

Fall 10-23-2008

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Recommended Citation

Marx, Helen A., "Learning about Self Far From Home: A Pre-service Teacher's Intercultural Development During an International Program" (2008). *NERA Conference Proceedings 2008*. 34.
http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/nera_2008/34

Learning about Self Far From Home: A Pre-service Teacher's Intercultural Development During an International Program

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Statement of Problem

There is much written about the need to prepare pre-service teachers for work with culturally diverse student populations (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Gay, 2002; Grant & Gillette, 2006; McAllister & Irvine, 2000). Research suggests that many pre-service teachers, the majority of whom are white, European-American, middle-class women, have been raised in culturally encapsulated communities and are unaware of their own cultural identities, have limited intercultural experiences, and lack knowledge about the role culture plays in teaching and learning (Gay, 2000; Haberman, 1996; Haberman & Post, 1992, 1998; Irvine, 2003; Sleeter, 2001; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). These teachers' ethnocentric worldviews negatively impact the educational experiences of culturally diverse students (Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2000; Gomez, 1996; Irvine, 2003; Nieto, 2002, 2004; Pohan, 1996; Rogoff, 2003; Sleeter, 2001). Irvine (2003) explains that "far too many pre- and in-service teachers proclaim a color-blind approach in teaching diverse students, hesitant to see them as cultural beings" (p. xv). Gay (2000) states that teachers must come to understand that "culture is at the heart of all we do in the name of education" (p. 8) and learn to teach in culturally responsive ways.

In a review of literature in the field, Zeichner and Hoeft (1996) report that teacher educators and researchers generally agree that to learn to teach culturally diverse students, pre-service teachers must be provided several opportunities. They need chances to uncover and consider their own cultural identities, to learn about and reflect on cultural processes, to experience and learn about other cultural groups, to

confront and examine their beliefs about racial and cultural difference, and to critically examine the socio-cultural dimensions of learning and teaching. Teacher educators and researchers generally agree that to learn to teach culturally diverse students pre-service teachers need opportunities to uncover and consider their own cultural identities, to learn about and reflect on cultural processes, to experience and learn about other cultural groups, to confront and examine their beliefs about racial and cultural difference, and to critically examine the socio-cultural dimensions of learning and teaching (Zeichner and Hoeft, 1996).

Multicultural teacher education programs typically include two main components: multicultural coursework and cross-cultural field placements. The literature on domestic cross-cultural placements indicates that they have a positive effect on some pre-service teachers' attitudes towards diverse student populations, though the results are mixed and contradictory (Cook & Van Cleaf, 2000; Gomez, 1996; Groulx, 2001; Terrill & Mark, 2000). Consistently researchers point to the importance of opportunities for guided reflection as crucial in these experiences, without which, such experiences can often reinforce existing beliefs, confirm misconceptions, produce stereotypes, and may hinder pre-service teachers' ability to seek alternative ways of teaching (Burant & Kirby, 2002; Delpit, 1995; Gomez, 1996; Haberman & Post, 1992; Irvine, 2003; Sleeter, 2001; Zeichner, 1996). Noel (1995) warns that these cross-cultural experiences must provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to be "confronted with an outsider perspective" (p. 270), and that unless these experiences challenge the teachers' sense of normalcy,

...self-awareness for these students becomes just awareness of the standards of the dominant society. The positive reinforcement system continuously telling these students that their beliefs, values, and traditions are the proper ones is still unchallenged... (pp. 270-271)

One concern over domestic, cross-cultural placement is that these schools, even those that serve culturally diverse students, are structured in similar ways and based within the dominant culture, pre-service teachers approach schools as cultural contexts they implicitly understand. Thus, even while the students

and the community may be “different,” the school’s structure, values, culture, and many of the teachers are the “same” as themselves (Pajares, 1992). Penetrating the cultural hegemony within the U.S. for a member of the dominant culture is very difficult, particularly when they enter cross-cultural communities with ethnocentric worldviews.

International study abroad teacher education programs have been proposed by some teacher educators as an innovative way to influence pre-service teachers’ intercultural development in ways not possible in domestic placements (Cushner & Brennan, 2007; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Heyl & McCarthy, 2003; Merryfield, 1994; Paccione, 2000; Quezada, 2004; Roberts, 2003; Schneider, 2003). A limited number of researchers have investigated teacher education study abroad programs, though they generally report positive growth in two general areas: personal development and intercultural development. Researchers have identified immersion within a different dominant context is significant to the positive effect of these experiences (Mahan & Stachowski, 1990; Stachowski, 1994; Stachowski & Mahan, 1995, 1998; Stachowski & Visconti, 1998; Zeichner & Melnick, 1996). Romano and Cushner (2007) conclude that international student teaching “can be the catalyst that starts teachers on a path of learning from others as well as forging relationships based on deep and meaningful understandings of peoples’ similarities and differences” (p. 224). They propose that such experiences provide pre-service teachers with the opportunity to learn about themselves, culture, and cultural difference that influences the way they teach and their understandings about the influence of culture on teaching and learning.

Theoretical Framework

Theories of intercultural development propose that international, intercultural experiences have the potential to bring into relief a person’s cultural unconsciousness and transform their worldview regarding culture and cultural difference; thus they can enable more effective cross-cultural relationships and

communication (Adler, 1975; M.J. Bennett, 1998, 2004; Hall, 1976; Kim, 2001; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; Ting-Toomey, 1993, 1999). This study uses Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) as a theoretical framework for describing and analyzing a pre-service teacher's intercultural sensitivity development during a study abroad experience.

M. Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) provides a process-oriented model that holds promise for multicultural teacher educators' efforts to prepare teacher for work with culturally diverse students, particularly in explaining intercultural growth during international teacher education placements (McAllister and Irvine, 2000). The model delineates six stages of intercultural sensitivity development, from ethnocentric to ethnorelative thinking. Bennett (2004) defines ethnocentrism as "the experience of one's own culture as 'central to reality'" and from this point of view "the beliefs and behaviors that people receive in their primary socialization are unquestioned: they are experienced as 'just the way things are'" (p. 62). He defines ethnorelativism as "the experience of one's own beliefs and behaviors as just one organization of reality among many viable possibilities" (p. 62). In the model, the three ethnocentric stages - denial, defense, and minimization - "can be seen as ways of *avoiding cultural difference*, either by denying its existence, by raising defenses against it, or by minimizing its importance" (2004, p. 63, italics in original). The ethnorelative stages - acceptance, adaptation, and integration - "are ways of *seeking cultural difference*, either by accepting its importance, by adapting perspective to take it into account, or by integrating the whole concept into a definition of identity" (2004, p. 63, italics in original). This articulation of an ethnorelative worldview is in alignment with the dispositions teachers need in order to be able to teach in culturally responsive ways.

In the process of becoming ethnorelative, a person needs significant encounters with cultural difference. Bennett (1993) proposes that engagement with cultural difference on the "other's" home turf may be an essential element in the process of developing intercultural sensitivity. The DMIS proposes that as long as a person stays within their own cultural context, he or she never need be aware of the way their cultural context impacts how they perceive the world that undergirds their cultural worldviews. Bennett (2004) explains that an intercultural experience "generates pressure for change in one's

worldview” and suggests that “this happens because the ‘default’ ethnocentric world view, while sufficient for managing relations within one’s own culture, is inadequate to the task of developing and maintaining social relations across cultural boundaries” (p. 74). Hall (1976) suggests that study abroad experiences require students to not only learn about other cultures but also engages in deep cultural learning about one’s self and themselves and their own culture:

Culture hides much more than it reveals and, strangely enough, what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants. Years of study have convinced me that the ultimate purpose of the study of culture is not so much the understanding of foreign cultures as much as the light that study sheds on our own. (Hall, 1998, p. 59, italics in original)

He drew attention to the need to holistically and physically experience a foreign cultural context in order to uncover one’s cultural unconscious and come to understand how culture’s “control system” influences our understanding of the world. International study abroad experiences, then, are powerful educational tools to influence intercultural sensitivity.

Research Overview

Seeking to deepen our understanding of the ways such programs might be part of our efforts to prepare culturally responsive teachers, this study explores one pre-service teacher’s intercultural development over the course of a teacher education study abroad program in London, England. This study examines a pre-service teacher’s intercultural development during a semester-long study abroad experience, identifying aspects of the experience that challenge and support intercultural development. Two research questions provided the overarching focus of this study:

1. In what ways does a pre-service teachers’ intercultural sensitivity development evolve during a semester-long teacher education study abroad program in London, England?

2. What aspects of the study abroad experience and program challenged and supported intercultural sensitivity development?

A qualitative case study research design made it possible to explore the research questions in ways that were respectful of the complexity of intercultural development and cognizant of the unique context of each person's experiences. Erickson (1984) reminds us that the goal in such qualitative research is not generalizability, but in-depth understanding of a particular instance of a case, to deepen our understanding of complex social phenomenon. The findings from this study are offered not with the intention of generalizing findings from this particular case to all pre-service teachers, but instead with the conviction that carefully considering one person's unique experiences can inform our understanding of the dynamic and complex process of intercultural development during study abroad.

This research is a case study of one pre-service teacher, Ana, who was enrolled in a teacher education study abroad program, called the London Program. This program is a component of a five-year integrated bachelor's/master's teacher education program offered by a large, land-grant state university in New England. The program was designed to provide students with an opportunity to have a cross-cultural immersion experience in an international, multicultural, and urban environment. The London Program included several components that are often included in lists of important characteristics of experiential learning: (1) opportunities for mentoring and guided cultural reflection, (2) credit-bearing coursework related to cross-cultural issues, and (3) experiential learning situations that provide opportunities for intensive immersion into the local culture (Engle & Engle, 2003).

All of the students enrolled in the London Program students fit the profile of typical pre-service teachers: they were middleclass, suburban, European-American women, who had limited intercultural life experiences domestically or internationally (Grant & Secada, 1990; Hodgkinson, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Melnick & Zeichner, 1998; Merryfield, 2000; Sleeter, 2001; Strizek, et al., 2007). Case selection criteria included seeking a case-participant who met the following criteria. The student needed to (1) be

representative of the typical, European-American pre-service student, (2) experience positive intercultural development over the course of the study, (3) be accessible during the research participant observation periods, (4) be willing and interested in being a participant.

Data was collected in three phases over the course of an academic year, from May 2006 to May 2007, covering three phases of the students' experiences in the study abroad program. Phase one took place during the summer of 2006 prior to the study abroad experience. Phase two took place during the fall semester, 2006 during the study abroad semester in London. Phase three covered the students' re-entry to the U.S. and the spring semester 2007 on campus. As would be expected, the second phase was the focus of the study and involved the most intensive portion of data collection; this period include two intensive periods of participant observation field research in London. The study involved two primary data collection methods: participant observation and in-depth interviews. Multiple methods of data collection afforded various avenues through which to view the student's study abroad experience and to understand the evolution of her intercultural development.

The dominant data analysis method used in this study is often described as a constant comparative approach to data analysis (Merriam, 1998) using a three-step coding process – open, axial, and selective coding developed within the grounded theory research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The process of reiterative and comparative readings of data allows the coding scheme to be refined, challenged, modified, and expanded as the research question is illuminated. Reiterative reading of texts involving the development of a coding scheme based on emergent themes and chronological and theoretical categories.

Findings - Intercultural Development within Study Abroad

This study finds that the case participant's, Ana, participation in a teacher education study abroad program positively influenced her intercultural development, supporting previous research on the benefits of such experiences. Over the course of this study Ana became more interculturally sensitive. At the beginning of the study Ana was aware of and interested in learning about other cultures; however her

understanding of culture as a construct was unsophisticated and she tended to seek individual and psychological explanations for differences among people. By the end of the study Ana was developing richer and more sophisticated cultural constructs, exploring her own cultural identity, accepting and recognizing fundamental cultural differences in herself and others, and actively seeking out intercultural experiences as an avenue to continue her intercultural development. Significantly, she was entering her first year of teaching with an acceptance of and desire to attend to the ways her own and her students' cultural perspectives influence teaching and learning. Ana's worldview was transitioning from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative approach.

Several themes emerged from this case study that illuminate aspects the participant's international study abroad experience that both challenged and supported her intercultural development – her development of a consciousness of culture. Through her immersion in a foreign school context Ana was challenged to confront the reality of a different cultural context; this was the catalyst for her engagement in the process of cultural learning. Developmentally ready to take on the challenges, she found support for her learning in her course with Catherine, who encouraged and modeled ethnorelative reflective thinking. The challenges and supports that were part of Ana's experience will be discussed separately in this section; however, it was the interplay between the appropriate challenges and support that proved vital to Ana's intercultural development within her study abroad program.

Challenge: Being the Cultural Other through International Internship

In Ana's study abroad experience it was her internship at North School - what Catherine called an "out of culture" teaching experience – that proved the catalyst for her intercultural development. As an international internship experience, Ana was immersed within a different dominant cultural context where she was the cultural outsider. At North, Ana had to confront the reality of fundamental cultural differences. Working within North, it was impossible for Ana to assume that the people in the school – teachers and students alike – had cultural understandings regarding teaching and learning that were similar to her own. The significance of her internship at North highlights the importance of such

immersion experiences during study abroad programs that seek to influence students' intercultural development, a finding supported by previous research (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Mahan & Stachowski, 1990; Stachowski, 1994; Stachowski & Mahan, 1995, 1998; Stachowski & Visconti, 1998; Zeichner & Melnick, 1996).

Though superficially resembling schools in the U.S., North School proved to be very "foreign" to Ana. At North School Ana experienced cultural differences that she could not understand and that she reacted strongly against. In her first weeks there Ana was taken aback by the way that both the students and the teachers acted and she was often very uncomfortable in the school, uncertain how to act or how to understand what she was witnessing. After being in London three months she commented about the way teachers related to children at London: "I am getting use to it, it is becoming more normal, but I am still shocked by it. I still don't like it" (AI3). During the experience, Ana discovered that indeed the dominant cultures of the two countries are very different; these differences can cause a great deal of anxiety, miscommunication, and misunderstanding and also lead to humorous and embarrassing gaffs and interesting discoveries. In particular, Ana had trouble understanding the differences she encountered in the way the British teachers and students understood their relationships and communicated with each other. Differences she began to notice in her life outside of school as well among children and their parents. Her dilemma became how to work in and feel a part of a school and culture that she so clearly did not understand and within which she often felt uncomfortable and conflicted.

Ana's first reaction upon entering North was to judge the differences she experienced as "wrong" and the teachers as "bad teachers" – clearly an ethnocentric reaction to the experience of a very different cultural context. She explained how she had first reacted:

Like all the teachers here are just crazy they don't know what they are doing, they are awful teachers, blah, blah, blah. And that's not the case. And I think I had a bit of that when I first came here. Like, what's a matter with these people? They must have had awful teacher preparation programs... I am sure that is what we sounded like when we first talked to you.... I was very judgmental of how the teachers were teaching... (AI3)

With guidance, as I will discuss shortly, Ana came to understand that she had been perceiving and negatively judging what she witnessed at North and student-teacher/ adult-child relations in London through her own cultural filters:

Without even realizing it, we had been trained in that American way of being, as a teacher; this is what, this is how you behave, this is what you do. And it [the style of teaching at North] just went against everything that we had, not explicitly been told, but the way we had been treated as kids, the way our parents treated us, the way teachers treated us, the way we taught. (AI5)

Ana came to see that though she did not have to agree with what she came to define as the “British way with kids,” it was their way and that for them it was “the way.”

Still I think that certain things should be changed here, but I don’t know that will happen or if that is just me being American and being here.... So you need a bit more understanding and compassion for these teachers and not being so, not being so critical.... yeah, because the way that America does it isn’t necessarily better. Who am I to say they are an awful teacher? (AI3)

Importantly, she was questioning the validity of her own values within this different cultural context. This represents a large shift in her thinking; before going to London Ana had never acknowledged that perhaps her own lens should not necessarily be used as the default by which others’ are judged.

Ana’s experience working within this foreign school, where her own-taken-for granted assumptions about teaching and learning did not adequately explain what she was experiencing, created a sense of cultural disequilibrium (Taylor, 1994a) for Ana. Colloquially called culture shock, the cultural disequilibrium experienced as one seeks to operate within a foreign cultural context that has a different “rule book of meaning” (Barnlund, 1998, p. 3) can act as the catalyst within study abroad experiences and positively impact students’ intercultural development (Adler, 1975; M.J. Bennett 1998, 2004; Hall, 1976, 1998; Taylor, 1994a, 1994b). The literature related to study abroad points to the experience of cultural disequilibrium as vital to students’ intercultural development. The experience of cultural disequilibrium has the potential to bring into relief a person’s own cultural unconsciousness, an awareness of the ways they themselves are cultural and have implicit cultural understandings that influence their perceptions

(Adler, 1975; M.J. Bennett, 1998, 2004; Hall, 1976; Kim, 2001; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; Ting-Toomey, 1993, 1999). And that was certainly true for Ana; she did become aware of her own culturally-constructed perspectives of teaching and learning within this experience in a different cultural context where her perspectives did not match those of the “others” she was working with.

Ana’s story clarifies that a vital part of the dynamic of becoming conscious of culture was facing the reality and validity of the “other’s” cultural perspective, and, thus, developing perspective consciousness. In order to work with North, she needed to come to understand the “others’” perspectives on teaching and learning so that she might function effectively. In the process of understanding their perspectives, she came to realize that she, too, had a perspective of teaching and learning that was not universally shared by people of other cultures. For Ana, experiencing this culturally different context caused her to become conscious of culture – both that of others and her own. Her experience highlights this interplay between the development of “self” and “other” cultural consciousness within intercultural development and points to the very power of international immersion experiences.

Concentrating on the cultural learning opportunities inherent in the experience of cultural disequilibrium within an international immersion experience does not dismiss the potentially disabling effect such immersion experiences can have on students who are not ready or who do not have the support needed to take on the challenges of an intercultural experience. However, it is the power of this experience of a cultural different context that results in cultural disequilibrium that can be the catalyst for transformative growth within study abroad. Study abroad experiences that seek to influence a student’s intercultural development need to provide for the experience of cultural disequilibrium coupled with adequate support to help the students learn from the experience. In Ana’s study abroad program, her internship at North School provided this experience of a different cultural context where she experienced cultural disequilibrium. Importantly, it was not just encounters with people who were culturally different, but the immersion into a culturally different context where she became the cultural outsider – she was the one who did not understand the cultural context – that was vital to her development.

A crucial aspect of Ana's immersion experience at North School was her experience as a cultural outsider. Clearly not a member of the dominant culture in the U.K. and not understanding many of the hidden meanings of the world around her, Ana was in the position of being marginal to a mainstream or dominant culture for the first time in her life. When I asked her what had been crucial to her learning in London, she stated clearly: "I want to say that it was being in London and being that other, that different person" (AI5). Interestingly, Ana did not like the label of cultural outsider when I asked her about it; she did not want to be seen as different, she wanted to fit in, and her desire to do so was her motivation for facing this challenge and engaging in cultural learning. However, it was her experience of being on the outside of another dominant culture that was significant in this international, intercultural experience. Within this international immersion experience Ana was not just different from other people – what could be called being the cultural other – but she was different from the cultural context – she was the cultural outsider. Importantly, at North Ana didn't just *observe* cultural difference, she *felt culturally different*. Within the literature regarding multicultural teacher education the experience of being the "other" has been identified as a critical component of cross-cultural field placements (Casale-Giannola, 2000; Gomez, 1996; Noel, 1995; Paccione 2000). Gomez (1996) writes about the need for such cross-cultural placements:

Among the most promising practices for challenging and changing pre-service teachers' perspectives was their placements in situations where they became the "Other" and were simultaneously engaged in seminars or other ongoing conversations guiding their self-inquiry and reflections. (p. 124)

Concurring, Noel (1995) argues that cross-cultural experiences must provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to be "confronted with an outsider perspective" (p. 270). In a life-study of teachers who were committed to multicultural education, Paccione (2000) found that common among them was some earlier experience in which the person had ventured "outside of their *racial-cultural comfort zones*" (p. 991, italics in original). For the participants in her study, "having the experience of being singularly different

creates an emergent awareness of what it is like to be on the outside” (Paccione, 2000, p. 993). Similarly, Fahim (2002) found that the experience of marginality was a crucial theme in the development of cultural sensitivity.

However, it can be hard for students who are white, European-American, heterosexual to feel cultural marginality at home; the hegemony of the dominant culture makes such experiences difficult. Bennett (1993) suggests that engagement with cultural difference on the “other’s” home turf may be an essential element in the process of developing intercultural sensitivity. While in the past Ana had had relationships with friends and co-workers who were culturally different from herself, these relationships had always taken place within her own dominant cultural context in the U.S. In such settings, while people might have been culturally different from her, the context was one she implicitly understood. Ana pointed this out to me when she compared her internship in London with her internship in a U.S. city, saying that in the U.S., “I don’t feel the differences” (AI5). In her domestic U.S. placements it was her students who were culturally different from the dominant cultural context, not Ana. The cultural contexts of U.S. schools, regardless of the location or cultural background of the students or community they serve, were contexts Ana implicitly understood; a sad testament to the cultural hegemony that runs throughout educational institutions in the U.S. Further, within these domestic placements Ana was not treated like a cultural outsider by the teachers, staff, or even students. Ana’s international immersion experience provided her with the opportunity to step outside of her dominant cultural context –the one in which she was embedded– and have the experience of being a cultural outsider. As such, she became conscious of culture in new and significant ways. Ana’s experience of being the cultural outsider within a different dominant cultural context during her study abroad experience may be difficult to be replicated within domestic U.S. school placements.

Support: In Need of an Intercultural Guide: Learning to Think in Ethnorelative Ways

Ana’s internship experience at North provided her with a direct and intense experience of a different cultural context, as well as an intercultural challenge: if she was to learn to work and function

within North, she needed to attend to these cultural differences and become conscious of culture in new and transformed ways. However, to face the intercultural challenges, inherent in international immersion experiences, requires a level of cultural reflection that does not come naturally and needs support to develop. It cannot be assumed that students will be able to engage in such reflection on their own. Cross-cultural experiences, including study abroad programs, need to include avenues where such cultural reflection is modeled and supported. In Ana's experience, she received such support from Catherine, one of her course instructors.

Ana entered her study abroad experience eager to learn and grow, even hoping that it would be in some way a transformative experience. While she might not have known from the outset exactly what she would learn in London or how she would grow, Ana began her study abroad experience wanting to be pushed outside her comfort zone, hoping to engage in cultural learning, and seeking to do more in her internship than "practice" teaching. Ana had many of the personal attributes Hess (1997) identifies as important to have a successful study abroad experience, such as curiosity, flexibility, a tolerance for ambiguity, and an interest and regard for culture and cultural differences. Ana entered the study abroad program primed for this type of cultural experience. Her challenge was to become conscious of culture, and she was developmentally ready to take on the challenge.

The first challenge for Ana was to begin to notice cultural differences and identify the differences she was experiencing as cultural, a step vital to the development of perspective consciousness. In her first weeks at North, Ana could not avoid the differences she was experiencing, but she could not name them either. She needed someone to help her see these differences as cultural and to dig deeply underneath what felt like surface level difference to uncover the often hidden and covert aspects of a culture. Catherine played the role of cultural translator for Ana. During class, in personal conversation, and in her dialogic journal, Ana felt comfortable talking to about cultural differences with Catherine, including her perceptions and misperceptions and the cultural disequilibrium she was feeling. Ana described how Catherine's translations helped:

I think that it was huge... That helped... to solidify those experiences that may have just slipped aside, oh, that was weird, or I just don't get it, or we're not fitting in. She was the one who really helped us work that in to something that could be meaningful to us. (AI5)

These cultural differences Ana experienced at North were not, at first, apparently cultural to Ana. Further, she was interpreting all she saw through her own cultural lens and judging it accordingly. Because Ana saw Catherine as a highly respected teacher she accepted Catherine's cultural explanations of the many differences Ana was seeing at North. Further, what Catherine said make sense to Ana in her work at North and her life in London; the translations helped her understand more clearly what she was seeing in her placements and in her life in London. With Catherine's help, Ana sought to understand what she was witnessing at North through an exploration of how a societies' understandings about childhood, adult-child relationships, and philosophies of education can influence teacher-student relations, a topic that Catherine took up within the context of her course.

Importantly, within their discussions of culture and cultural differences, Catherine did not explain away the cultural differences they were experiencing or seek to ease Ana's discomfort by focusing on similarities. Rather, Catherine very honestly and forthrightly made the exploration of culture difference a legitimate and safe topic for discussion. Translating each other's culture and reflecting more deeply about the subjective aspects of culture became the focus of their work in seminar. As a cultural translator, Catherine supported Ana as she struggled to understand the different cultural perspectives, her own and others. Though she was clearly just starting to understand the socio-cultural dynamic at play in the U.K., Ana's direct experience at North, along with providing translation and validation of an alternative culture perspective, Catherine was crucial to Ana's intercultural development in London. This exploration of cultural perspective and the cultural translation that Catherine provided played a vital role in Ana's development of perspective consciousness.

More than just a cultural translator, Catherine played the role of an intercultural development guide for Ana as she developed of perspective and cultural consciousness. In the course she taught and through her written comments to Ana within their dialogic journal, Catherine modeled the analytic tools necessary for cultural reflection: comparative and contextual thinking. Central to this process, Catherine

supported Ana's continued exploration of the cultural dimensions of her experience through a focus on cultural contrasts. Further, Catherine continually modeled; modeling for Ana a way to try to understand the "British perspective" by exploring how her own culture – "being American" - was influencing the way she was interpreting her experiences at North School.

Ana felt that Catherine was teaching her how to be culturally reflective and that this type of reflection was crucial to her success at North. As Ana sought to understand her experiences at North, Catherine repeatedly pointed out to Ana that Ana was unconsciously comparing North School to American schools and that she was using her cultural perspective to make sense of and judge what she was seeing. Catherine asked Ana to try to withhold this type of judgment. Ana explained how Catherine modeled for them this type of reflection:

... Catherine is teaching... just the way that she is getting us to look at things. Had us stop, take a step back from things, don't look at things as we would if we were in America, as if they were teaching in an American school, because the teacher is not teaching in an American school, the teacher is not teaching American children. The teacher's in a British school, teaching British children, in an inner city. (AI3)

By contrasting different cultural perspectives she was beginning to consider the influence that cultural context has on a person's understandings. In the process of trying to understand the perspectives of her "hosts" at North School, Ana also had to begin to reflect on her own implicit cultural perceptions.

Importantly, the type of cultural reflection that Ana was doing in Catherine's class was not merely an exercise undertaken during class time; it was a necessity for making sense of her intercultural experiences at North. Ana explained to me:

I feel like her ultimate objective for the entire class, her one objective would be to get us to just look critically at schools, at why we do things the way that we're doing. And that's what I am pulling out of her class. I think it's so important. And it's not that I've not been taught that before, it is the first time it has been useful for me. That I have been able to put it into play in the school and I've really enjoyed it, I've really gotten something out of it... (AI3)

She acknowledged that she had been taught about reflective thinking in domestic placements, but that she had never really seen the need for it before. In London, Ana's ability to work successfully at North, to understand and fit into the culture at the school, made this type of cultural reflection necessary for her to

function and feel successful in her work with students. Catherine was helping Ana use her internship experiences to become conscious of culture and the influence of cultural perspectives as an avenue to help her function within this different cultural context; thus, Catherine was modeling and supporting an eminently practical reflective practice.

Educational research demonstrates the vital role that cultural reflection plays in learning from cross-cultural experiences, both domestically and internationally (Bradfield-Kreider, 1999; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Howard, 2003; Jenks, et al., 2001; Obidah & Howard, 2005; Spindler & Spindler, 1994; Tang & Choi, 2004). Ana's experience highlights the need for to create supportive environments for such reflective thinking. Within her relationship with Ana, Catherine was able to create the conditions that King (2000) has identified as necessary for supporting reflecting thinking. King explains that such an environment must have an "underlying respect for students regardless of their level of intellectual development" and an acknowledgement that "the journey is each *student's* journey and that the teacher's role as guide is to choose responses that are adapted to the student's needs." King continues, "through respectful but challenging interactions like these, interactions that take account of students' epistemological assumptions, teachers can promote reflective thinking" (p. 25).

Such an environment must attend to students' affective, social, and cognitive needs and create a safe space where students can to share what are often difficult and confusing thoughts and feeling and take risks as they seek to explore new areas of understanding and consciousness. Parks Daloz (2000) states that such classrooms are

...characterized by the establishment of a climate of safety in which people feel free to speak their truth, where blaming and judging are minimal, where full participation is encouraged, where a premium is placed on mutual understanding, but also where evidence and arguments may be assessed objectively and assumptions surfaced openly.
(p. 114)

Berger (2004) describes such teachers as the guides who help students as they approach the “growing edge” of their knowledge and awareness. She suggests that these teachers must help students find and recognize their edge, be good company at the edge, and help to build firm ground in a new place.

Catherine proved such a guide for Ana and highlights the vital role such a guide can play within an intercultural experience, though much more needs to be understood regarding how to model and support the transformation of consciousness. Ana’s experience once she returned home suggest that such support must be continued upon re-entry; pre-service teachers need opportunities to make connections between their study abroad experience and issues of domestic diversity.

Implications for Teacher Education Study Abroad Programs

Ana’s story clearly points to the positive potential of such programs to influence students’ intercultural development. The study is bounded by its exclusive focus on one woman’s experiences and is intentionally focused on teacher education study abroad programs. This study draws attention to the dynamic and complex process of intercultural development during study abroad and the interplay between the intercultural challenges within immersion experiences and the support for intercultural development provided within the study abroad program. A consideration of these suggests implications for teacher education programs seeking to use international experiences to influence pre-service teachers’ intercultural growth.

Difficulties of Being the Cultural Outsider in London

There are many types of study abroad programs and they are similar only in the fact that they take place away from the home university and outside of the U.S. Though at some level all study abroad programs might be called immersion experiences, the degree to which a student is immersed within the culture of the host country varies greatly between program types and is influenced by the goals of individual programs (Engle & Engle, 2003). Engle and Engle (2003) imply that in study abroad programs

where the goal is intercultural development, as was the case in Ana's program, immersion within a foreign cultural context must be part of the program's design. They propose that immersion can take place through direct enrollment in universities, home-stay living situations, and through community based service learning and/or internship opportunities. Regardless of the design used, immersion implies that the student is put in a situation where they must function within a different cultural context and among members of the host culture who the student perceives as a cultural other. As was discussed previously, Ana's internship at North was significant to her intercultural development. The findings from this study suggest that immersion experiences where students become cultural outsiders within a different cultural context are vital to the design of study abroad programs that seek to influence students' intercultural development.

However, in countries where students from the U.S. share a common language with the host culture, as in England, students might be able to avoid the feelings of being a cultural other (Edwards, 2000). The mutually comprehensible language can allow U.S. students to communicate with more ease in England than in countries where students need to struggle with speaking a foreign language. In English-speaking countries students may function at a high level without ever deeply confronting the ramifications of substantive cultural differences. Student facility with the language can mask cultural differences and create a veneer of cultural immersion for students. Edwards (2000) cautions that students studying abroad in Britain can make the assumption that a shared language means a shared culture and "exempt the British from 'otherness'" (p.91). Edwards points out that when U.S. students study abroad in Britain

The primary sources do not, as it were, require translation, and it is easy enough to ignore the deep rifts signaled by tell-tale surface signs of differences in social organization, spirituality, and familial interactions. We always understand what is *said* in our transatlantic dialogues, and this effectively masks the fact that we are frequently wrong about what is *meant*. (p. 91, italics in original)

Thus, the apparent ease of communicating the spoken and written language can work against the goals of study abroad programs in England and other Western, English-speaking countries and limit the potential for such programs to lead to intercultural growth.

Study abroad programs that take place within English speaking countries must be more carefully designed, not less so. Rather than being an “easy” place to send students, such programs must be carefully designed. Programs in these countries must create opportunities that allow students to experience a sufficient degree of cultural disequilibrium that acts as a catalyst for the student to engage in intercultural development. Immersion experiences, such as internships and community service learning projects, are such catalysts. Further, such programs need to make explicit the study of culture within these immersion experiences by including coursework and seminars that focus on cultural learning (Edwards, 2000). Study abroad programs cannot assume that merely sending students to live in another culture will necessarily lead to intercultural development; programs must be designed to provide a sufficient intercultural challenge and adequate support for students’ intercultural development.

Within such programs students need a cultural translator; resident directors and/or seminar leaders may prove crucial to students’ intercultural development, as was the case for Ana. Previous research has regarding the positive effect of study abroad on pre-service teachers cultural awareness has pointed to the importance of developing friendship and peer-relationships with people from the host country, where the cultural translation needed is provided through these relationships (Mahan & Stachowski, 1990; Stachowski, 1994; Stachowski & Mahan, 1995, 1998; Stachowski & Visconti, 1998; Zeichner & Melnick, 1996). However, it may be unreasonable to expect that students will develop such close relationship in a four month study abroad program. Further, discussions regarding cultural differences that are vital to cultural translation are not always easy and such discussion may not happen among friends or acquaintances; to promote and successfully negotiate such discussions requires intercultural skill.

Finally, a supportive and safe environment is crucial in supporting intercultural development and requires a level of knowledge regarding intercultural development that most lay people may not possess.

Catherine had such skills. This study suggests that the role of cultural translator and intercultural guide might best be played by someone who is trained in providing support for intercultural development within study abroad experiences. Study abroad programs must explicitly attend to students' intercultural developmental needs, providing a safe environment where such growth is supported by a skilled facilitator.

Conclusion

Over seventy years ago John Dewey (1938) set out a theory of education that articulated the vital role experience plays in the learning process. Drawing attention to the ways we learn through our experiences, Dewey cautioned that educators must attend to the types of experiences students have, stating

The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other. For some experiences are mis-educative. (p. 25)

He reminded educators that "it is not enough to insist upon the necessity of experience, nor even of activity in experience. Everything depends upon the quality of the experience which is had" (p. 27).

Dewey's work has greatly influenced both teacher education and study abroad program design, where field experiences and intercultural experiences are held to be the keystone to a student's education.

This research was undertaken with the desire to understand more clearly the "quality" of one young woman's intercultural experiences, seeking to consider how such experiences influence her intercultural sensitivity development. The study was begun with the conviction that pre-service and in-service teachers need to become mindful of culture and cultural difference, believing that such mindfulness is necessary, though not sufficient, in providing culturally responsive education for culturally diverse students. Framed within understandings of intercultural sensitivity development, this study shows the evolution of one young woman's intercultural development. Importantly, Ana's experiences highlight

the way direct immersion experiences within different cultural contexts can influence intercultural sensitivity development. Ana's internship at North School was transformative not because she was working with culturally different students, but because she was working within a culturally different school context. Being the cultural outsider within a context, where her taken-for-granted understandings about teaching and learning no longer applied, created the opportunity to become conscious of culture. Her initial ethnocentric tendency was to judge what she saw from her own cultural perspective and she needed support to develop a more ethnorelative worldview. She needed cultural translation to identify the socio-cultural dimensions of the differences she was witnessing. Further, she needed guidance as she attempted to learn how to understand North School from the perspective of the host nationals. Ana's story shows how study abroad experiences can provide intercultural challenges and supports leading to a transition to a more ethnorelative worldview.

Teacher educators can learn from Ana's experiences as they seek to design programs that address pre-service teachers' ethnocentric worldviews and support the development of intercultural sensitivity. While it may be unreasonable to assume that the majority of pre-service teachers be given the opportunity to become immersed within an international setting, greater efforts must be made to this end. Pre-service teachers often cannot study abroad because of strict curricular guidelines and state certification requirements; teacher educators must find ways to integrate study abroad programs within the teacher education curriculum. Further, though this research did not investigate domestic placements, Ana's experiences highlight the need for cross-cultural placements, either domestic or international, that allow pre-service teachers to feel cultural difference and to be the cultural outsider in significant ways. Theories of intercultural sensitivity development might inform these efforts and focus attention on students' engagement with and understandings of cultural difference.

The use of teacher education study abroad programs must ultimately be judged by the influence the experience has on pre-service teachers' intercultural competence within domestically diverse school contexts. Advocates for the use of teacher education study abroad must focus on the issues of re-entry and find ways to leverage growth attained in international experience toward intercultural growth regarding

issues of domestic diversity. Previous research suggests that international experiences can play a crucial role in the development of a commitment towards multicultural education (Merryfield, 2000; Mahon, 2003; Paccione, 2000). Paccione (2000) suggests that commitment to multicultural education is a life-long endeavor and that international and intercultural experiences aid in developing an emergent awareness of diversity issues. Ana's experience supports such findings, where her international experience clearly moved her forward in developing a cultural consciousness in ways that may not be possible within domestic placements. Teacher educators need to consider how to support continued growth upon re-entry, where emergent awareness grows into a commitment to action.

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