

**Postglobal Teacher Preparation:  
Border Thinking Along the Global South  
Through International Cross-Cultural Experiences**

**La Preparación Post Global del Maestro:  
El Pensamiento de Frontera en el Sur Global  
a través de Experiencias Internacionales Transculturales**

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Preservice teachers' international cross-cultural experiences can provide opportunities for the exploration of epistemic frontiers. In this article we suggest that postglobal teacher preparation take a critically reflective approach that engages preservice teachers in border thinking, which allows for other ways of knowing while studying abroad. Through international cross-cultural experiences, preservice teachers can recognize the disparate impacts of neoliberal economic globalization on educational and social equity within the metaphorical global South and the global North. We examine the narratives constructed by preservice teachers through the reflection of their international cross-cultural experiences during a Honduras Study Abroad Program. The article also explores the implications of a postglobal preparation for preservice teachers. (This article is provided in English only.)

Las experiencias culturales internacionales de aquellos que se preparan para ser maestros pueden proveer oportunidades para la exploración de fronteras epistémicas. Este artículo sugiere la preparación postglobal como una aproximación crítica y reflexiva que puede comprometer a los que se preparan para ser maestros hacia una forma fronteriza de pensamiento la cual les permite explorar otras formas de conocimiento. A través de esta experiencia los maestros en preparación también pueden tener la oportunidad de reconocer los impactos desiguales de la economía neoliberal y capitalista sobre diversas plataformas educacionales y sociales dentro de lo que metafóricamente se conocen como sur y norte globales. En este artículo se analizan narrativas construidas por los maestros en formación durante un programa de estudios internacionales en Honduras. Se exploran también implicancias para la preparación postglobal en la educación de maestros. (Este artículo se ofrece solamente en inglés.)

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During the last four decades, the proliferation of study abroad programs for U.S. preservice teachers (Phillion & Malewski, 2011; Teichler & Steube, 1991) has coincided with the expansion of neoliberal economic policies globally, known as globalization. Neoliberalism in this study is understood as a theory of political economic practices that prioritize individual freedoms through institutionalized private property rights, free markets, and free trade (Harvey, 2005). Globalization can be understood as neoliberalization through hegemonic discourse that began in the 1970s and intensified during the 1990s onward. Within this context, short-term study abroad programs for U.S. preservice teachers have gained in popularity (Willard-Holt, 2001) alongside the intensification of globalization (McCabe, 2001). However, research on preservice teachers' international cross-cultural experiences continues to disregard the influence of globalization on teacher preparation (Phillion, Malewski, Sharma, & Wang, 2009). Even though research fails to address the impacts of globalization substantively, claims are made that future teachers automatically benefit from international cross-cultural experiences (Cushner, 2007; Walters, Garii, & Walters, 2009). We suggest a postglobal understanding for teacher preparation in order to recognize and imagine alternatives to globalization's intentional occlusion of epistemological colonization within education. The purpose of a postglobal approach to preservice teachers' international cross-cultural experiences is to provide opportunities for engagement with "border thinking." Postglobal border thinking engages the difference between epistemological stances from the global South and the global North (Mignolo, 2012). The global South is comprised of the world's vulnerable populations and exists side-by-side with the global North, globalization's elite and favored populations.

In this study, we examine the epistemic frontiers of predominantly White<sup>1</sup>, monocultural preservice teachers' neoliberal values through their international cross-cultural experiences from a Honduras Study Abroad Program. For the purpose of preparing teachers to practice in diverse settings (Zeichner, 2009), it is vital to understand how travel across national and cultural borders can promote the crossing of epistemic borders. We focus on the preparation of teachers to ably engage multiple epistemological stances in order to open space within formal educational settings to explore the ways in which globalization creates inequitable educational opportunities and experiences for populations of the global South. Additionally, the ability to engage multiple epistemological stances

is important for the praxis of future teachers as they increasingly engage in learning relationships with vulnerable populations.

In this article we first review previous literature on study abroad programs within teacher preparation. Then, a postglobal framework is employed for understanding preservice teachers' international cross-cultural experiences, introducing the practice of border thinking and engagement with the global South as an alternative to globalization. Next, we describe a study abroad program, situated in Honduras, including examples of how U.S. preservice teachers are encouraged to engage in border thinking during this experience. We follow this section with a discussion of the methodological approach of narrative inquiry and an examination of preservice teacher reflections on their international cross-cultural experiences in Honduras. Finally, we discuss the presented data and conclude with possibilities for a postglobal approach to preservice teachers' international cross-cultural experiences.

### **Critical Teacher Preparation and Study Abroad**

International cross-cultural experiences have been proposed for over four decades as a strategy for the preparation of U.S. teachers as effective practitioners in diverse settings (Phillion & Malewski, 2011). As U.S. educators began teaching abroad in ever greater numbers with the creation of the Peace Corps in 1960, Taylor (1969) proposed international cross-cultural experiences for preservice teachers in order to develop global mindsets. This view was supported by Anderson and Willmon (1975), based on what they termed "worldawareness" for future teachers. These early examples of research on teacher preparation and international cross-cultural experiences are imbued with ethnocentric U.S. Cold War rhetoric (Zemach-Bersin, 2007). Wilson's (1982) approach to study abroad programs for preservice teachers adopts an early critical lens, as evidenced by her reference to Said (1981), and breaks from the previous ethnocentric perspective. Wilson is also among the first educational researchers to discuss the need to reflect on international cross-cultural experiences; she formalized the idea of experiential learning for preservice teachers studying abroad. Through a critical lens, Wilson (1982) explains:

A further important point should be made about experiential learning that is cross-cultural. Said (1981) writes in his recent book, *Covering Islam*, that a necessary condition for knowing another culture is noncoercive contact with the alien culture through real exchange. That means that if one is engaged in a job, teaching, for example, one must also see oneself as learner. Such a condition raises questions about whether military or missionary cross-cultural experiences can be experiential learning. (p. 185)

Wilson's perspective set the foundation for future research on preservice teachers' international cross-cultural experiences in addressing the implications

for educational praxis on vulnerable populations. However, recent research dilutes the emphasis on non-coercive contact through study abroad and fails to question the motivations behind study abroad programs within teacher preparation (e.g., Cushner, 2007; Walters et al., 2009). The project of national education, as embodied through U.S. public education systems, is seldom questioned. Yet the presumption remains that exposure to different cultures around the world is inevitably beneficial for the future educational praxis of preservice teachers working with vulnerable student populations.

Outside the field of education it is possible to find scholars who address the influences of globalization on study abroad (e.g., McCabe, 2001). Ogden (2007-2008) investigates study abroad through a postcolonial lens in order to question the apparent benefits of international cross-cultural experiences for U.S. students. Ogden proposes that U.S. students abroad must engage with local communities in order to attend to colonial difference and understand the world from more than one perspective. This assertion is based on the author's observation about U.S. students studying abroad:

All in all, colonial students are comfortably situated on the venerable veranda, although with an obstructed view of the full potential that an education abroad experience presents. The colonial student does his/her experiencing from the veranda and ventures away only occasionally, and then only into well-charted territory. (p. 39)

Ogden's view supports Kinginger's (2010) proposal that study abroad requires an "activist" approach for critical reflection to occur, similar to Wilson's (1982) suggestion. Kinginger understands the monoculture background of many study abroad participants and has stated, "In defense of these students, the profession needs an activist stance in relation to learning... in study abroad" (p. 225). An activist approach involves thinking at the epistemic border of the global South and global North for the "full potential" of international cross-cultural experiences to be engaged. Kinginger (2010) explains, "Our students are at increasing risk of failing to notice their own ignorance of the communities they join through study abroad" (p. 225). This assertion can be understood through work done by education scholars around "epistemologies of ignorance" (Malewski & Jaramillo, 2011). As a critical approach, analyzing epistemologies of ignorance is based on the social causes of ignorance, which are often detached from the material conditions that people, especially in the global South, experience daily. Individual preservice teachers who study abroad are representative of systemic discourses that produce epistemologies that "other" the global South and often disregard the so-called ugly side of neoliberal globalization. Teacher education works with individual preservice teachers intimately through international cross-cultural experiences; the aim of a postglobal approach is to challenge the reproduction of systemic ignorance. This study is not a critique of individual preservice teachers but uses cases as examples of what the majority of study abroad literature within education ignores. In other words, international cross-cultural experiences possess many beneficial possibilities for teacher education, but such experiential learning may not be meeting its objectives despite the

abundance of praise given to such programs in the literature. The hope of teacher education, specifically international cross-cultural experiential learning, is to integrate material realities into the epistemic foundations of monoculture preservice teachers.

### **Postglobality: Border Thinking and the Global South**

A postglobal conceptual framework works to uncover globalization's intentional occlusion of epistemological colonization – in addition to cultural and material colonization – of vulnerable populations. Epistemological decolonization addresses the forces of globalization and the intentional creation of a global South and a global North (Mignolo, 2012). Thinking through a framework of the global South and the global North enables contemporary modes of coloniality to be recognized and provides a source, the global South, for alternative ways of thinking (Freire, 1970/2000). Alternative, or “other,” ways of thinking are reconstituted through thinking at epistemic borders, where differences are not just defined by modernity (e.g., the modern nation-state system, inevitable progress), but also coloniality. This takes into account the lived experiences of vulnerable populations, as well as epistemological colonization over the past 500 years. Postglobal teacher preparation challenges the rigidity of epistemic borders and normalization of coloniality with border thinking through an engagement of epistemological difference between the global South and global North (Mignolo, 2012).

The concept of the global South starts from the postcolonial and “emerges as a postglobal discourse” (López, 2007, p. 3). The global South is a metaphor that functions at two levels. On one level, the global South is comprised of marginalized and vulnerable groups (e.g., women, immigrants, and people of color) who experience “the brunt of the anxieties set in motion by the economic, political, and cultural changes unleashed by globalization at the level of neighborhoods and communities” (López, 2007, p. 3). At this level, local communities within the global South provide natural resources and services for the global North. On another level, the global South is where alternatives to globalization are emerging through global political society that includes vulnerable populations and anti-globalization social movements. In this sense, Mignolo (2011) understands the global South as “the place where another way of life is burgeoning” (p. 166). This is based on the “recognition by peoples across the planet that globalization's promised bounties have not materialized” (López, 2007, p. 3). In other words, vulnerable populations are reacting to exploitative and oppressive social relations through their own means (Freire, 1970/2000). Globalization's setbacks include examples such as the Asian, Russian, and Brazilian economic crises of 1997-1998 and the global financial crisis of 2007-2008 that originated in the United States and Western Europe. Examples of alternatives to globalization's neoliberal aspirations, enacted through resistance, include the Cochabamba “water war” in Bolivia (1999-2000) (Olivera & Lewis,

2004) and the ongoing Zapatista movement, publicly known as Zapatismo thought since 1994 (Ramírez, 2008). Both are examples of vulnerable populations exposing and working through the cracks in the project of globalization and challenging the dominant epistemology.

Alternatives to neoliberal ideology are possible with a postglobal broadening of knowledge(s) that include ways of knowing from the global South. This framework provides opportunities during pedagogical development for preservice teachers to critically reflect and act within and against the forces of globalization, which are many in regard to education (Apple, 2004). This holds implications for an educational praxis that struggles towards more equitable social relations. As Harvey (2005) explains, alternatives are important because one of the prominent features of globalization is “increasing social inequality,” to the extent that it can “be regarded as structural to the whole project” (p. 16). In opposition to the project of globalization, Jaramillo (2012) asserts that “education plays a necessary and decisive role” (p. 70) in questioning matters such as the production of knowledge, the meaning of global citizenship, definitions of success, and (un)sustainable societal constructs and lifestyles. Through the recognition that the global South and global North exist side by side, the master narrative of globalization can be questioned, transformed, and/or replaced. Study abroad programs for preservice teachers can highlight alternative perspectives from the global South, which often exist near preservice teachers’ home communities, albeit invisible to their epistemologically narrow worldviews. There is much to learn from globalization’s setbacks and the global South’s alternative social movements. It is imperative for preservice teachers to engage in border thinking that works toward an embrace of postglobal worldview in order for educational equity to be possible. Disparate educational opportunities and experiences exist within a few miles of each other in the thousands of school districts or corporations that exist across the US. Rethinking the effects of globalization is part of future teachers’ development of dispositions towards equity and justice.

To investigate postglobal possibilities and alternatives, we explore the following questions:

1. How do preservice teachers reflect on their ways of knowing and other ways of knowing through international cross-cultural experiences?
2. How can preservice teachers’ international cross-cultural experiences cultivate border thinking between the metaphorical global South and global North?
3. What challenges are presented by neoliberal globalization that may prevent preservice teachers from considering global inequities manifested at various levels?

## The Honduras Study Abroad Program for Preservice Teachers

The Honduras Study Abroad Program aims to prepare critically conscious and globally minded teachers through international cross-cultural experiences, including field placement in a bilingual Honduran elementary school. The program is a short-term, 18-day experience, which includes interactions with various socioeconomic levels of Honduran society combined with formal and informal reflections on social disparities. The ultimate aim is to make connections across national boundaries regarding the hierarchical social construction of society in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. The short-term structure of the program caters primarily to first-year students at a major U.S. university located in the Midwest, students who can be hesitant to spend extended periods of time away from home and often have not previously travelled internationally. Within the short-term structure of the program, time is intentionally utilized to maximize formal and informal learning experiences. The Honduras Study Abroad Program is usually a starting place for preservice teachers to conceptualize global social relations. Preservice teachers also visit government-funded rural schools, an orphanage, and cultural and archaeological sites, and participate in service-learning activities at the rural schools. Through visits to multiple learning contexts, preservice teachers experience intranational diversity in formal and informal educational settings and are encouraged to reflect critically on how inequity is structured locally and globally.

Through the Honduras Study Abroad Program, preservice teachers are enrolled in three courses: *Exploring Teaching as a Career, Multiculturalism and Education*, and a *Global Studies Seminar*. Introductory texts are assigned prior to departure; formal courses, which occur during the 18 days in Honduras, include evening class discussions; and program participants complete their final projects upon returning to the United States. The courses are co-taught by a faculty member in conjunction with a graduate instructor and a faculty member from a private university in Honduras. In the first course, preservice teachers explore their perceptions of what it means to be a teacher; examine the social, historical, and political nature of schooling; and debate the overt and hidden curricula of U.S. school systems. The *Multiculturalism and Education* course aims to develop preservice teachers' sociopolitical awareness by questioning their beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives and encouraging critical reflection on the implications of their worldviews for educational praxis. The *Global Studies Seminar* allows preservice teachers to make meaning of their international cross-cultural experiences through learning about local contexts and critically reflecting through digital storytelling (photo and video montages).

Preservice teachers are encouraged to engage in border thinking through coursework and international cross-cultural experiences by reading Elvia Alvarado's (1989) *Don't be Afraid, Gringo: A Honduran Woman Speaks From the Heart* and by meeting a rural businesswoman who took it upon herself to provide educational opportunities for all children in her village. Alvarado's testimony of her women's rights and labor organizing as a *campesina* challenges and often

disrupts the narrative that the United States does nothing but good in the world. Situated within the Cold War context of the 1980s, in which U.S. anti-communist foreign policy dramatically increased U.S. military presence in Honduras for the purpose of illegally countering a leftist government in Nicaragua, this reading encourages preservice teachers to engage in border thinking because Alvarado connects the U.S. intervention in Honduras to an increase in social inequality in Honduras. The preservice teachers also visit a government-funded rural school that was initially built with funds raised by a local businesswoman. The businesswoman, Doña Teresa, started a restaurant and saved the profits to build a school in her village so that all the children in the village would have an opportunity to pursue a formal education. The K-12 school receives minimal public funding, but Doña Teresa discusses with the preservice teachers, as they dine at her restaurant, her plans for the expansion of educational resources and opportunities (e.g., building a computer lab with internet access). Doña Teresa describes her efforts in a manner that makes it clear to the preservice teachers how local efforts by vulnerable populations are effective, despite not fitting the predetermined mold of projects funded by neoliberal organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Similar to Alvarado's (1989) testimony, Doña Teresa's story challenges preconceived ideas about rural Central American women and the poor communities' dependency on aid from the global North (e.g., elite Hondurans or U.S.-based church fundraisers experienced by many preservice teachers). The disruption of the narratives that the United States is the "beneficent world policeman" and that globalization benefits all people often produces engagement with other ways of thinking and a realization that different ways of living do not necessarily signify helplessness and hopelessness. As discussed in this article, a postglobal understanding that recognizes and engages the global South can influence the epistemological and pedagogical development of preservice teachers and their conception of and interaction with vulnerable populations through future educational praxis.

### **Research Methodology: Narrative Reflection**

The qualitative research method utilized in this study is narrative inquiry, with an emphasis on the study of lived experiences (Phillion, He, & Connelly, 2005). Narrative inquiry uses lived experiences to investigate participants' recognition of sociopolitical and cultural contexts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The exploration of participant recognition "focuses on an understanding of experience," and "holds promise for ways to think about long-standing multicultural issues in global contexts" (Phillion, He, & Connelly, 2005, p.10). We focus on understanding preservice teachers' international cross-cultural experiences in relation to epistemological considerations.

The specific phenomenon we study is how preservice teachers' international cross-cultural experiences might foster border thinking of



epistemological difference. We use narrative reflections of preservice teachers to place attention on “the details—how and why a particular event is storied...or what a narrator accomplishes by developing the story that way” (Riessman, 2008, p. 12). Preservice teachers’ narrative reflection of their lived experiences involves ideological manifestations within, around, and against globalization as a dominant perspective. According to Riessman (2008), the dialogical relationship between contexts and epistemologies allows for narrative disruptions. Such disruptions allow insight into the tensions within a participant’s thinking. Narrative tensions in the thinking of preservice teachers allow exploration of possible engagements with border thinking.

## Participants

Eight preservice teacher participants from the 2012 Honduras program were included in this study with IRB approval that assured participant consent. It is important to mention that the 2012 data add to and build on a total of 86 preservice teacher participants who have studied abroad on the Honduras program since 2003. The preservice teacher participants include elementary and secondary education majors; of the eight 2012 participants, two were secondary education majors. Sixty-three of the total participants were female and 23 were male. The vast majority of the participants were White and many grew up in rural and suburban Midwestern settings. Half of the participants had no prior international travel before the Honduras trip. All participants chose or were given pseudonyms. Table 1 provides details on the eight participants from the 2012 Honduras program.

Table 1: 2012 Honduras Study Abroad Program Participant Demographics

Name	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Languages (other than English)
Noelle	female	White	basic words in Spanish
Jason	male	White	some Spanish (not fluent)
April	female	Bi-racial (Black and White)	basic words in Spanish
Sheila	female	White	none
Tiffany	female	White	none
Lucy	female	White	none
Sarah	female	White	some Spanish (not fluent)
Sam	female	White	Spanish (basic fluency)

## Data Collection

Qualitative data collection tools used by researchers in narrative research include observations, interviews, and document analysis of participants' journals and reflective assignments (Riessman, 2008). This study fittingly relied on observations throughout the entire program; informal conversations with participants; in-depth structured and unstructured interviews with participants before, during, and after the program; and participants' reflective journals, course assignments, and course discussions. Data collection focused on allowing participants to story their experiences, to interpret their experiential learning in formal and informal settings, and to discuss the ways in which their engagement with border thinking might become transformative for the development of a postglobal worldview.

Data were collected in three phases: pre-trip, on-site, and post-trip. Pre-trip data were collected through demographic information and group interviews with participants inquiring into their perceptions of Honduran society, schooling, and the international relationship between the United States and Honduras and their anticipated cross-cultural experiences. On-site data were collected through observation, informal conversations and unstructured interviews, and course discussions. The aim was to allow participants to share their international cross-cultural experiences, including experiential learning experiences that challenged their ways of knowing. Post-trip data were gathered through individual in-depth interviews that explored the impact of each preservice teacher's international cross-cultural experiences within formal and informal learning contexts. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and securely stored. Digital storytelling assignments were thematically analyzed and securely stored.

## Data Analysis

We examined the data by coding the descriptions in interviews, reflective journals, assignment documents, and observation notes. Coding was based on Riessman's (2008) dialogical analysis which recognizes the interrelational fragmentation of narrative reflections in deconstructing and reconstructing knowledge based on lived experiences. Open coding was applied to organize different forms of data, and individual participant statements were analyzed to form meaning out of reflections on lived experience. We identified reflective statements related to postglobality and border thinking, then formed reflections into thematic clusters, and investigated participants' international cross-cultural experiences. Examination focused on the dialogical relationship among preservice teacher participants' international cross-cultural experiences, the influences of globalization on education and throughout society, and thinking along epistemic borders.

Based on the above methods, we sought evidence among participant reflections of the dialogical relationship between preservice teacher participants' international cross-cultural experiences, the influences of globalization on education and throughout society, and consideration of other ways of knowing and being. From the analysis and our interpretation of the data, we documented reflections on experiences that engaged thinking along epistemic borders for each participant. Finally, we compared across participants by identifying the nuanced processes of border thinking and how they made meaning of their reflective thoughts based on their international cross-cultural experiences.

### **Preservice Teachers' Reflections on Experiential Learning**

Our analysis of preservice teachers' border thinking examined how reflections of their international cross-cultural experiences might stimulate a global criticality that considers alternatives to globalization based on other ways of knowing from the global South. For the purposes of this article, we chose three participants to demonstrate the variation in postglobal understandings and border thinking. These three participant narratives range from basic comparative nation-state conceptions to more nuanced postglobal thinking. All three participants challenge their own thinking to a degree, but thinking along their ideological borders varies in terms of engagement. The three chosen participants represent the range present in the 2012 group of participants and the range present in previous years. Importantly, the preservice teacher participants chose to travel to a country with a U.S. State Department travel warning. This is an important consideration for preservice teachers who participate in this program because the majority have completed only the first year of college, and more than half have never travelled outside the United States. On the other hand, the Honduras Study Abroad Program primarily attracts socioeconomically privileged preservice teachers (although the cost per credit hour is in line with in-state tuition), and the program offers a highly structured experience while in Honduras. This tension represents comfort seeking and discomfort seeking within each participant's motives and desires.

Through narrative inquiry, the first section of the analysis is based on Jason's understanding of the global South and global North based on epistemological familiarity. The second section of the analysis focuses on Lucy, who makes comparisons of progress and poverty between Honduras and the United States. The final section of analysis is based on April, who struggles with border thinking and appears to move toward exploring other ways of knowing.

#### **Jason's Othered "Global South"**

Jason is a White male, self-described as middle-class, from the suburbs of a major U.S. Midwest city. He has prior international travel experience, primarily

as a tourist. Jason knew some basic Spanish phrases but was not conversational in the language. He was enrolled in the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program and desires to be a secondary-level history teacher. Jason found his Honduras experience different from his previous travels. He stated:

Before Honduras I've been to New Zealand, Australia, Egypt, Germany, Italy, France, and Spain. So I have a large global idea and what I was trying to picture Honduras was as something completely different from all of those. I knew it was a third world country, they have poverty and I just kind of prepared myself to see the shacks that people live in and the dirt roads and things like that.

He added that his preconceptions and the reality "matched pretty well as far as landscape, and as far as how the actual country was." For Jason, having a global mindset is limited to the notion of travelling across geographic regions. This perception reduces the meaning of the global South and the global North to normalized hierarchical power relations.

Jason's standpoint did not recognize the interconnections between the United States and Honduras. In comparing the two countries, Jason expressed a sense of U.S. superiority through perceived cultural generalizations:

[In Honduras] there's a status quo that you can pick up on, that people who are less wealthy that live there, they kind of just accept their circumstances and you don't really sense a purpose of betterment from the culture. You don't really see that here in America. For example, I was in Chicago and we walked by the hotel and we saw some of the maids picketing the hotel and were standing out there trying to get better wages and things like that. In Honduras, I didn't see that ever happen, I didn't see them picketing and it's just like that status quo that remains there.

Jason's post-trip reflective comparison ignores the class discussion around the reading of a campesina's (farmworker/peasant) testimony regarding labor organization for the pursuit of social justice for campesinos (Alvarado, 1989) and disregards the discussion with Doña Teresa about local empowerment by local people.

Educational comparisons between Honduras and the United States further disclosed Jason's refusal to accept parallel structural inequities in the two countries:

In Honduras, I think it's part of the problem that only the poor kids can go to the poor schools and then the rich kids can go to privatized schools that are way advanced and have all the computers and things like that. So they get an unfair advantage, and then that advantage keeps the whole country poor until that educational system is brought down. Here we have more of a chance, so kids from an urban area that do receive less of an education, they can break those barriers and get out. However, in Honduras it's much

more permanent and its effects are much more permanent but here it's not quite a drastic difference and it's easier to go between the two levels.

Jason's perspective of Honduras is limited to national boundaries and neglects how international relations, particularly with the United States, shape domestic social class categorizations.

In terms of racial and ethnic views, Jason possessed a colorblind view of the U.S. national identity, while simultaneously identifying the lack of a Honduran national identity as the source of Hondurans "accepting the status quo." Jason stated:

I never picked up on the sense of nationality. Here, we're all Americans. In Italy, they are all Italians. In Honduras, I didn't really see, "we are Hondurans." I didn't see a unification factor....Here in America, we have the definitions of people. So you can be White, Black, Hispanic, or Asian but in the end you still end up being an American. You still end up working together towards a goal. In Honduras, you could have the Indios and the Gringos but I'm not sure they would end up working together if it came down to it.

Jason's international cross-cultural experiences deepened and reinforced the primacy of social categorization based on nationality. Thus, Jason deemphasized global interconnectedness and the influence of those in the global North on those in the global South. Furthermore, his reflections ignored the existence of the global South within the geographical borders of the perceived "first-world," such as the United States. Teacher educators can involve texts that highlight disparities within the United States in order to challenge preconceived hierarchies based on nationality. For example, income and wealth disparities are seldom analyzed within the U.S. context, and poor U.S. Whites are invisible in national discourse. Also, it is possible to engage in domestic experiences that are similar to international experiences as a means to make global connections regarding educational inequities and opportunity gaps within a supposedly privileged domestic context.

### **Lucy's Comparison of the Global North and South**

Lucy is a White female who was raised in a middle-class, Christian family in a "really small town" in the U.S. Midwest. Many of her beliefs embody neoliberal notions of progress and success. For example, Lucy described how she came to understand Honduras as poor:

We were on a bus for a while just driving through the island [sic] and there was just nothing. There's a whole lot of areas that there was just nothing. It was just trees and forest. It wasn't like here in the US...where there's building upon building, and businesses upon businesses, and people everywhere. And so driving through Honduras there was just small little shacks that were the businesses and then there was nothing.

Lucy seems to unquestioningly accept the notion that progress requires “building upon building, and businesses upon businesses” and judges Honduras negatively for having large areas of “just trees and forest.” Her preconceived beliefs – that climatic and environmental damage and deforestation equal progress – remain intact.

Acceptance of the neoliberal dream that “globalization can work for everyone on the planet, from CEOs to the lowliest factory worker” (López, 2007, p. 4) ignores the realities of people who have not benefitted from a global market. It also ignores the fact that the global South and the global North live side by side in the United States. Lucy mentally positions the global South as a geographic place far removed from the lived realities of the people near her own hometown. In comparing the levels of poverty in Honduras to poverty in the United States, Lucy attributed the poverty in Honduras to government inefficiency. When probed further, she stated:

I know with the US, there’s the healthcare stuff that provides that kind of stuff and there’s just different [legal] acts and stuff that [the U.S. government] does.

I guess in the United States, being poor you still have most of the needs because of the whole government thing. So you still have food and water and shelter. There are homes you can go to if you don’t have a house. And it seems like in Honduras, they don’t necessarily have all that....I guess the conditions are worse off than in the United States, because the [US] government tries to help those people whereas I don’t know if they do in Honduras, but it just seems like there wasn’t that kind of stuff there.

Lucy’s belief that the U.S. government provides for “most of the needs” of its people positions the United States as a better place to be poor than Honduras. This comparison is based on the notion that the United States is a welfare state and Honduras is not. In much the same way that Jason believes that students from disadvantaged backgrounds can “break those barriers and get out,” Lucy’s statement reflects a mindset that attributes the circumstances of the poor to their personal failings rather than a symptom and product of systemic inequity in a diminishing welfare state.

In looking for evidence of questioning epistemological assumptions, it appears that Lucy’s international cross-cultural experiences may have promoted a different conceptualization of knowledge and knowing. In response to the question, “Some people are fearful or even hateful towards immigrants in this country, specifically Latino immigrants. Did this trip affect that at all?” Lucy replied:

It definitely affected that, I guess. Because I always used to think, “Oh, we’re in the US, speak English.” Like, we should just have that as our official language just so that they can’t have the people who refuse to learn it, or whatever. But now I don’t really have that big of an opinion on a state language anymore, but I definitely am not against anybody who speaks Spanish.

Claiming that she is now “not against” Spanish-speakers is perhaps a very slight shift in terms of negotiating the difference between the self and the other, but could still be considered progress for a student who will almost certainly come into contact with non-English speaking students as a monolingual teacher. For the first time, Lucy has had the experience of not understanding what the people around her are saying, and this appears to have moved her towards taking the perspective of a non-dominant group. Teacher educators are often presented with such “openings” by preservice teachers, which allow for further exploration of a priori beliefs. The deconstruction of why certain hierarchies exist can further illuminate the systemic component to a broadening of perspective based on personal interaction.

### **April’s International Cross-Cultural Experiences**

April grew up in a middle-class suburban setting and identifies as a biracial female, explaining, “I just feel like I grew up White... and sometimes when I meet other Black people, they don’t see me as Black because I don’t act like whatever ‘Black’ acts like.” April was the least sure of all the participants about how to define herself racially. She said, “I feel like I’m not sure culturally...not culturally, ethnically what to identify myself as because I’m getting mixed signals from society.” The time that April appears to have already spent thoughtfully reflecting on her own ways of knowing and being seems to promote the desire and ability to understand the world from more than one epistemological perspective and learn about the current state of the world:

I don’t have a lot of knowledge about the world, I guess you could say. Which is another reason I went on study abroad, because I feel like that will help me increase my worldview....I feel like I haven’t [previously] learned a lot. You take world history or whatever, but you don’t learn about how it is now, you learn about how it was. So... I don’t know what’s happening.

By approaching the topic of US-Honduran relations with a degree of humility and acknowledging that she does not have all of the answers, April demonstrated the kind of critical reflection that will allow preservice teachers to engage with other ways of knowing (Mignolo, 2012).

April also demonstrated criticality in considering the differences between the United States and Honduras as she reflected on how constructed language hierarchies have privileged English over other languages, especially with regard to globalization. In making sense of the role that English plays in the global context, she reflected:

April: I feel like in order to kind of prosper you need to know English. I feel like that’s really kind of a self-centered view on that but, I mean, maybe that’s how [Hondurans] are looking at it. Like, in order to...maybe to go to university in America or something like that, you need to know English.

Interviewer: Why do you think that's self-centered?

April: Just because I feel that's how we [U.S. Americans] look at it. I don't know necessarily how Hondurans view it. I feel like we think everyone needs to know English to communicate with us. I feel like sometimes we view speaking Spanish as kind of a negative thing. Because we have so many immigrants that come here we're like, "You want to stay here? You need to speak our language," so we kind of view it with a negative connotation. But, on the flip side of that, there are a lot of people learning Spanish in high school.

April appeared to feel uncomfortable with the ways that she perceived English – and the neoliberal and colonial aspects entailed therein – dominating other ways of knowing and being. She countered the imposition of the necessity of knowing English placed on immigrants by pointing out that many people in the United States learn a second language. However, when asked what English and Spanish would look like if they were depicted with human characteristics, April concluded that "English would probably be really, really big, and self-centered. English would have a really big head and I feel like Spanish would be trying to grow. Spanish is trying really, really hard to grow."

April appears to be willing to explore other ways of thinking. She looks at the issue of language from what she believes might be the perspective of Hondurans, still acknowledging, "I don't know necessarily how Hondurans view it." Viewpoints such as April's, based on relational understandings that take into account global power dynamics, provide teacher educators the opportunity to deconstruct normalized social hierarchies and explore alternative visions with teacher educators. The consideration of alter-globalizations is based on dialogue between teacher educators' perspectives and those of preservice teachers.

### **Engagement with the Global South Through Border Thinking**

The purpose of this study was to examine how international cross-cultural experiences engaged preservice teachers in border thinking and rethinking the dominant discourse of globalization and its impact on educational equity. The consideration of other ways of knowing demonstrated how critical reflection can be encouraged by thinking at the epistemic border of the global South and global North, while acknowledging the possible challenges based on preservice teacher backgrounds. Postglobality can provide a framework for questioning neoliberal epistemology through revealing the intentional occlusion of globalization's setbacks. The preservice teacher narratives we examined present various levels of criticality through border thinking and demonstrate the possibilities and hurdles of raising social awareness within teacher education.

The three preservice teacher cases presented are representative of the observed uneven engagement with border thinking through international cross-cultural experiences. All of the participants in the 2012 Honduras Study Abroad



Program confronted difference during their international cross-cultural experiences but exhibited various degrees of willingness to engage epistemic borders. When forced to think about the processes and logics behind disparately inequitable lived experiences as presented through examples of the global South and global North, the preservice teachers had to either ideologically reinforce their preconceived neoliberal beliefs or had to engage perspectives from the global South through border thinking. Probing during post-trip interviews revealed to what degree each participant confronted epistemological challenges. Several preservice teachers who studied abroad in Honduras considered alternatives to the presumed benefits of globalization; however, the lasting effects of such reflection are unknown and provide future pathways for research.

Despite often being epistemologically strenuous for the preservice teachers to come into contact with the global South, it became apparent to them that globalization is not necessarily beneficial for vulnerable populations around the world, even in cases where educational opportunities were more equitable. How preservice teachers conceptualized the global South and global North presented a challenge to understanding globalization's inequitable effects. Some preservice teachers instead maintained nation-state level comparisons of how the world is constructed and did not reference their trip experiences in connection to inequities within the United States. Furthermore, some preservice teachers disregarded the experiences in Honduras that demonstrated the global South as the source of envisioning another way of life within and in resistance to hegemonic neoliberal ideology.

Nevertheless, exposure to international cross-cultural experiences that foster a postglobal understanding can help develop preservice teachers' critical reflection skills as global inhabitants. These experiences also offer the space to move beyond culturally essentialist educational praxis (which, for example, emphasize the understanding of culture as food fairs and holidays) towards notions of equity and justice through the recognition of colonial difference between the global South and the global North. The forces of globalization shape preservice teachers' future praxis and their future students' educational experiences. This ideological reality can be unconcealed through a postglobal understanding. The postglobal is a continuous process based on critical self-reflection in order to analyze systemic forces, such as globalization, that will encourage a broadening of knowledge(s). A postglobal approach to education can allow for greater pedagogical inclusion of an increasingly diverse student population and work towards more equitable educational opportunities. As such a framework is developed by teacher educators, international cross-cultural experiences for preservice teachers increasingly provide opportunities for other ways of thinking from the global South that imagine more equitable social relations.

## Towards the Preparation of Postglobal Teachers

We have examined how preservice teachers resist or engage in border thinking as an epistemological challenge and alternative to neoliberal globalization and its impact on educational equity. Future teachers stand to benefit from critically considering the side-by-side existence of the global South and the global North in order to engage the inequitable effects of globalization on educational opportunities and experiences. From the narratives of three participants we have presented the possibilities and challenges for a postglobal approach to teacher preparation. The proliferation of study abroad programs for preservice teachers can be utilized for envisioning alter-globalization through international cross-cultural experiences. In conclusion, we have highlighted possible aspects of how postglobal teacher preparation can be conceived based on, but not exclusive to, international cross-cultural experiences:

1. Preservice teachers can learn from alter-globalization social movements in the communities and regions in which they study abroad.
2. Teacher educators can co-create, alongside preservice teachers, alter-globalization that addresses concerns around equitable global social relations. It is also an opportunity to unmask the normality of a neoliberal world system that emphasizes capital as the primary factor for social relations.
3. International cross-cultural experiences with the global South can be employed for pushing preservice teachers across epistemic borders.
4. Teacher educators can utilize openings offered by preservice teachers' rethinkings based on personal international cross-cultural experiences to deconstruct inequities and move towards systemic analysis.
5. Dominant histories can provide common starting points for imagining alternative ways of knowing and being, working towards epistemological decolonization.

In working towards the preparation of postglobal teachers, it is important to recognize that not all preservice teachers have access to study abroad programs. Yet, because the global South and global North exist side by side, within one city or one province or state, preservice teachers can still access cross-cultural experiences. Furthermore, international experiences can occur within a local community since globalization has increased the mixing of people around the world, albeit often under troubled circumstances such as exploitative labor or political asylum. Though the context differs and "going away" on a study abroad trip offers certain material realities that enhance experiential learning, the kind of cross-cultural experiential learning that we propose is still possible through teacher education courses that take place at a U.S. university. Teacher education can benefit from more experiential learning outside of university

classrooms and outside of K-12 classroom experiences for preservice teachers. Community experiences that engage preservice teachers in cross-cultural interactions can be more readily incorporated into teacher education programs in order to emphasize the intellectual role of teachers as community participants. This stance also advances the concept that education is a community endeavor, relieving the focus on schooling and instead focusing on various funds of knowledge.

### Notes

1. We employ "White" as a sociopolitical construct based on hierarchies of power involving multiple social identities (e.g., gender, sexuality, socioeconomic class, spirituality). In this study, the primary context for hierarchies of power is the Americas with an emphasis on U.S. White identity. In naming Whiteness, it becomes possible to challenge and envision alternative constructs.

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