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Teacher Preparation for the Global Stage: International Student Teaching


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Abstract

As globalization lessens the distance between peoples and diversifies the common classroom, teacher education programs lag behind in producing globally-minded educators. One approach used by some teacher education programs to remedy this issue is to offer international student teaching experiences. While the literature related to these programs is rather positive, information related to why students choose to participate in international student teaching experiences and the challenges they encounter while abroad is limited. This study attempts to fill this gap in the literature. Drawing on interview and documentation 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.

Keywords

international student teaching, teacher education, global education, internationalization of education, study abroad

Cover Page Footnote

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TEACHER PREPARATION FOR THE GLOBAL STAGE: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TEACHING

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Introduction

When the church bells rang and *Habemus Papam* was declared, the proclamation of the new pope was spread 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 contributes to the phenomenon often referred to as globalization. Zhao (2009) defined 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). Formal education is no stranger to this phenomenon. US classrooms are changing in ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity. In order to meet the needs of different learners in today’s classrooms, teacher education programs need to rethink teacher preparation.

To prepare teacher candidates for the evolving 21st century classroom, teacher education programs are slowly making strides to become more globalized in the U.S. 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 teachers within global and multicultural contexts. Allaman (2012) claims that traditional teacher education programs face challenges in preparing future teachers for diverse classrooms. Kholer (2012) argued 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 is therefore

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deemed to have the potential to aid teacher candidates in adapting to the ever-changing classroom.

While IST literature overwhelmingly supports these experiences, citing numerous benefits, the challenges are not thoroughly explored. Thus, this study sought to answer three questions: (1) What are the factors that influence teacher candidates' decisions to participate in IST?; (2) What types of challenges do teacher candidates experience during IST?; and (3) How does IST contribute to the teacher candidates' global perspective? This small-scale study adds to the IST literature by exploring the holistic experience of teacher candidates as they participate in IST. The study addresses not only benefits and challenges of IST, but also the candidates' reasons for participating and development of a global perspective. The impetus of this study came from the principal author's personal IST in South Korea. For this experience, the principle author completed student teaching requirements in the U.S. and then participated in the IST in rural South Korea for four months. The experience was challenging and rewarding

Theoretical Framework

The development of a global perspective is thought to be a benefit of IST (Mahon & Cushner, 2002). Hanvey (1979) discussed 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. As we show in the study below, the IST program reviewed touched primarily on perspective consciousness and cross-cultural awareness. However, as Merryfield (2000) has suggested, simply taking part in an experience does not equate to being multicultural or having a global perspective. While teacher candidates who participate in IST have the potential to develop these dimensions, how they utilize and actualize their experience determines the kind of teacher they might become. IST can be a catalyst for obtaining such global perspectives. This study therefore used Hanvey's dimensions as a guiding framework to explore the experiences of teacher candidates while participating in IST. With these dimensions in mind, the following section examines relevant literature on IST.

Current Status of International Student Teaching.

There are several types of IST in teacher education programs dependent upon the institutions. Quezada (2004) categorized the different experiences available to teacher candidates for teaching overseas: (a) Department of Defense schools, which are mainly for military families of U.S. soldiers based in the specific foreign country; (b) Department of State schools, which are international schools modeled after the U.S. school system attended by American nationals, international students, and locals; and (c) host country schools, which are local public schools primarily attended by locals. A majority of teacher education programs integrate American teacher candidates into host country schools (Quezada, 2004).

In addition, Quezada (2004) identified several consortiums of IST programs: 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. Along with the above programs, many teacher education programs have built partnerships with their counterparts in various colleges and universities overseas. A number of institutions in the Midwestern U.S. have direct partnerships that provide opportunities for IST. For example, Landerholm and Chacko (2013) discussed a university partnership at Northeastern Illinois University and local

schools in South Korea. Teacher candidates taught eight weeks in the U.S. followed by four months of internship in South Korea. The study herein focuses on the partnership between a Midwestern U.S. university and a university in Southeastern England.

Benefits of International Student Teaching. The benefits associated with IST are well documented in the literature. IST participants who have the opportunity to experience teaching overseas diversify their perspectives, gain awareness of global issues, develop cultural awareness and understand patterns of change, and experience direct effects on their own pedagogical understanding (Allaman, 2012). Mahon and Cushner (2002) described the survey results from teacher candidates' experience in the COST program. They argued that IST is a catalyst that enables teacher candidates to interact with their students, colleagues, communities, and the world. Teacher candidates are thrust into an environment where they not only have to adapt to their surroundings, but also have to adapt their teaching styles.

Teacher candidates learn quickly to adapt to their environment through classroom experiences. Maynes, Allison, and Julien-Schultz (2012) described the experiences of Canadian teacher candidates during and after their international teaching experience on the Masai Mara in southern Kenya. They found that teacher candidates were creative in building their own methods and adopted alternative methods learned from their Kenyan cooperating teachers when facing a lack of resources. 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 (2008) examined the experiences of 39 teacher candidates who took part in a non-teaching study-abroad trip to Honduras. They found 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 an understanding of the impact of social and cultural contexts of learning environments on students' learning (Lin, 2014). Additionally, teacher candidates experience being an ethnic minority in an educational setting and, as a result, may be more sensitive to their students' needs and better able to create a culturally diverse classroom (Allaman, 2012). Clement and Outlaw (2002) noted 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.

Moreover, Kissock (1997) found that the universal traits of domestic and international student teaching is that teacher candidates experience teaching 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 competencies and cultural awareness. Their study also revealed that through international experiences, teacher candidates developed a sense of self-efficacy and global mindedness.

As a 21st century pedagogue, teacher candidates must 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 teacher candidates' self-efficacy, pedagogical content knowledge, and cultural understanding (Alfaro, 2008; Allaman, 2012; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Mahon & Cushner, 2002; Ozek, 2009; Quinn, Jarchow, Powell, Barr, & McKay, 1995; Sahin, 2008; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998; Stachowski & Sparks, 2007). IST has been suggested as one option for preparing teacher candidates to be more effective in working with diverse student populations. The benefits of IST include: an opportunity to learn a new

culture and language, to develop a variety of pedagogical skills, and to recognize multiple perspectives and a global outlook. It is obvious, though, that with benefits also come challenges.

Challenges of International Student Teaching. Some studies have identified challenges associated with IST. Vall and Tennison (1992) suggested that a possible critical issue when students go abroad is managing culture shock. They stated that culture shock can range from simple disorientation to dysfunction in the new society where a teacher candidate is placed. Oberg (1960) described 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 prior to arrival in the host country. In a review of the student teaching overseas project at Indiana University-Bloomington, Stachowski and Sparks (2007) proposed 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 advised that teacher candidates should be held accountable for much more than just teaching in the international country. For example, they suggested that teacher candidates should engage in extracurricular activities, social gatherings, and cultural events to become more 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 related to 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 that individuals are forced to survive on their own and encounter ideas and perspectives vastly different from their own or their home nation's 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 and access to IST. 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 mirror representation in teacher education programs. Kholer (2012) found that teacher candidates who come from low socio-economic backgrounds typically are not inclined to participate in study abroad. Challenges with cooperating teachers have also been reported. A key figure that can help the teacher candidate is the cooperating teacher, though Yang (2011) found that cooperating teachers did not provide enough support. Similar to domestic placements, the amount of work demanded of the cooperating teacher may leave little time to support the teacher candidate.

Study Abroad Intent. The literature on intent for IST is limited. Several 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. Rust et al. (2008) analyzed the results of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshman Survey (n=400,000) and identified a profile of students most inclined to study abroad as being largely female; having high SAT scores and GPAs; attending liberal arts schools, high-status institutions of higher learning, or private schools; and moving directly from high school to college. Rust and colleagues reported that intent is not highly dependent on the students' major or field of study. They also explained that students who are actively involved in campus, community, social, academic, and diversity activities are 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 of 3,081 freshmen from 19 different universities. The data revealed that students with high socioeconomic status, with diverse interactions and co-curricular involvement, and in social sciences majors are more likely to study abroad, and that, compared to European-American students, Asian-American students are significantly less likely to study abroad. The study also showed that "minority students disproportionately enroll at community colleges or attend college part-time" (p. 138). Therefore, minority students were less likely to study abroad than traditional university students due to lack of programs and resources at the community colleges.

Several other factors also influence study abroad intent. Salisbury et al. (2011) analyzed data from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts, which consisted of 6,828 participants from 53 different institutions. The authors detailed the notion of intent while exploring variables based on race. Factors affecting intent to study abroad included, but were not limited to, standardized test scores, institutional/federal grants, institutional/federal loans, parents' education, and socioeconomic status. Salisbury and colleagues (2011) concluded that ACT scores did not affect intent on study abroad for White American students but negatively affected African-American students. Moreover, Asian-American and Hispanic students were more likely to study abroad when receiving federal grants and loans compared to their White American counterparts. Similarly, Rust et al. (2008) found that White American students tended to seek out study abroad opportunities to increase cross-cultural educational experiences, whereas minority students participated in cross-cultural experiences on a daily basis given their limited numbers represented in higher education.

While research on the benefits of IST is well documented (Alfaro, 2008; Allaman, 2012; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Mahon & Cushner, 2002; Maynes, Allison, & Julien-Schultz, 2012; Ozek, 2009; Sahin, 2008; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998; Stachowski & Sparks, 2007), 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 IST is important for the benefit of current and future programs. The review of literature revealed a gap of information regarding the reasons why teacher candidates participate in IST. Also, there is no deconstruction of the aforementioned benefits and challenges in the literature. How do teacher candidates cope? How are these benefits and ideas unpacked after returning home? These questions raised by the literature review were explored in this study.

Methodology

This study utilized 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 explained that in a comparative case study design there can be a literal or theoretical replication. This study centered on IST experiences of five participants. Thus, a literal replication was applied.

Research Setting and Participant Selection. The IST took place at Saturn University in Southeastern England in partnership with Central University in the Midwestern U.S. Teacher candidates finished eight weeks of student teaching at Central University and eight weeks of student teaching at Saturn University; pseudonyms have been given to the universities in this study. Once the teacher candidates arrived in Southeastern England, they attended a weekend of orientation on the Saturn University campus. Orientation consisted of a

review of the British curriculum and school structure, the IST program's and Saturn University supervisors' expectations, and more. The teacher candidates were placed in public primary and secondary schools in Southeastern England. Supervisors from both universities conducted placement visits and assigned grades to each candidate.

The study participants included three teacher candidates (Rita, Jamie E., and Todd) who participated in IST during the time of the study and two (Karen and Lucia) who previously participated in IST. In addition, this study included two key informants (Connie and John) who served as university administrators of the IST program and provided additional information. Pseudonyms have been assigned to all participants.

Data Collection and Analysis. Data for this study consisted of participant interviews, blog posts, and online reflections. The qualitative data were collected via interviews and documentation. Each interview was recorded using a digital recording device with the permission of the participant. Recordings were transcribed and used for data analysis. Two participants posted weekly blogs about their experience while abroad, responding to questions provided by the university administrator. After informed consent was signed, a semi-structured interview was conducted with both administrators. Through snowball sampling, two former participants, Karen and Lucia, of the IST program were invited to participate in the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both former participants. Through purposeful sampling, the key informants gave permission to contact teacher candidates to participate in the study. The three participants (Rita, Jamie E., and Todd) took part in three interviews. Phase I interviews, conducted in person and via Skype, occurred while each was teaching in the U.S.; Phase II interviews occurred via Skype while they were overseas in Southeastern England; and Phase III interviews occurred via Skype upon one week after returning to the U.S.

A constant comparative method was used for data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Merriam (1998) explained that the constant comparative analysis method compares data from different sources in order to build concepts. This method enabled identification of similar concepts and themes from the different participants. An open coding method was utilized to analyze the data. Corbin and Strauss (1990) described open coding as a process 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 allowing for certain themes to emerge. Although this method is used for theory building in grounded theory research, it is beneficial in this comparative case study. All audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, and data were coded based on the abovementioned method. Following data analysis, member checking was used to ensure the true meanings for the participants were captured (Merriam, 1998). Participants of this study read the transcripts and the qualitative report for fact checking.

Limitations. This was a small-scale study with only five participants. However, the experiences of the five participants and two administrators provided important feedback of this IST program. While generalization is not the goal of this study, we explored questions that are vital to teacher education and study abroad. The questions investigated in this study are developed from a review of literature where gaps in the research were found on intent and challenges. Additionally, this study only looked at one type of IST, namely a partnership between two universities. The findings of the study may differ from other types of IST.

Findings

This section 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 the IST program at Central University. 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, which got the attention of Karen and Todd. Through direct and indirect recruiting at study abroad fairs, presentations at student teaching meetings, and the world-wide-web, Connie and John are able to recruit students each semester to participate in IST.

With further questioning, the teacher candidate participants revealed personal reasons for going abroad. 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 a personal trip to Italy. Prior experience was one of the reasons for both Karen and Jamie E.'s reasons to participate in this IST program.

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 was learned and merge it with her classroom when she begins teaching in the U.S.

Different cultural experiences were also a factor regarding 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. The IST teacher candidates participated in weekend excursions together with the faculty from Saturn University as well as travel on their own to other European countries.

Challenges.

This section 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. During the Phase I interview Rita, Jamie E., and Todd mentioned that they 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 that they were going to meet with all of the other IST members at the airport and take a cab to their homestay. But their school placements, curriculum, teaching content, and how they were traveling to school remained unknown upon arrival. One thing that all participants mentioned was they were relieved to speak with their host family before arriving in England. During Phase I interviews, the unknown was highlighted as the main challenge.

Transportation was another factor of 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 provided by his school. Another source of anxiety was the curriculum. Rita spoke of having to learn the English curriculum within one week. Rita, Jamie E., and Todd mentioned in their interviews that since they had to student teach in the U.S. until the day before leaving for England, they did not have sufficient time to research the British curriculum. However, as soon as the participants arrived in England, they had a two-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 returned [sic] 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 [in the U.S.] everything needs to be driven to.” Todd added, “I miss...the rail system for sure. Over here you have to drive everywhere.” Jamie E. stated, “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 U.S., they had begun to adapt with their environment in Southeastern England.

Teaching. Placement was the first challenge discussed by both Connie and Karen. Karen, a former participant, had a placement problem when she arrived in England. She was first placed in a school setting outside of the age-range required for teacher certification 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 U.S. was the amount of observation. Connie mentioned this in an 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 explained about the different models 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 did not 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 U.S., my CT was also preparing students for national exams but I took control over the class. The CT in the U.S. 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 U.S. Todd explained that he taught roughly the same amount of hours in England compared to the U.S., 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 U.S.

A variation in English education was the content. Karen explained in her 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.

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.

Global Perspective

This section explored the ways in which IST contributed to a global perspective. The themes identified in the findings are 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 teachers in their prospective classrooms in the U.S. When comparing the interview data from Phase I to Phase III, one of the changes that occurred was their 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 [sic] race students here.”

Jamie E. discussed his experience during the Phase III interview,

There are a lot of Polish students in my class and there are Indian and Middle Eastern as well. There is somewhat 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 skin color, they were acknowledging other types of diversity in later phases.

Pedagogy. All of the participants mentioned that they wanted to bring something back from England to use in their teaching. One of the ways they accomplished this was through their travels while in England. Connie and John both mentioned that while participating in IST, the teacher candidates had the opportunity to go on trips designed for them and led by the university supervisor from Saturn University. The participants used the travel experiences to bring back physical and anecdotal memorabilia for their future US 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 historic sites, he said that he would be able to bring the content knowledge to life from his lived experiences through the IST program. Lucia sympathized with English language learners and a feeling of outsider status. During her participating year, Lucia and fellow IST members traveled 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 [U.S.]. I can kind of understand their situation.

Jamie E. and Todd discussed a skill-based system at the school for student achievement. As 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 much about herself and grew as a 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 U.S.].

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

Discussion and Recommendations

This section examines the findings individually in relation to literature; programmatic recommendations are suggested for best practices. The three themes developed from the findings include: (1) intent, (2) challenges, and (3) global perspective.

Intent. Their intent to participate in IST as well as motivations behind participation echoes the thoughts of Hanvey’s (1979) perspective consciousness. Participants were either directly or indirectly recruited to the program by the university administrators. They discussed prior study abroad and/or traveling experiences as motivation to participate in this experience. However, further research needs to examine factors that can influence study abroad participation to include, but not limited to, socio-economic-status, gender, parental influence, etc.

Challenges. Anxiety, transportation, and amount of teaching were some of the main challenges reported by our participants. In terms of anxiety, teacher candidates were afraid of the unknown; unknown placement, British curriculum, and overall not knowing what to expect. This was counteracted by a two-day orientation upon arrival in England. Throughout the IST experience, participants interacted differently in their foreign environments. Hanvey (1979) argued there are four levels of cross-cultural awareness: (a) textbook/tourist; (b) culture conflict situations; (c) intellectual analysis; and (d) cultural immersion/living the culture. The data in this study support the earlier levels of cross-cultural awareness with beginnings of further exploration. Some participants adapted to the system and volunteered their skillsets, allowing for more immersive experience. Todd for example taught extra curricular music courses in order to gain more teaching experience.

Global Perspective. Returning to perspective consciousness (Hanvey, 1979), we can explore the comments made by the participants in terms of diversity. The data show that it went beyond race; participants discussed socio-economic status, family structure, and learning ability as factors of diversity. Participants began to question their understanding of diversity and thus delved deeper into the perspective rather than the surface level of opinion. Cross-cultural awareness was further explored through the teacher candidates’ travel experiences. Utilizing travel as learning experiences for themselves and as teachable moments for their future classrooms opened the door to further levels of cross-cultural awareness; the beginnings of understanding another culture juxtaposed to one’s own.

This study found some functional problems existing within this IST program. Upon returning from the IST experience, the teacher candidates graduate and start looking for teaching jobs as well as explore other life goals. Sometimes, teacher candidates remain in Europe for further travel. There are no requirements from the Central University in terms of

further evaluation after finishing the IST program. Teacher candidates may participate in an optional survey about the program.

Stachowski and Sparks (2007) discussed the importance of immersion in not only teaching but also cultural events, social gatherings, extracurricular activities, etc. The findings of this study indicate that outside of interacting with their host families and perhaps social gatherings, the teacher candidates had no community involvement or service learning component. Drawing upon the findings of this study, several recommendations could be considered when implementing an IST or study abroad program for teacher preparation, discussed in the four sections below.

Cultural Literacy Orientation. Kissock (1997) described the IST orientation as a two-stage process. The first stage occurs when teacher candidates are searching for the location and determining where and if they want to take part in the experience. This orientation stage is the question/answer session about requirements for university credits, teaching licensure, job placements, and so forth. It is necessary for generating interest among teacher candidates. The second stage occurs after teacher candidates have been admitted into the program. Kissock (1997) argued 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 conduct research on the country they will be placed in, the orientation program should also include information on cultural norms, daily life, a brief history, language, and other important aspects for foreigners living abroad. To gain a different perspective on the IST experience, past participants should be invited as guest speakers to tell their stories.

Along with the cultural literacy orientation, it is very important to provide information on the curriculum 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 provides an opportunity for teacher candidates to meet each other and to start building relationships before going abroad. Acquainting one another may lead to a strong support system while abroad. Although one can never be completely prepared, it is vital to have these orientations in place to acquaint teacher candidates with their IST program.

Diverse Field-Based Experience Prior to Student Teaching. Field experiences can determine the quality of the teaching force (Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002). It is therefore critical that IST programs, and teacher education programs in general, provide teacher candidates with a learning experience during which they can connect theory to practice such as a practicum, service-learning, and so forth. Diverse field experiences serve as a great vehicle for teacher candidates to understand their own identities and values systems (Brown, 2005; Whittaker, McDonald, & Markowitz, 2005) and to confront their own prejudice, bias, and fears. At the same time, this diversity experience should equip teacher candidates with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to successfully work with diverse learners. 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 English Language Learners or students with various abilities, but in all teacher training courses, as diversity impacts many aspects of practical teaching.

Seidl and Friend (2002) have argued, however, that to prepare teacher candidates for diverse student populations, there is a need for teacher candidates to engage themselves in cross-cultural experiences. Therefore, 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 (Lin & Bates, 2015).

Nevertheless, the choice of school is also a factor to consider when teacher candidates are placed. Placement in a certain type of school affects variables such as licensure, certification, and addressing diversity. Ultimately, the kind of school where the teacher candidate is placed plays a salient role in their student teaching experience.

Domestic Student Teaching Requirement. Teacher candidates should first finish at least half of their student teaching in the U.S. 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 and allow teacher candidates to become accommodated with their teaching role before being exposed to an unfamiliar educational landscape overseas. This also assures that they complete all licensing requirements in the U.S.

Academic Work. A crucial part of IST is requiring teacher candidates to do academic work while abroad. Reflection is an important part of teaching and learning. Stachowski and Sparks (2007) stated the importance of reflective reports during IST, which help teacher candidates reflect critically on their experiences both in and outside of the classroom. Therefore, engaging teacher candidates in reflection on a regular basis will help not only develop their analytical skills, but also help them think about their own identities and values as well as pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of learners. This can take the form of a blog, a question/answer essay, a video diary, or other appropriate assignment.

To help teacher candidates gain international perspectives and broaden their worldviews, 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 staff who understands the educational and cultural systems of the international host university and school as well as the home university. The better-prepared teacher candidates are before they begin their time abroad, the more likely they will succeed personally and professionally in the foreign setting.

Conclusion

The benefits of IST are multifaceted. However, major concerns were raised about the functionality of IST in teacher preparation. The data reveal that teacher candidates overall spent less time teaching while abroad. The data also reveal that while there are many benefits from IST, the goal of attaining a deep global perspective, according to Hanvey's (1979) levels of cross-cultural awareness, was likely not fully attained for most participants. Outside the actual teaching, there were little to no efforts reported to engage with the school, community, or culture. Future studies are needed to investigate the impact of IST on teacher candidates' intercultural competences and IST paired with service learning.

To effectively prepare teacher candidates to teach in a multicultural society, IST has the potential to be a great vehicle. However, as Merryfield (2000) has argued, individuals do not become global educators by simply going overseas. Teacher candidates need to learn how to first question their belief system, attitudes, and privilege. Teacher candidates need to be challenged to think critically, to reflect on their practices critically, and, as Hanvey (1979) suggested, to be culturally aware. The findings of this present study support Merryfield's argument that teacher education programs need to do a better job to prepare future teachers to become globally-minded. The benefits of IST cannot be denied, but a well-planned monitoring and supervision system needs to be in place to ensure teacher candidates have the best experience while abroad. Additionally, teacher education programs need to find ways to help teacher candidates get involved in their local communities so that they get to live in the local

culture and traditions of the host country. A sound IST program will help teacher candidates learn about themselves, as well as culturally responsive teaching, and the people who are involved in the process.

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