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Dissertation

THE INFLUENCE AN OVERSEAS TEACHING EXPERIENCE
HAS ON TEACHING DECISIONS

by

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When I was a teenager I hung a map in my bedroom and marked all the places on the globe that I wanted to visit when I got older. At the time my mother remarked, “You suffer from wanderlust.” Twenty-five years later I still get excited when planning my next trip to Europe, or discussing the possibility of my family relocating to an exotic location in Asia, the Middle East, or South America. Yes, I suffer from wanderlust and this journey has opened my eyes to the realization that there are other people who want to discover the world just as I do. It is refreshing to know that I am not alone in my quest to expand my horizons, both personally and professionally, and I am indebted to the following individuals.

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THE INFLUENCE AN OVERSEAS TEACHING EXPERIENCE HAS ON TEACHING DECISIONS

(Order no. )

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence an overseas teaching experience has on teaching decisions. Previous research has focused on preservice teachers and student teachers, but none have looked at licensed teachers and how their teaching decisions were different when they returned to teach in their home country.

Through a questionnaire, face-to-face interviews, and classroom observations, the study found four areas that are influenced by an overseas teaching experience: global perspective, cultural empathy, culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum choices, and personal growth. No clear differences among the teachers were found for factors such as gender, race, or experience. Results suggest teachers who have taught overseas may have more cultural empathy for students of other backgrounds and English-language proficiency and a willingness to develop curriculum that encompasses more of a global perspective.
# Table of Contents

1. **INTRODUCTION** ..................................................................................................................... 1  
   Background .......................................................................................................................... 2  
   Statement of the Problem and Research Questions ............................................................. 7  
   Operational Definitions ........................................................................................................ 9  

II. **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE** ..................................................................................... 12  
   Influence of Attitudes and Beliefs on Teaching .............................................................. 12  
   Working and living overseas ........................................................................................... 26  
   Summary of the Above Research Findings ...................................................................... 41  
   How the Findings will Effect the Current Investigation .................................................. 42  

III. **RESEARCH METHODS** ................................................................................................. 44  
   Sample ............................................................................................................................... 45  
   Data Collection .................................................................................................................. 49  
   Data Analysis ..................................................................................................................... 54  
   Data Synthesis /Triangulation ............................................................................................ 56  
   Limitations .......................................................................................................................... 57  

IV. **FINDINGS** ..................................................................................................................... 58  
   Survey ................................................................................................................................. 58  
   T-Tests ................................................................................................................................. 64  
   Survey ................................................................................................................................. 77  
   Open-ended questions ........................................................................................................ 77  
   Interviews ............................................................................................................................ 82  
   Observations and Artifacts ............................................................................................... 88  
   Summary of Findings .......................................................................................................... 94  
   Differences Between Groups ............................................................................................ 98  

V. **Discussion** ....................................................................................................................... 99  
   Global perspective ............................................................................................................. 99  
   Cultural Empathy .............................................................................................................. 100  
   Culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum choices ................................................... 101  
   Personal growth ............................................................................................................... 101  
   Conclusions ....................................................................................................................... 103
List of Tables

Table 1. Changes in U.S. Population from 2000-2012 .................................................3
Table 3.1. Overseas Teaching Experience .................................................................47
Table 3.2. Interview Participant ..................................................................................49
Table 4.1. Curriculum and Instruction .......................................................................60
Table 4.2. Personal Growth ..........................................................................................61
Table 4.3. Cross-Cultural Understanding ...................................................................62
Table 4.4. Career Goals ...............................................................................................64
Table 4.5. Two-Sample T-Test for AL .......................................................................66
Table 4.6. Kruskal-Wallis Test on AL ..........................................................................66
Table 4.7. Two-Sample T-Test for AN ........................................................................67
Table 4.8. Kruskal-Wallis Test on AN ..........................................................................67
Table 4.9. Two-Sample T-Test for DB ........................................................................68
Table 4.10. Kruskal-Wallis Test on DB .......................................................................68
Table 4.11. Two-Sample T-Test for X .........................................................................69
Table 4.12. Kruskal-Wallis Test on X .........................................................................69
Table 4.13. Two-Sample T-Test for AJ .......................................................................70
Table 4.14. Kruskal-Wallis Test on AJ .......................................................................70
Table 4.15. Two-Sample T-Test for AL .......................................................................71
Table 4.16. Kruskal- Wallis Test on AL .......................................................................71
Table 4.17. Two-Sample T-Test for AZ .......................................................................72
Table 4.18. Kruskal-Wallis Test on AZ .......................................................................72
Table 4.19. Two Sample T-Test for BV .......................................................................73
Table 4.20. Kruskal-Wallis Test on BV .......................................................................74
Table 4.21. Two-Sample T-Test for CZ .......................................................................75
Table 4.22. Kruskal-Wallis Test on CZ .......................................................................75
Table 4.23. Two-Sample T-Test for DJ .......................................................................76
Table 4.24. Kruskal-Wallis Test on DJ .......................................................................76
Table 4.25. Survey Responses for Open-Ended Question One ....................................77
Table 4.26. Survey Responses for Open-Ended Question Two

79
List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Influences on Teaching Decisions.................................................7
1. INTRODUCTION

The world is more interconnected than ever. From the current worldwide economic crisis to the Arab Spring, today’s challenges involve forces that move beyond national boundaries. Citizens must be able to think and act globally if they are able to meet the challenges of this ever-changing world, and educators can help. One of the many responsibilities of an educator is to prepare students to be successful in this changing world by helping them develop a global perspective and cultural empathy. There are a variety of ways to help a student develop a global perspective and cultural empathy, such as using a curriculum that promotes diversity and celebrating international days, yet teacher influence may have the most effect in the classroom. From talking about personal experiences to including worldwide current events in everyday conversations, teachers have a direct influence on the development of students’ global perspective and cultural empathy.

In addition, teachers in the United States must also deal with a variety of cultural influences in the classroom. Students from immigrant families and from minority ethnicities, may necessitate teachers incorporate lessons with culturally relevant pedagogy, in order for students to connect with and learn from what is being taught in the classroom.

It is possible that teachers who have taught overseas and returned to teach in their home country may have more of an influence in the shaping of students’ global perspective and cultural empathy than other teachers. And,
teachers who have taught overseas may have developed the cultural awareness and pedagogy to help immigrant and minority children succeed in school. Consequently, this research explored the influence, if any, an overseas teaching experience has on the teaching decisions of American teachers.

**Background**

School districts nationwide are experiencing drastic changes in the make-up of their student population. Linguistically and culturally different students are filling the classrooms. From refugees escaping oppressive governments, individuals in high tech fields hoping to attend first-tier universities, and immigrants searching for the elusive streets of gold, the global community shows up in U.S. classrooms every day, and teachers must be prepared to work with students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds who come across their desks every day.

Villegas and Lucas (2002) maintain that changing demographics in the United States are one reason to prepare teachers to work with students who are from a variety of racial, ethnic, social, and language backgrounds. The 2010 U.S. Census findings show a steady increase in the population of Latinos and Asians who call the U.S. home (see Table 1).
Table 1

Changes in U.S. Population from 200 to 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White (Non-Latino)</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Adapted from U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 Census. Profile of the General Demographic Characteristic: 2010*

According to the 2010 Census, immigrants are the fastest growing group of students in U.S. schools. Eighteen percent of the U.S. population speaks a language other than English at home, and 28% of U.S. citizens were born outside of the U.S.

While these statistics are important to U.S. policy makers in immigration and social policy, most significant to the educational community is the jump in the number of English language learners (ELLs) in our schools. Presently one-fifth of the U.S. population speaks a language besides English at home, and this does not include undocumented workers and their children. The 2010 Census found that 11.2 million students or 21% of school-aged children between 5 and 17 are considered ELLs. So what does this mean for U.S. teachers?

Besides the linguistic difficulties educators face when working with the ELL population, educators have to confront the challenges that will arise when the school’s traditional values clash with the student’s cultural values (Kugelmass,
Many teachers have not been adequately prepared to work with students from diverse backgrounds and may not feel comfortable working with these students, usually because they do not know anything about the student’s culture (Chisholm, 1994). Therefore, there is a need for teachers who have cultural empathy and a broad global perspective to work in these classrooms and bring a culturally relevant pedagogy to the classrooms.

A culturally relevant pedagogy, also known as culturally responsive teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1994), builds on the premise that “how people are expected to go about learning may differ across cultures” (Villegas, 1991, p.13). Teachers can bring culturally relevant pedagogy to the classroom by learning about the various cultures represented in their classrooms and using that knowledge to influence instructional practice. While teachers incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy from a variety of sources, one of the most accessible ways is to immerse oneself in another culture.

This immersion can be done working with immigrants who are studying English or volunteering at a citizenship class. However, the most authentic way to learn about another culture is to experience it first-hand, and teaching in another country can do this. As Scoffham (2004) maintained in his report, “First hand experience has a key role in promoting learning” (p. 9). There may be no better way for teachers to learn about another culture and to think more deeply about their own cultures than by working and living in another country.
U.S. teachers have been working in international capacities at least since 1808. Current international teaching experiences have their origins in the schools and programs that were created after World War II (Crossely & Watson, 2003). These schools include independent international schools, United States Department of Defense Dependent Schools, and United States Department of State Affiliated Schools for Teaching Overseas (The International Educator, 2008; The Office of Overseas Schools Department of State, 2009). Other ways teachers have gone overseas include teacher exchanges and Peace Corps appointments. While the type of overseas experience will certainly differ in length and intensity (i.e., living in the outskirts of Dakar, Senegal, is much different than joining an expatriate community Paris, France), living in another culture does change individuals. Knowing the overseas experience can change them, teachers still elect to go overseas for a variety of reasons, including employment, family situations, or wanting to experience a new culture. Each teacher has a unique experience overseas that transforms his or her teaching, and the influence of this transformation may appear when teachers return to practice in their home countries.

Educating from a global perspective stimulates both students and teachers to think critically about their place in the world, challenge stereotypes, and empathize with the world-views of people from other countries (Wang, 2005). Research has shown that in order for teachers to prepare their students to become citizens of the world, teachers must develop a keen understanding of
their own global perspectives and cultural empathy, and a good way to do this are through interaction with individuals who are not from the United States.

In *Preparing Teachers to Teach Global Perspective*, Kissock (1996) addresses the overseas teaching experience in the chapter “Student Teaching Overseas.” He argues that providing opportunities for student teachers to teach overseas, or work in a community different from the one with which they are familiar, prepares future teachers for their work in the global world. He maintains that these opportunities help students expand their world-view and increase their cultural empathy, both dispositions that are necessary in a 21st century classroom. Just as Bryan and Sprague (1997) report, Kissock’s anecdotal evidence supports his inferences that teaching abroad provided “life lessons” in teaching abilities, understanding the role of education in society, and expanding their world-views.

While research has shown that an overseas teaching experience influences teachers’ cultural empathy and global perspective, the overseas teaching experience is also influenced by other factors that include personal background, educational attainment, and beliefs and attitudes. Teachers bring these factors to their overseas teaching assignment, and the depth and breadth of these factors may have an influence on the depth and breadth of the influence the overseas teaching experience has on teaching decisions when teachers return to their home country. It is not possible for teachers to separate these factors from their overseas teaching experience, nor can teachers separate their
overseas teaching experience from these factors. Figure 1 shows one way to conceptualize the overlap between overseas teaching experiences and the prior knowledge, educational attainment, and beliefs teachers bring to the classroom.

Figure 1.1. Influences on teaching decisions. This figure illustrates the connection among the influences of teaching decisions.

Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to look at the influence, if any, an overseas teaching experience has on teaching decisions when teachers return to their home country. Teaching decisions include, but are not limited to the following areas of decision-making: curriculum, classroom management, and instructional
behaviors. One way to determine the influence of an overseas teaching experience is to scrutinize the influence these overseas teaching experiences have on teacher decisions.

This research captured the lived experience of teachers who have taught abroad. The overarching question was, “What do teachers report as the influence, if any, of an overseas teaching experience on teaching decisions in their United States' classrooms?”

The following research questions were investigated:

RQ1. In what ways do teachers report that overseas teaching experiences have influenced their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about instruction and curriculum?

RQ2. Are there any reported differences for less experienced and experienced teachers?

Study Design

The project was primarily a phenomenological study in the sense that teachers self-reported their understandings via an online questionnaire and face-to-face interviews. Thirty-eight individuals who taught overseas and were teaching in their home country at the time of the research completed an online questionnaire. Subsequently, a convenience sampling approach (Patton, 2006) was used to select four individuals for the qualitative portion of the study. The four individuals were interviewed and three of the four were observed in their classrooms. I was also able to study the displays and other materials in the
classrooms. Following data collection, data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed; emergent patterns and themes throughout were noted.

**Operational Definitions**

1. “Cultural competence” is defined as having an awareness of one’s own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989).

2. “Cultural empathy” is defined as the ability to accept another cultural point of view.

3. “Culturally relevant pedagogy” and “culturally responsive teaching” are interchangeable in this research. It is defined as teachers acknowledging students' diversity and incorporating their backgrounds and experiences into the learning experiences and classroom environment. Teachers “develop the knowledge, skills, and predispositions to teach children from diverse racial, ethnic, language, and social class backgrounds” (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003, p.270).

4. While there is a great deal of information about “global perspective”, there is a dearth of current information about teacher global perspective. Nonetheless, the information about global perspective can be transferred to teachers who have worked overseas. Case’s (1993) conceptualization of a global perspective includes “open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, resistance to stereotyping, inclination to empathize, and non-
chauvinism” (Merryfield, Jarchow, & Pickert, 1997, p.5). The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (1994) develops this perspective further by defining it as “the viewpoint that accepts the interdependency of nations and peoples and the interlinkage of political, economic, ecological, and social issues of a transnational global nature” (p.18). For the purpose of this research, a definition of global perspective will include components of the definitions of Case (1993), NCATE (1994), Guillory and Guillory (1989), Hicks and Townley (1982), Kerr (1989) and the United States Commissioner of Education’s Task Force on Education (1979):

a) awareness of how our actions are connected;

b) open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, resistance to stereotyping, inclination to empathize, and non-chauvinism;

c) understanding of the interdependency of nations and peoples and the interlinkage of political, economic, ecological, and social issues;

4) acceptance of the values of social justice and human rights.

5. “Overseas teaching experience” is defined as the experience of teachers who first taught in the U.S. then taught overseas, and eventually returned to teach in the U.S.

6. “Overseas schools” will include independent international schools, United States Department of Defense Dependent Schools, and United States Department of State Affiliated Schools for Teaching Overseas, including
the Peace Corps (The International Educator, 2008; The Office of Overseas Schools Department of State, 2009).

7. “Experienced teacher” is defined as one who has had four or more years’ experience as a full time teacher.

8. “Less experienced teacher” is defined as one who had one to three years’ teaching experience, had switched disciplines or grades (for example, elementary school to high school or science to physical education), or was a career switcher (for example, doctor to middle school science teacher).

9. “Preservice teacher’ is defined as a student who has declared an education major but has not yet completed training to be a teacher.

10. “Sociocultural consciousness” is defined as “an understanding that people’s ways of thinking, behaving, and being are deeply influenced by such factors as race/ethnicity, social class and language” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p.22).

11. “Student teacher” is defined as a student who is teaching under supervision in a school for a limited amount of time in order to fulfil teacher licensure requirements. Student teachers are typically in their last year of their university program.
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review will investigate three categories of research in global learning: teaching with a global perspective, overseas student teaching and work experience, and experiential learning programs. It will also discuss the influence teachers’ personal world knowledge has on the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors they convey in their teaching about the value of global perspectives. Furthermore, it will illustrate why there is a need for American teachers to teach with a global perspective. Finally, it will address gaps in the research in teachers’ development of global knowledge and the impact of this knowledge on their teaching.

Influence of Attitudes and Beliefs on Teaching

In an effort to understand how an overseas teaching experience influences a teacher’s attitude toward teaching and curriculum, we must first examine the influence of personal experience on a teacher’s attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in teaching (Buehl & Fives, 2009). While attitudes and beliefs can affect teaching behaviors, there is evidence that this does not always occur. Nonetheless, Kagan (1992) said teachers’ beliefs lie “at the very heart of teaching” (p.85). It is these beliefs that may mark the importance of an overseas teaching experience, and these beliefs are very difficult to change. A variety of characteristics contribute to teacher beliefs: education level, previous teaching experience, and personal and social histories (Decker & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008).
These characteristics, coupled with Shulman's (1986) three dimensions of teacher’s subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and curricular knowledge—work together to guide teachers’ thinking in the classroom.

Richardson (1996) described belief as “a proposition that is accepted as true by the individual holding the belief” (p.104). For example, a teacher who believes that all Dutch people are miserly may believe this until spending time in The Netherlands and developing friendships with Dutch people. As Richardson notes, “Beliefs are thought to drive actions; however, experiences and reflection on action may lead to changes in and/or additions to beliefs” (p.104). Beliefs are influenced by practical experience and practical experience influences beliefs.

Research suggests that what teachers know and believe can also change over time, depending on their experiences, and Cochran-Smith and Fries (2005, p. 100) suggested researchers "examine and untangle" the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices. Therefore, looking at the research about how teachers’ attitudes and beliefs affect teaching can help understand the influence an overseas teaching decision may have on teaching decisions.

One study that looked at teacher attitudes and beliefs was led by Pope and Wilder (2005). The study assessed preservice teachers’ perceptions and attitudes regarding issues of cultural diversity, by asking the preservice teachers (N=295) to complete the Valuing Diversity in Education Survey. The findings indicated that many of the students were aware of the diversity in their classrooms, but those who scored high in valuing diversity had a greater
awareness and appreciation of diversity, as well as having more personal interaction with diverse situations and people. The researchers suggest that those individuals who had a high score in valuing diversity may be better equipped to work in diverse situations. Additionally, the findings did not reveal whether value for diversity can be taught. Rather, it indicated that the beliefs and attitudes about diversity that teachers bring to education programs can be enhanced through teacher preparation programs, because beliefs and attitudes are difficult to change. Furthermore, the study found that there are preservice teachers who do not value diversity and that they need more than a teacher education program to change their thinking.

One of the more recent studies to look at teacher attitudes and beliefs was led by Bodur (2012). The study investigated the possible changes, in preservice teachers' beliefs and attitudes about teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students after partaking in multicultural workshops and working in a linguistically and culturally diverse school setting. Eighty-eight preservice teachers were given the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey and of those eight volunteers to be interviewed. To determine if the attitudes and beliefs of teachers change, two groups of preservice teachers were compared. The first group was comprised of third-semester elementary education preservice teachers who had completed the multicultural strand of the teacher education program, and the second group was made up of first-semester preservice teachers who had not begun the multicultural strand of the teacher education program. The results indicated that
the preservice teachers who participated in the multicultural strand of the teacher education program had more positive attitudes and beliefs about teaching diverse students than their counterparts who had not taken the multicultural strand. However, the researchers were careful to point out that previous multicultural experience may have had an effect on the results.

Overall, the existing research suggests that experiences both outside and in the home country will influence teacher attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Additionally, what teachers believe about the nature and agency of teaching prior to their overseas teaching experience will influence the impact teaching overseas has on their teaching decisions. Therefore, a study like this needs to take into consideration teacher beliefs before the overseas experience and accept that those beliefs could and should change after working overseas.

**Global Perspective**

We are now in the early part of the 21st Century and there are still concerns about the lack of global awareness American students have as compared to their counterparts from other countries. The timeliness of this issue is critical. Not only are U.S. students consistently falling behind their international peers but also they are also unprepared to participate in a global workforce or to confront global changes. Educating with a global perspective asks students and teachers to think critically about their place in the world, challenge stereotypes, and empathize with the world-views of people from other countries (Wang, 2005). Therefore, teachers should both prepare students to live in an increasingly global
world and they themselves be active citizens who play a part in creating a better future.

Research has shown that in order for teachers to prepare their students to become citizens of the world, teachers need to be globally aware and one way to increase a sense of world citizenry is through the development of opportunities for educators to interact with individuals who are not from the United States.

While talk of global education and global perspective has circulated for the past thirty years (Alger & Harf, 1984; Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005; Curran, 1981; Davies, 2001; Freeman, 1993; Hanvey, 1975; Johnston & Ochoa, 1993) progress has not been made in this area. In 1989, The National Governor’s Association identified inadequate teacher preparation in global education as an obstacle in the United States’ ability to meet the economic, political, and cultural challenges of the modern world. It maintained that the United States would inevitably fall behind other industrialized nations if teacher education programs did not develop teachers who have a grasp of the world around them. Later, in 1995, after determining that teacher preparation programs did not implement The National Governor’s Association’s suggestions, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) revisited the issue by mandating teacher education in global perspectives. This mandate did not provide the results NCATE wanted, so the standards were rewritten in 2001 and they suggested teaching is a global position, but they did not provide explicit ideas on how to schools of education can implement these ideas. Today, educational leaders are interested in helping
their students develop a global perspective, but the design is more focused on pre-packaged resources available for purchase (i.e., citizenship courses).

In “Global citizenship: abstraction or framework for action?” Davies (2006) illustrates the growing demand for educators who are able to integrate a worldview into their teaching by highlighting the increase in resources for teaching global citizenship. In the same way that schools are looking to pre-packaged resources to supplement teaching world-views, so too are administrators hiring more teachers with experience outside of the United States. Whether the experience is student teaching abroad, participating in a teacher exchange program, or spending time overseas because of personal reasons, administrators are increasingly aware of the value of employing teachers with an overseas experience. (Davies 2006; Young, 2008). Agreeing with Davies and Young, Stephen Scoffham of The United Kingdom’s Development Education Association maintained, “…that first-hand experience has a key role in promoting learning” (DEA, 2004, p. 9) Consequently, administrators are beginning to realize the value of hiring teachers with an overseas teaching experience if they want to prepare their students for success in a world that is constantly becoming more and more connected.

Studies of Teacher Education Students

Studies of teacher education programs reveal the need for teachers to be prepared to think globally and to be experts in the areas of their content (Bodur, 2012; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005,), yet in Educating School Teachers,
Levine (2006) criticizes teacher education programs for the ill-preparedness of education school graduates: “Teacher skills and knowledge need to be raised if we are to substantially increase student achievement to the levels needed for an information economy” (p.11). In order to provide students with the skills needed for the 21st century, Levine argues that we need teachers who are globally aware and who can prepare students to participate in a global workforce or confront global challenges. He maintains that competition from other industrialized nations is putting pressure on the U.S. to graduate individuals who are cognizant of the world around them, and one way this can be done is to employ teachers who can incorporate a global perspective into their teaching. He provides four examples of what he calls “exemplary” teaching education programs, and while all four programs are different in scope and size, they all stress the importance of developing teachers with a global perspective.

Though Levine highlights what teacher education programs need to do to insure students keep pace with the changing information economy, there is still a gap in the research in regards to the influence of an overseas teaching experience. The studies that have looked at the influence of overseas teaching experiences largely focus on student teaching abroad, summer exchange programs or international club participation while at university or on intercultural experience. However, none look specifically at the lived experiences of teachers who have taught overseas and the relationship to pedagogical content knowledge. In general the research shows that teaching overseas for any
extended period of time does influence how teachers approach curriculum when they return, but the small sample sizes and lack of empirical evidence provides us with data that is not generalizable or reliable. Furthermore, the data focuses primarily on foreign language, ESOL, and social studies teachers, and not on licensed teachers in other fields therefore more research is needed.

In *Preparing teachers to teach global perspective* (1997), Kissock addresses this issue in the chapters “Student teaching overseas.” He argues that providing opportunities for students teachers to teach overseas, or work in a community different from their home environment, prepares future teachers for their work in a global world. He maintains that these opportunities help students expand their world-view and increase their cultural awareness. Kissock provides examples of overseas students teaching opportunities when he discusses the Global Student Teaching program at the University of Minnesota, Morris. The program began on a small scale in 1969 at Moorhead State College (now University) and developed into a major component of UMM’s education curriculum. Students are provided with the opportunity to teach overseas and Kissock’s anecdotal evidence from interviews supports his inferences that teaching abroad provided “life lessons” in teaching abilities, understanding the role of education in society, and expanded world-view. While there is no empirical evidence to support the anecdotes, the information does provide some reasoning for conducting a phenomenological study.
In “Global Perspectives and Teachers in Training,” the United Kingdom’s Development Education Association looked at eight case studies of teacher educator programs that incorporated global perspectives into the curriculum. One program studied was the teacher-training course at The World Education Centre and the School of Education at the University of Wales. This case study looked specifically at including global citizenship and sustainable development components in the initial licensure course. Initial findings revealed that prior to the inclusion of these components the preservice teachers, as well as their professors, were uncomfortable addressing global citizenship and sustainable development issues in their classrooms. However, after the training for the professors, and the inclusion of these courses, the confidence level for classroom discussions about global citizenship and sustainable development increased for both preservice teachers and professors (Bennell & Elliot, 2004).

Another case study that highlighted the benefits of teaching global awareness to preservice teachers was conducted at the Institute of Education, a graduate college at the University of London. The program focused on the implications first-hand encounters had on preservice teachers’ discussion of world citizenship. In this case study, student teachers travelled to the Auschwitz Museum in Poland to have a better understanding in order to teach citizenship in geography classes. The preservice teachers’ reflections illustrate a stronger grasp of how to incorporate citizenship into geography courses compared to their confidence prior to the Auschwitz trip, but it also shows that some geography
teachers are only concerned with teaching about country size, so incorporating citizenship is difficult (Lambert, 2004).

Though the case studies illustrate how teachers who were exposed to a curriculum with a global perspective were able to convey the importance of understanding other cultures, there was a lack of strong data associated with the research, nonetheless, through interviews and reflection journals, the report’s summation found that students benefit both educationally and personally from teachers who can help them make connections between where they live and the larger world.

A 1993 study by Wilson looked at on-campus cross-cultural experiences and how they affected education students’ understanding of other cultures. Using Sharma and Jung’s (1986) research that focused on US student understanding and awareness of other cultures as a springboard, Wilson focused on the University of Kentucky’s Conversation Partner Program. In the program, secondary social studies majors are paired with English as a Second Language students in order to assist the American students in learning about different cultures. Usually the students meet once a week for about an hour and discuss anything from school to politics to religion.

While the point of the Wilson’s study was to broaden the preservice teachers understanding of another culture, Wilson found that some students do form a real friendship, which she maintains is another benefit of the program. In analyzing the data, Wilson separated the US student learning topics into the
following categories: substantive knowledge and perceptual understanding; and personal development and interpersonal relationships. The research showed that the U.S. participants gained a general understanding of what it means to have a global perspective, as well as knowledge about another culture. Furthermore, the participants agreed that participating in this program would help them be prepared to effectively teach students from another culture because they had already experienced the benefits and challenges of working with someone from another culture. While the students who participated in the University of Kentucky’s Conversation Partner Program did not physically travel overseas to learn about a different culture, Wilson’s research illustrates how any type of exposure to another culture can influence global perspective.

Two other studies of interest focus on measuring educators’ understanding of diversity and their global awareness. Torney-Purta’s (1982) seminal paper “The global awareness survey: Implications for teacher education” highlights the need for education majors to improve their understanding of the world in which they live. Conducted by the Council on Learning, in cooperation with the Educational Testing Service, the study focuses on undergraduates' knowledge of the world. The survey items were built around 13 global issues that included environment, human rights, religious issues among others. The questionnaire measured global awareness of 3,000 undergraduate majors and was equally divided between freshman, sophomores, juniors and seniors. The participants held majors in many disciplines, but the paper focused on the
answers from education majors and the implications the findings would have for schools of education. The results found that the average senior education major had a score of 39.8 out of 101 questions, with freshmen planning to major in education scoring a 36.6, showing that their global awareness was low.

Torney-Purta (1982) formulated three hypotheses from the findings of their study: 1) those who choose to major in education are less able students than those who choose majors in history, social science, mathematics, sciences or engineering; 2) males generally scored higher than females and more females are enrolled in education; and 3) media exposure influenced global awareness (p. 203). Using these hypotheses, Torney-Purta (1982) concluded that schools of education need to build a number of global awareness courses into the curriculum, if the goal of these programs is to prepare future teachers to work in diverse classrooms. She also recommended all students, but especially education majors be required to take geography and history courses so they have a firmer understanding of politics and its implications in the world economy. And finally, Torney-Purta recommends encouraging students to take an interest in current events by reading, watching or listening to the news. In this way, she believed they will become more informed of international news and will eventually develop a habit of checking the news.

Since Torney-Purta (1982) looked at global awareness more than two decades ago, it is necessary to review more recent research to determine what has been done and what needs to be done to insure teachers develop a global
perspective. In 2001, Pohan and Aguilar wrote about the development of two empirical measures designed to assess educators’ beliefs about diversity. In “Measuring educators’ beliefs about diversity in personal and professional contexts” the researchers reviewed existing measures that assess teachers’ beliefs about diversity, and determined that there was a gap in the research. As a result, they created their own two-part instrument: Personal beliefs about diversity scale and Professional beliefs about diversity scale. The researcher conducted a pilot study to assess the clarity and reliability of the instrument. Upon completion of the pilot study, the researchers set out to measure the personal and professional beliefs of 756 participants drawn from five states. The results of the field study are not significant to my research, but the manner in which the instrument was created and implemented may be useful for future research in this field because it looks at teacher beliefs about diversity, which may be influenced from an overseas teaching experience. Pohan and Aguilar maintain that using these measures “… may have implications for designing responsive teacher preparation curricula. It would be interesting to investigate the role or influence that beliefs about diversity, multicultural education knowledge, and cross-cultural experiences has on enhancing culturally competent educators” (pp. 177-178). Therefore, a tool like this would be beneficial in looking at the influence an overseas teaching experience has on teaching decisions.

More recently, the School of International Training in Vermont has focused its research on The Federation of The Experiment in International Living (FEIL)–
a one and a half year project designed to explore and assess the influence of intercultural experiences provided through service projects conducted as part of the Federation’s Volunteers in International Partnerships program. “Exploring and assessing intercultural competence” (Fantini, 2006) highlights FEIL’s project that began in July 2005 and was completed in December 2006. The program is of interest to my research because it looks at the experiences of the participants in the International Partnership program. While the study focused on inter-cultural competency, and not on the influence it had on curriculum choices, the methodology could be useful for framing the proposed research.

**Overseas Teaching Experiences**

There is a variety of ways for teachers to develop a global perspective and overseas teaching experiences are one way to do this. Whether participating in experiential education overseas or participating as a student teaching, short term teacher exchanges or full-time teaching positions, the research to date shows that an overseas teaching experience provides teachers with the opportunity to understand their own global perspective, and bring those ideas to the classroom. However, further investigation into how the overseas teaching experience influences teaching decisions is needed in order to determine the benefits, if any, of an overseas teaching experience.

**Experiential Education**

It is well documented that one of the most effective ways to learn is through
experience and an overseas teaching experience may be the quintessential example of experiential learning. In studying the effects of living in another culture, experiential learning theory must be considered. ELT defines learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (Kolb 1984, p. 41). While the study recollections of time spent abroad can provide some insight on the influence of an overseas teaching experience, using ELT is a more effective barometer, because it emphasizes the role experience plays on the learning process and requires teachers to reflect on what they have learned and how it may have changed their teaching. The time spent overseas may have a direct influence on the decisions teachers make when they return to their home countries and how they use their experiences to inform their teaching. For teachers who spend time overseas, the experience may help them develop a global perspective that they bring to the classroom.

**Working and living overseas**

Since the world is more interconnected than ever, many people spend time working overseas, only to return to their home country after a two to three year sojourn. Though there has not been a significant amount of research on the experience of teachers who return from an overseas teaching experience, there is a plethora of information about expatriates’ experiences working overseas and their repatriation. While not the focus of this study, it is important to look at why these expatriates went overseas and how they adjusted to their repatriation
because the findings could influence how one accepts the reliability of the self-reporting of this study’s participants.

In 1961, following President John F. Kennedy’s announcement of the newly formed Peace Corps, Donald J. Shank identified five reasons why Americans go abroad: to see the world, to learn about different cultures, to learn a foreign language, to study and to teach. In identifying these, Shank understood, even then, that the word was getting smaller, and it wouldn’t be long before it was “normal” for students to spend a semester abroad or for individuals to spend two years working overseas. More recently, the reasons for accepting an international posting have expanded to include: personal interest in international experience, the location of the assignment, a desire to enhance the career, and “the overall assignment offer including the repatriation package and the financial impact” (Dickman et al., 2007). Together, all of these reasons provide a glimpse into why teachers elect to work in another country. More specifically, whether the experience was positive or negative has an impact on the teacher’s recollection of the trip and the type of influence it has on teaching decisions, as well as future career decisions.

As discussed above, there are a variety of reasons individuals choose to take an overseas assignment, and, when they return to their home country, the reintegration/repatriation can vary as well. There has been a great deal of research on the success or lack of success experienced by expatriates when, during, and returning from overseas assignment. In the study of 298 Japanese
expatriates in the United States Takeuchi et al. (2005) hypothesized correctly that the cross-cultural success experienced by some expatriates was related to previous experience, either work or non-work related, in the country that they have repatriated. The researchers also found that the amount of time the expatriates were expected to spend on an overseas assignment influenced their adjustment to the new culture and the type of transition they had when returning home.

While some studies focused on cross-cultural success, Kohonen (2008) looked at the influence an overseas experience had on expatriates’ identities and career aspirations. Using the narratives of 21 Finnish expatriates, Kohonen determined that the identities of those who go overseas can be separated into three categories: “identity shifters”, “balanced identities” and “non-shifters”. The identity shifters differed from the other two groups because they did not have a positive experience when returning to their home country. Balanced and non-shifters did not have difficulty when they returned to their home countries, but they were not as capable as identity shifters when they needed to navigate their own careers. While the findings refer to managing directors and country managers of industrial companies, the feelings that the individuals had upon repatriation can be expected of teachers who return to work in their home country after an overseas assignment. In other words, their self-reporting of their overseas experience can be colored either negatively or positively depending on identity group in which they are classified.
In the same research, Kohonen found that many repatriates suffer from a “re-entry shock upon return” (Kohonen, 2008, p.321; Adler, 1997). There are a number of reasons for this reverse culture shock, one being that many expatriates had difficulty with repatriation because of unrealistic expectations (Gmelch, 1980) or because of personal changes resulting from the overseas experience. In one of the few studies that looked at teacher overseas experience and repatriation, Sussman (2002) focused on reverse culture shock. The study looked at the re-entry difficulty of 113 American teachers who taught in Japan. The program involved a minimum stay of 1 year, but the average stay was 27 months with a range of 6–72 months.

Using the Cultural Identity Model, Sussman found that returning teachers’ repatriation distress could be identified in four ways: affirmative, subtractive, additive, and global. Affirmative identity would be seen in those teachers whose experience overseas only confirms their positive feelings towards their home country, and who had a difficult time settling into their overseas assignment. Subtractive identifiers found it relatively easy to adjust to their overseas placement, but had difficulty when they returned home because they felt they had “less in common with their compatriots”. Additive identifiers also had an easy time settling into their host country, but they had difficulty when they returned home because their values changed while in the host country. Specifically, they

1 The Cultural Identity Model (CIM) proposes several tenets: (1) cultural identity is a critical but latent aspect of self-concept; (2) salience of cultural identity is, to a large part, a consequence of the commencement of a cultural transition; (3) cultural identity is dynamic and can shift as a consequence of the overseas transition and self-concept disturbances; and (4) shifts in cultural identity serve as a mediator between cultural adaptation and the repatriation experience.
identified more with the values of the members of the host country, than with those values held by members of their home country. The last category is global identity. This group is unlike the others because they have had many international experiences and they understand that there will be an adjustment period in the host country and upon return to the home country. Global identifiers experience the least amount of stress upon reentry because they know what is expected. In her research with the 113 American teachers, Sussman concluded that high repatriation distress correlated with feeling more “Japanese.” This correlation is important to the current study because teachers’ experience overseas and repatriation could influence their self-reporting and cause them to report that their overseas experience was positive in all aspects, when in reality it could be quite different, but because they are suffering from repatriation distress, everything looks better on the other side of the pond.

**Student Teaching**

In his review of the literature of student teacher overseas experiences, Cushner (2007) argues that there is no substitution for the international immersion experience. He maintains that an overseas student teaching experience impacts student teachers’ global perspective, in particular in increasing cultural empathy as well as self-confidence. He says that experiential learning, because it is “affective and personal”, has a strong influence on professional and personal development (Cushner, 2007; Stachowski, Richardson
& Henderson; Bryan & Sprague, 1995) and enables student teachers to use their experiences overseas to help frame their teaching decisions.

Merryfield (2000) agrees with Cusher that overseas student teaching experiences are instrumental in developing empathetic and culturally aware teachers. One of her main concerns with the current student teaching programs in the U.S. is that they do not teach for diversity or global perspective. According to the 2010 US Census, 18% of school-aged children speak a language other than English at home, and 28% of US citizens were born outside of the US (US Bureau of the Census, 2010). These statistics worry Merryfield because many of today’s teachers are not prepared for their exceedingly diverse classrooms. In an effort to understand how schools of education can better prepare their teachers for the changing schools, Merryfield interviewed 80 teacher educators who are recognized for their success in preparing globally aware teachers. She found that the teacher educators agreed that experiential learning, such as teaching overseas and reflecting on their experience, has the strongest influence in helping to create a teacher with a strong global perspective and empathy for people of another culture. The teachers interviewed said that the experiences of living away from their home country and being an outsider provided them with the understanding of what it is like for the millions of immigrant school children who experience this every day.

Perhaps the most studied overseas teaching program is the Overseas Student Teaching Project at Indiana University- Bloomington. Begun in the mid-
1970s, this program sends student teachers overseas with the goals of providing its students with:

1) a broader understanding of the interdependence of all nations;
2) the opportunity to experience and participate in a different type of educational experience and community;
3) and enable students to experience professional and personal growth “through increased self-confidence and self-esteem, greater adaptability, and the acquisition of new and different teaching methods, ideas and philosophies” (Stachowski & Sparks, 2007, p. 119).

Essentially, the project hopes to develop teachers with a global perspective so they can be prepared for challenges they may face in the changing landscape of U.S. classrooms. Participants in the program are primarily undergraduates in the school of education and their majors vary from early childhood education to art. The program requires teachers to not only participate in the activities offered by their school placement, but also asks them to become actively involved in the community through living with a host family or participating in neighborhood activities.

In 2007 Stachowski and Sparks published their findings from a longitudinal study that consisted of self-reporting and follow-up interviews of the nearly 2,000 preservice teachers who went through the program. The results show that over the course of 25-plus years, the Overseas Project did meet its goals, and
teachers who participated in the program continue to use the knowledge from their experiences overseas in their teaching. While the scope of this study is remarkable, there remains a gap in the research because a study of teachers who are not in a program that is actively working to develop a global perspective and cultural empathy remains absent. My study looks at teachers who have elected to go overseas for a variety of reasons previously discussed and I want to try to determine whether their experience, without the benefit of being enrolled in a university program, had an impact on their teaching decisions.

Quezada and Alfaro (2007) looked at the influence teaching abroad had on biliteracy student teachers. The participants were four biliteracy teachers who completed their student teaching in Mexico. The participants completed journal entries and participated in interviews upon completion of their overseas teaching experience. The journal entries and interview data were read and re-read by the two authors to assure coding reliability. The authors then met to compare their coding findings and then find a set of common categories. The four themes that emerged were: "perceived inequities, teachers as change agents, student intimacy, and internal versus internal relationships “ (p. 101). An interesting finding of the study is that particular experiences overseas influenced their personal beliefs and affected how the teachers now approach the curriculum. In separating the findings into these four themes, Quezada and Alfaro found that the teaching abroad experience resulted in an expanded view, especially when teachers viewed themselves as agents of change. They suggest that institutions
of higher education incorporate and/or encourage teaching abroad programs to provide teachers with experiences that will help them be culturally and globally able to meet the challenges of an increasingly broad-minded world.

One study that did look at the influence a cross-cultural experience had on teacher curriculum choices, was Stachowski, Richardson, and Henderson’s 2003 “Student teachers report of the influence of cultural values on classroom practice and community involvement: Perspectives from the Navajo Reservation and from abroad”. The researchers looked at how influential these experiences were on the student teacher’s classroom practice and community involvement. Participants were 88 elementary and secondary student teachers who were members of the Overseas Student Teaching Project. As student teachers they were placed on the Navajo Indian Reservation and in England, Wales, Scotland, the Republic of Ireland, India, Australia and New Zealand.

As a result of identifying the values of the communities they were living in, the student teachers then applied the knowledge to their classroom practices. For example, a student teacher placed at two small schools in the Scottish Highlands appreciated the close contact her cooperating teachers had with the parents of all her students. As a result, at the end of her experience, the student teacher planned to actively provide opportunities to meet with parents when teaching in the U.S. As for curriculum choices, another student who was placed at a school in England, said she would work to incorporate lessons about other cultures because her student teaching experience showed her the value of doing
so. In examining their findings, Stachowski et al. (2003) argue for the need for schools of education to allow student teachers to embrace culturally diverse experiences, so they will be well-equipped to work with diverse populations in the US.

In an earlier study, Stachowski, Visconti, & Dimmett (2000) looked at the implications overseas student teaching experiences had on teaching practice. Again using student teachers who participated in the Overseas Student Teaching Project, the researchers asked 31 participants to reflect upon their experiences with the youth culture from their placements. They were asked to focus on three areas: student teachers’ observation of youth culture; the student teachers’ interpretation of their observations; and the implications of their observations on their classroom practice. Though the findings illustrate the influence overseas student teaching experiences have on student teachers’ perspectives of other cultures, the third component of the study, the implications on classroom practice, is most relevant to my research. The student teachers reported that their experience with overseas youth culture would be influential in their approach to teaching. Several student teachers said their experience influenced their decision to incorporate cooperative learning and interactive learning into their lessons (p. 13).

Finally, a more recent study to look at the implications of overseas student teaching placement was another Stachowski led study in 2008. Once again focusing on students participating in the Reservation and Overseas Project, the
researchers looked at the influence service learning activities had on classroom practice. While the research indirectly relates to this study, the methodology used—self-reflective write-ups—is akin to the interview portion of my research because I asked teachers to self-report on their experiences. Additionally, Stachowski, Bodle and Morrin (2008) determined that the participation in these service projects, either overseas or on the reservation, did increase the student teachers’ world-view. An increased awareness of other cultures may be one result of overseas teaching experiences, and previous research has shown that it may influence teachers’ curriculum choices.

In the same line of research, Bryan and Sprague (1997) looked at the effect of overseas student teaching internships on early teaching experiences. Ten participants were interviewed via telephone, and the findings showed that overseas student teaching internships had long-term influence on novice teachers, specifically in their sensitivity to students from other cultures. The researchers found that the overseas internship influenced had a positive influence in seven areas: initial hiring, retention in teaching, attitudes toward students, attitudes toward a second language, curriculum choices, teaching flexibility, and teaching strategies. The teachers interviewed remarked that the overseas teaching experience benefitted them while looking for employment and encouraged them to continue in the field of education. In regards to attitudes towards students and a second language, the overseas teaching experience provided teaching with a better understanding of the challenges their students
faced, and made them more willing to develop strategies for student success. The last three areas were affected because teachers reported that the overseas teaching experience provided them with the confidence to develop curriculum and teaching strategies for all students, as well as be flexible if needed.

**Short-Term Exchanges**

The most recent study to look at experiential learning and field experiences was conducted by Malewski, Sharma & Phillion (2012). Their research looked at how international field experiences promote cross-cultural awareness in preservice teachers. Forty-nine preservice teachers from a Midwestern university were enrolled in a study abroad program in Honduras, Malewski and his team collected data from a six year collective case study that included interviews, course assignments, journal reflections and researchers’ observations. Two-thirds of the preservice teachers who participated in the study had little or no international travel experience. There were 37 female and 12 male participants; five of the of participants were fluent in Spanish and six had a working knowledge of Spanish. The 38 other teachers used translators or relied on members of the host families for translation. Unlike a semester abroad program, the Honduras study abroad program is a 5-week program that consists of a three-week field placement in either an elementary or secondary school and the participation in two required courses (Exploring Teaching as a Career and Multicultural Education). The preservice teachers were allowed to select their
classroom placement based on their teaching interests as well as to stay in the housing provided by the local university of live with a host family.

Malewski et al.’s data found six common themes among the participants: language and culture, cross-cultural communication, privilege and deprivation, cultural knowledge, study abroad and self-reflection. Though data came from a variety of preservice teachers over a six-year period, the consistency with which the data’s themes were referred to in discussions, interviews, observations, or reflections, strengthened the researchers’ belief that the international field placement was crucial to preparing preservice teachers for teaching in culturally diverse settings. In their report, Melewski et al. included three vignettes where preservice teachers discussed their experiences in their Honduras classrooms. One such vignette was told by Shawn and Stacy who were asked by their cooperating teacher to teach a history lesson about the U.S. and the world wars. Initially, the preservice teachers thought they were asked to teach such a lesson because they were American, but the teacher informed them that the particular unit was a part of the Honduran curriculum because the U.S. was important to their economy. The preservice teachers thought it would have been more appropriate to include discussion about Honduras, not just the U.S., thus illustrating a change in cultural awareness that the preservice teachers developed because of their time in Honduras. The vignettes added rich description to the findings because they illustrated the cross-cultural awareness that the preservice teachers gained from their experiences. The vignettes also
highlighted the plans the preservice teachers had to engage in culturally relevant pedagogy when practicing in their own classrooms. Ultimately, Melewski et al. concluded that cross-cultural awareness through an overseas experience is vital to preparing teachers for culturally diverse classrooms.

**Full-time positions**

In 1996 Razzano studied how an overseas experience can help teachers become more cognizant of the world around them. At the time, Razzano interviewed 50 faculty who had worked or lived abroad before or during a career in higher education. She found that the majority of teachers felt that their teaching improved because of the overseas experience. She notes that those interviewed said they strive to keep a variety of cultural learning styles in mind when they teach, as well as try to connect what is happening in the U.S. to what is going on in the word around them. A major finding is that the overseas experience had an influence on their understanding of their own global perspective, as well as how they bring that perspective to the classroom.

In a study of the lived experiences of teachers, Merryfield (2000) indicates that teacher educators who spend time overseas are more adept at addressing global issues in the classroom. The participants were able to recognize the similarities between cultures and countries, but also realize that personal background affects their perception of others. Many of the White teacher educators who participated in the study credited living in another country with helping them understand what it means to be different. Consequently, if teachers
are expected to prepare students to be successful in a global society, then it is important for teacher educators to have experiences teaching outside of the U.S. Merryfield makes the important argument that schools of education can help teachers develop a global perspective by hiring professionals who have experiences outside of their own culture, whether overseas or working in cultures different than their own.

One study that touched upon pedagogical content knowledge was Gu’s (2005) research on intercultural experience and teacher professional development. Focusing on professional development programs offered jointly by the UK’s Department for International Development and the Chinese Ministry of Education, Gu looked at the influence of intercultural experience on tertiary Chinese English teachers and British English language teachers (ELT). The objective of the projects was to introduce and establish communicative language teaching (CLT) methodologies in the teaching of a foreign language. CLT’s approach to teaching second and foreign languages emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language (British Council 1999 as cited in Gu, 2005).

In Gu’s (2005) study, samples of 24 universities involved in the PD projects were compared to 23 that were not involved in the PD projects. Data was collected by both interviews and questionnaires. Interviews were conducted with 19 British ELT specialists and 19 Chinese teachers who were involved in the DFID; questionnaires were sent to 123 Chinese English teacher participants in
the PD projects and 492 Chinese English teachers not involved in the project. The results showed that those teachers who participated in the PD program were more likely to have a positive attitude toward CLT, as demonstrated by the PD programs. The results of the two-way Chi-square test revealed that non-participants (127:84=3:2) marginally preferred CLT to traditional teaching methods compared with the attitude difference among Chinese PD project participants (58:10=6:1). This indicated that the difference in Chinese project’s participants’ attitudes toward CLT and traditional methods was greater than that of non-participants (p. 7). This is significant because it illustrates that participation in the PD project made an impression on the Chinese teacher’s views on their approach to teaching. The results are important for my study because it suggests that teachers who have taught overseas may report that the experience has influenced their curriculum choices.

**Summary of the Above Research Findings**

While there has been scant research on the implications an overseas teaching experience has on the teaching decisions of teachers who have worked overseas and then returned to teach in their home countries, much research has been done on the development of global perspective in teachers, experiential education, working as an ex-patriot and the influence attitudes and beliefs have on teaching decisions. Previous research on preservice and student teachers has found that an overseas teaching experience helps frame a teacher’s global perspective, specifically in the areas of cultural empathy and cross-cultural
awareness. Furthermore, research has shown that the overseas teaching experiences are experiential learning opportunities where teachers’ reflections enable them to process their time abroad and how the experience informs their teaching. Just as teachers seek overseas employment for a number of reasons, individuals who spend time abroad often experience reverse culture shock when they return to their home country. Previous research findings show that an individual who experiences reverse culture shock may not be able to accurately describe a learning experience, thus providing biased and inaccurate information about their overseas experience. Finally, the research on attitudes and beliefs in teaching found that it is extremely difficult to change a prior belief, but when they do change it is often because of a new experience, such as teaching overseas.

**How the Findings will Effect the Current Investigation**

Much of the previous research has focused on preservice and student teachers who spent time abroad, yet the findings will help inform this investigation because previous research indicates that the development of a global perspective, cultural empathy, curriculum choices, and personal growth are all influenced by an overseas teaching experience. Previous researchers have provided much needed scaffolding about the nature of overseas teaching and much of what has already been done has informed my research decisions and helped frame my questions.
Research Gaps

Previous research has focused on student teaching and overseas experience, but there is scant research on teachers who taught in schools in their home countries, then taught overseas, and eventually returned to teach in their home countries. Since one current education trend is looking at teachers’ roles in our globally interconnected world, (Stachowski & Sparks, 2007) it is necessary to study these teachers and determine the differences in their approaches to educating our children, and if the differences help develop a more globally aware, and therefore more globally prepared world citizen.
III. RESEARCH METHODS

In this chapter, I explain the study's research questions and the use of a questionnaire, face-to-face interviews, and observations to answer those questions. This is followed by a description of the study's design, also includes research sites, my access to those sites, the participants, and my role as the researcher. Then, I explain how the data were collected and analyzed. I conclude with a discussion of this study's integrity, including issues of bias, validity, and limitations.

This study was phenomenological in the sense that it included teachers self-reporting their understanding of themselves. A mixed-methods design consisting of an online questionnaire, face-to-face interviews and observations was determined to be the best way to answer the question “What do teachers report as the influence, if any, of an overseas teaching experience on teaching decisions in their United States’ classrooms?” The questionnaire and interviews provided evidence for answering the following specific research questions:

RQ1. In what ways do teachers report that overseas teaching experiences have influenced their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about instruction and curriculum?

RQ2. Are there any reported differences for less experienced and experienced teachers?

Rather than rely only on teacher’s self-reporting in their survey and interview
answers, I also observed those teachers I interviewed to determine if what they said they did was actually discernible in their classroom practice. Another reason for adding the qualitative portion to the study was to add depth and breadth to the research and enable me to practice an area of research that I thoroughly enjoy.

**Sample**

This research gathered information from teachers who first taught in the United States, then taught overseas, and eventually returned to teach in the United States. Since the majority of the research in overseas teaching has already focused on preservice teachers (Cornell, 2003; Wang, 2005), student teachers and preservice teachers were not included in this study. Additionally, participants in the study had to have a minimum of one-year teaching experience in the United States prior to teaching overseas. For this research, a less experienced teacher was defined as one who had one to three years teaching experience, had switched disciplines or grades (for example elementary school to high school or science to physical education) or was a career switcher (for example doctor to middle school science teacher). Experienced teachers were defined as those who had four or more years’ experience. In addition to having taught in the United States a minimum of one year, participants must have taught overseas for a minimum of one year.

In February 2010, the questionnaire was posted on surveymonkey.com©. Following the posting a number of friends who taught overseas and then returned to teach in their home country were contacted via e-mail. Then an invitation was
posted on Facebook©. After a month, the rate of return continued to be slow, so
the survey link was posted on a number of Linked In© groups at the suggestion
of a friend. These were: ESL Educators, ESL International, International School
Educators, Official Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme, Teacher’s
Lounge, Teachers of English to Natives and Speakers of Other Languages,
Teachers without Borders, Kappa Delta Pi—International Honor Society in
Education, International Teachers, International Teacher Recruitment and
Elementary/Primary School Teachers. Posting the survey on Linked In© created
a snowball effect where individuals were directed to the survey from members of
Linked In©. Of those who individuals who were directed to the survey from
friends, three contacted me on my Linked In© page and asked if they could pass
along the survey link to other people. The questionnaire was kept “open” on
surveymonkey.com© from February 2010-August 2010. It was closed at the end
of August 2010. Thirty-eight individuals who taught overseas and returned to
teach in their home country completed the online questionnaire.

Of the teachers who completed the questionnaire, 30% were male and
70% were female. Of those who answered the race question, seven were non-
White and 28 were white. Ninety-seven percent of the teachers were native
English speakers ad 72% reported that they spoke a language other than English
functionally. Regarding teaching institutions overseas, teachers taught at both
public and private schools, with the breakdown as follows:
Table 3.1

*Overseas Teaching Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent International School</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Defense Dependents School</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Department of State Affiliated School For Teaching Overseas</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local school</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace Corps placement</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answered question</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those teaching institutions 67% were located in urban areas, 16% in suburban areas, and 16% in rural areas. At the time of the survey 48% of teachers were teaching at public institutions and 52% reported being employed by private or parochial schools. Thirty-three teachers answered the question about teaching experience, with 21 reporting being experienced teachers. The time teachers spent overseas varied from one year to 20-plus years. Teachers who answered the survey taught in a number of capacities that included: pre-kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, high school and university. Subjects taught included English to Speakers of Other Languages, mathematics, English, history, theatre, music, physical education, biology, chemistry, art and information.
technology. The same teachers covered the globe teaching in the following places: South America, Europe, Asia, Australia, the Middle East and Africa.

In addition to the questionnaire, a qualitative component contributed to the data of the study. From the participants who completed the survey, a convenience sampling approach (Patton, 2006) was used to interview four individuals for the qualitative portion of the study. Interview participants were selected based on location and their willingness to be interviewed, to be observed, and to share curriculum with me. The participants were all located in southeastern Massachusetts. Three of the participants were interviewed in their classrooms; two were interview after school and one was interviewed during his preparatory period. One participant is not presently teaching and was interviewed at her home. All interviews lasted between 45 minutes and an hour and a half. One participant was interviewed two times; the first interview was one hour and the second interview lasted 45 minutes. The participants included two men and two women, all considered experienced teachers.
Table 3.2
*Interview participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Teaching experience</th>
<th>Overseas placement</th>
<th>Current position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Experienced 10+ years</td>
<td>Feedback in Rio de Janeiro and Modern American Institute in Belo Horizonte, 1.5 years; American school of Belo Horizonte, three years;</td>
<td>English teacher at a suburban public school in Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>Experienced 9+ years</td>
<td>Leysin American School, Leysin, Switzerland, two years; Anglo-American School, Moscow, Russia two years</td>
<td>Art director for an urban non-profit organization in Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Experienced 10+ years</td>
<td>Peace Corps in Poland, two years; University of Wausau Poland, one year; American School in Wausau, three years</td>
<td>English teacher at suburban public school in Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Experienced 5+ years</td>
<td>All-boys boarding school in Sydney, Australia, one year</td>
<td>English teacher at a private school in Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection**

**Survey**

After spending months trying to find a useful tool for the quantitative portion of the study, I came across John W. McKiernan’s University of Alabama 1980 dissertation "An Evaluation of the Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching and its Effect on the Expressed Self-Acceptance and Acceptance-of-Others of its Participants". Dr. McKiernan’s research was two-fold: Part I looked at student teachers who had gone overseas with COST and asked them to
answer questions about specific aspects of their COST experience and the changes or disadvantages that they believed the COST experience offered them. Part II tried “to determine the changes in the acceptance of self and acceptance of others that the COST experience provided its participants” (McKiernan, p. 23). Part II required participants to take the survey before they went on their student teaching assignment and to take it again when they returned. Part I included 11 open-ended responses and the rest were Likert type or yes/no scales. Part II used the instrument “Acceptance of Self and Others” designed by Emanuel M. Berger, which uses a Likert scale. McKiernan piloted the questionnaire to 23 student teachers from the Center for International Education, Massachusetts State College System, and made changes as a result of their comments and suggestions.

Prior to determining if I should use part of McKiernan’s instruments, I contacted my advisor Phil Tate and asked his opinion. Together we went through the instrument and decided that portions of the instruments could be used and tweaked to fit my study. After making this decision I tried to contact Dr. McKiernan and ask if I could utilize some of his instrument. After countless e-mails to the staff at the School of Education at the University of Alabama, I was finally given contact information for Dr. Ronnie Stanford, one of Dr. McKiernan’s dissertation committee members. I sent an e-mail to Dr. Stanford on September 27, 2009 and received a response the following day. Dr. Stanford told me that Dr. McKiernan had died in an accident, but Dr. Stanford would be willing to assist. I
called Dr. Stanford the following week and asked permission to use portions of the instrument. He said it would be fine, provided I gave credit to Dr. McKiernan for the original idea. While looking through Dr. McKiernan’s dissertation, I was unable to find information regarding the reliability and validity of the instrument. Nonetheless, sections of the instrument were used because of their usefulness in the study.

Using parts of Dr. McKiernan’s instrument, the questionnaire was tailored to include how overseas teaching experiences have influenced teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about instruction and curriculum. The questionnaire was divided into four sections: a. pre-planning, travel, and friendship b. curriculum and instruction c. personal growth and d. cross-cultural understanding. All of these sections had answers that were chosen from a five-point Likert scale. The merits of a five-point scale as opposed to a four-point scale were debated, but it was determined that the five-point scale would yield the best results. In addition to the Likert scale questions, two open-ended questions were included as well as a short demographic section at the end of the questionnaire.

Prior to posting the questionnaire online, a former colleague reviewed the questions and took the survey, while timing herself. She suggested some of the questions be reworded, and said the survey took her 24 minutes to complete. Following her advice some questions were reworded. At the suggestion of a statistician and in light of the fact that there was no information regarding
reliability and validity of the instrument, a Cronbach’s-Alpha test was run. The Cronbach’s-Alpha test found the instrument to be reliable with its internal consistency in three of the four sections. Scores ranged from .87 to a .96 in the following sections: curriculum and instruction c. personal growth and d. cross-cultural understanding. The Pre-planning, travel and friendship section scored low on the Cronbach’s Alpha test with a .17. However, this was determined not to be a problem because the questions did not relate to the research questions. Participants who answered the questionnaire gave their consent by deciding to take the online survey.

**Interviews and observations**

The interview questions (see Appendix) were based on those Bryan and Sprague (1997) developed for their research with Christopher Newport University students who studied overseas. Since their questions were similar in nature to this study, they were used them as a starting point for the interviews. However, because the interview was qualitative in nature, other questions developed from participants’ responses, therefore making the interview loosely structured. During the interviews I took notes to highlight comments I thought were important, as well as capture my own thinking. Interviews were recorded on an mp3 recorder. I transcribed about 35% of the interviews shortly after the completion of each interview. The other 65% of the interviews were transcribed by a local university undergraduate found through a job-posting website. When I used a transcriber, I would verify the transcription against the digital recording to ensure accuracy.
Prior to being interviewed, the participants were asked to complete a short demographic and biographic questionnaire. All interview participants were provided with an informed consent form (see Appendix) and given the opportunity to opt out of the study at any time. The interview participants’ confidentiality was insured and pseudonyms were used in the reporting. There was no inherent risk in participating in the study.

As this is a phenomenological study, the participants self-reported, so I asked to observe one of their classes to determine if they were doing so accurately. Since only three of the four interview participants were teaching at the time of this study, I was only able to observe three classes. Two classes were observed for a 90-minute block and one class was observed for 30 minutes. While observing the three participants, I used a scripted format in order to have a “reality” check on their questionnaire and interview answers. The protocol included the headings I saw, I heard, I thought and below each heading I wrote what was occurring in the classroom at that time. While in the class I observed what in the classroom and on the walls. The purpose of this was to determine if there was consistency between what the teacher said in the interviews and in his or her practice. While observing the classes, my role was that of researcher, and I took pains to observe with as little interaction as possible. I was introduced to the students in two classes and in one class, I was allowed to take a seat as inconspicuously as possible. Two of the teachers paid me no mind, but one teacher was conscious of my presence and at one point exclaimed “Sarah, how’s
that for a connection!"

**Data Analysis**

**Quantitative**

Most of the quantitative research was descriptive in nature, but inferential statistics was used to determine what the greater population of teachers with overseas teaching experience think. After studying the descriptive statistics from all the survey participants, a t-test was run for the categories of race, gender and teaching experience. In cases where the data revealed a significant result in the mean, a Kruskal Wallis test was run to determine the median. This was done to reinforce the validity of the findings.

**Qualitative**

Two questions were included in the questionnaire to determine if an overseas teaching experience had an influence on teacher curricular shifts, which is one area that this research looked at. One question asked participants to fill in the blanks: *Before I taught overseas I ________________ and now I _______________.* The first question aimed to determine if teachers could identify the changes the overseas teaching experience brought to their thinking. The second question asked, *In what ways is your teaching different than your colleagues who have not taught overseas?* This question was included because it aimed to identify specific instruction or curricular changes that occurred because of the overseas teaching experience. Twenty-four of the participants elected to respond to the first question and 31 participants answered the second
question. These were included because they were directly related to RQ1. Once I had the answers from these two questions I printed them and used highlighters to code them. The themes found were: global perspective, cultural empathy, culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum choices, expectations, and miscellaneous.

The second part of the qualitative research was the interview. As stated earlier, a convenience sampling approach (Patton, 2006) from the questionnaire participants was used to select four individuals to be interviewed. Interview participants were selected based on location and their willingness to be interviewed, to be observed, and to share curriculum with me. The participants were all located in southeastern Massachusetts. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and an hour. Once all the material was transcribed, I looked at ways of coding the material. Initially I was going to use the Atlas TI program, but after trying to use the program, I realized it would be much easier for me to code the interviews using printouts and highlighters. At this point, I reread the interviews and studied the data to isolate statements that highlight the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998) of particular themes. From there, I determined if certain codes could be combined, modified or eliminated, and under the direction of my advisor, I looked at the codes and put them into the appropriate themes.

The final part of the qualitative research was the teaching observations of three of the four interview participants. This was done to determine if the teachers actually did what they self-reported. Each teacher was visited one time
for a full class period. During the observations careful notes of the classroom set-
up were taken and I sat in the back of the classrooms; I tried not to participate in
the conversations (unless I was explicitly asked something). I employed a
teacher observation method of writing what I saw, heard and thought. After each
observation I went home and transcribed my notes that evening. I also checked
with what the participant said in the interview and made notes of any similarities
in what was said in the face-to-face interview. I did this in hopes of finding
emergent themes. Finally, the findings from each interview were summarized and
I performed member checks to ensure that I accurately represented the
participants’ lived experiences. In one case I had to follow-up with the participant
to clarify a response.

**Data Synthesis /Triangulation**

Once all the data was collected and analyzed, it was synthesized to
triangulate the responses from the questionnaire with those from the interviews
and observations. For example, 67% of questionnaire respondents said that their
overseas experience helped them develop sensitivity to cultural differences
among their students. Then, I saw that the theme of cultural empathy was
mentioned explicitly by three of the four interview participants and one participant
addressed it during my classroom observation. Through looking at the emergent
themes, it was found that in some areas an overseas teaching experience
influences teaching decisions.
Limitations

Weak Generalizability

The word 'generalizability' is defined as the degree to which the findings can be generalized from the study sample to the entire population (Polit & Hungler, 1991, p. 645). Since this study is not large, it cannot be considered generalizable in the traditional sense, but it is important because it helps find a small understanding of the phenomenon of overseas teaching and the influence it has on teaching decisions.

Threats to validity and reliability

Many teachers who have worked overseas have done so because of their desire for adventure or interest in another culture. Many of these teachers have actively sought out positions overseas which makes them excited about working in an international environment. This self-reporting could affect the results because participants who wanted to teach overseas may have described their experience in a positive light and may have already developed a nascent global perspective even before they taught overseas.

Researcher subjectivity is also a threat to the validity of my findings. As a former teacher at The International School of Brussels my own experiences lead me to believe that overseas teaching experience does positively influence instruction and curriculum choices. Throughout my coding process, I had to keep asking myself: Am I looking for themes that are not there, but I think should be there?
IV. FINDINGS

In this chapter I discuss both the quantitative and qualitative findings from this study. The quantitative findings are first reported as descriptive statistics. Then t-tests were run for race, gender, and teaching experience. What follows is a reporting of the results and a highlighting of those tests that yielded significant results.

Survey

The survey included both Likert-scale items and open-ended questions. The quantitative findings are first reported as descriptive statistics. Then t-tests are reported for gender, teaching experience, and race. What follows is a reporting of the results and a highlighting of those tests that yielded significant results.

Forty-two individuals who taught overseas and are currently teaching in their home country began the online questionnaire (see appendix) and 38 completed it. The questionnaire was kept “open” on surveymonkey.com© from February, 2010, to August, 2010. The survey was divided into 12 sections. Only the results that align most closely with the research questions are reported below.

Descriptive Statistics

All tables presented used a Likert scale with the following measures: 1=never, 2=a little, 3=somewhat, 4=much, and 5=a great deal.
Table 4.1 shows the results from the section of the survey that asked specific questions about teaching objectives and the influence an overseas teaching experience had on such objectives. Of note is the high percentage of individuals who responded 5 (‘a great deal’) for topics g, h, i, k, l, m, and o. These items generally relate to three topics: developing curriculum, accounting for cultural differences, and flexibility and creativity in instruction. Some generic behaviors associated with teaching, such as planning, evaluating, or working with out-of-school activities, were not chosen as influenced very much by overseas teaching experiences.

Table 4.2 shows the results of the survey that asked respondents to report how the overseas experience had changed aspects of their character and personality both in and outside of the classroom. The teachers claimed that they had experienced a good deal of change in every area of personal growth listed on the survey. Of note is the high percentage of respondents who answered “a great deal” for items j, k, l, and m, which are related to cultural empathy.
Table 4.1
Curriculum and Instruction

To what extent have your overseas teaching experiences influenced the following teaching objectives?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Planning for teaching</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Implementing your own teaching plans</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Experimenting with different teaching methods</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Evaluating students</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Self-evaluating your teaching</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Using or developing innovative teaching strategies</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Developing curriculum</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Developing cultural sensitivity among your students</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Learning techniques for teaching multicultural classes</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Working with out-of-class school activities</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Learning to teach with improvised materials and resources</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Creativity in teaching</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Flexibility in unanticipated situations</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Creativity in construction and use teaching materials</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. Ability to work with non-</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2
*Personal Growth*

How has your overseas teaching experience(s) changed your:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Ability to adjust to new situations</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Willingness to meet new challenges</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Confidence in your ability to rely on your own resources</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Acceptance of others</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Acceptance of yourself</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. General level of maturity</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Independence</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Intellectual interests</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Acceptance of responsibility</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Ability to communicate across language barriers</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Ability to communicate across cultural barriers</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Interest in future cross-cultural experiences</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Ability to adapt to cultural diversity</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 shows the political influence an overseas experience had. This
section of the survey asked about commitment to cross-cultural education as well as how the respondents felt about their home countries. Responses to items l, m, n, o, and p show that these teachers who taught overseas had a commitment to cross-cultural education, demonstrated by their willingness to bring other views into their teaching. The answers to items c, d, and e should be noted, because there is a fairly even distribution in the answers 3 (‘somewhat’), 4 (‘much’) and 5 (‘a great deal’). Coupled with the responses to items h and o, these responses indicate that the teachers did not report that they became more patriotic as a result of their overseas experiences.

Table 4.3
Cross-Cultural Understanding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How has your overseas teaching experience(s) influenced your:</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Concern for inequities among individuals and groups</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Concern for inequities among nations</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Respect for your home country</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Respect for the feelings of others about your home country</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Respect for the position of your home country in world affairs</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Respect for the views of other societies of the role of your country in world affairs</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Appreciation of your host</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
country’s position in international politics and economics

h. Patriotic feelings for your home country  
   11.9%  19%  21.4%  31%  16.7%

i. Identification with mankind in general  
   7.3%  7.3%  12.2%  39%  34.1%

j. Interest in world economics  
   11.9%  11.9%  21.4%  21.4%  33.3%

k. Interest in international politics  
   9.5%  9.5%  19%  26.2%  35.7%

l. Acceptance of differences  
   4.9%  4.9%  17.1%  31.7%  41.5%

m. Commitment to cross-cultural or international education  
   4.9%  4.9%  9.8%  26.8%  53.7%

n. Abilities to use illustrations from other cultures in your teaching  
   7.3%  2.4%  14.6%  31.7%  43.9%

o. Willingness to bring other than the dominant U.S. views into the classroom  
   10%  0%  7.5%  25%  57.5%

p. Ability to help your students understand international issues from both the U.S. and non-U.S. points of view  
   9.8%  4.9%  9.8%  24.4%  51.2%

The topics in Table 4.4 are worth mentioning if only to highlight how little overseas experiences affected these teachers’ career goals, with the possible exception of “long range career goals.” For item f, 15% of individuals said the overseas experience had no influence on curriculum planning, yet approximately 75% of individuals answered 3 (somewhat), 4 (much) or 5 (a great deal).
Table 4.4
Career Goals

With respect to your career and career goals, please indicate the effect that your overseas teaching experience has had on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Being offered particular jobs</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Losing job opportunities</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Long range career goals</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Marketability, in general</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. The content of the subject taught</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Curriculum planning</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Counseling individual students</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Directing extra-curricular activities</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Professional meetings or activities</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Selecting professional reading</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T-Tests

Two-sample t-tests were conducted in three areas: gender, teaching experience, and race. Only 33 of the 38 respondents answered the question that related to experience, thus only their responses could be run in the t-tests.

Regarding gender, 39 respondents elected to identify themselves as male or female, but of those, only 38 actually completed the survey. Likewise, only 35
respondents chose to answer the question regarding race. Of these, 28 selected White and seven identified with another race. Because the number of respondents who identified as other than White was so small (n=7), it was decided to group all of those respondents into the category of non-White. Before the t-tests were run, the survey questions were coded (see appendix) so the data could be easily inserted into the statistics program. The alpha value used was 0.05. Additionally, it was decided to run Kruskal-Wallis test for the findings that were worthy of note because this test looks at the median, while the t-test looks at the mean. Providing the mean would help insure the accuracy of the results and the significance. While 2 sample t-tests were run on every question, only results that were either statistically significant, showed a trend, or were surprising or unexpected are reported below.

**Gender**

No statistical differences were revealed between males and females in their responses to the questions as seen in the tables 4.5-4.8. T-tests were run on the following questions because I was curious to find if there was a difference between male and female teachers in the areas of developing sensitivity to cultural differences among students. I thought that there would be a greater difference in developing sensitivity between the male and female teachers, with the females showing more development of cultural sensitivity among students, but the difference was not significant.
Table 4.5

Two-Sample T-Test for AL

To what extend have your teaching experiences influenced the following teaching objectives:
developing sensitivity to cultural difference among your students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>StDev</th>
<th>SE Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.704</td>
<td>0.609</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.250</td>
<td>0.866</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference = μ (Female) - μ (Male)
Estimate for difference: 0.454
95% CI for difference: (-0.132, 1.039)
T-Test of difference = 0 (vs. not =): T-Value = 1.64
P-Value = 0.120  DF = 16

Table 4.6

Kruskal-Wallis Test on AL

To what extend have your teaching experiences influenced the following teaching objectives:
developing sensitivity to cultural difference among your students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Ave</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.500</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>-1.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H = 2.13  DF = 1  P = 0.144
H = 3.23  DF = 1  P = 0.072  (adjusted for ties)

Experience

“Experienced teacher” is identified by “E” and less-experienced teacher is identified by “L” in the tables that follow.

Tables 4.7 and 4.8 show the results from the t-test and the Kruskal-Wallis test for the question, “To what extent have your teaching experiences influenced the following teaching objectives: learning techniques for teaching multicultural
classes?" This was chosen because I thought there would be a statistically significant difference between experienced and less experienced teachers. The p-values indicate there is not a statistically significant difference between what experienced and less experienced teachers report when they relate the influence an overseas teaching experience had on learning techniques for multicultural classes. Additionally, the obvious difference in the mean is overcome by the small N.

Table 4.7
Two-sample T-Test for AN

To what extent have your teaching experiences influenced the following teaching objectives: learning techniques for teaching multicultural classes (AN)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>StDev</th>
<th>SE Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.211</td>
<td>0.918</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference = mu (E) - mu (N)
Estimate for difference: 0.794
95% CI for difference: (-0.196, 1.784)
T-Test of difference = 0 (vs not =): T-Value = 1.70
P-Value = 0.108  DF = 16

Table 4.8
Kruskal-Wallis Test on AN

To what extent have your teaching experiences influenced the following teaching objectives: learning techniques for teaching multicultural classes (AN)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Ave</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>-1.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H = 2.25  DF = 1  P = 0.133
H = 2.49  DF = 1  P = 0.115 (adjusted for ties)
Tables 4.9 and 4.10 results show that both experienced and less experienced teachers reported that they believed that an overseas teaching experience influenced their abilities to use illustrations from other cultures in their teaching. This topic was chosen because I believed that regardless of teaching experience, an overseas teaching experience does influence a teacher’s ability to use illustrations from other cultures in their teaching. The mean score was 4.333 for E teachers and 3.58 for L teachers, but the difference is not statistically significant. Both groups scored a median of 4 in the Kruskal-Wallis test.

**Table 4.9**  
*Two-Sample T-Test for DB*

How has your overseas teaching experience(s) influenced your abilities to use illustrations from other cultures in your teaching (DB)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>StDev</th>
<th>SE Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.333</td>
<td>0.730</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference = $\mu (E) - \mu (N)$  
Estimate for difference: 0.750  
95% CI for difference: (-0.085, 1.585)  
T-Test of difference = 0 (vs. not =):  
T-Value = 1.91  
P-Value = 0.075  
DF = 15

**Table 4.10**  
*Kruskal-Wallis Test on DB*

How has your overseas teaching experience(s) influenced your abilities to use illustrations from other cultures in your teaching (DB)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Ave</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>-1.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$H = 2.90$  
$DF = 1$  
$P = 0.089$

$H = 3.27$  
$DF = 1$  
$P = 0.070$ (adjusted for ties)
Tables 4.11 and 4.12 illustrate that both experienced and less-experienced teachers reported that they believed that their overseas teaching experiences influenced their planning for teaching, with the mean for experienced teachers at 3.6 and less-experienced teachers at 3.5. Since the p-values for the t-test are above .05 and the Kruskal-Wallis yielded a median of 4 for both groups, there is no significant difference. This topic was chosen because both groups reported that the overseas teaching experience influenced their planning for teaching, and I wanted to know if less experienced teachers were influenced more. The findings show that they are not.

Table 4.11

*Two-Sample T-Test for X*

To what extend have your teaching experiences influenced the following teaching objectives: planning for teaching (X)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>StDev</th>
<th>SE Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.905</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference = mu (E) - mu (N)
Estimate for difference: 0.100
95% CI for difference: (-0.650, 0.850)
T-Test of difference = 0 (vs. not =): T-Value = 0.27
P-Value = 0.786  DF = 27

Table 4.12

*Kruskal-Wallis Test on X*

To what extend have your teaching experiences influenced the following teaching objectives: planning for teaching (X)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Ave</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H = 0.11 DF = 1 P = 0.741
H = 0.12 DF = 1 P = 0.730 (adjusted for ties)
Tables 4.13 and 4.14 show p-values that are above 0.05, so there is not enough data to show a difference between experienced and less-experienced teachers in the influence an overseas teaching experience had on their abilities to develop curriculum. I included this topic because I am very interested in curriculum and the literature led me to believe that an overseas teaching experience has an influence on a teacher’s ability to develop curriculum. Since the sample size is too small, the findings are inconclusive.

Table 4.13
Two-Sample T-Test for AJ

To what extent have your teaching experiences influenced the following teaching objectives: developing curriculum (AJ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>StDev</th>
<th>SE Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.300</td>
<td>0.923</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.667</td>
<td>0.985</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference = μ (E) - μ (N)
Estimate for difference: 0.633
95% CI for difference: (-0.095, 1.362)
T-Test of difference = 0 (vs. not =): T-Value = 1.80
P-Value = 0.085  DF = 22

Table 4.14
Kruskal-Wallis Test on AJ

To what extent have your teaching experiences influenced the following teaching objectives: developing curriculum (AJ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Ave</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.500</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>-1.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H = 2.93  DF = 1  P = 0.087
H = 3.31  DF = 1  P = 0.069  (adjusted for ties)
The results shown in tables 4.15 and 4.16 show there is a strong reported belief among experienced and less-experienced teachers that an overseas teaching experience influenced their abilities to develop cultural sensitivity among students. Both groups tended to choose an answer of 4 or 5 when determining how much an influence the experience had on helping their students develop cultural sensitivity, and there is no statistical difference between them. This topic was included because the descriptive statistics report that an overseas teaching experience influences a teacher’s ability to develop cultural sensitivity among students. I was curious if the amount of experience a teacher had made a difference in their ability to do this.

Table 4.15
Two-Sample T-Test for AL

To what extend have your teaching experiences influenced the following teaching objectives: developing sensitivity to cultural difference among your students (AL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>StDev</th>
<th>SE Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.650</td>
<td>0.587</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.333</td>
<td>0.888</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference = mu (E) - mu (N)
Estimate for difference: 0.317
95% CI for difference: (-0.294, 0.927)
T-Test of difference = 0 (vs. not =): T-Value = 1.10
P-Value = 0.288  DF = 16

Table 4.16
Kruskal-Wallis Test on AL

To what extend have your teaching experiences influenced the following teaching objectives: developing sensitivity to cultural difference among your students (AL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Ave</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>-0.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H = 0.64  DF = 1  P = 0.425
H = 0.90  DF = 1  P = 0.342  (adjusted for ties)
Tables 4.17 and 4.18 show that there is a strong reported belief among experienced and less-experienced teachers that an overseas teaching experience influences the ability to work with non-English speaking students, again, with no statistical differences between the two groups. Since the literature finds that an overseas teaching experience does positively influence the ability of teachers to work with non-English speaking students, I wanted to know if there is a difference between experienced and less experienced.

Table 4.17
Two-Sample T-Test for AZ

To what extent have your teaching experiences influenced the following teaching objectives: ability to work with non-English speaking students (AZ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>StDev</th>
<th>SE Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.429</td>
<td>0.926</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference = μ(E) – μ(N)
Estimate for difference: 0.179
95% CI for difference: (-0.584, 0.941)
T-Test of difference = 0 (vs not =): T-Value = 0.49
P-Value = 0.630 DF = 20

Table 4.18
Kruskal-Wallis Test on AZ

To what extend have your teaching experiences influenced the following teaching objectives: ability to work with non-English speaking students (AZ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Ave</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>-0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>-0.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H = 0.19 DF = 1 P = 0.667
H = 0.25 DF = 1 P = 0.616 (adjusted for ties)
Race

Tables 4.19 and 4.20 show that teachers in the White (designated ‘W’) and non-White (designated ‘NW’) groups report that the overseas teaching experience had a strong influence on the ability to communicate across cultural barriers. The Kruskal-Wallis medians show both groups scoring the same. There was no statistical difference. This question was included for two reasons. First, was researcher bias because I have a son who is half Black. The second reason is I thought that there would be a difference between what non-White and White teachers report in their ability to communicate across cultural barriers. I thought the findings would show that White teachers reported an overseas teaching experience had more of an influence on their ability to communicate across cultural barriers, than the non-White teachers.

Table 4.19
Two-Sample T-Test for BV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>StDev</th>
<th>SE Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.714</td>
<td>0.488</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference = mu (NW) - mu (W)
Estimate for difference: 0.344
95% CI for difference: (-0.223, 0.911)
T-Test of difference = 0 (vs. not =): T-Value = 1.26
P-Value = 0.221  DF = 21
Table 4.20  
*Kruskal-Wallis Test on BV*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Ave</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H = 0.26  DF = 1  P = 0.609  
H = 0.36  DF = 1  P = 0.546  (adjusted for ties)

Tables 4.21 and 4.22 show that NW teachers claimed that the overseas teaching experience had a very strong influence on their commitment to cross-cultural and international education. The t-test shows a significant difference between the responses of the non-White and White teachers (p = .019). The Kruskal-Wallis test results in medians that are a full point apart, although the results are not statistically significant, probably because of the small number of non-White teachers. This question was included because I had previously thought that an overseas teaching experience would have a strong influence on both White and non-White teachers' commitment to cross-cultural education.
Table 4.21  
Two-Sample T-Test for CZ

How has your overseas teaching experience(s) influenced your commitment to cross cultural or international education? (CZ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>StDev</th>
<th>SE Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.714</td>
<td>0.488</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference = \( \mu_{(NW)} - \mu_{(W)} \)  
Estimate for difference: 0.714  
95% CI for difference: (0.131, 1.298)  
T-Test of difference = 0 (vs. not =): T-Value = 2.53  
P-Value = 0.019  DF = 23

Table 4.22  
Kruskal-Wallis Test on CZ

How has your overseas teaching experience(s) influenced your commitment to cross cultural or international education? (CZ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race (EG)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Ave</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>-1.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( H = 2.35 \)  DF = 1  \( P = 0.125 \)  
\( H = 2.73 \)  DF = 1  \( P = 0.098 \)  (adjusted for ties)

When asked about the effect that an overseas teaching experience had on being offered particular jobs, the non-White teachers answered it had more of an influence than for the White teachers. Tables 4.23 and 4.24 show that the t-test resulted in a p-value of 0.05. Although the median scores differed by a full point on the Kruskal-Wallis test, the p-values were above the alpha range chosen. The inclusion of this question was based on a conversation I had with a non-White teacher. The colleague commented that the overseas teaching experienced
opened more job opportunities and I wanted to see if it was a trend.

Table 4.23
Two-Sample T-Test for DJ

With respect to your career and your career goals, please indicate the effect that your overseas teaching experience has had on being offered particular jobs (DJ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>StDev</th>
<th>SE Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.857</td>
<td>0.690</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference = μ (NW) - μ (W)
Estimate for difference: 0.786
95% CI for difference: (-0.000, 1.572)
T-Test of difference = 0 (vs. not =): T-Value = 2.09
P-Value = 0.050  DF = 20

Table 4.24
Kruskal-Wallis Test on DJ

With respect to your career and your career goals, please indicate the effect that your overseas teaching experience has had on being offered particular jobs (DJ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Ave</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>-1.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H = 1.53  DF = 1  P = 0.216
H= 1.61  DF=1  P=0.205 (adjusted for ties)
Survey

Open-ended questions

There were two open-ended questions on the survey that focused specifically on the influence of an overseas teaching experience. One question asked participants to fill in the blanks in this statement: “Before I taught overseas I ________________ and now I ________________.” Twenty-four of the participants elected to respond to the question and the answers reflected the themes in the face-to-face interviews. An analysis of the relevant responses by level of experience is found in Table 4.25. Eleven responses are shown because they are most aligned with the themes I determined in my coding. The other responses were not relevant.

Table 4.25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey response</th>
<th>Teacher experience</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>See things only one way, see them many ways</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Cultural empathy/personal growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought I had a broad multicultural world view, now I actually have one</td>
<td>Less experienced</td>
<td>Cultural empathy/Global perspective/personal growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read books to understand the cultural differences of places, but now I have experience and personal knowledge.</td>
<td>Less experienced</td>
<td>Cultural empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be bothered if everything wasn’t prepared for my students ahead of time, but now I can handle a situation where we may not have</td>
<td>Less experienced</td>
<td>Curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desks or chairs or even a classroom available to us.</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overplan, focus instead on contingencies and creating multiple possibilities</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on specific classroom activities, plan with the bigger picture in mind</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach the same holiday themes, but now I change themes more frequently</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be really concerned with standards, benchmarks, and assessments, now I'm less tied to those things and try to do what fits best for my particular class.</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before I went overseas I used to think in a very US-centric manner, but now I think in a much broader and more informed worldview.</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Global perspective/personal growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think the US was leading in most important aspects of medicine, politics and humanitarian activities, but I know that we have a great deal to learn from other countries</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Global perspective/personal growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think quite narrowly, have a broader perspective</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Global perspective/personal growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second open-ended question asked participants, “In what ways is your teaching different than your colleagues who have not taught overseas?” Thirty-one participants elected to answer this question, but only 12 answers are included because there align most closely with the themes that came from my coding. The analysis of the relevant responses by level of experience is in Table 4.26.
Table 4.26

*Survey Responses for Open-Ended Question Two*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey response</th>
<th>Teacher experience</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am more aware of different cultural aspects of the world than I ever would have been had I stayed in Iowa.</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Cultural empathy/global perspective/personal growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perhaps less of a social/human approach when you have not taught overseas...</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Cultural empathy/personal growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When working with non-English speaking students while teaching overseas, I often used drawings and came up with creative ways to communicate. Now, when teaching math, I use drawing and am able to create examples more relevant to the students more easily than many of my colleagues.</td>
<td>Less experienced</td>
<td>Curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specifically, I think I have been exposed to many more ways of looking at best practice and then selecting and implementing.</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That's hard to define precisely, but one thing is a much greater focus on decentered teaching and critical pedagogy. Also, less US cultural politics and pop culture and a more ecumenical outlook.</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have greater examples to draw on for examples of cultural/political/economic experiences.</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Global perspective/personal growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of wider/multiple perspective(s). Interest in material goes beyond US dominant view. Acceptance of and interest in learning about different cultures</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Global perspective/personal growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier to relate to a greater number of students…better examples… “when I was in Korea”</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Global perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See things in different ways—an enormous shift regarding world views</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Global perspective/ personal growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More worldly --open to more viewpoints/strategies</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Global perspective/personal growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In seeing how different education systems work and understanding &quot;our&quot; way is not necessarily the &quot;best&quot; way, perhaps a blending of the two</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Global perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I illustrate lessons with global content and challenge kids to see beyond the ends of their noses. I can relate to exchange students and immigrants who struggle with our language and culture. Everything is washed with layer of multiculturalism.</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Global perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The expectation [in U.S. schools] of need to discipline, and, in general, of engaging the students, is different</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two of the responses for the second open-ended questions did not fit easily into the main themes, but each is easily related to comments from the interviews. One comment was made in reference to one participant’s experience teaching English as a foreign language overseas. The experienced teacher wrote that teaching overseas made her more grammar-focused and she thought her “students get a better education” now that she is back teaching in the U.S. She responded, “I would never hire an ESL teacher who did not spend years abroad teaching.” Although none of the four interview participants made such a radical comment, all four said that teaching abroad made them better teachers.
The second open-ended response concerned the difficulty in returning to teach in the U.S. The respondent, who is an experienced teacher, remarked that she felt like an outsider in the stateside school because she had spent time outside of the U.S.:

I have a unique perspective on students who are new to the school, a different view of the systems that are taken for granted in the school, and a different long-term view of myself….In some ways I am an outsider to the school culture.

The interview participants did not report the exact same feeling, but it is similar to their comments about reverse culture shock.
Interviews

In this section the findings from the face-to-face interviews are separated into themes: global perspective, cultural empathy, culturally relevant pedagogy/curriculum choices, personal growth and miscellaneous.

Global perspective

The most-mentioned theme was how an overseas experience expands one’s global perspective. All four of the interview participants agreed that their overseas teaching experience helped develop their global perspectives, both in and out of the classroom. For some, their newfound global perspective informed their classroom curriculum choices. “[I have] a more global view and it informs my workshops,” said Martha, who currently develops workshops for public school teachers. Mark went a step further and said that the experience had a direct effect on his views about the United States: “I think the overseas experience kind of opened my eyes to the United States, but specifically the global political sense of the United States and the rest of the world.” Similarly, Matthew said, “I think sometimes as Americans we have these awful stereotypes of other nations and I feel like our students need to know that [so I bring in other cultures].” Mary followed the same idea when she commented that as people of the world, we Americans are unable to escape the multiculturalism that surrounds us. She said, “When you see yourself not as American, but as a citizen of the world [that is when you know you have been influenced] by teaching overseas.”
While all of the participants commented in general terms about helping students develop a global perspective, Mary was the only one who said that students need to do so if they want to be competitive in the global market.

Not only are we having more cultures moving to our area, but our kids are going to be competing against those different cultures for regular jobs. You know, it used to be just Americans at a company for these jobs. Now you’ve got the Indian market, you’ve got the Chinese market. Brazil itself is a huge market that is up and coming. . . .They [students] need to know because their customers are going to be from abroad, their bosses are going to be from abroad, their competition is definitely going to be from abroad. And because of the way politics and business are…it’s not just a country thing anymore, it’s a global thing. I think it’s really important that we try to understand that.

*Cultural empathy*

One theme that clearly emerged in the interviews was cultural empathy. Three of the four interview participants readily acknowledged that their experiences overseas heightened their awareness of other cultures and of the feelings that students from other cultures experience when moving to a new country. Mary, who taught at a private school in Brazil where the majority of the students came from wealthy families, said she would connect with those students when teaching *Catcher in the Rye* and draw parallels with their lives and the life of the main character. Upon returning to the United States, she said she would
use her experiences of living in a Brazilian city and ask her American students to imagine living in a place where the majority of people have bars on their windows. “[My students] tend to get really quiet and wide-eyed when I bring up things like that because it seems so otherworldly.” In doing this, she thinks she helps create a more empathetic student and “hopefully, adult.” She added, “You realize that even though people’s cultural ideas are different that they still have the same basic needs.” In the same vein, Matthew commented that going overseas “sensitizes you to every student’s potential and differences and I think you become more accepting of students, and I think you have to have that overseas experience to get to that level.” Martha reported, “I feel that I understand new Americans more…that awareness, that sensitivity is heightened.”

**Culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum choices**

A third theme that appeared in all the conversations was culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum choices. All four participants said that their time overseas was influential in their desires to teach specific lessons upon their return to the United States. Mary commented that the experience made her a better teacher when it came to teaching various pieces of literature to her students. “To give them colorful stories, to give them anecdotes when reading stories about developing countries, [such as] *Life of Pi*, the experience I had in Brazil helps me explain things more precisely.” She added that with literature, she does not
Want to read just the dead White males that the canon says we should, so I teach short stories at the back of our book that are from Zimbabwe and South Africa….It’s important to try new perspectives…to challenge kids to see things differently because that is the only way we are going to have peace in this world.

Matthew also said he uses his experiences to enrich the lessons for the students. Since he spent time in Poland, he is able to use his experiences to help explain scenes in literature, as well as to include Polish and Russian pieces of literature in his curriculum choices. In this way he reports he has expanded the curriculum and opened his students’ eyes to other views of the world.

Mark shared that his time overseas “opened up his eyes to the wonders of technology” and as a result he teaches a senior elective that focuses on blogs.

I came up with this, a blog class, which is really kind of a vehicle for me to get kids to start looking at the news and to talk about the news. They have their own blogs and they need to survey the news each week and choose something that’s happening and they have to write an opinion about it; they have to articulate why that event is culturally relevant.

He added that the benefit of teaching the class is that it makes the students aware of the world around them and brings them out of the “bubble” of their high school.

Finally, the low standard of achievement that some teachers perceive to be accepted in the U.S. was mentioned in the interviews. Mary said she felt that
the standards in U.S. public schools are not as high as in other countries, which is why she elected not to continue teaching in public school. While Matthew did not second Mary’s statement, he did comment that the “caliber of his students [in Poland] was very high” across the board, as opposed to only occurring in specific honors and Advanced Placement classes at his current school.

**Personal Growth**

In the face-to-face interviews there were some comments that warrant attention because they relate to an individual’s personal growth that occurred because of the overseas teaching experience. One comment came from Mary, who was discussing the reverse culture shock she felt upon returning to the U.S. from Brazil.

The thing that I remember feeling coming back was that it was overwhelming to go to the grocery store. You know, you go to a place like a Super Stop & Shop or something and instead of having three kinds of toilet paper you’d have like a whole aisle of toilet paper like, I don’t know—Pink? Scented? How many ply? I had to leave, I actually remember being in the store remembering I have got to go because I started to hyperventilate.

While the other interviewees were not as forthcoming about reverse culture shock, Mary and Matthew both mentioned that they had to readjust to the “fast-pace” of life in the northeast U.S. Mark was the only one who commented
explicitly about the school culture shock he experienced when he taught overseas, in his case, in Australia:

The first time I walked into the classroom was a very startling moment because I was expecting one sort of advance, one set of culture dynamic, and I was seeing something completely different...that I had to figure out in that moment and respond to, so that was challenging.

He went on to add that he should not have expected everything at the school in Australia to be similar to the school in the U.S. He said that once he realized the differences were not insurmountable, he benefitted because he became more aware of his actions as a teacher. Ultimately, he thinks the challenges he experienced made him a better teacher:

In a sense, when I came back, I took some pressure off myself because I had more perspective. Having been tested in a different way I had a better sense of myself as a teacher. I also had a better sense of maybe how to drive kids and what we were actually accomplishing.

Another example of personal growth that cropped up in all interviews, but may not be directly relevant to teaching influence, was the opportunity an overseas teaching experience afforded for travel. All interview participants said one of the perks of teaching overseas was that they were able to “travel the world,” as one participant said. Matthew commented, “It was a very great experience to be traveling within the towns….It was culturally rich.” Said Mary, “It was super. I went to Egypt for 15 days with the students, I went to Japan as a result of the
programming for three weeks, I went to pretty much all over.”

A final example of personal growth that is not directly related to teaching influence but was mentioned by three of the four participants was the strong friendships formed while overseas. Martha, Mary, and Matthew all commented that the friendships they formed while overseas were beneficial at the time and are still relevant today. Matthew mentioned a former student who is now studying at a well-known university in Massachusetts and said that he and his family visit her about once every two months. He explained, “The bond is incredible.” Mary and Martha had similar experiences with former students, both saying that the advent of Facebook has helped them stay connected with their former students as well as with colleagues.

Observations and Artifacts

Of the four interview participants, I was able to observe the three who were practicing teachers. The fourth participant was managing a non-profit organization and was not working as a teacher. Two of the participants, Mary and Mathew, were English teachers working at a suburban public high school in southeastern Massachusetts. The school’s population was approximately 1,500. Both participants were teaching ninth to twelfth graders as well as a variety of courses from Advanced Placement Literature to “college-prep” Freshman English. The school where they were employed used a 90-minute block schedule.

On February 3, 2011, I observed Mary’s English 11 Inclusion class.
Because the class included special education students (students on Individual Education Programs), there was a special education teacher in the classroom. Mary’s classroom was decorated with all things “English.” There were whiteboards on the front and back of the classroom and the third wall held bookshelves. The fourth wall was almost all windows and the windowsill was filled with stacks of books: texts, fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and so on. The students sat in rows and Mary’s desk was nestled in the front of the room and covered with papers “to be graded.” The whiteboard in the back of the room was covered with a number of items. There was a map of Great Britain that Mary constantly referenced in the lesson and a calendar of “The Places to Visit Before You Die.” In addition, student summer reading projects adorned the back wall, and written on the whiteboard were the homework assignments for the week. Written on the front whiteboard was the day’s lesson plan, as well as some of the vocabulary words from the week’s unit. There were 26 students in the class.

Mary began the lesson by conducting a short grammar lesson on sentence structure and then she jumped right into a discussion about the novel Black Swan Green. It was apparent from the discussion that ensued that the students were having a difficult time with the novel, particularly because of the British English that is used throughout. Mary acknowledged this and challenged the students to “give themselves more time” when reading the novel because of their unfamiliarity with British English. At one point a disgruntled student complained that she did not understand what the characters were saying and
why couldn’t they speak normal English. Mary replied, “The language is different because British people speak differently. Their sentence structure is different.”

She then switched topics to the research paper on the novel and asked the students to participate in a critical thinking exercise. On the board she created two columns: British schools and American schools. From there students were asked to think about the differences and help create a list on the board. She then told the students that their goal was to choose a theme from the book to focus on and find material to support that theme. Her examples included a former student who wrote about the Romeo and Juliet blood feud and compared it to gang violence in the U.S. and in the Middle East and Africa. After hearing this, one student said, “Parts of Africa are messed up,” to which Mary replied, “It’s just like here. Parts here are messed up, too.” She then told students a good place to start their research was to think about something that “ticks you off” because they may have felt passionate about it.

The second half of the class consisted of students working in small groups to brainstorm ideas for their papers, and then they spent 20 minutes listening to an audio of the novel Black Swan Green. Martha concluded the class by asking the students to look up the key terms that she had listed on the board.

On February 16, 2011, I had the opportunity to observe Matthew’s English 12 college-prep class. This classroom had the same layout as Mary’s, with students sitting in rows and a whiteboard in the front and the back and windows on one side, with bookshelves on the other. Matthew’s desk was in the front of
the room near the windows and it was mostly clear of clutter except for pictures of his family. The bookshelves were filled to capacity with English literature textbooks and the windowsill was clear. Written on the back whiteboard was the homework for the week, as well as a list of the week’s vocabulary words. There were also student projects posted on the wall in the back and in the front. Written on the front whiteboard, in almost cryptic penmanship, was the agenda for the day, as well as a note reminding the students to continue reading Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. There were 24 students in the class.

Matthew began the class by asking the students to pass in their homework, and when it reached the front of the row, Matthew collected each pile and responded “Gracias” or “Dziekuje” to express his thanks. Matthew is of Polish descent and is married to a woman from Poland. His students know this, so many of them are familiar with the occasional use of a Polish word. Once the homework was collected, he talked briefly about *Pride and Prejudice*, exclaimed, “This ain’t no sissy book,” and tried to convince the students of its merits. He asked if they had any questions and implored them to keep reading. He then conducted a review of the week’s vocabulary words. He asked the students to take out their books and turn to the week’s words. He then would randomly call out students’ names and ask them to create a sentence with the said vocabulary word. One of the words was “bombastic” and Matthew said, “It’s a very British word,” to which a student responded, “Mr. _____________ is very bombastic” in an English accent.
Then Matthew came to the word “precipitated” which seemed to confuse his students, so he gave the following example: “There is a lot of tumult in the Middle East and North Africa. What events precipitated the problems?” Two students then offered their ideas, to which Matthew said, “Correct. Now, did I tell you about my trip to Tunisia?” He then told the students about the time he was visiting Tunisia and asked a market vendor where he could get a poster with the picture of the dictator on it. He added that the vendor cut down the poster and gave it to him with the words “Good riddance.” Matthew then said to his class, “So that’s an example of events that precipitated the [Arab Spring].” At this point Matthew exclaimed to me, “How’s that for a connection! It wasn’t planned!”

The class continued discussing the vocabulary words, and a conversation prompted by Matthew began about the number of words in the English language that come from other languages. “Our language is so enriched. ‘Vodka’ comes from Polish, ‘spruce’ from Prussian, and ‘ex-officio’ is Latin. Our language is made up of other [languages],” he told the students. He then completed the vocabulary discussion and the class concluded with the students taking a quiz.

On February 28, 2011, I had the opportunity to observe Mark’s senior elective seminar, “Blogomania.” The class normally runs for 60 minutes, but on this day it was shortened to 30 minutes because of a school-wide assembly. Mark created the course and was the only one teaching it. The basic premise of the course was to teach students about journalism by using blogs as a platform. Mark taught at an elite private school in southeastern Massachusetts. The
population of the school was 550 and the class I observed had six students. Since Mark did not have his own classroom, he used was a small room with glass doors and windows. The desks were in a semi-circle and the students gravitated toward one end of the room. There was nothing on the walls. Each student was sitting at a desk with a laptop open.

When class began, Mark asked the students if they wanted to read an article that attempted to define news. The students agreed and read the article. When everyone was finished, a conversation about what makes news began with students and teacher voicing their opinions. Mark then asked the students to post their reactions to the article on their blogs. As I had my computer I was able to sign in as a guest on the class’ blog website and was able to peruse the comments and the recent articles that were posted by Mark. The articles Mark chose to post were from a variety of news organizations around the world and covered topics from politics to sports. After posting their reactions to the article about news, Mark asked the students if they were receiving comments about their posts. The students said they were, though two had concerns about using the filters. Mark reviewed filter use and then posed the following questions: “What do you think about proximity in news? Would our lives be affected if we didn’t know anything about Egypt? Would your life be affected?”

One student replied that gas prices had increased as a result of the unrest in the Middle East. Mark responded that he never really paid attention to gas prices until he moved to Australia because gas was $6 per gallon when he lived
there. He then asked the students to think about proximity in the news and the possible strong emotional response someone can have to it. One student said, “It makes you think.” Another offered his view and then said, “[I ask] does it pertain to me? If it doesn’t then I don’t care.” Yet another said, “It’s interesting [what is happening in Egypt] and it’s important.” The students digested the comments and Mark then asked the students if they thought news should be “hitched to someone” to make it relevant. One student commented that it needed to be relevant to the audience because papers need to be sold. At this point another student brought the topic back to the Arab Spring and said, “Egypt doesn’t directly affect our lives, but in the Middle East it is more important because it affects them.” At that comment Mark referred to the blog assignment and told the students that their mission was to make their postings culturally relevant. The students nodded their heads in agreement and then the class was dismissed.

Summary of Findings

The results of this study reveal that teachers think that an overseas teaching experience has a strong influence in the development of a global perspective, cultural empathy, culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum choices, and personal growth. These themes were prominent in almost every type of data collected. Also of interest is the topics that were minimized in or left out of the data.
Global Perspective

The survey’s findings show that an overseas teaching experience does influence the development of a teacher’s global perspective, specifically in teachers’ commitment to cross-cultural education because of their willingness to bring other views into their teaching. Specifically, survey respondents agreed that an overseas teaching experience influenced their acceptance of differences, abilities to use illustrations from other cultures in their teaching and the willingness to bring other than the dominant U.S. views into the classroom. More than 50% of respondents answered “a great deal (5)” when asked about the influence the overseas teaching experience had on the above-mentioned categories. They also show that the overseas teaching experience has helped teachers inform and frame their global perspective, while at the same time most did not become more patriotic towards their home country because of the experience.

Answers to open-ended questions supported the above findings with three of the 12 respondents referencing global perspective when asked to complete the statement “Before I taught overseas I ________________ and now I ________________.” Additionally when asked “In what ways is your teaching different than your colleagues who have not taught overseas?” seven of the 12 respondents provided answers that referred to global perspective. The interviews and observations also supported these findings, with teachers
Cultural Empathy

The findings suggest that an overseas teaching experience increases cross-cultural understanding, particularly in the areas of ability to communicate across language barriers, ability to communicate across cultural barriers, interest in future cross-cultural experiences, and the ability to adapt to cultural diversity. In each of the above-mentioned categories 65% or more of the respondents chose 5 (a great deal) as their answer. Specifically, three of the 12 teachers who filled in the statement “Before I taught overseas I ________________ and now I ________________,” provided answers that referred to cultural empathy. Additionally, of the twelve teachers who responded to the second open-ended question, “In what ways is your teaching different than your colleagues who have not taught overseas?” two respondents referred to cultural empathy in their answers.

The face-to-face interviews supported the survey findings mentioned above, but most especially in the ability to adapt to cultural diversity. All the interview participants said their overseas experience provided them with the ability to better communicate with others, thus allowing them more success when communicating across cultural barriers.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Curriculum Choices

When asked about the influence an overseas teaching experience had in the areas of culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum choices there was a strong connection between the overseas teaching experience and areas of
developing curriculum, developing cultural sensitivity among students and
developing techniques for teaching non-English speaking students. A high
percentage of respondents selected “a great deal (5)” when asked to report the
influence an overseas teaching experience had in the areas.

Additionally, teachers responded that the overseas teaching experience
influenced the development of curriculum, learning techniques for teaching,
working with out-of-class school activities, learning to teach with improvised
materials, creativity in teaching, and flexibility in unanticipated situations. It
should be noted that many of these areas require teachers to utilize their
creativity and flexibility.

Furthermore, the open-ended questions, interviews and observations
supported these findings, as the teachers reported that the overseas teaching
experience influenced their pedagogical and curriculum choices, but not generic
planning and evaluation. Specifically, five of the 12 teachers who filled in the
statement “Before I taught overseas I ________________ and now I
________________,” provided answers that referred to curriculum choices.
Additionally, of the twelve teachers who responded to the second open-ended
question, “In what ways is your teaching different than your colleagues who have
not taught overseas?” three respondents referred to curriculum in their answers.

**Personal Growth**

The findings also suggest that teachers with an overseas teaching
experience had a tremendous amount of personal growth. Survey results
indicated 55% or more respondents responded 5 (a great deal) when answering “How has your overseas teaching experience changed your: ability to adjust to new situations, willingness to meet new challenges and confidence in your ability to rely on your own resources.” In the interviews all teachers reported personal growth in the above-mentioned areas, but especially in the ability to adjust to new situations. Three interview participants mentioned the strong friendships they formed while overseas—friendships that continue today—and all interview participants said a major perk of teaching overseas was the ability to travel and see the world.

**Differences Between Groups**

Although responses on several items appeared to differ according to gender, experience, and race, in general the differences were not statistically significant. Possible exceptions are levels of change in the ability to communicate across cultural barriers and in being offered particular jobs, which were reported by non-White teachers to be more prominent than levels reported by White teachers. In addition, no clear differences in gender, experience, or race were noted in the quantitative data.
V. Discussion

This study looked at the influence, if any, an overseas teaching experience has on teaching decisions when teachers return to their United States’ classrooms. This research captured the lived experiences of teachers who have taught abroad. The overarching question was, “What do teachers report as the influence, if any, of an overseas teaching experience on teaching decisions in their United States’ classrooms?”

RQ1. In what ways do teachers report that overseas teaching experiences have influenced their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about instruction and curriculum? Previous research has shown that teaching overseas influences teacher beliefs and attitudes about particular cultures and challenges stereotypes. It also suggests that teaching overseas affects personal background in the area of personal growth because of the development of meaningful interpersonal relationships. Finally, overseas teaching experience has an influence on teacher knowledge (Fantini, 2006; Gu, 2005; Wang, 2005). In this research, the findings suggest that an overseas teaching experience does influence attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about instruction and curriculum.

Global perspective

Previous research has found that an overseas teaching experience does influence the development of a teacher’s global perspective (Bryan & Sprague, 1997; Kissock, 1997; Stachowski & Sparks, 2007) In this study, both the
quantitative and quantitative findings support previous research, with a majority of participants choosing 5 (a great deal) when asked, “How has your overseas teaching experience influenced your: acceptance of differences” (41%), “ability to use illustrations from other cultures in their teaching” (43%), and “willingness to bring other than the dominant U.S. views into the classroom (57%).” Furthermore, open-ended responses on the questionnaire yielded similar results, with participants maintaining that the overseas teaching experience assisted them in developing a more informed worldview, and all interviewees agreed that an overseas teaching experience expanded their global perspective.

**Cultural Empathy**

In the area of cultural empathy, previous research (Bodur, 2012; Malewski, Sharma & Philion, 2012) has found that an overseas teaching experience has a profound influence on teachers’ cultural empathy. Not surprisingly, this study yielded similar results. Sixty-two percent or more of the survey respondents chose 5 (a great deal) as their answer to the question, “Has an overseas teaching experience increased cross-cultural understanding, particularly in the areas of: ability to communicate across language barriers” (65%), “ability to communicate across cultural barriers” (66%), “interest in future cross-cultural experiences” (74%), and “ability to adapt to cultural diversity” (62%). Furthermore, a majority of participants who offered responses to the open-ended questions said that the overseas teaching experience brought them
more cultural awareness, therefore increasing their cultural empathy when in the classroom.

**Culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum choices**

Though there is no explicit research on the influence an overseas teaching experience has on culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum choices, previous research indicates there is a link between the overseas experience and the curriculum choices teachers make (Cusher, 2007; Merryfield, 2000; Stachowski & Sparks, 2007). This study found a strong connection between an overseas teaching experience and culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum choices. Respondents reported an overseas teaching experience influenced their developing curriculum (45%), developing cultural sensitivity among students (66%), and developing techniques for teaching non-English speaking students (65%). Additionally, participants responded that the overseas teaching experience taught them to plan with a bigger picture, and focus on the student, rather than the teacher. While these findings are interesting, a much more specific instrument should be used in further investigations to better determine the influence an overseas teaching experience has on curriculum choices related to cultural responsiveness.

**Personal growth**

One area that was not the focus of this study but yielded noteworthy results is the influence an overseas teaching experience has on personal growth.
While previous research (Merryfield, 2000; Razanno, 1996) has touched on the influence an overseas teaching experience has on personal growth, no study has resulted in explicit data in this area. However, both the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study revealed that participants claimed that they had experienced a good deal of change in every area of personal growth listed on the survey. When asked, “How has your overseas teaching experience changed your________,” the majority of respondents answered 5 (a great deal) in the following areas: ability to adjust to new situations (55%), willingness to meet new challenges (62%), and confidence in your ability to rely on your own resources (58%). Additionally, qualitative data from the open-ended questions and interviews, as well as the survey, showed that teachers felt the overseas experience influenced their personal growth in areas of confidence and adaptability.

RQ2. Are there any reported differences for less-experienced and experienced teachers? Common sense may suggest that there might be differences in the content and the ways that more experienced teachers learned from an overseas teaching experience as compared to what and how less-experienced teachers learned. On several of the survey items, such as “learning techniques for teaching multicultural classes,” “abilities to use illustrations from other cultures in your teaching,” and “developing curriculum,” there were fairly large differences in the means of the reported responses. However, these apparent differences were not statistically significant, perhaps because of the
small number of respondents. There were no obvious differences in the open-ended responses on the survey, the interview responses, or observed instruction between experienced and less-experienced teachers. Taken together, these findings suggest that there is no clear difference in the influence an overseas teaching experience has on less-experienced and experienced teachers.

Conclusions

1) Teachers who have returned to teach in North America report that their overseas teaching experience has a profound effect on their curriculum planning and instruction, particularly in the areas of cultural empathy, global perspective, and choices of culturally relevant curriculum.

2) Returning teachers also report very marked changes in personal attributes such as adaptability, confidence, and general maturity, factors that may also affect their teaching.

3) None of the reported differences in responses according to gender, experience, or race were found to be statistically significant.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study did not find significant differences in demographic characteristics or experience. A finer-tuned, larger-scale study would allow for a more definitive answer to the questions about differences in background, gender, race, teaching experiences prior to teaching overseas, and length of overseas teaching experience. A longitudinal study that included the gathering of
information before service overseas as well as after returning would yield better information, as would the inclusion of a control group of matched teachers who do not go overseas. In addition, using measures such as journaling to collect reported changes in cognition would boost understanding of both the process and the power of the cross-cultural experience. Future studies might take advantage of the ease of sampling from teachers in the Fulbright Classroom Teacher Exchange program. However, the disadvantage of working with Fulbright teachers is the brief nature of the experience, so teachers who spend a full year overseas may be better participants than those who stay for shorter terms. Finally, if student learning for general academic gains as well as for change in global perspective could be measured, then comparisons between teachers who have taught overseas and their peers who have not may produce some interesting data.

**Implications for Practice**

Teachers with overseas teaching experience can utilize their cultural empathy and cross-cultural competence to develop the tools necessary to help students improve their skills and knowledge about other societies as well as about their own society, regardless of their English proficiency or cultural background. While all teachers should be encouraged to develop curriculum related to the cultures of their students, school departments should actively pursue professional development programs that enable teachers to participate in teacher exchanges overseas. If district and school leaders are interested in
improving the cultural empathy and global perspective of their students, they should consider active recruitment of teachers who have worked or studied overseas. Teachers who have overseas experience may also be of use in helping to determine what schools in the United States must do to raise the achievement of students in comparison to students in other countries. Additionally, schools of education should actively encourage preservice and student teachers to spend time in another culture so they can develop better cultural empathy, global perspective, and appropriate curriculum decision-making strategies.

This study contributed to the scant research exploring the influence an overseas teaching experience has on teaching decisions. While researchers and practitioners explore how to create culturally inclusive classrooms and prepare students for success in this ever-shrinking world, teachers are the first line of defense in the classroom. Incorporating their overseas experiences into their curriculum design and instruction can have a powerful influence on their students’ perceptions of the world around them and their abilities to adapt to the changing world.
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

I invite you to complete this questionnaire designed to identify how an overseas teaching experience influences teaching decisions. In addition, the questionnaire will ask questions about travel and friendship, curriculum and instruction, personal growth, cross-cultural understanding, and professional growth. Your participation in this research questionnaire is completely voluntary and you can stop the questionnaire at any time. The questionnaire should take between 10 and 15 minutes to complete and you can stop once you have started and return later to complete it. Please note that all responses are anonymous and confidential. Additionally, there is an opportunity to participate in a face-to-face interview related to your overseas teaching experience. If you wish to participate, please send an e-mail to thomass@bu.edu after you have completed the questionnaire. Your e-mail address will not be shared with anyone else but me.

Please complete responses to this questionnaire by December 25, 2010.

If you have any questions please contact Sarah Thomas at +1 508-971-7132 or at thomass@bu.edu.

You may obtain further information about your rights as a research subject by calling the Office of the Institutional Review Board of Boston University at +1 617-353-6662. Thank you.

Many of the questions were influenced by John W. McKiernan’s 1980 dissertation “An Evaluation of the Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching and its Effect on the Expressed Self-Acceptance and Acceptance-of-Others of its Participants” at the University of Alabama.

INSTRUCTIONS: On items with numbered choices, please check the number of your choice with 1 = somewhat and 5= a great deal)

PRE-PLANNING, TRAVEL & FRIENDSHIP

1. Please select the number of your choice based on a scale of 1 to 5.
   a. Before you went overseas to what extent did you investigate the school where you would be teaching?
      1  2  3  4  5
   b. To what extent did you have any foreign language competency that was of help to you in your overseas assignment?
      1  2  3  4  5
   c. To what extent did you have friendships with area nationals prior to going overseas?
      1  2  3  4  5
   d. To what extent would you describe the amount of non-school social activities you participated in while overseas?
      1  2  3  4  5
e. To what extent would you describe your interest in the historical origins of the culture of your host country?

1 2 3 4 5

f. To what extent would you describe the amount of host country travel or regional travel you engaged in?

1 2 3 4 5

2. Please indicate the nature of the host country friendships you made? (Circle all that apply)

1 2 3 4

none one or a few many

two casual good good friends

friends

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. To what extent have your teaching experiences influenced the following teaching objectives:

none 1 2 3 4 A great deal 5

a. planning for teaching

b. implementing your own teaching plans

c. experimenting with different teaching methods

d. evaluating students

e. self-evaluating your teaching performance

f. using or developing innovative teaching strategies

g. developing curriculum

h. developing sensitivity to cultural difference among your students

i. learning techniques for teaching multicultural classes

j. working with out-of-class school activities

k. learning to teach with improvised materials and resources

1. creativity in teaching
m. flexibility in unanticipated situations
n. creativity in the construction and use of teaching materials
o. ability to work with non-English speaking students

PERSONAL GROWTH
4. How has your overseas teaching experience(s) changed your:

   none 1 2 3 4 5
   a. ability to adjust to new situations
   b. willingness to meet new challenges
   c. confidence in your ability to rely on your own resources
   d. acceptance of others
   e. acceptance of yourself
   f. general level of maturity
   g. independence
   h. intellectual interests
   i. acceptance of responsibility
   j. ability to communicate across language barriers
   k. ability to communicate across cultural barriers
   l. interest in future cross-cultural experiences
   m. ability to adapt to cultural diversity

CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING
5. How has your overseas teaching experience(s) influenced your:

   none 1 2 3 4 5
   a. concern for inequities among individuals and groups
b. concern for inequities among nations

c. respect for your home country
d. respect for the feelings of others about your home country
e. respect for the position of your home country in world affairs

f. respect for the views of other societies of the role of your country in world affairs
g. appreciation of your host country’s position in international politics and economic

h. patriotic feelings for your home country

i. identification with mankind in general

j. interest in world economics

k. interest in international politics

l. Acceptance of differences among people

m. commitment to cross-cultural or international education

n. abilities to use illustrations from other cultures in your teaching

o. willingness to bring other than the dominant US views into the classroom

p. ability to help your students understand international issues both from the US and non-US points of view

Personal Growth
6. Please indicate to what extent you believe your interaction with another society has contributed to your professional activities:

none  1  2  3  4  a great deal

7. With respect to your career and your career goals, please indicate the effect that your overseas teaching experience has had on your:

none  1  2  3  4  a great deal
a. being offered particular jobs
b. losing job opportunities
c. long range career goals
d. marketability, in general
e. the content of subject taught
f. curriculum planning
g. counseling individual students
h. directing extra-curricular activities
i. professional meetings or activities
j. selecting professional reading
k. other (please specify)

_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

8. In what ways is your teaching different than your colleagues who have not taught overseas? Please provide specific examples.
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

9. Complete the following sentence: Before I went overseas I used to ________________, but now I ________________________.

Personal information

10. What is your gender? Female Male

11. What is your race/ethnicity?
   - American Indian or Alaskan Native (Alaska Indian, Aleut, Inupiat; Yupik, etc.)
   - Asian (Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Japanese, Samoan, Vietnamese, other Asian)
   - Non-Hispanic Black or African American
   - Hispanic or Latino
   - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   - Non-Hispanic White or Caucasian
   - Multiracial
   - Prefer not to answer
12. Is English your native language?   Yes   No

13. Do you speak a language other than English functionally?   Yes   No

14. What grade level do you teach?
15. What subject(s) do you teach?

16. At what type of institution are you teaching right now?
   a. Public
   b. Private or parochial

17. What was your undergraduate major and/or minor? ___________________________________

18. Did you participate in an overseas exchange program while an undergraduate student? If yes, where? _______________________________________

19. Please respond to these questions about your overseas teaching experience(s).
   Where and for how long did your overseas teaching experience take place? Please list all places.
   Grade level(s) worked with ____________________
   Subject area(s)?_________________________________________

20. Describe your overseas school
   a. Independent International Schools
   b. Department of Defense Dependents Schools
   c. U.S. Department of State Affiliated Schools For Teaching Overseas
   d. Local school
   e. Peace Corps placement
   f. Other ____________________

21. Describe the location of your overseas school
   a. urban
   b. suburban
   c. rural

22. Select the answer that best describes your most recent overseas school
   a. established industrial nation
   b. poor country, urban
   c. poor country, rural

23. Please indicate your major job positions, teaching or non-teaching, since your overseas teaching experience?

   Job title   years in which employed
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

24. What took you overseas? Circle all that apply
   a. employment
   b. family
   c. wanted to experience another culture
25. Would you be willing to be contacted for follow-up questions? Yes ☐ No ☐ 
☐ If yes, please provide your e-mail address and telephone number

**Other information**

26. As part of this research, I am interested in contacting individuals who have not taught overseas. Would you be willing to provide a name and contact information of a teacher who you know who has not taught overseas? Thank you.

  Name
  Telephone
  E-Mail
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did you go overseas? What was the experience like?

2. How did your overseas teaching experience affect your employment as a teacher?

3. Explain the positions you have held since your return?

4. Did your overseas teaching experience affect the way you currently teach? In what ways? (Bryan and Sprague 1997) Can you give me specific examples from recent lessons?

5. Do you believe your overseas teaching experience has made you a better teacher?

6. If you didn’t have curriculum constraints now, what would you teach?
APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, which will take place from February 2010 to October 2010. This form details the purpose of the study, a description of the involvement required and your rights as a participant.

The purpose of the study is:

• To report on the influence of overseas teaching experience on teaching decisions

The benefits of the research will be:

• To better understand the influence of overseas teaching experiences have on attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about instruction, curriculum, and student learning
• It may help change the requirements for student teaching placements in schools of education

The methods that will be used to meet this purpose include:

• One-on-one interviews
• Observations
• Review of lesson plans

You are encouraged to ask questions or raise concerns at any time about the nature of the study or the methods I am using. Please contact me at anytime at thomass@bu.edu or 508-971-7132.

If selected to be interviewed, the interviews will be audiotaped to help me accurately capture your insights in your own words. I will only hear the tapes for the purpose of the study. If you feel uncomfortable being recorded, you may ask that it be turned off at any time. I will not use the recorder during observations and will only take notes.

There is not inherent risk in this study. However, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. In the event that you choose to withdraw from the study, all information you provide will be destroyed and omitted from the final paper.

Insights gathered from you and other participants will be used in writing my dissertation for the purpose of completing my doctor of education degree at Boston University. Though direct quotations from you may be used, your name and other identifying information will be kept anonymous.

By signing this consent form I certify that I ___________________________ agree to the terms of this agreement.

___________________________________   _________________
(Signature)       (Date)
REFERENCES


Navajo Reservation Communities: Student Teachers’ Powerful Experiences Build Community Connections, Broaden Worldview, and Inform Classroom Practice. *International Education, 38*(1).


Curriculum Vitae

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E-mail: sa.thomas@me.com

EDUCATION

**Doctor of Education, Curriculum and Teaching**, May 2012
Boston University, Boston, MA
Dissertation: An Analysis of the Influence an Overseas Teaching Experience has on Teaching Decisions

**Master of Arts in Print Journalism**, May 1999
Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI

**Bachelor of Arts in English with a double minor in Secondary Education and Communication**, December 1993
Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, MA

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**Boston University**, Boston, MA
*Adjunct Faculty: CT 575 General Methods of Instruction*  Fall semester 2011
Instructed Master’s level School of Education Teach for America teachers.
Introduced methodology and research skills through overseeing active research projects in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research design.

*Graduate Placement Coordinator*  Summer 2008
Coordinate placement of graduate students in Boston-area schools and liaise with cooperating teachers and administrators.

Taught educational philosophy, theory, and history to 12-15 undergraduate students. Supervised 12-15 undergraduate students at elementary, middle and high schools in the Boston area.

*Teaching Fellow ED 500: Foundations of Educational Practice*, Fall 2006
Taught educational philosophy, theory, and history to 15 graduate students. Supervised 15 graduate students at high schools in the Boston area.
University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, MA  Fall semester 2008-present
Adjunct Faculty: ENL 101: Critical Writing and Reading and ENL 102: Critical Writing and Reading
Instruct, manage, and assess 25 undergraduates in both courses. Meet one-on-one with struggling writers and ESOL students in an effort to improve their skills.

Dartmouth High School, Dartmouth, MA
English Teacher  September 2008-2010
Instructed, managed, and assessed English students in grades 9-12. Adapted curriculum for special needs students. Developed and implemented a reading course for struggling readers.

The International School of Brussels, Brussels, Belgium
Mentored novice teachers, which included observational work, weekly meetings and assistance with lesson plan development. Developed and led school-wide mentor training workshops for new mentors and administrators. Coordinated the placement of divisional mentors.

Grades 7-9 English/ESOL/Journalism Teacher  January 2001-June 2006
Provided accurate assessment of student learning abilities, as well as adapted curriculum for special needs and gifted and talented students. Developed and implemented a journalism and vocabulary curriculum. Chaired division-wide English curriculum committee. Created and implemented an intensive ESOL curriculum. Tutor

PRESENTATIONS AND OTHER EXPERIENCE

Boston University, Boston, MA
WIP (Work in Progress) Presenter  March 2012
Delivered a lecture on the research project addressing the influence an overseas teaching experience has on teaching decisions.

NAFSA: Association of International Educators
Poster session presenter  June 2011
The influence an overseas teaching experience has on teaching decisions

System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES) Bristol Community College
Workshop Presenter  February 2010
Developing the Writer Within: Writing Basics for Pre-GED and ESOL Learners
The Sports Museum, Boston, MA
*Educational Consultant* January 2008-October 2008
Evaluated the effectiveness of the *Stand Strong* curriculum as it is used in community programs in Chelsea and Charlestown, MA. Evaluated the efficacy of the *Get Your Head In The Game!* , a reading program designed to motivate third through eighth graders.

**HONORS, ACADEMIC AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

**Teaching Fellowship**, Boston University School of Education, 2006-2008
**Teaching Assistant**, Marquette University, 1997-1999

**RESEARCH INTERESTS**

- The impact an overseas teaching experience has on teaching decisions
- Effective instructional practices for novice ESOL teachers
- Best practices for writing instruction
- Girls and STEM
- Mentoring

**TEACHING INTERESTS**

- English education, methods, and pedagogical content knowledge courses for undergraduate and graduate education students
- Writing and reading across the curriculum
- Effective writing and reading at the college level
- Incorporating character education into the classroom
- Teaching to ESOL students in the mainstream

**PUBLICATIONS**


**LICENSURE**

Massachusetts Educator’s License, Professional Status, English 9-12, # ****315454
ESL in the Mainstream tutor, Australia
PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Board Member, Education and Americas Chair, Greenlight for Girls, www.greenlightforgirls.org
Research Associate, The Kaput Center for Research and Innovation in STEM Education
Mentor Teacher, Our Sisters’ School, New Bedford, MA
National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
State Coordinator for the Achievement Awards in Writing, National Council of Teachers of English—2008
Education Committee Member, Our Lady of Purgatory Maronite Catholic Church