need to provide international experiences for teacher candidates is vital more than ever in today's globalizing society. There is no better time than now to reconceptualize teacher education to include international and intercultural experiences. We need to redesign our courses and learning experiences for teacher candidates to actively reflect on global issues and gain intercultural competence if not becoming multilingual. Additionally, a successful international student teaching experience is dependent on the strength of collaboration among the partnering entities, the engagement of the teacher candidate, the support provided by the partnering entities, and the active participation of the host schools.

Teacher preparation programs can systematically support an international student teaching experience by taking steps to maintaining strong relationships with partnerships overseas, provide equal opportunities for all students to take part—by including scholarships, fundraisers, and other methods to pay for this internship, and by supporting teacher candidates while abroad. Together, we can prepare our teacher candidates to take charge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom.

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## APPENDIX

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

#### **Phase I**

- 1) Please introduce yourself
- 2) Why do you want to become a teacher?
- 3) Have you had to create or have you thought of a teaching philosophy? what is it?
- 4) How did you hear about this international student teaching?
- 5) What made you interested in this kind of experience?
- 6) Why did you choose to do the international student teaching experience?
- 7) Why have you decided to go to this country?
- 8) What do you look to get out of this experience?
- 9) Do you foresee any challenges while taking part in this experience?
- 10) How do you expect to cope with these challenges?
- 11) What are your goals for this experience?
- 12) What are your expectations for this experience?

#### **Phase II**

- 1) How have you been adapting to life here?
- 2) What differences have you seen from your student teaching experiences back home and here?
- 3) Is there something that worked back home that didn't work here or vice versa?  
Examples
- 5) Now that you're here, have your expectations changed?

#### **Phase III**

- 1) How does it feel to be back? What does it feel like?
- 2) What do you miss about being in your host country?
- 3) So, what significant differences you noticed with the two student teaching programs?
- 4) What was something that worked back there that didn't work here or vice versa?  
Examples...
- 5) How have you changed your teaching philosophy? Why?
- 6) When we first met, you told me that you joined this program because.....how did you achieve that purpose? Why not? Why?
- 7) What challenges did you face while student teaching in ....? how did you cope with these challenges?
- 8) Did your reach the goal you set for yourself from our first interview?
- 9) How did the program meet/not meet your expectations you mentioned from our first interview?
- 10) Would you recommend this experience to other future teachers? Why? Why not?



**Key Informants**

What programs exist? How long has it been in existence?

How is the program funded?

What is the purpose of the program?

What are the requirements?

Any data that I can see from past participants compiled by you or the department?

Literature available?