

HOW DO PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS UNDERSTAND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE
DURING A SHORT-TERM STUDENT TEACHING ABROAD PROGRAM?
AN EXPLORATORY, COLLECTIVE CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Elizabeth Cynthia Barrow: How Do Pre-service Teachers Understand Intercultural Competence During a Short-Term Student Teaching Abroad Program: An Exploratory, Collective Case Study
(Under the direction of Xue Lan Rong)

This dissertation explores how four pre-service teachers (PSTs) came to define and understand intercultural competence (ICC) during a short-term student teaching abroad program. In this exploratory, collective case study I highlight the participants' voice by analyzing their definitions of ICC before, during, and after their experience in Germany and using their descriptions of experiences living and working in German schools collected from journals, program evaluations, group interviews (before and during), class observation notes, re-entry individual interviews, and reflection surveys. Findings were analyzed using the conceptual framework of ICC (Alred, Byram, and Flemings, 2006; Bennett, 2008; Deardorff, 2006, 2008; Fantini, 2009) and transformative learning theory (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000; Taylor, 1994a, 1994b, 1997).

Findings reveal that participants developed a more complex understanding of ICC over the course of a one-month student teaching abroad experience and that perspective transformation occurred in some of the participants. However, the pattern and depth of the transformation depend as much on participants' affective and cognitive tendencies (impacted by individual's professional and personal characteristics and history) as it does on program components. Four themes emerged from the data: (a) cross-cultural comparisons; (b) sociolinguistic awareness; (c) self-development; and (d) cultural awareness. All participants grew in their understanding and conceptualization of ICC, but two of the four individuals

completed a perspective transformation during the four-week overseas period. The other two participants' experiences validate Cranton's (2006) concept of transformation iterative and cyclical and not hierarchical or linear.

In addition to the theoretical implication, the applications for universities and K-12 schools can be many. Schools and universities have increased their focus on global education and creating opportunities for their students to participate in different cultural immersion experiences. This dissertation highlights the importance of studying genuine experiences in an international setting and shows ways in which international student teaching abroad program coordinators can maximize the possibility of their students developing an understanding of ICC that can be used not only for teaching abroad, but also when teaching culturally, linguistically, and racially diverse students in the United States.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ICC	Intercultural Competence
MVU	Mountain View University
PST	Pre-service Teacher

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

“It’s hard to put into words what this trip did to me, but it changed my life. I’m the same person I was 30 days ago, but I have a different mindset now.”

(Natalie, Journal Entry, Final Reflection)

This dissertation examines how four pre-service teachers (PSTs) came to define, describe, and understand intercultural competence (ICC) during a short-term student teaching abroad program. This study highlights the complexity of defining ICC and also the process by which participants understanding of ICC evolved over one month’s time. As suggested by Natalie’s quotation above, participants in this study came to understand themselves better and gained an appreciation of what it means to be intercultural.

Most teaching candidates’ demographic characteristics, including racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic ones, do not mirror those of students in public school classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 2011), especially considering the ethnic makeup of those residing in the United States has changed dramatically in the last 50 years and continues to evolve today (Banks & Nguyen, 2008; Krogstad, 2016). Accordingly, the cultural, linguistic, racial, and ethnic diversity of students in classrooms across the U.S. is also increasingly diverse and non-majority students respond academically and socially to teachers who share similar traits. Yet non-majority teachers, especially “young teachers of color[,] leave the [teaching] profession at higher rates than their European-American counterparts” (Ladson-Billings, 2011, p. 14). Given the challenge of populating classrooms with teachers who reflect their students demographically, another solution must be developed to create a learning environment that enables all types of students to succeed.

The most realistic and effective solution is to expand teacher preparation programs to include training that specifically addresses the ICC of PSTs. Such training could foster well-rounded classroom leaders who can teach diverse populations of students successfully.

However, course content alone—even if centered on multicultural education, social justice, and culturally responsive practices—is not sufficient to instill predominantly White and middle class teachers with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to work with a diverse population of students (Sleeter & Owuor, 2011). Nor does student teaching in a diverse field placement automatically produce a culturally responsive teacher (Sleeter & Owuor, 2011). Diverse field placements, Sleeter & Owuor (2011) suggest, may offer PSTs “cultural awareness” (Kambutu & Nganga, 2008), but mere awareness is insufficient. Although cultural awareness is a core cognitive competency¹ essential to developing ICC (Bennett, 2008), teacher education programs must provide candidates with the opportunity to develop behavioral and affective competencies² as well.

Moving beyond cultural awareness to ICC must be a goal of teacher preparation, yet many of today’s teacher education programs do not include intercultural practice. Research shows that either PSTs do not have the attitudes to support ICC or they are not receiving adequate instruction in their teacher preparation courses (Cushner & Mahon, 2009). Cross-cultural immersion field experiences that challenge student teachers to develop behavioral, affective, and cognitive ICC must be emphasized (Cushner, 2007; Cushner & Mahon, 2009; Merryfield, 2000). Ladson-Billings (2011) argued that a teacher preparation program that offers

¹ Cognitive competencies include “cultural-general knowledge, culture-specific knowledge, identity development patterns, cultural adoption process, and cultural self-awareness” (Bennett, 2008, p. 18).

² Behavioral competencies include “the ability to empathize, gather appropriate information, listen, perceive accurately, adapt, initiate and maintain relationships, resolve conflict, and manage social interactions and anxiety” (Bennett, 2008, p. 19). Affective competencies include “curiosity . . . initiative, risk-taking, suspension of judgment, cognitive flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity, cultural humility, and resourcefulness” (Bennett, 2008, p. 20).

candidates the opportunity to teach overseas helps PSTs prepare for the diverse classrooms they will encounter in their careers by empowering them with competencies they can use to successfully educate a broad range of students.

Research on student teaching abroad has proven that participants in international experiences benefit both personally and professionally from their intercultural sojourns (Anderson, Lawson, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Marx & Moss, 2011; Ozek, 2009; Willard-Holt, 2001; Zhao, Meyers, & Meyers, 2009). Through these experiences, participants gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to be considered interculturally competent. Cushner (2008) found that teachers who successfully interact with individuals from a different culture promote ICC in their students as well. Merryfield (1997) suggested that intercultural experiences have the power to influence pedagogical practices in everyday teaching:

Teachers who have experienced another culture are more likely to perceive the power and potential of being connected to another part of the world and are also more likely to find ways in their daily instruction to teach local/global interconnectedness and perspective consciousness to their students. (p. 10)

She reminded teachers that their personal experiences with another culture can impact their professional practice as well.

Instead of relying on quantitative methods, such as the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventories (Chen & Starosta, 2000; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003), this dissertation uses case study methodology and qualitative methods to highlight how four PSTs came to understand ICC during their own international teaching experience.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore if and how student teachers develop an understanding of ICC during a one-month international experience. This dissertation, an exploratory collective case study (Stake, 2000, 2006; Yin, 2014), investigated the experiences of four PSTs from a large university in the Southeastern United States (Mountain View University³) as they participated in a month-long student teaching abroad program. Research studies emphasize the benefit of international immersion experiences for teacher candidates both professionally (increasing their pedagogical knowledge) and personally (increasing their cultural awareness, self-efficacy, curiosity, empathy, flexibility, adaptability, and independence; Anderson et al., 2006; Barnhart, 1989; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Marx & Moss, 2011; Willard-Holt, 2001; Zhao et al., 2009). Marx and Moss (2011) concluded that long-term international exposure (8 weeks or more) increases the probability that participants will develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that form the basis of intercultural competence; however, short-term international immersion programs (1 to 7 weeks) can be equally meaningful for student teachers' personal and professional growth, including development of ICC-related characteristics (Mapp, McFarland, & Newell, 2007). However, there is a gap in the literature regarding how PSTs define ICC in their own words and the process whereby these teacher candidates come to more fully understand ICC. This study was designed to begin to fill that gap.

This collective case study comprises four individual cases, and each provides insight into how PSTs define ICC and the process whereby such definitions are developed. From an analysis

³ All names and places have been given pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of those involved.

of these four unique cases, I formulated a better understanding of the significance of a short-term student teaching abroad program on PSTs' understanding of ICC.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How does a short-term student teaching abroad experience inform pre-service teachers' (PST) understanding of intercultural competence (ICC)?
 - 1a. How do PSTs define ICC at various stages of their experience?
 - 1b. How do PSTs describe the student teaching abroad experience with respect to ICC and transformative learning?

Methodology

As an exploratory collective case study (Stake, 2000, 2006; Yin, 2014), this dissertation was designed to explore the significance of a short-term student teaching abroad program on PSTs' understanding of ICC by examining four individual cases and then making cross-case comparisons. This dissertation utilized a collective case study methodology because the phenomenon studied, i.e., development of ICC, exists within the real-life context of living and working abroad (Yin, 2014). Each case provides a unique view of a person's experience, and the four cases collectively provide an overview of the study abroad program and the ways in which ICC can be developed.

This study utilized multiple methods of data collection, including pre-departure questionnaires, group interviews, individual re-entry interviews, observations of PSTs in Germany, and analysis of artifacts including participant journals and seminar transcripts. Of particular interest were interviews and student journal reflections. Interviews (group and individual re-entry) were my main method of data collection. They served as a way to hear participants unedited opinions and to corroborate data collected from student journals. Students were guided by prompts for their journals (see Appendix E), and the participants' reflections in

these journals provided invaluable data on participants' experience and thinking while abroad (Deardorff, 2009, 2011; Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 2008). A more detailed examination of the methodology and study design is provided in Chapter 3.

Conceptual Framework

This research study draws upon a conceptual framework of ICC (Alred, Byram, & Fleming, 2006; Bennett, 2008; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2009; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009) and transformative learning theory (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 1997, 2000; Taylor, 1994a, 1994b). ICC is founded on the broad definition of the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to successfully interact in an intercultural setting (Deardorff, 2006). Transformative learning theory is founded on Mezirow's (1978) research on adult women returning to the workforce. Transformative learning is the idea that critical incidents lead individuals to reflect upon their frame of reference or perspectives (Mezirow, 1978).

There is no consensus among intercultural scholars about the exact definition of ICC (Deardorff, 2006); thus, for the purpose of this dissertation, I used the following elements of ICC compiled from Deardorff's (2006) extensive study as part of the conceptual framework:

- skills to analyze, interpret, and relate, as well as skills to listen and observe;
- the ability to understand others' worldviews;
- development of personal attributes, including curiosity, general openness, and respect for other cultures. (Deardorff, 2006)

These elements comprise the characteristics of ICC, including suspending judgment and challenging assumptions (Bennett, 2008).

Findings from this study indicate that during a short-term student teaching abroad program participants developed a better understanding of others' worldviews and also developed

some of the personal attributes listed above. While participants showed signs of developing these characteristics and a more complete understanding of what it means to be interculturally competent, the skills listed above do not provide a picture as how and why participants began to develop these understandings. Therefore, I used transformative learning theory to explain the process of developing ICC.

Transformative learning theory is useful in analyzing both the process of developing the knowledge, skills, and behaviors of ICC and how a perspective may be transformed by a disorienting dilemma. Central to transformative learning is the idea that experiencing a life-changing event, such as a crisis, dilemma, or loss, forces individuals to reflect upon their frame of reference or perspectives (Mezirow, 1978). In everyday life, a disorientating dilemma could be job loss or divorce (Taylor, 2008). In an international setting, the disorientating dilemma could be a person's inability to communicate in the host country's language. The trigger moment (Lyon, 2002) starts the transformative learning process. Taylor (1994a, 1994b) and Lyon (2002) connect trigger moments, or disorienting dilemmas, with culture shock—a type of disorientation a person experiences when interacting with individuals from a different culture, typically in an international setting. Simply recognizing a trigger moment, however, does not lead to a perspective transformation. Similarly, a person cannot become interculturally competent as a result of one positive intercultural experience. The process is complicated and nuanced, requiring thoughtful reflection and conversations with others that help the person to uncover the meaning behind the disorienting experience. The following quotation from Taylor (1994a) highlights the connection between transformative learning and ICC:

Transformative learning attempts to explain how our expectations, framed within cultural assumptions and presuppositions, directly influence the meaning we derive from our experiences. It is the revision of meaning structures from experiences that is addressed by the theory of perspective transformation. (p. 395)

In an intercultural setting, people experience situations that may challenge their pre-conceived cultural assumptions. As Taylor (1994a) postulates, assumptions can be revised in a way that leads to a perspective transformation; the revision process itself may determine the degree of transformation.

Central to both ICC development and perspective transformation is the existence of a disorienting dilemma and a person's grappling with the dilemma through reflection and critical discourse (see Cranton, 2006; Taylor, 2008). Neither element alone is sufficient to alter a person's perspective; however, a person can combine a disorienting intercultural experience reflection, discourse, and time and thereby gain the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to interact interculturally with success. See Appendix A for Taylor's (1994a) model that connects ICC and perspective transformation.

By pairing conceptualizations of ICC with transformative learning theory (Alred, et al., 2006; Bennett, 2008; Deardorff, 2006) this dissertation hopes to illuminate the process through which PSTs develop ICC during a short-term student teaching abroad experience. The theoretical foundations of this conceptual framework, as well as other relevant literature, will be explored in more detail in Chapter 2.

Significance

This study focuses on a small number of teacher candidates from Mountain View University as they came to understand ICC, or not, through their short-term international experience. Many scholars have attempted to quantify ICC using the following Likert-scale inventories: global competency and awareness scales (Braskamp, Braskamp, & Engberg, 2014; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Olsen & Kroeger, 2001), intercultural sensitivity scales (Hammer et al., 2003; Chen & Sarasota, 2000), culturally responsive teaching and self-efficacy scales (Siwatu, 2007), and multicultural teaching competency scales (Prieto, 2012; Spanierman et al.,

2011). However, these inventories, as questions about fixed points in time, are not a means of evaluating ICC development over time (Deardorff, 2006). Intercultural scholars have created models to assess individual development of ICC (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005), but they have not reached a consensus about which of the numerous models most accurately measures ICC (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). There is a gap in the literature regarding multiple method research conducted in real time as participants are experiencing their international program. This study fills that gap.

Findings from this study suggest that student teachers can experience transformation and ICC development through teaching abroad and their intercultural interactions in a short time period. Short-term teaching abroad programs offer students an immersion experience in a different culture at a reduced cost. Findings from this study can inform future short-term study abroad programs; it can help future programs to maximize the potential opportunities for teacher candidates to develop ICC.

Definitions of Terms

A number of terms in this study have multiple definitions,⁴ or their definitions are contested. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the following definitions for these terms will be used.

Cross-Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness is a conscious understanding of one's own culture before studying other cultures. Cross-cultural awareness is defined as an

awareness of the diversity of ideas and practices to be found in human societies around the world, of how such, ideas and practices compare, and including some limited recognition of how the ideas and ways of one's own society might be viewed from other vantage points. (Hanvey, 1976, p. 8)

⁴ A complete list of terms used in this dissertation is provided in Appendix A.

Intercultural

Intercultural refers to the interactions between two or more individuals from different cultures (Bennett, 2009).

Intercultural Competence

Generally, ICC is defined as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to successfully interact in a global setting. Successful intercultural competence is defined as making intercultural adjustments in “emotional regulation, openness, flexibility, and critical thinking” (Savicki, Binder, & Heller, 2008, pp. 113-114).

Frames of Reference

As defined within Mezirow’s (1997) transformative learning theory, frames of reference are structures individuals use to understand their experiences, including habits of mind and point of view. Taylor (2008) defines frames of reference more concretely as “structures of assumptions and expectations that frame an individual’s tacit points of view and influence their thinking, beliefs, and actions” (p. 5).

Perspective Transformation

Perspective transformation is the idea that a person can develop a more “inclusive, differentiated, permeable, and integrated perspective” through reflection and discourse. (Mezirow, 1991, p. 155).

Outline of Dissertation

Within Chapter 1, I provide a background for this study and outline the research questions that guide it. The research questions address how PSTs who engage in student teaching abroad come to understand ICC. This first chapter also includes a brief overview of the methodology and conceptual frameworks used in this study. In Chapter 2, I present research literature and the conceptual framework that guided this study whereas in Chapter 3, I describe

the methodological approach. In Chapter 4, I contextualize the student teaching abroad program by presenting an overview of program components both before departure and while in Germany, including a brief overview of the placement sites and homestays in Germany. The findings are discussed in Chapters 5-6. In Chapter 5, I present the four case narratives of the participants that serve to confirm and complicate the conceptualization of ICC and the process whereby individuals gain these competencies. In Chapter 6, I present emergent themes that address the research questions. Finally, in Chapter 7, I conclude this dissertation by summarizing the findings in relation to the research questions, and I discuss the implications of the data with regards to the relevant literature and conceptual framework. I also discuss the application of the findings for student teaching abroad programs and future research.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This dissertation is guided by conceptual literature and empirical studies on study abroad and student teaching abroad. In the first half of this chapter, I will review the literature to build the background and context for this research. My study adds to the body of literature on intercultural competence (ICC) by contributing student teachers' personal narratives about the process through which they developed ICC.

In the second half of this chapter I present the conceptual framework for the study; it draws on conceptualizations of the developmental models of ICC (Alred, et al., 2007; Bennett, 2008; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2009) and Mezirow's (1978, 1991, 2000) transformative learning theory. The developmental model of ICC provide a foundation for the knowledge, skills, and behaviors most commonly identified by intercultural scholars as necessary for effective and appropriate intercultural interactions. Transformative learning theory provides a lens through which to analyze the ICC acquisition process. The exploration of participants' perceptions of ICC, lived experiences, and descriptions of ICC, and the process of transformation formed the framework for this study.

Types of Short-Term Study Abroad

Short-term study abroad programs have become more popular due to the rising costs associated with long-term or semester abroad programs (Kamdar & Lewis, 2015), but there are different types of short-term international experience, so organizers must design one that will meet the intended goals and objectives of the program. Most studies indicate that short-term study abroad programs should last eight weeks or less, but the term is used inconsistently in the

literature (Batey, 2014; Batey & Lupi, 2012; Kamdar & Lewis, 2015; Mapp, 2012; Mapp et al., 2007; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Ozek, 2009; Willard-Holt, 2001; Zhao et al., 2009). Some study abroad scholars argue that longer-term international sojourns are needed to instill intercultural awareness or cross-cultural awareness (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Goldoni, 2013; Mahan & Stachowski, 1990; Marx & Moss, 2011; Medina-López-Portillo, 2004). However, rich learning experiences and transformations can occur during a short time period (Perry, Stoner, & Tarrant, 2012) when programs intentionally focus on fostering participants' ICC and creating opportunities for reflection and discourse (Taylor, 1994a, 1994b).

There are three models for short-term study abroad: the summer semester abroad (8-12 weeks), the study tour (7-28 days), and the service learning trip (2-6 weeks). More specifically to student teaching abroad, Quezada (2004) identified three types of study abroad models for internationalizing student teaching: the tourist approach, internationalizing the curriculum, and allowing student teaching in another country as part of a cultural immersion program. Each program type and duration has benefits and limitations. In his study of the different types of student teaching abroad programs across the U.S., Quezada (2004) concluded that regardless of program type, teacher candidates who traveled overseas reported growth personally and professionally, including gains in self-confidence (teaching and navigating different cultures), pedagogical techniques, and instructional planning. Additionally, participants “became more sensitive to issues of multiculturalism” (Quezada, 2004, p. 464).

Cwick and Benton (2009) provide an overview of student teaching abroad programs, including one-way exchanges, bi-lateral exchanges, and multilateral exchanges. They do not recommend one particular type of student teaching abroad program; instead, they provide an overview of the pros and cons of each. A benefit of a one-way exchange, according to Cwick &

Benton (2009), is that teacher candidates can study in any country in which their university has a relationship with a local university. This can provide participants with a choice of destinations, some with more of a culture gap than others. Conversely, bi-lateral exchanges limit the teacher candidate to one destination in which two universities from different countries (the home institution and a foreign partner institution) typically have a contract or relationship to exchange teacher candidates (Cwick & Benton, 2009). Although bi-lateral exchanges limit the destination choices for potential participants, they offer participants from both countries rich educational opportunities to exchange ideas, opinions, and experiences with each other and their host communities. Multilateral exchanges, however, typically involve multiple universities from multiple countries. Each university hosts teacher candidates from another country and provides opportunities for the candidates to engage in interactions and/or curriculum centered around a common theme, such as “students at risk” (Cwick and Benton, 2009, p. 40). Cwick and Benton (2009) argue that multilateral programs “create a pedagogical orientation toward intercultural competence” (p. 40).

Summer Semester Abroad

For the summer semester abroad, students “live on campus and take multiple classes” (Sachau, Brasher, & Fee, 2010, p. 650). The benefits of this type of study abroad program are opportunities for participants to gain in-depth knowledge about the host country through increased access to natives and improve their self-confidence by navigating a foreign country (Sachau et al., 2010). Housing is the main limitation of a summer semester abroad: Placing students in dormitories instead of homestays limits the frequency of students’ authentic intercultural interactions with natives of the host country (Sachau et al., 2010).

The Study Tour

The second type of short-term study abroad program is the study tour (Sachau et al., 2010), or educational tourism (Quezada, 2004), whereby students travel from city to city visiting historical and cultural sites. Most closely representing the traditional tourist approach to international travel, the study tour typically houses students in hotels and transports them as a group by bus or train (Sachau et al., 2010). Although students learn as they visit sites associated with a specific program theme, the study tour limits the amount of authentic interactions students have with natives (Sachau et al., 2010). Thus, according to Sachau, Brasher, and Fee (2010), study tours do not facilitate in-depth study and understanding of the host culture. One benefit of the study tour is the ability to see more of the host country in a shorter period of time (Sachau et al., 2010). Cwick and Benton (2009) warn against short-term educational tourist programs that do not promote in-depth learning and critical thinking. Short introductions to international travel may instill in participants a desire to return to the host country for a cultural immersion experience (Sachau et al., 2010), and cultural immersion experiences promote ICC development and transformations. Quezada (2004) concluded that participants in student teaching abroad programs moved past educational tourism and showed gains in intercultural sensitivity.

Service Learning Trip

The third type of short-term study abroad program is the service learning trip, an experiential learning trip that combines university coursework and a component of community service (Sachau et al., 2010). Service learning trips offer students the opportunity for authentic interaction with host country natives; as such, they foster students' self-confidence, their interest in service, and an interest in the host culture (Sachau et al., 2010).

Volunteerism. Horn and Fry (2013) studied the propensity of study abroad participants to continue volunteerism after completing an international service trip, also accounting for destination, type of program, and duration as variables affecting volunteerism. Findings from this study indicated that longer-term international placements increase the likelihood that a person will continue to volunteer upon return; however, the destination of the international program was a stronger indicator of volunteerism than duration (Horn & Fry, 2013). For example, “the probability of development volunteerism among students who study abroad in a *developing* country without service-learning for 4 months is 17 percentage points higher than that of students who study abroad in a *developed* country without service-learning” [italics in original] (Horn & Fry, 2013, p. 1171). Unsurprisingly the three conditions that resulted in the highest level of volunteerism were: “studying abroad in a developing country, participating in an international service-learning program, and participating in a longer- rather than shorter-term program” (p. 1173); however, Horn and Fry (2013) do hypothesize that short-term service-learning programs in developing countries may also promote a higher level of volunteerism upon return to the U.S.

A range of program types, durations, and destinations have been studied in the literature reviewed in this chapter. They all aim to provide teacher candidates with intercultural experiences that will help them grow personally and/or professionally as they gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to be successful educators in increasingly diverse U.S. classrooms.

Assessment of Growth

Assessing the impact of study abroad on a person’s development—personal, professional, or intercultural—has been and will remain problematic because development is deeply personal and individual. It is hard to quantify a transformation that can happen entirely internally without

any external reflection of change. In an attempt to quantify growth as a result of an intervention (i.e., the study abroad experience), scholars have developed numerous inventories based upon desired intercultural outcomes. Some of the most common inventories related to assessing ICC are listed below.

Quantitative methods used to measure student growth in ICC during study abroad and student teaching abroad programs usually include Likert-style pre- and post- tests of participants' intercultural sensitivity (Chen & Starosta, 2000; Olson & Kroeger, 2001), global competency and awareness (Braskamp et al., 2014; Cushner & Mahon, 2002), intercultural development (Hammer et al., 2003; Anderson et al., 2006), culturally responsive teaching (Siwatu, 2007), self-efficacy (Siwatu, 2007), multicultural teaching competency (Prieto, 2012; Spanierman et al., 2011), and intercultural maturity (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). These inventories allow researchers to assess characteristics of ICC that may not be as easily measured with qualitative methods. These inventories have been designed to evaluate ICC development at a fixed point in time instead of evaluating the process over a period of time.

Inventories

Chen and Starosta (2000) based their Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory on six elements of intercultural sensitivity: “self-esteem, self-monitoring, open-mindedness, empathy, interaction involvement, and non-judgment” (p. 4). The inventory contains 24 Likert-style questions based upon possible interactions with individuals from different cultures. Results from Chen and Starosta’s (2000) study of their inventory indicated that individuals who score high on the inventory are more likely to perform well in intercultural settings, be more empathetic, and show “more positive attitude towards intercultural communication” (p. 12).

Similarly, the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI; Hammer, et al., 2003) consists of 50 Likert-scale questions designed to measure a person’s ICC along the Developmental Model

of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). The DMIS is used to place a person's worldviews along a scale ranging from ethnocentric orientations (denial, defense, minimization) to ethnorelative orientations (acceptance, adaptations, integration; Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Hammer et al., 2003).

The Intercultural Maturity Scale used by King and Baxter Magolda (2005) takes the IDI one step further to measure dimensions of intra- and interpersonal development, how individuals understand their own beliefs, and how they use these beliefs in intercultural situations. Results are used as a marker of intercultural maturity. The Intercultural Maturity Scale expands upon the IDI and the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory to account for a more multidimensional understanding of ICC development; however, most studies employing a quantitative measurement of ICC use the IDI (see Anderson et al., 2006; Campbell & Walta, 2015; Marx and Moss, 2011; Medina-López-Portillo, 2004; Roller, 2015).

The IDI has been used frequently by researchers wishing to measure the impact of study abroad and student teaching abroad programs and is often used in combination with qualitative methods. Medina-López-Portillo (2004) used the IDI to draw connections between program duration and program development. Anderson, Lawson, Rexeisen, & Hubbard (2006) used the IDI to assess the extent to which a short-term study abroad program can influence participants' cross-cultural sensitivity. Marx and Moss (2011) used the IDI to select one participant for an in-depth qualitative study on the benefit of cultural immersion programs. Campbell and Walta (2015) used the IDI to evaluate the degree to which pre-departure orientation sessions influence participants' intercultural sensitivity. Roller (2015) used the IDI in combination with qualitative methods to discern whether intentional curriculum centered around reflection changed a person's ability to work with diverse students. These studies (Anderson et al., 2006; Campbell & Walta,

2015; Marx and Moss, 2011; Medina-López-Portillo, 2004; Roller, 2015) all indicate that given the right circumstances a person can show growth in intercultural sensitivity and develop a better understanding of ICC.

These studies (see Anderson et al., 2006; Campbell & Walta, 2015; Marx and Moss, 2011; Medina-López-Portillo, 2004; Roller, 2015) all attempted to quantify the impact of study and student teaching abroad programs on participants' personal and professional lives, but they did not explain the process whereby one develops this growth. In response, study and student teaching abroad researchers are increasingly using qualitative methods to highlight participants' voices about the impact of international experiences on their personal and professional lives. Qualitative studies provide a more detailed understanding of the possible long-term benefits of participating in an international exchange.

Impact of Student Teaching Abroad Programs

Two early studies that operationalized empirical research on student teaching abroad were Barnhart's (1989) study of Iowa State University's past study abroad participants and Willard-Holt's (2001) study of the impact of a 1-week cross-cultural teaching experience on elementary PSTs. These two studies, although fundamentally different, established a foundation of what impact a student teaching abroad program can have on PSTs over both a short-term (1 week) and long-term (8 weeks) international experience, including the following outcomes: self-efficacy, increased open-mindedness, empathy, flexibility, adaptability, personal growth, and knowledge of pedagogy. These studies were exploratory in nature and did not use theory as an analytical lens. Both studies included significant limitations; namely, they relied on self-reported data. Barnhart (1989) sent a cross-cultural inventory to past participants, and Willard-Holt (2001) used pre- and post-questionnaires and a one-year follow up survey. The validity and reliability of the data collected by self-report can be questioned; however, subsequent studies

have reported findings similar to Barnhart's (1989) and Willard-Holt's (2001; see Anderson, et al., 2006; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Mapp et al., 2007; Ozek, 2009).

Cross-Cultural Experiential Learning

Findings from short-term and long-term student teaching abroad programs indicate that overseas experiences result in increased cross-cultural awareness, increased cross-cultural adaptability, and enhanced ability to work with culturally different students in the U.S. (Kambutu & Nganga, 2008; Malewski, Sharma, & Phillion, 2012; Wilson, 1982). Scholars have reported that cross-cultural experiential activities also result in professional and personal development (adaptability, flexibility, self-development, self-confidence; Batey & Lupi, 2012; Chan & Parr, 2012; Mapp et al., 2012; Sahin, 2008).

Wilson (1982) first reported the influence that cross-cultural experiential learning can have on PSTs' self-development, cross-cultural effectiveness, and teaching effectiveness. He justified cross-cultural experiential learning for teachers for the following reasons:

1. Teaching itself is a cross-cultural encounter.
2. Cross-cultural experience aids self-development.
3. Cross-culturally effective persons have characteristics desirable for effective teachers.
4. Cross-cultural experience leads to global perspectives necessary for global education to happen in schools. (Wilson, 1982, p. 186)

Through overseas teaching, Wilson (1982) concluded, teachers can gain the skills necessary to be effective teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students in the U.S. By adapting to cultural differences and focusing on intercultural communication while overseas, teachers prepare themselves to be more flexible during intercultural situations that arise in their increasingly diverse classrooms (Wilson, 1982). Wilson (1982) also concluded that teachers who participate in an overseas teaching experience are more likely to teach from a global

perspective. Although conducted decades ago, Wilson's study is foundational; it provides an overview how an international practicum benefits teachers and remains relevant today.

In the subsections that follow, I review some of the studies that have extended Wilson's work. I organize this section of the literature review thematically using in the following sequence: (a) studies that focus on cultural awareness and cultural adaptability, (b) studies on working with diverse students; (c) studies on teaching from a global perspective, and (d) studies on working with English language learners (ELLs).

Cross-cultural awareness. Cross-cultural awareness is defined as an

awareness of the diversity of ideas and practices to be found in human societies around the world, of how such ideas and practices compare, and including some limited recognition of how the ideas and ways of one's own society might be viewed from other vantage points. (Hanvey, 1976, p. 8)

In schools, teachers uninformed about Hanvey's (1976) definition of cross-cultural awareness may unintentionally perpetuate stereotypes of cultures by subscribing to the food and costume approach to teaching different cultures. Based on my experience as a teacher, such an approach only provides a superficial appreciation of differences. Depth of knowledge about a culture comes from living and working in that culture (Cushner & Mahon, 2002). Student teaching abroad programs provide teacher educators the opportunity to challenge their stereotypes and assumptions to promote deeper cultural knowledge that they can later share with their students (Cushner, 2008).

Findings from student teaching abroad studies indicate that living and working in an international setting results in a decrease of stereotypes and assumptions about cultures different from one's own (Kambutu & Nganga, 2008; Malewski, et al., 2012). Kambutu and Nganga (2008) and Malewski, Sharma, & Phillion (2012) have reported that short-term student teaching abroad experiences allow participants to challenge pre-conceived notions of cultural diversity

and let go of their assumptions. Kambuta and Nganga (2008) studied PSTs who traveled to Kenya for two to three weeks during a summer semester. Data from their pre- and post- surveys revealed participants' lack of cultural awareness before departure and increased cultural awareness after the international experience (Kambuta & Nganga, 2008). Follow-up interviews also indicated that participants had moved towards acculturation (Kambuta & Nganga, 2008). Using transformative learning theory as their theoretical framework, Kambutu and Nganga (2008) concluded that participants did show some change but that it was not enough to completely change participants' previous knowledge and perspectives.

Participants' varied reactions to the lack of American amenities in Kenya reveals participant predispositions may not change as a result of a cultural immersion program (Kambutu & Nganga, 2008). Some participants considered living without certain amenities while in Kenya to be a hardship; others did not (Kambutu & Nganga, 2008). Living abroad does not always result in ICC. On the contrary, some experiences abroad can reinforce stereotypes and cultural assumptions (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Merryfield, 2000) as indicated by some of Kambutu and Nganga's (2008) participants' reflection that living abroad made them more grateful for the life they have in the United States. However, other participants in this study (Kambutu & Nganga, 2008) study did reflect on their privileges as an American and subsequently moved towards being agents of and for social change. This study provides evidence that previous cultural knowledge is not easily altered and that specific program components or curriculum within the international experience may be necessary to foster cultural awareness.

Malewski et al. (2012) extended the findings of Kambutu and Nganga (2008). In their extensive qualitative study of 49 participants who traveled to Honduras, Malewski et al. found that studying abroad gave more participants a "deeper understanding of the role of cultural

knowledge in becoming culturally responsive educators,” when combined with course content (p. 34). They concluded that international experiences can challenge preconceived notions of cultural diversity and prepare teachers to teach in diverse settings. Malewski et al.’s program may promote ICC more effectively than Kambutu and Nganga’s (2008) program because participants in Malewski et al.’s study were required to complete curriculum components, including content specific assignments. Assignments, including daily reflections, and cross-cultural interactions challenged participants’ assumptions which resulted in a more complex understanding of the role of content knowledge and cultural knowledge for the future educators (Malewski et al., 2012). For example, social studies teachers came to understand through their cross-cultural exchanges that the role of a social studies educator is to challenge stereotypes and assumptions inherent in textbooks, thereby facilitating a “cross-cultural construction of history and its relationship to current global and race relationships of power” (Malewski et al., 2012, p. 35). Malewski, et al. (2012) is one of the only studies on content specific pedagogical knowledge gained from student teaching abroad programs. It highlights a very important component of PST education: the connection between developing a more ethnorelative view of the world and a teachers’ role as an instructor of content knowledge.

International teaching exchanges not only benefit the teacher candidates traveling overseas but also influence the cultural understanding of the students they encounter in their international placements. Sahin (2008) concluded that increased cultural understanding is evident in teacher candidates from Turkey interning in U.S. schools and in the students and other individuals the Turkish students interacted with in the U.S. According to Sahin (2008), participants in this study not only gained cultural awareness but also developed personally and professionally during their international experiences. Self-development included gaining a sense

of responsibility, self-confidence, and agency (Sahin, 2008). Sahin (2008) surveyed the Turkish teacher candidates as well as their U.S. mentor-teachers. Turkish PSTs also engaged in cross-cultural comparison of the systems of education in Turkey and the U.S., leading some Turkish teacher candidates to conclude that each system of education has benefits and challenges but their perceptions of a gap in education in Turkey was not as significant as they previously thought (Sahin, 2008). Comparing education systems promotes ICC by helping participants to understand the other country's educational context (Sahin, 2008). PSTs from Turkey were often placed together at the same placement, sometimes with three Turkish students sharing the same U.S. mentor-teacher (Sahin, 2008). This factor is significant because it provides evidence that positive cultural awareness can be achieved even when participants in an international teaching program are placed in close proximity to one another (Sahin, 2008).

Similarly, Batey and Lupi (2012) concluded that increased cultural awareness can occur when PSTs travel to English speaking countries. In their study of PSTs' international internship in England, Batey and Lupi (2012) used the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory to analyze participants' reflections and concluded that participants were beginning to show cultural awareness, flexibility, and adaptability. Participants' failure to progress to a deeper level of cultural awareness may be explained by a key aspect of the program design: participants were rarely without one of their classmates. Unlike the experiences of participants in other programs (Marx & Moss, 2011; Zhao et al., 2009), participants in Batey and Lupi's (2012) study were accompanied by university faculty throughout the internship; the students lived together in university housing and were placed in schools together. It is also possible that participants incorrectly remembered their experiences or they only reported what they thought Batey and Lupi wanted to hear because Batey and Lupi's (2012) primary method of data collection was

student reflections collected two weeks after the internship. This study is significant for concluding that development of cultural awareness can occur during a short-term internship to a culturally similar destination; however, the study does not indicate how participants gained their increased cultural understanding (Batey & Lupi, 2012). To gain a more complete understanding of the degree to which participants moved towards cultural awareness, the study could have collected data from participants throughout the three-week internship and then compared this data to pre-departure data.

Teachers need support as they grapple with international teaching experiences; as teachers process their observations and experiences, they gain cultural awareness and new cultural knowledge. Chan and Parr (2012) concluded that participants in a three-week international experience can gain an intercultural identity and that the “richest learning” occurred when individuals, either alone or in groups, discussed “these challenges in mutually supportive, collegial ways, [and] when they were able to find a way of dealing with a particular cultural or pedagogical or curriculum challenge” (p. 16). Chan and Parr (2012) did not explain in detail how the participants gained their cultural awareness, but it seems like their program required reflection and discourse—the central components of the process of developing cultural awareness and ICC (Cranton, 2006).

Mapp, McFarland, and Newell (2007) and Mapp (2012) concluded that short-term international experiences are significant for increasing individuals’ cross-cultural awareness and adaptability in fields other than education. In their studies of social work students traveling internationally, Mapp et al. (2007) and Mapp (2012) concluded that short-term experiences centered on experiential learning can result in students’ positive growth. Mapp, et al. (2007) used quantitative and qualitative data to conclude that students who traveled to Ireland began to

appreciate another culture, understand how another country operates its social work program, and acquire a different worldview. Participants in Mapp et al. (2007) and Mapp (2012) traveled to another English-speaking country that is culturally similar to the U.S. and still experienced an increase in cultural adaptability. However, Mapp, et al. (2007) did imply that students in their study may have shown more growth if they had traveled to a country that had more cultural difference or a language barrier.

Cultural diversity. Overseas student teaching has also been linked to teacher candidates' understanding of diversity in the U.S. (Addleman, Nava, Cevallos, Brazo, and Dixon, 2014; Mahan & Stachowski, 1990; Walkington, 2015). Whereas some studies (see He & Cooper, 2009) indicate that cross-cultural learning and appreciation for diversity can occur without leaving the United States, Mahan and Stachowski (1990) concluded from their comparison of conventional and overseas student teaching placements that individuals who completed the overseas teaching experience were more likely to make personal gains related to identity, community, and worldviews. In their study, individuals who participated in the conventional student teaching practicum in the United States were less likely to participate in community activities and only reported interacting with individuals within their schools (Mahan & Stachowski, 1990), thus limiting their possibility for personal growth outside of school and their understanding of cultural diversity.

Addleman, Nava, Cevallos, Brazo, and Dixon (2014) used transformative learning theory to investigate elements of transformative learning evident in a short-term cultural immersion program. Data was collected from program participants in Vienna, Austria and Quito, Ecuador during faculty-led structured experiences designed to provide participants with authentic cross-cultural experiences rather than cultural tourism (Addleman et al., 2014). Findings from

Addleman et al. (2014) indicated that transformative learning and perspective transformations can take place over the course of a short-term cultural immersion experience. Participants experienced disorienting dilemmas, reflected on these situations and their disorientations, and ultimately began to alter their perceptions and actions accordingly (Addleman et al., 2014).

Students who do not travel internationally do not have the same opportunities to experience disorienting dilemmas, challenge their own assumptions, reflect on what they have learned, and then apply their new knowledge. Perspective transformations can occur in the U.S.; however, international experiences that combine coursework and theoretical knowledge learned at home with knowledge gained during the international teaching experience foster a better appreciation for teaching in diverse settings than study in the U.S. alone. Coursework and theoretical knowledge without international application may not be sufficient to change an individual's perspective and challenge previously held beliefs about students from culturally different backgrounds.

Addleman, et al. (2014) and Walkington (2015) studied the significance of short-term cultural immersion programs on PSTs understanding of—and ability to work with—diverse students. Walkington (2015) also concluded that transformation can occur during a short-term student teaching abroad program. Participants in Walkington's (2015) study traveled to China for two weeks. In addition to interning in Shanghai schools and participating in other intercultural interactions, participants were required by their program to reflect on their experiences as part of a summative assessment, an ePortfolio, that also included activities required by university lecturers (Walkington, 2015). The purpose of the study was to understand the “impact of immersion in another culture upon the development of pre-service teachers’ perspectives and preparation for practice in diverse cultural contexts” (Walkington, 2015, p.

152). Participants expressed both personal and professional gains, including increased comfort interacting with individuals who are culturally and linguistically different; participants attributed their transformation to immersion in a country more culturally dissimilar to the U.S.

(Walkington, 2015). In Walkington (2015), the short-term cultural immersion experience in China served to supplement instruction from the home university in Australia. Although Walkington (2015) indicated that transformation occurred in her participants as a result of this trip, she did not use transformative learning theory, as Addleman et al. (2014) did, to show the process. Absent from both of these studies is follow-up research on how participants in these studies are interacting with diverse students in their classrooms as in-service teachers.

Gaining A Global Perspective

Defining a global perspective. The term global perspective broadly means to have a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of the world (Merryfield, 1998). Hanvey (1976) describes a global perspective as something that can be achieved both individually and by a collective group:

As conceived here a global perspective is not a quantum, something you either have or don't have. It is a blend of many things and any given individual may be rich in certain elements and relatively lacking in others. The educational goal broadly seen may be to socialize significant *collectivities* of people so that the important elements of a global perspective are represented in the group. ...Every individual does not have to be brought to the same level of intellectual and moral development in order for a population to be moving in the direction of a more global perspective. [italics in original] (Hanvey, 1976, p. 2)

In *An Attainable Perspective*, Hanvey (1976) outlined five dimensions of a global perspective:

(a) perspective consciousness, (b) state of the planet awareness, (c) cross-cultural awareness, (d) knowledge of global dynamics, (e) and awareness of human choices. The dimensions most commonly reported in study and student teaching abroad findings are perspective consciousness

and cross-cultural awareness (described above; see: McGaha & Linder, 2014; Tarrant, Rubin, & Stoner, 2015). Perspective consciousness is described by Hanvey (1976) as follows:

The recognition or awareness on the part of the individual that he or she has a view of the world that is not universally shared, that this view of the world has been and continues to be shaped by influences that often escape conscious detection, and that *others have views of the world that are profoundly different from one's own*. [italics added] (Hanvey, 1976, p. 4)

Understanding that others have views of the world different from one's own is not an attribute that comes naturally to all (Deardorff, 2009). PSTs gain firsthand knowledge of multiple perspectives through international experiences.

Seeking a global perspective. Both study and student teaching abroad programs can support experiences that promote global perspectives in students. Merryfield (1997) and Cushner (2007) posited that international experiences can result in more globally- and internationally-minded teachers. Merryfield (1997) argued that there are multiple reasons to support global education in classrooms and the global education of teacher candidates:

Teachers who have experienced another culture are more likely to perceive the power and potential of being connected to another part of the world and are also more likely to find ways in their daily instruction to teach local/global interconnectedness and perspective consciousness to their students. (p. 10)

Cushner (2007) argued that enhancing the intercultural development of teachers is best achieved through “direct intercultural immersion experience like that which occurs during overseas student teaching” (p. 28). He argued that impactful student teaching abroad programs result in the development of empathy, self-confidence, efficacy, increased global mindedness, and intercultural sensitivity. Some student teachers, he suggested, may only achieve a more open mind towards teaching students who differ from them after engaging in experiential learning in an intercultural setting (Cushner, 2007). The findings of Merryfield (1997) and Cushner (2007), suggest that student teaching abroad can result in multicultural teachers.

Alfaro (2008) echoes the findings of Cushner (2007) and Merryfield (1997) that some teacher candidates may not be able to think critically about their own approach to education and include multiple perspectives in their instruction until they have an international teaching experience. Alfaro (2008) analyzed the international teaching experiences of four participants in Mexico and identified five themes: teaching from the heart, cultural experience of difference, negotiation of difference, transformation of cultural and intercultural phenomena, and multicultural inclusive pedagogy. Specifically, within multicultural inclusive pedagogy, Alfaro (2008) concluded that “candidates transformed their teaching practices from a mono-lingual, mono-cultural perspective to a multilingual, multicultural perspective to being inclusive and teaching from a responsive pedagogical multicultural perspective of multiple realities” (p. 24). Participants recognized the significance of language as a component of the intercultural experience and thereby recognizing the importance of supporting multiple language fluency in their classrooms (Byram, 2012; Fonseca-Greber, 2010). As candidates taught in Mexico, they were exposed to the perspectives of individuals often excluded from U.S.-centric instruction (Alfaro, 2008). It is possible that these teacher candidates could have gained a global perspective from continued coursework and internships in the U.S., but living within another culture and coming to understand this culture in relation to one’s own worldview seems to have solidified a global perspective in the teaching candidates who participated in the international teaching experience studied by Alfaro (2008).

Slapac and Navarro’s (2013) study of PSTs living and working in South Korea and China mirrors Alfaro’s (2008) findings that teaching in an international setting can result in personal and professional growth, including global self-awareness. Slapac and Navarro (2013) conducted an extensive qualitative study of teacher candidates working and living abroad. They recorded

growth in global awareness (Slapac & Navarro, 2013), but the conditions that made that growth possible must be considered. Prior to the study, the participants may have already possessed an open mind towards diverse populations, and they may have been pre-disposed to challenge themselves during the international experience (Slapac & Navarro, 2013). The two programs studied by Slapac and Navarro (2013)—teaching abroad programs in South Korea and one in China—were highly competitive and may have selected individuals who were already globally aware. Nevertheless, Slapac and Navarro (2013) concluded that international teaching programs are valuable for promoting students’ global awareness and can “provide education students with a strategic way to open new understandings and perspectives on teaching/learning processes in culturally and linguistically diverse settings” (p. 11). Slapac and Navarro’s (2013) use of focus group interviews, blogs, journals, and coursework assignments provides a more in-depth view of the types of experiences and interactions that resulted in the teacher candidates’ growth than do studies utilizing pre- and post-questionnaires only (see: Anderson, et al., 2006).

In their study of a short-term study abroad program in Bangladesh, Gambino and Hashim (2016) recommended that programs require student reflective essays and genuine dialogue with host country nationals to “provide students with significant opportunities to deepen their understanding of themselves as citizens with local, national, and global responsibilities” (p. 16). Although their findings report successful use of reflective essays during a short-term student teaching abroad program, Gambino and Hashim (2016) cautioned that not all aspects of global awareness can be learned from one short-term experience.

Respect for English Language Learners

Another significant outcome of student teaching abroad is increased respect and empathy for ELLs in the United States. This outcome is more likely to occur when teacher candidates work and live in countries where English is not the primary language. In these settings,

individuals may struggle with the native language and can be forced to find other means of communication (Henry, 2007; Jiang & DeVillar, 2011; Medina, Hathaway, & Pilonieta, 2015). According to Jiang and DeVillar (2011), individuals often feel alienated when they cannot communicate effectively; the experience of struggling to communicate, however, may produce empathy and “a more positive attitude towards teaching ELLs” (Henry, 2007; Jiang & DeVillar, 2011; Medina et al., 2015). Participants may empathize more with their ELLs because they have actually experienced communication difficulties themselves.

Jiang and DeVillar (2011) concluded that students who participated in international experiences in non-English speaking countries gained more confidence in their teaching ability and a “positive attitude change toward second-language use in their classrooms” (p. 56). Additionally, participants in their study reported learning more about themselves and appreciating multiculturalism more (Jiang & DeVillar, 2011). Jiang and DeVillar (2011) included 13 participants, seven of whom studied in Belize, a country with English as the official language. Three of the seven individuals who studied in Belize did not report a positive attitude change towards second-language usage whereas participants who studied in China or Mexico indicated a positive adjustment (Jiang & DeVillar, 2011). There are many reasons the three individuals in Belize did not report a positive attitude change towards ELLs; one reason could relate to participants’ ability to use English and thereby communicate and navigate the country comfortably (Jiang & DeVillar, 2011). By contrast, participants who did not speak or read the language in their country of study increased their empathy for their future ELLs (Jiang & DeVillar, 2011). Therefore, studying in a country that does not have English as the official language may be more beneficial insofar as it fosters more respect and empathy for ELLs in the U.S. than do international placements to English-speaking countries.

Medina, Hathaway, & Pilonieta (2015) echoed the findings of Jiang and DeVillar (2011). Medina et al. (2015) used transformative learning theory to study their participants' feelings of being an outsider and their perception changes through the course of an eight-week study abroad experience to Germany. Unlike participants in Jiang and DeVillar's (2011) study, participants in Medina, et al.'s (2015) study did not teach in international schools; instead, they completed methods coursework and visited German schools. Findings from this study indicated participants gained an understanding and knowledge of ELLs and subsequently developed empathy and advocacy, even though they did not work in German schools (Medina et al., 2015). Similar to the experiences of participants in Jiang and DeVillar's (2011) study, participants in Medina et al.'s (2015) study felt like outsiders when they could not speak the language, leading them to reflect on what it must be like to be an ELL in the United States. When a culture gap is present, especially regarding language, participants experience dilemmas and are more likely to undergo perspective transformations.

Content area teachers are not the only type of student teacher that can benefit from a short-term student teaching abroad experience. Henry (2007) concluded that future art educators teaching in Italian elementary schools gained confidence in teaching ELLs in the U.S. through their experiences in Italy. Participants in Henry's (2007) study taught art lessons; while important information was translated from English to Italian, participants developed techniques to communicate their instructions, such as using visual references. More importantly, participants in this study realized that "lessons involving higher-level thinking skills could be successfully taught despite the language barrier" (Henry, 2007, p. 36).

The purposes of these studies (Henry, 2007; Jiang & DeVillar, 2011; Medina et al., 2015) were not to study second-language acquisition or fluency in participants. Only Henry's (2007),

study focused on understanding the difficulties of teaching ELL students in the U.S. Yet all three studies supported the use of international student teaching experiences in fostering empathy and respect for the linguistically diverse students that PSTs will most likely teach as in-service teachers (Henry, 2007; Jiang & DeVillar, 2011; Medina et al., 2015).

Study Abroad and ICC

Previous research on teachers' and teacher candidates' ICC levels has revealed that many educators either do not have the attitudes to support ICC or they are not receiving adequate preparation in their teacher education program (Cushner & Mahon, 2009). Pederson (1997) even revealed that K-12 students were more interculturally sensitive than their teachers and teacher candidates (as cited in Cushner & Mahon, 2009). Yet it is difficult for teacher education programs to focus on ICC development given accreditation demands and state regulated teacher education curricula (Cushner & Mahon, 2009). One way to introduce teacher candidates to intercultural development is through experiential experiences or field placements outside of their own culture (Merryfield, 2000; Cushner & Mahon, 2009; Cushner, 2007).

Studies that specifically explore teacher candidates' understanding of ICC are not readily available. Two studies (Akpinar & Ünalı, 2014; Leutwyler & Meierhans, 2016) offer opposing views on PSTs' understanding and development of ICC. Akpinar and Ünalı (2014) used a mixed method approach to study the impact of an "academic study visit" on the ICC development of two groups of participants representing different disciplines (p. 1158). Leutwyler and Meierhans (2016) used quantitative methods to statistically compare how participation in an international student exchange program led to developments of "teaching-specific competencies" (e.g.: self-efficacy, flexibility, motivation to teach) compared to students who stayed at the home university (p. 120).

Akpinar and Ünalı (2014) concluded that science teachers showed more growth in ICC (including knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness) than the foreign language teachers; nevertheless, both sets showed significant gains in self-awareness. To measure growth, Akpınar and Ünalı (2014) used a 54-question pre- and post-questionnaire with Likert-style questions covering the components of ICC listed above. Interviews with participants served as a type of reflection and were therefore used to analyze participants' understanding of ICC development (Akpınar & Ünalı, 2014). For example, one question asked the participants the following: "To what extent did you develop these abilities? Why or why not?" (Akpınar & Ünalı, 2014, p. 1161). This mixed method approach allowed Akpınar and Ünalı (2014) to conclude that studying abroad did have a significant impact on participants' development of ICC, including the following life skills: "appreciation for others, open-mindedness, self-knowledge," "a non-prejudicial attitude, patience, understanding, reasoning, self-development, and independence" (p. 1162). Participants showed gains in ICC development, but the degree of development was not clear (Akpınar & Ünalı, 2014). Participants made significant gains in self-awareness but not as much in attitudinal changes (Akpınar & Ünalı, 2014). Akpınar and Ünalı (2014) called for more research on the development of ICC characteristics.

In contrast to the conclusions drawn by Akpınar and Ünalı (2014), Leutwyler and Meierhans (2016) concluded that intercultural competencies related to teaching, such as self-efficacy and motivation, are not significantly developed during an overseas teaching experience as compared to remaining at a home institution. Leutwyler and Meierhans (2016) claimed that previous studies on the impact of student teaching abroad on student teachers' self-development have been overly glorified and have not been methodologically sound since previous studies largely rely on self-reported data. Results from their statistical analysis of the pre- and post-

questionnaires indicated that there was “no significant difference ... regarding the teaching-specific self-efficacy beliefs and the motivation to teach” between the experimental group (studying abroad) and the control group (staying at home university; Leutwyler & Meierhans, 2016, p. 122). Both the experimental and the control groups maintained high levels of self-efficacy specifically in relation to teaching culturally diverse students. Ultimately, Leutwyler and Meierhans (2016) concluded that “the results of the longitudinal analyses suggest that participating in an exchange programme [sic] does not show, generally, any effect on the discussed competencies and attitudes” of ICC (p. 124). The authors do admit that a limitation of a quantitative study is the lack of nuanced data to explain statistical findings, and they acknowledged that there is potential for development during international exchanges; however, program coordinators, they argued, need to specifically design program components to support participants and foster ICC development (Leutwyler and Meierhans, 2016).

Leutwyler and Meierhans’s (2016) findings and conclusions contradict those of many of the studies discussed in this literature review, including Clarke, Flaherty, Wright, and McMillen (2009) who used the Intercultural Sensitivity Index (Olson & Kroeger, 2001) as a post-test (no pre-test was given) to measure differences between two groups of marketing students: an experimental group that traveled to Belgium and a control group that remained at the home university. Clarke et al. (2009) concluded that students who studied abroad showed gains in global awareness and self-efficacy compared to the control group. Leutwyler and Meierhans (2016) have called for researchers to reexamine how they study the impact of student teaching abroad experiences on teacher candidates. The main limitations of previous studies noted by Leutwyler and Meierhans (2016) are their reliance on participant self-reported data and retrospective data, many times in the form of a questionnaire sent out months or years after

participants return from their international experience, leading to “hindsight bias” (p. 129). Very few studies on the impact of student teaching abroad, and specifically studies related to the development of ICC, collect data before, during, and after international sojourns. Many of the previous studies that have relied on self-reported data have not considered that participants may not possess the intercultural maturity to know what they have learned or to know what they do not know (Leutwyler & Meierhan, 2016). My study contributes to the larger body of literature by collecting qualitative data before, during, and after an international study abroad program and specifically asking participants to reflect on their own knowledge and definition of ICC at multiple stages.

Conceptual Framework

For this dissertation, I employed a framework of ICC characteristics (Bennett, 2009), the developmental model of ICC (Deardorff, 2006), and transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000) to interpret the process of developing ICC. In this section, I first present a definition of ICC that will be used throughout this dissertation, and I discuss different models for conceptualizing ICC as well as issues with assessing ICC. Second, I present transformative learning theory as an analytical lens. I outline the history of transformative learning theory, including critiques of the theory. I connect transformative learning to ICC. Finally, I evaluate studies that have used transformative learning theory in study abroad.

This conceptual framework was instrumental to my study because it explores how participants processed their intercultural interactions in Germany and developed their definition of ICC. By analyzing the cases in this study through this conceptual framework, I add to the body of literature on understanding the transformative potential in student teaching abroad programs to foster interculturally competent teachers.

Intercultural Competence

There is no consensus among intercultural scholars regarding a definition of ICC (Deardorff, 2006). Intercultural refers to the interactions between two or more individuals from different cultures (Bennett, 2009) where culture is defined as the “values, beliefs, and norms held by a group of people,” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 247). ICC has been loosely defined as the knowledge, skills, and behaviors one must possess to effectively interact with individuals from another culture (Deardorff, 2006, 2008; Fantini, 2009).

Deardorff (2006) wanted intercultural scholars to reach a consensus regarding a definition of ICC, so she designed her seminal research to achieve that end. She polled administrators from U.S. institutions known for internationalization strategies as well as intercultural scholars with international reputations. Deardorff’s (2006) research was thorough; she used both a questionnaire and Delphi study to gather data. However, her findings indicated that identifying a concrete definition of ICC is almost impossible (Deardorff, 2006). Participants in the study settled on a broad and vague definition of ICC as “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes,” but they were unable to be more specific (Deardorff, 2006, pp. 247-48). Attempts by other scholars (e.g., Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009) to identify specific factors of ICC have resulted in long lists of characteristics, but these lists are ultimately problematic because no one person can conceivably embody all of the characteristics listed. Deardorff (2006) concluded that the following elements and characteristics are essential for developing ICC:

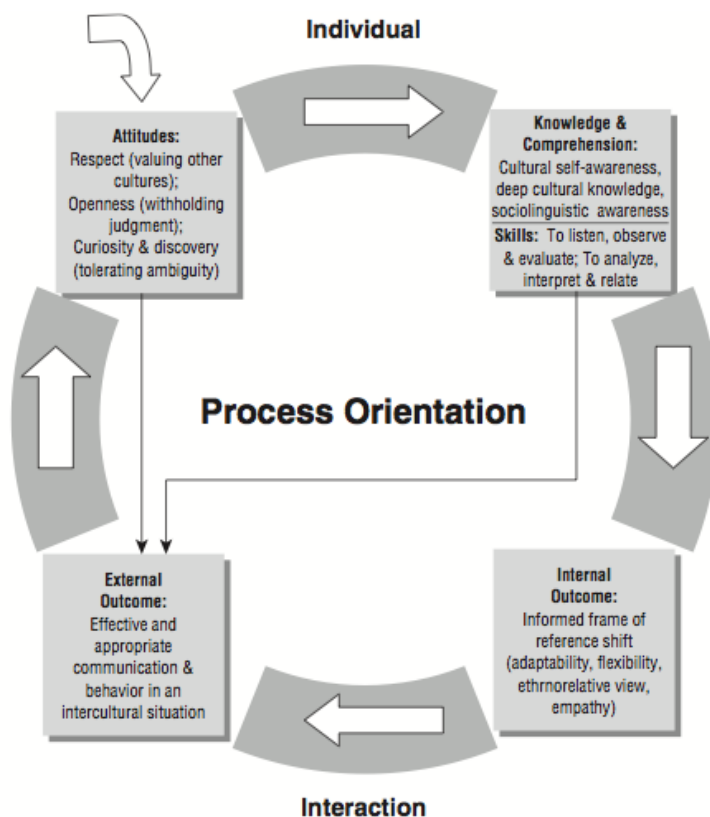
- skills to analyze, interpret, and relate, as well as skills to listen and observe
- the ability to understand others’ worldviews

- development of personal attributes, including curiosity, general openness, and respect for other cultures. (Deardorff, 2006)

Findings also show that no one component (such as knowledge) completely characterizes ICC (Deardorff, 2006).

There are different models used to conceptualize the characteristics essential in ICC (see Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). For the purposes of this dissertation, I used Deardorff's (2006) developmental process model of ICC (see Figure 2.1) to show the influence of knowledge and skills, in combination with one's attitude, in yielding a path towards shifting frames of reference internally that "enhance empathy, ethnorelativity, and adaptability" (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 32).

Figure 2.1 *Process Model of Intercultural Competence*



Note: Deardorff's (2006, p. 256)

This model “depicts the complexity of acquiring intercultural competence in outlining more of the movement and process orientation that occurs between various elements” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 257). Deardorff’s (2006) model best outlines the path to achieving a successful intercultural interaction, and the stages of development. Another model, Deardorff’s (2006) pyramid model, identifies the foundational values necessary for ICC and how these skills build upon each other to culminate in desired external outcomes, such as effective communication in intercultural settings (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Although Deardorff’s (2006) pyramid model provides a linear visualization of the stages of ICC development, Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) argue that compositional models lack specific criteria or outcomes necessary to identify proficiency in ICC. Also, a model with linear structure may erroneously imply the ICC development must progress in a hierarchical manner.

However, Deardorff’s (2006) developmental process model does not show the process that an individual must traverse to obtain the required characteristics to be effectively intercultural. Transformative learning is one theory that can be used to understand that process (Cranton, 2006). Both ICC and transformative learning theory examine frame of reference shifts; frame of reference shifts transform a person’s worldview, and they are required for one to be considered interculturally competent (Taylor, 1994a, 1994b).

Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning theory⁵ will be used to analyze if and how participants, as individual cases, underwent a change in meaning perspective during a short-term international experience. A meaning perspective is the cultural lens through which a person views all new experiences, and a person’s meaning perspective (Mezirow, 1978) or frame of reference

⁵ Mezirow (1978, 1991, 1997) developed transformative learning theory when studying women who made the choice to return to the workforce after an extended time away (Baumgartner, 2012; Kitchenham, 2008).

(Mezirow, 1997) is shaped by past experiences (Mezirow, 1978, 1999). Therefore, transformative learning theory explains how new experiences in a person's life are processed and appropriated (Taylor, 2008). According to the theory, transformative learning occurs when an experience of some life event—a crisis, dilemma, or loss—alters how the person sees the world (Mezirow, 1991). Mezirow (1978) theorized that disorienting experiences force people to reflect upon their own meaning perspectives.

For a learning experience to be transformative and to alter a person's frame of reference, two things must occur: reflection and discourse (Taylor, 2008). First, the individual experiencing a life-altering event must reflect on what is happening, and secondly, that person must engage in critical reflective discourse regarding the event (Taylor, 2008). Reflective discourse happens when people first assess why they think the way they do and then investigate alternative perspectives (Mezirow, 2012). Engaging in these two practices allows individuals to reflect upon what they have experienced and then adapt to whatever change is taking place (Mezirow, 1997), a point Mezirow (2012) explains aptly in his recent research:

Transformation theory's focus is on how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others – to gain greater control over our lives as socially responsible, clear-thinking decision makers. (p. 76)

Using this theory has allowed me to analyze the process whereby participants have situated their intercultural interactions and to deduce whether they have been transformed.⁶

⁶ The word *transformation* or *transformative* is used frequently in study abroad literature. According to Cranton and Taylor (2012), Brookfield (2000) says that transformation has been misused to “refer to any instance in which reflection leads to a deeper, more nuanced understanding of assumptions” (as cited in Cranton & Taylor, 2012, p. 10). Newman (2011) questions the difference between transformation and good teaching (as cited in Cranton & Taylor, 2012, pp. 10-11). For the purposes of this dissertation, *transformation* or *transformative* refers to cases when individuals have reflected on their own actions, worldviews, and assumptions and then acted in some way to alter their actions based on newly acquired knowledge.

Evolution of transformative learning theory. Transformative learning theory has evolved significantly since its inception in the 1970s (Baumgartner, 2012; Kitchenham, 2008). Initially, Mezirow (1978) conceived of nine phases that people must traverse to transform their meaning perspective after a disorienting dilemma (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 *Mezirow's Initial Phases of Transformation*

1. A disorienting dilemma	6. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles.
2. Self-examination	7. Planning a course of action and acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans.
3. A critical assessment of sex-role assumptions and a sense of alienation from taken-for-granted social roles and expectations.	8. Provisional trying of new roles.
4. Relating one's discontent to a current public issue	9. Reintegration into society on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective.
5. Exploring options for new ways of living.	

Note: Taken from Baumgartner, 2012, p. 101.

In developing the early iterations of transformative learning theory, Mezirow (1978) was influenced by the work of Kuhn and Freire (Kitchenham, 2008), and he was particularly taken with Freire's ideas of conscientization and the "emphasis on developing a consciousness that has the power to form reality" (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 107; see Mezirow, 1978). In the 1980s, Mezirow expanded the number of phases to 10 (see Table 2.2) and used the work of Jürgen Habermas on critical reflection to expand transformative learning theory (Baumgartner, 2012).

In the 1990s, Mezirow continued to refine his definition of reflection (Baumgartner, 2012) and modified his phases to include negotiating relationships (Kitchenham, 2008). Mezirow (1991) defined reflection as "the process of critically assessing the content, process, and premise of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience" (as cited in Baumgartner, 2012, p. 105). Mezirow also added that the individual must not only practice

critical reflection but also participate in critical discourse with others (Kitchenham, 2008; Baumgartner, 2012). In addition to critically evaluating their own assumptions self-reflectively, individuals seeking a transformative learning experience must also engage in dialogue with others whose perspectives differ from their own (Mezirow, 1991).

Table 2.2 *Phases of Transformative Learning*

1. A disorienting dilemma	6. Planning a new course of action
2. Self-examination with feelings of guilt and shame.	7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans.
3. A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, and psychic assumptions.	8. Try new roles and assess feedback.
4. Relating one's discontent to current public issues and that the problem is shared with others.	9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships.
5. Exploring options for new roles and relationships.	10. Reintegration into society on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective.

Note: Taken from Mezirow (1991, 2000)

Differences in the two tables include the addition of feelings of guilt and shame listed in number two and the opportunity to assess feedback in number eight (Mezirow, 1991, 2000) in Table 2.2.

In the 2000s, Mezirow introduced the idea that meaning perspectives are frames of reference comprised of a person's habits of mind and points of view (Kitchenham, 2008).

Mezirow further claimed that individuals can change their points of view by seeing the points of view of others (Kitchenham, 2008).

Critiques of transformative learning theory. Taylor (1997) argued that transformative learning theory did not include all elements that could lead to perspective transformation, including the context of situations and intense emotions such as anger. Others criticized transformative learning for being too cognitive and rational, criticisms that Mezirow ultimately acknowledged (Baumgartner, 2012; Mälkki, 2010). According to Taylor (1997), Mezirow's theory overlooks the power of "trust, friendship, and support" in relationships, qualities that can

contribute to a transformation (p. 49). Such criticism did push Mezirow to rethink his conceptualization of transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2000), although the basis of the theory remained unchanged.

As evidenced above, transformative learning theory has changed over the years. Many of the changes reflect Mezirow's acknowledgement of criticisms of the theory, most notably that transformative learning theory was too focused on individual transformation and did not promote social action (Baumgartner, 2012; Collard & Law, 1989). Mezirow responded to criticism about the underrepresentation of social action in his theory by saying that transformative learning theory "is a foundation for learning how to take social action" (as cited in Baumgartner, 2012, p. 110). Mezirow established that people seeking to re-integrate into society must first understand their own position or assumption, reflect on the assumption, gain new knowledge about the previous assumption, build competence and self-assurance concerning new knowledge and worldviews, and plan how to take new actions. Reorientation, he argued, must precede social action.

Transformative learning theory in practice. Transformative learning theory has been used by a number of study and student teaching abroad projects to discern if programs have promoted a transformation in participants (Dunn, Dotson, Cross, Kesner, and Lundahl, 2014; Kambutu and Nganga, 2008; Trilokekar and Kukar, 2011). In the following sections I will review studies that have used transformative learning theory.

In their study of two international teaching programs, Trilokekar and Kukar (2011) used transformative learning theory to identify what, if any, "disorienting or discomforting experiences" the PSTs had and how the participants reflected upon those experiences (p. 1142). Using questionnaires and interviews, the authors selected five cases to study; the cases were

drawn from a pool of 19 former PSTs who completed an international experience. Trilokekar and Kukar (2011) reported that in each of the five cases participants experienced transformative moments, usually relating to race. Regarding reflection, each of the five participants kept a journal as part of their course requirements (Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011). Participants who reported that they had not thought about their race or identity prior to traveling abroad reported that a disorienting experience made them consider the concept: when they experienced racism, or were given special treatment because they were White, they began to reflect on what it meant to be Asian or Canadian (Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011). Through their experiences, these individuals began to change their perspectives and become more interculturally competent (Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011). Despite all participants acknowledging transformative experiences (disorienting dilemmas), not all participants were able to develop new frames of reference (Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011).

Although Trilokekar & Kukar (2011) show how transformative learning theory can be used to evaluate a study abroad program, this project had several limitations. Participants in this study were polled several years after their experience (Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011). Moreover, asking individuals to self-reflect on experiences after the fact may result in skewed findings (Leutwyler & Meierhan, 2016). To make the case for transformative learning theory stronger, Trilokekar and Kukar should have conducted focus groups and/or interviews before, during, and after the international travel in addition to observations of the PSTs in their host country. Their procedure would also have benefited from including informal interviews with people from the host country who had observed the PSTs' behavior and reaction to the disorienting experiences.

Another study that utilized transformative learning theory was Kambutu and Nganga's (2008) study of pre-service and in-service teachers during a short-term international experience

that took place during summer break. Kambutu and Nganga (2008) conducted narrative research of pre- and post-surveys with follow-up interviews of 12 educators who traveled to Kenya. Participants in this summer trip were not exposed to the same level of disequilibrium as participants in international experiences who lived and worked with their host community, even for short time periods. Despite participants reporting disorienting experiences, Kambutu and Nganga's (2008) findings suggested that participants did not progress in their degrees of ICC from the pre- and post-tests. Future studies of short-term international experiences that use this study as a model should intentionally provide participants with opportunities to experience transformative moments and opportunities to reflect on what they have experienced. In so doing, those programs may have more success in altering participants' frames of reference, thereby potentially increasing participants' ICC.

Unlike Trilokekar & Kukar (2011) and Kambutu and Nganga (2008) Dunn, Dotson, Cross, Kesner, and Lundahl (2014) compared two PST study abroad programs using transformative learning theory for each. One program was short term and the other was long term, and each had a different focus. The longer semester study abroad program focused on enabling PSTs to engage with local students and colleagues (Dunn et al., 2014). The short-term program (3 weeks) challenged students to think critically about the local/global connection (Dunn et al., 2014). Results from both programs indicate that students experienced transformative learning, but the authors concluded that future programs should share one focus (Dunn et al., 2014). Nevertheless, participants in both programs experienced disorienting dilemmas, reflected on these experiences critically (through assignments), and discussed changes with others. Participants traversed Mezirow's (1991) phases of transformation in what Dunn et al. (2014) called "going global" (p. 297). Significant to participants' transformations in this

study was their development of a “peer community” to help them navigate intercultural settings (p. 300).

Summary

Using transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1976, 1997, 1991, 2000; Taylor, 1994a, 1994b, 2008) in combination with Deardorff’s (2006) process model of ICC and Bennett’s (2008) characteristics of ICC, this dissertation hopes to expand the understanding of ICC development during a short-term student teaching abroad experience. Future research can analyze participants’ understanding of ICC during a short-term student teaching abroad experience using a modified version of Mezirow’s (1991) 10 phases (to be discussed in Chapter 6).

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

This dissertation is a descriptive, exploratory collective case study (Stake, 2000; Yin, 2014) of pre-service teachers (PSTs) who participated in a student teaching abroad program through a large university in the Southeastern United States (Mountain View University). This chapter provides information on the research methodology, participants, and data collection and data analysis procedures. A more detailed context of the research setting is provided in Chapter 4. This chapter will conclude with a statement of my positionality with regard to this study.

Qualitative Methods and Collective Case Studies

The purpose of this study is to explore if and how student teachers develop an understanding of intercultural competence (ICC) during a one-month international experience. Qualitative methods are most suitable for this study. Qualitative methods allowed me to understand the experience of my participants by focusing on their own thoughts and prioritizing their voices. In essence, qualitative research is the study of people and how they come to understand the world around them (Merriam, 1998). Instead of relying on numbers and statistics, qualitative researchers rely on observations, interviews, and their interpretation of the data to understand the phenomenon of interest (Merriam, 1998). In this study, the phenomenon being studied is the understanding of ICC.

Collective Case Study

For the purposes of this dissertation, a collective case study (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2000) was best suited. A collective case study is a joint study of multiple instrumental cases that the researcher believes will lead to “better theorizing about a still larger collection of cases” (Stake, 2000, p. 437). Each PSTs’ experience student teaching abroad equals one case. One case would have produced a singular narrative of the student teaching abroad experience; I would have data on one person’s understanding of ICC and whether that person’s experiences in Germany amounted to transformative learning. By contrast, studying multiple cases, multiple people experiencing the same phenomena, allowed me to conduct cross-case analysis in search of commonalities, differences and/or generalizations (Goddard, 2010). Collective case studies all have the same research questions (Goddard, 2010). The individuals are the cases and they are bound together by the study abroad program.

In collective case studies, the cases should be similar (Stake, 2006). In this dissertation, the cases are similar in that each participant was a student of a large public university’s School of Education teacher preparation program. Each individual participated in a university led student teaching abroad program during the last month of his or her student teaching practicum and each had access to the same pack of pre-departure materials and organized experiences in Germany.

Participants in this study were from several programs within the School of Education (Mountain View University-BEST,⁷ Early Childhood, Middle Grades, and Master of Arts in Teaching). Each participant was treated as an individual case, but collectively the four cases provided a more generalizable understanding of PSTs’ experiences teaching overseas and their development of ICC (Stake, 2006). Through these cases, I learned what kinds of experiences

⁷ Mountain View University – BEST program is a four-year degree plus one year licensure program for undergraduate students in STEM.

affected the development of ICC in PSTs and what types of experiences led to transformative learning during a short-term program.

Design of the Study

Participant Access and Selection

The student teaching abroad program was available to undergraduate seniors and master's candidates in the School of Education completing their full-time student teaching practicum during the Spring 2016 semester. Out of 89 students invited to apply, only 7 committed. I contacted the then program director, Friedrich, in August 2015 and was allowed access to the first pre-departure meeting held in December 2015. At that time I introduced myself to the student teachers, explained the goals and aims of the project, and reiterated the voluntary nature of this project. After receiving approval from the Internal Review Board (IRB), official recruitment of participants began in January 2016.

Jack, a doctoral student in Curriculum and Instruction, assisted with participant recruitment. Potential participants received a recruitment flyer via email and were asked to respond to Jack if they were interested in volunteering for this project or if they had any questions. I could not recruit directly due to a potential breach of power: I was the acting University Supervisor⁸ for two of the potential participants. Upon receipt of an interest email, Jack emailed an electronic adult consent form (see Appendix B) via Qualtrics. Participants who completed all stages of the research project received a \$20 Amazon gift card. All seven PSTs participating in the program agreed to participate in the research. Six self-identified as female, and one as male. The females were undergraduate students, and the male was a graduate student.

⁸ A University Supervisor is responsible for conducting four official observations of student teachers in their student teaching practicum and, using a rubric and input from the students' cooperating teacher, decide if the PST passes their student teaching practicum.

Unfortunately, due to attrition and incomplete data collection, only four of the seven participants who finished all surveys and attended all interviews in the study abroad program were selected for inclusion in this study. See Table 3.1 for a list of participant information and demographics.

Table 3.1 *Student Teaching Abroad Participants*

	Degree Sought	Area of Concentration	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Gender
Natalie	B.A., Math with a teaching license (MVU-BEST)	Math	22	White	Female
Sophia	B.A., Early Childhood	Reading & Math	22	White	Female
Gabi	B.A., Middle Grades Education	Social Studies & Math	22	White	Female
Bruce	Masters of Arts in Teaching	History	23	White	Male

Below is a brief description of the four participants. I provide the basic information most relevant to this study, including age at time of departure, history of international experiences, expectations for student teaching in Germany, and student teaching placement in Germany. More detailed information about German placement schools will be provided in Chapter 4.

Natalie. Natalie was a 22-year-old White female originally from the Chicago area but a long-time resident in the Southeastern United States. She was a math major getting a license in mathematics education (grades 9-12) as part of the Mountain View University – BEST program. Natalie was quiet and reserved during group interviews and seminars, rarely contributing to group discussions. A self-proclaimed planner and organizer, Natalie liked to be in control of her immediate environment, including her classroom. She had some travel experience outside of the United States prior to student teaching abroad in Germany; she traveled to Italy and Greece on a 10-day family vacation when she was in the 7th grade. Natalie’s goals for student teaching in Germany were to gain new skills in teaching (pedagogy) and to gain “a new perspective on teaching that [she has] not gotten in the United States” (pre-departure questionnaire). In Germany, Natalie was placed at First Gymnasium with fellow student teacher Gabi. They shared the same classes.

Sophia. Sophia was a 22-year-old White female from the Southeastern United States. She was an Early Childhood Education major, specializing in math and literacy, and was an active participant in the group interviews and seminars. Sophia had traveled internationally prior to Germany, participating in tourist, mission, and educational trips. In June 2015 she traveled to China for a five-week university-sponsored experience where she interned in preschool and kindergarten classes. Her goals for Germany included being more open-minded and reflexive and not entering her experience with preconceived expectations or assumptions (pre-departure questionnaire). In Germany, Sophia was placed in a first-grade class (the equivalent of kindergarten in the United States) in Third Schule on the lower elementary English Immersion campus.

Gabi. Gabi was a 22-year-old White female from the Southeastern United States and a Middle Grades Education major with specializations in social studies and math. Gabi was an active participant in group interviews and seminars and became the focal student in a promotional video sponsored by the University of Germantown.⁹ Gabi had extensive international travel experience prior to participating in the student teaching abroad program, though these family trips and mission/volunteering work were never longer than 10 days. Her goals for Germany included learning more about the German education system, forming relationships, and learning whether or not the problems in the U.S. education system can be “addressed with strategies used in Germany” (pre-departure survey). She also wanted to return to the United States with “hope and ideas” (pre-departure questionnaire). In Germany, Gabi was placed at First Gymnasium with fellow participant Natalie.

⁹ The University of Germantown and its School of Education co-sponsored a video documentary to be made about the Americans coming to Germany in order to raise awareness of the program and to promote the importance of intercultural communication and work between countries and universities.

Bruce. Bruce was a 23-year-old White male from the Southeastern United States. He was a Master of Arts in Teaching Social Studies candidate with an undergraduate degree in history. Bruce was quiet and introverted; however, he participated regularly in group interviews and seminars. Prior to Germany, Bruce had only traveled outside of the United States once: on a day trip to Tijuana, Mexico from San Diego when he was in middle school. His goals for student teaching in Germany included learning more about the German system of education, building networks, and facilitating an international communication project (pre-departure questionnaire). In Germany, Bruce was placed in Second Stadtteilschule where he was the only American student teacher.

Data Collection

Collective case studies do not require a specific type of data collection; researchers use necessary methods and tools depending upon the question(s) being asked (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). I collected data through group interviews, individual re-entry interviews, seminar transcripts, classroom observations, open-ended pre-departure questionnaire, participant journals, program evaluations, and an open-ended reflection questionnaire. These data collection techniques were chosen because they were “likely to (1) elicit data needed to gain understanding of the phenomenon in question, (2) contribute different perspectives on the issue, and (3) make effective use of the time available for data-collection” (Glesne, 2006, p. 36). By collecting data, in the participants’ own words from multiple sources in a variety of contexts, I was able to triangulate the data, thus contributing the validity of the study (Glesne, 2006). In addition to triangulation, this study also included the following verification procedures: member checking and clarification of research bias (Glesne, 2006). See Table 3.2 for a research crosswalk.

Table 3.2 *Research Crosswalk*

	How does a Short-Term Student Teaching Abroad experience inform PSTs' understanding of intercultural competence?	How do PSTs define intercultural competence at various stages of their experience?	How do PSTs describe the student teaching abroad experience with respect to intercultural competence and transformative learning?
Pre-Departure Questionnaire (March 2016)		X	
Group Interview 1 (3/15/16)	X		X
Group Interview 2 (4/21/16)	X	X	X
Field Notes	X		X
Seminar 3 (4/27/16)	X		X
Re-entry Individual Interviews (June 2016)	X	X	X
Daily Journal Entries (April 2016)			X
Program Evaluation (April 2016)			X
Student Teaching Reflection Survey (October 2016)			X

Pilot data. Pilot data included data collected from pre-departure questionnaires and the first group interview (3/15/16). Jack, acting as research assistant, distributed the pre-departure questionnaire electronically and conducted the pre-departure group interview. The pre-departure questionnaire consisted of eight open-ended questions including demographics, travel experience, interactions with individuals from different cultures, and questions pertaining to transformative learning experiences (See Appendix D). Participants were also asked to define ICC. This data, collected before participant departure to Germany, was used in combination with data collected during and after the study abroad experience. Pilot data was used as a baseline to analyze participants' initial definitions of ICC.

Interviews. As my main method of collecting data, I conducted two group interviews and one individual re-entry interview with the participants. These group interviews and individual re-entry interviews were semi-structured in nature, audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim.

Audio files were kept on a secure, password protected server. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, asked to sign an IRB approved consent form, and assured that no identifying information would be used in the written report. See Appendix D for a list of the group interview and individual re-entry interview questions. Each semi-structured group interview took approximately 60 minutes, and individual re-entry interviews lasted between 35 and 70 minutes.

Group interviews. Availability of—and convenience for—participants precipitated the need for group interviews. The first group interview took place during a required pre-departure meeting (3/15/16). Jack and I chose this time for the first group interview because participants were already together for the pre-departure meeting, which were mandatory for participation in the student teaching abroad program. The second group interview, in Germany, took place following a whole group visit to a local school (4/21/16). As stated in Chapter 1, student teachers were geographically located around the suburbs of Germantown and teaching in five different schools. Therefore, the location and timing of the second group interview was largely determined by the availability of the participants.

Group interviews can be advantageous for data collection since they can elicit a large amount of data in a short period of time (Morgan, 1997). Furthermore, group interviews allow participants to interact with each other throughout the discussion (Morgan, 1997). Savicki (2008) argued that group interviews and the interaction between participants can offer opposing viewpoints to a question; that process may evoke more responses from individuals or begin to change the fixed views of some. As Morgan (1997) cautioned, however, group interviews can also silence the voices of some who disagree with more vocal members the focus group. Thus, group interviews could potentially result in conformity of opinions instead of multiple

perspectives. Individual interviews may provide more insight into an individual's attitude towards ICC; however, group interviews do produce rich data (Morgan, 1997).

Group interview 1. The purpose of the first group interview was to establish a baseline of PSTs' definitions of ICC, previous travel experience, and expectations for student teaching in Germany. Jack conducted the interview using a set of IRB approved, semi-structured interview questions. Jack transcribed the interview and provided field notes. In May, upon my return from Germany, Jack and I met to discuss the first interview and field note observations. I asked clarifying questions. Upon receiving the audio file and transcript from the first focus group, I listened to the audio recording while following along with the transcript and made additional notes about group dynamics, tone, and participation.

Group interview 2. I conducted the second group interview in Germany. Consent to audio record and transcribe the interview was obtained from all four participants. This interview focused on PSTs experiences living and teaching in Germany and took place in a public school classroom following a school visit. This group interview, similar to the first, was dominated by several participants; however, all four participated. Each participant expressed his or her own views and interacted with each other when discussing topics such as stereotypes of Germany and Germans and concerns about classroom management. Adding to the richness of the second group interview was a visit to a "refugee class". During the school tour earlier that day, Sophia and Gabi were able to observe a class dedicated to teaching recent immigrants, including many Syrian refugees. This class was designed to accelerate the students' language acquisition in an attempt to integrate recent arrivals into mainstream language classes as soon as possible. Participants were struck by the students in this "refugee class," especially their ability to smile and laugh in the face of many trials and tribulations. For the Americans who observed this class

their experience was pivotal in their understanding of multiple perspectives and ICC. It was here that many experienced a shift in perspective consciousness (Hanvey, 1976, 1982).

Re-entry individual interview. The purpose of the final interview was to give participants an opportunity to reflect on their experience as a whole and how their understanding of ICC did or did not change over time. The four interviews (one for each person) took place in a reserved conference room in a Mountain View University library. Participants were asked to sign a consent to audio record. Interviews took place over a two-week period in June 2016. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Transcriptions and use of quotes. As mentioned previously, audiotapes from group interviews and individual re-entry interviews were transcribed verbatim, including fillers and false starts such as “um,” “ah,” “yea,” “kinda,” and “like”. However, this dissertation is not a discourse analysis and therefore fillers and false starts were removed from participant quotes when they were not essential to the interpretation of the meaning. The most commonly removed words were “um,” “kinda,” and “like.” I used my position as researcher to make decisions about the removal of fillers and false starts. This was done consciously; editorial decisions were made to preserve the readability of relevant quotes (Sandelowski, 1994; Stuckey, 2014).

Classroom observations. Classroom observations took place over four business days in Germany. The purpose of classroom observations in Germany was to corroborate participants’ comments and observations of German classrooms in their journals with reality. I was not allowed to videotape classroom observations in Germany or collect any data on the children. I was only able to observe each participant once and therefore was only able to see Natalie and Gabi in front of the classroom. Bruce attended classes to participate in question and answer sessions and Sophia led her students through a brief version of her students’ morning routine,

although my observation took place in the afternoon. The purpose of observing participants' interactions in German classrooms was two-fold. First, these observations provided additional data about the cases being studied. I was able to see how the participants spoke to others within the school setting. Second, these observations allowed me to corroborate what the participants said in their group interviews and pre-departure questionnaire with what was actually happening in the field.

Reflection survey. In lieu of a fourth round of interviews, I sent out a reflection/follow-up survey in October 2016 to all four participants using the electronic platform Qualtrics. An open-ended survey was used for two reasons. First, I hypothesized that participants who did not elaborate in the group interviews or their individual interview may feel more comfortable answering questions in written form. Secondly, participants were busy first-year teachers and scattered geographically – Gabi is in South Korea, Bruce is in Asheville, NC, Natalie is in Raleigh, NC and Sophia in Brooklyn, NY – thus an online questionnaire was more convenient. Questions in this reflection survey asked participants to reflect on their experiences in Germany and make connections (or not) to their personal and professional lives.

Artifact collection. The final step of data collection was to collect artifacts that participants created during their time in Germany. Artifacts included journal entries, program evaluations (sent by Mountain View University), and transcripts from the third seminar in Germany (4/27/16). Journal reflections were an important part of this experiential process for the participants as they navigated living and teaching in a different culture. All participants were required to write a daily journal for the entire month of April 2016. These reflections were important for the participants to unpack what they saw and heard and to “analyze their development of intercultural competence” (Deardorff, 2008, p. 45). As a method of data

collection, these journals allowed me to analyze the development of participants' ICC over time, and especially during their time in Germany. See Appendix E for a copy of the journal assignment.

Validity. In order to assure the validity and trustworthiness of the data, I employed multiple measures of validity: triangulation, peer review and debriefing, negative case study analysis, clarification of researcher bias, and member checking (Glesne, 2006).

Triangulation. Triangulation is considered to be the “use of multiple data-collection methods, multiple sources, multiple investigators, and/or multiple theoretical perspectives” (Glesne, 2006, p. 37). I employed multiple data-collection methods (listed above) collected over an extended period of time. Statements from pre-departure data were compared with data collected during and after the month in Germany. Likewise, similar questions were asked in all three interviews in order to correlate participants' answers over time and ascertain an accurate understanding of participants' feelings and perceptions.

Peer review and debriefing. Peer review and debriefing is an “external reflection and input on [my] work” (Glesne, 2006, p. 37). I employed several critical friends (Yin, 2014) who listened to my data analysis and reflections on the project. Including my dissertation advisor, these critical friends challenged me to think deeply about my data and to reflect on what I was seeing, or not seeing.

Clarification of researcher bias. Clarification of researcher bias is the researcher's “reflection upon [his/her] own subjectivity and how [he/she] will use and monitor it in [his/her] research” (Glesne, 2006, p. 37). As mentioned earlier in this Chapter, two of the participants in this study were formerly my students. I was aware of their dispositions and proclivities. Therefore, I had to be careful of my own biases for or against these individuals and protect

against unintentional clouding of data collection and analysis. To do this, I checked my notes against participant journals and interview transcripts, reading over statements multiple times to ensure a fair interpretation. Additionally, I relied on member checking to assess the validity of my narratives.

Member checking. Member checking is “sharing interview transcripts, analytical thoughts, and/or drafts of the final report with research participants to make sure you are representing them and their ideas accurately” (Glesne, 2006, p. 38). Participants were given multiple opportunities to review my interpretation of their data and assess for validity. In Germany, they were given a redacted copy of the transcript from the first group interview to read and comment upon. Three participants provided clarifying comments (typically words or phrases that were unclear on the transcript).

For the second round of member checking I compiled a narrative of the experiences of the four participants, Bruce, Natalie, Gabi, and Sophia. These participants were sent copies of their narratives via email between November and December 2016 and asked to comment on the validity of their story. See Appendix F for the member checking email. After subsequent rounds of analysis and revision, I sent Bruce, Natalie, Gabi, and Sophia a second draft of their narratives. Only Natalie’s narrative had changed from my original interpretation. We discussed via email these changes and Natalie concurred with my analysis. Bruce, provided additional information and commentary on my interpretation of his experience. Bruce’s commentary served to not only validate my analysis and findings, but to also check my biases and subjectivity.

Rationale for sending narratives to participants instead of the second and third interview transcripts stems from Doyle’s (2007) argument that when concerned about a participant’s

experience, narratives provide a more accurate representation of interpretation than reviewing transcripts. Doyle (2007) also argued that sending participants their narratives allows them the opportunity to expand upon their story in ways that might enrich the project. Such was the case with Bruce. Finally, Carlson (2010) and Creswell (2009) argued that member checking is best done with polished pieces so that participants do not become preoccupied with grammar and fillers and lose sight of reviewing their testimony. This was the case with all four participants and the first group interview transcript. All four individuals commented on how they sounded when reading the transcript (field notes, 4/21/16) and the majority made marks on their transcripts to remove fillers and false starts.

Data Analysis

Stages of Analysis and Coding

I conducted data analysis and coding in several stages. First I began a comprehensive within-case analysis (Merriam, 1998) of the four cases. I read transcripts and journal entries broadly at first, identifying quotes that seemed significant at that time. Two major themes that emerged from initial analysis and coding: (a) comparing Germany and America and (b) classroom management. During subsequent rounds of analysis and coding I employed a more in-depth exploration of participants' discussions of ICC and cultural interactions.

Codes were created using Bennett's (2008) characteristics of affective, cognitive, and behavioral competencies of ICC. I wanted to code not only how participants defined ICC when asked but also at how they spoke and wrote about encounters with individuals from a different culture.

Finally, data was coded and analyzed for transformative learning. More specifically I analyzed the text for situations of culture shock and/or a disorienting dilemma. Having become more intimately involved with the texts, I was able to interpret the meaning behind text that was

coded as disorienting. I conducted analysis of transformative learning using a modified version of Mezirow's (1997) stages of transformation, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

I used the qualitative software program MAXQDA to assist with data analysis. I imported transcripts, journals, and other text into MAXQDA and applied *A priori* codes across all four cases using the conceptual framework. New codes were added and data chunks with the same code were compared to each other to identify emerging themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glesne, 2006). I wrote analytical memos to help preserve emerging "theoretical notions" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 107). Duplicate codes were collapsed and the most important themes became clear. Finally, I reduced the codebook to include only the most relevant codes for this study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). See Appendix G for an excerpt of the codebook.

In Chapter 5, I will present the narratives of Bruce, Sophia, Natalie, and Gabi and their emergent themes. In Chapter 6, I will present the themes and major findings that emerged from cross-case analysis of the four cases.

Statement of Positionality

I identify as a White, female from eastern North Carolina who attend Mountain View University as an undergraduate and a doctoral student. I have been privileged to see the world in the role both an individual traveler and a teacher supervising high school students. I have traveled extensively outside of the United States beginning when I was 18 years old. My interest in this project stems from my own experiences of living and working in a foreign country for eight weeks when I was 28 years old. At that time, I did not know what it meant to be interculturally competent, but I knew that I was learning about perspective consciousness. I knew that living and working in a foreign country and culture was improving my attitudes, skills, and knowledge. I believe that I experienced transformative learning that helped me become a

better human being and teacher. However, my positive international experiences could bias me to only see the positive and transformative experiences of my participants. To counteract that potential bias, I am specifically including cases that do not support the theory that transformative learning can take place during a short-term student teaching abroad program.

Secondly, I recognize that my position as a supervisor of two of the participants (Bruce and Gabi) could cloud my interpretation of their stories. I minimized this potential bias in three ways: (a) by relying on a research assistant to collect pre-departure data, (b) by assuming complete involvement in the study only after both Bruce and Gabi had passed their student teaching practicum in the United States, and (c) by using the data to check my interpretations against their ideas. On one occasion I was not objective in my interpretation of Bruce's narrative and this was brought to my attention through our member-checking conversations. Subsequently, I revised my interpretation of the data to more accurately represent the participant's experiences.

I acknowledge my positionality and have taken measures through the validity constructs listed earlier in this chapter to safeguard the accuracy of the experiences of all four participants. Although unconscious biases could reduce the validity of my interpretation, I have attempted to accurately portray the experiences of student teachers abroad with regards to the literature surrounding ICC and transformative learning.

Limitations

As with any research project this size, this study is not without limitations. Some of the limitations of this study include sample size, sample demographics, and research setting. The most significant limitation is the small, homogeneous sample size. Although all seven participants agreed to participate in this study, due to attrition only four cases are included in this dissertation. Additionally, all participants identified as White, and only one identified as male.

Finally, the research setting (Germany) could also be considered a limitation, especially since all participants are originally from the United States and there is not a significant culture gap between the U.S. and Germany. However, findings from this study indicate that individuals can achieve a stronger understanding of ICC, and some can even undergo a perspective transformation, in an international setting that is not so culturally distant from the United States.

CHAPTER 4 – CONCEPUTALIZING THE STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

This chapter highlights student teaching abroad program details, including members of administration who were relevant to the Germany program (see Table 4.1) and key program components as it operated in the 2015-2016 academic year. It is important to establish the context of the program because there are many common variables for each case (required program components), but also circumstances unique to each case.

After two years in China, the Mountain View student teaching abroad program shifted to Germany. Mountain View University launched its student teaching abroad program in the spring semester of 2012. Pre-service teachers (PST) traveled to Beijing, China during the month of April in 2012 and 2013 to participate in an internship with a private, English immersion high school. Unfortunately, interest in the Beijing placement began to wane due to the soaring travel costs to China and because the private high school in Beijing could not meet the expectations of the Mountain View program. Although marketed as an English immersion school, the high school in Beijing conducted classes in Chinese more often than not. Also, the Beijing high school was hosting teachers from another American university at the same time the Mountain View PSTs, and the Mountain View students did not feel they were getting the experience they had been promised, and paid for. Therefore, the then program director of international studies at Mountain View University, Friedrich, offered the Dean of the School of Education an alternative – student teaching in Germany. Germany was chosen as a potential site location for future study abroad due to convenience of access. Friedrich, a native of Germany and former teacher in Germantown before he came to work for Mountain View University in the United States, was

certain he could provide Americans with homestays in Germany, a component not offered in the China program. Homestays are a vital component in study abroad immersion programs (Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight, 2004).

Friedrich also used his contacts to locate schools and universities amenable to an exchange program; however, finding exact placement cities in Germany proved initially difficult. According to state board of education laws in 2014, Mountain View student teachers were required to complete 12-14 weeks of a student teaching practicum in U.S. schools.¹⁰ Therefore, students must have successfully completed their practicum before participating in the student teaching abroad program. Participants must also be registered for classes the semester in which they study abroad, thus, April was the only option for students to travel to Germany.

Unfortunately, many schools in Germany close for two weeks in April or March – one to observe the Easter holiday and another for a spring break. Friedrich identified a region in Northern Germany, Germantown, where students only participated in a one week break. Therefore, if Easter fell in April, the American students would only miss one week of school in Germany instead of two. Friedrich contacted Dr. Kurt in the University of Germantown International Office and was subsequently connected with Dr. Michaels, a Professor of Education. They agreed to work with Mountain View University and in 2014, 13 American students interned in schools in districts surrounding Germantown.

The first year of the Germany student teaching abroad program was a success logistically and in participants' evaluations of the program, and so the following year an exchange element was added in which German teacher candidates traveled to the United States in March and interned in schools near Mountain View University. In 2016, the student teaching abroad

¹⁰ This information came from the state Department of Education website, but is not being included because it would break anonymity.

exchange program continued as before. Study abroad recruitment began on the first day of the Fall 2015 semester during an orientation session. Subsequently, coordinators of academic programs within the School of Education also sent program information via email. Only teacher candidates in their final semester of student teaching (undergraduates and MAT candidates) were invited to apply. The deadline to enroll was October 1, 2015. Of 89 eligible teacher candidates, only 7 committed to the program, down from 11 participants the previous year.¹¹ Due to administrative changes at Mountain View University, American participation in the program for 2017 has been temporarily suspended. German teacher candidates will still visit Mountain View University and local schools in March 2017.

Table 4.1 *Administrative Stakeholders in Student Teaching Abroad Program*

	Role & Responsibilities	Home Country
Friedrich	Program Director; Responsible for logistics and communication with Dr. Michaels, Geoff, and Martin; Responsible for pre-departure meetings for American students	United States
Geoff	Residential Coordinator; Responsible for overseeing student homestays and logistics for excursions in Germany; Accompanied students	Germany
Martin	Site Supervisor; Responsible for checking on American PSTs school placements	Germany
Dr. Kurt	International Office at the German University; Responsible for connecting Friedrich and Dr. Michaels and planning excursions/school visits in Germany.	Germany
Dr. Michaels	Professor of Education; Led seminars in Germany	Germany
Mia	German Doctoral Student; Responsible for supervising German teachers in the U.S. and leading seminars in Germany	Germany
Dr. Jones	Led seminars in the U.S. with the German exchange students; Previously traveled to Germany to supervise past American participants	United States
Elizabeth (author)	Researcher; No official connection to exchange program; Observed American PSTs in German schools; Led focus group two and participated in excursions with the group while in Germany.	United States
Jack	Research assistant; Conducted first focus group during the final pre-departure session	United States

Note: Friedrich is originally from Germany, but works and lives in the United States since 2009.

¹¹ The number of eligible teacher candidates at Mountain View University was also lower in 2016 than the number in 2015.

Pre-Departure

In this section I describe the components of the student teaching abroad exchange program that took place in the United States, including pre-departure sessions and the role of German exchange students. During pre-departure sessions Friedrich provided participants with important cultural and logistical information. Additionally, the American participants met their German counterparts who proved to be an important asset in Germany.

Pre-Departure Sessions

Pre-departure sessions were designed to prepare participants for a successful experience in Germany. Friedrich organized a series of five required pre-departure meetings and created a Wiki page to provide participants with the most up-to-date information about their schedule before and during the exchange. The first pre-departure meeting was held in December 2015 and participants received information about purchasing plane tickets and other logistics. The remaining four required pre-departure meetings included information from Mountain View University's study abroad office, lessons in German, and other pertinent information. Participants received no specific instruction in ICC.

Participants expressed that the pre-departure sessions partially prepared them for their month in Germany; however, several participants vocalized a desire for additional information. For example, Gabi stated that the information provided was slightly outdated (such as how to dress as a professional in German schools), and Gabi, Natalie, and Sophia wanted additional language lessons (informal conversations). Bruce wanted more information about the German education system (individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16).

German Exchange Students and the “Buddy” System

A component new to the 2016 student teaching abroad program was the introduction of a “buddy system.” Seven of 12 German participants were paired with an American participant. The remaining five German students were paired with volunteers from the Masters in International Education program at Mountain View University. These pairs became an essential part of the exchange program, especially for the American students. The German teacher candidates visited classes, observed pedagogy, taught at least one lesson to American students, and participated in two seminars led by Dr. Jones. The purpose of these seminars was to provide the opportunity for comparative reflection between the American and German teaching profession. American participants were encouraged to attend these seminars, but not required, therefore attendance was minimal, an unfortunate paradox considering how pivotal the seminars in Germany later were for the Americans and how much the Americans relied on their buddies to be cultural mentors (Bennett, 2008). Once they realized how helpful it was to have someone guide them through foreign situations, the Americans when they were in Germany, realized how much more they could have done for their German buddies in the United States (Sophia, Bruce, Natalie).

Role of the Author

As mentioned in Chapter 3, I initially approached potential study participants during the first required pre-departure meeting in December 2015. I explained the purpose of this research project and outlined the data I would collect. I informed potential participants that their participation was completely voluntary and they could leave the study at any time.

During the second phase of recruitment, Jack, a doctoral student in the School of Education, disseminated a project recruitment flyer via email to seven individuals following the second required pre-departure session (early February 2016). During the Spring 2016 semester, I

was the acting University Supervisor for two of the potential participants and did not want them to see their participation in this dissertation project as imposing on them due to my position of power. Jack managed all communication with participants until April 1, 2016. This included keeping informed consent paperwork and conducting the first group interview and completing its transcriptions. Participation in the student teaching abroad program was contingent on participants successfully passing their student teaching practicum in the United States. Therefore, when the participants left for Germany on April 1, 2016 they had all successfully completed their programs and I was no longer the official University Supervisor for Bruce and Gabi.

As part of phase three of the program, I arrived in Germany on April 14, 2016 to collect data. Over the 10 days I spent in Germany my primary role was as an observer participant (Merriam, 1998). I watched the Americans interact with—or teach—German students, and I participated in several question and answer sessions. I also informally conversed with all the participants, usually over lunch at their school placements, and conducted the second group interview before the participants departed for a weekend excursion to Berlin. I returned to the United States on April 25, 2016 and joined the final seminar in Germany on April 27, 2016 via Skype.

Student Teaching Abroad in Germany

Overview of German Education System

Explaining the German education system is beyond the scope of this chapter and dissertation, but I will provide a brief description of the three-tiered system to provide context for the participants' school placements. Sophia was in a Grundschule school. Natalie and Gabi were in Gymnasiums, and Bruce was in a Gesamtschule. See Figure 4.1 for a visual

representation of the three-tiered system. It should be noted that this is basic research on the German school system and does not take into consideration regional differences.

The German three-tiered system consists of Grundschule (elementary), Secondary I (through grade 9), and Secondary II (through grade 13). Schooling is mandatory from grades 1-9. After grade nine, students may decide to continue to an upper level of secondary schooling or complete three years of a part-time vocational program (Hainmüller, 2003). Preschool (ages 3-5) is voluntary and largely the responsibility of the private sector (Hainmüller, 2003).

Upon completing elementary education, students and their parents choose one of four types of lower secondary education.

- Hauptschule (school for practical education)
- Realschule (school for a mix of practical and liberal education, with the latter being given greater emphasis than the former)
- Gymnasium (school for liberal education and typically college track)
- Gesamtschule (comprehensive school offering practical, liberal, and practical liberal education) (Hainmüller, 2003).

Typically, students attending a Gymnasium are on a college track and will complete their final three years of secondary school at their Gymnasium. Students finishing an upper secondary education receive a “school-leaving certificate.” The certificate qualifies them to pursue either higher education or professional training, but students must pass an *Abitur*, a “university qualifying exam,” before entering higher education (Hainmüller, 2003, pp. 7-8).

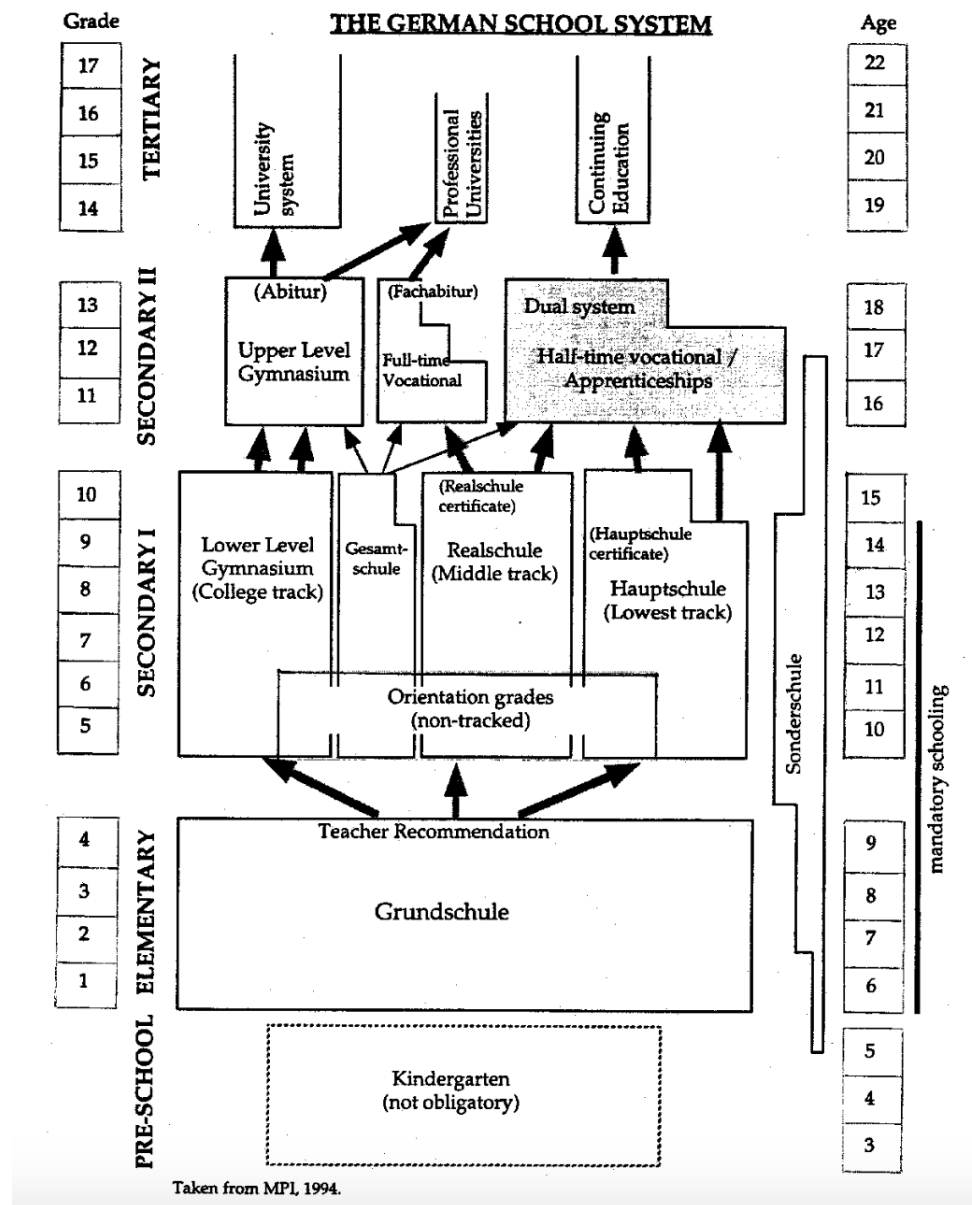
Individual schools and districts in Germany are also assigned a social index based upon the rating of social, cultural, and economic capital and the proportion of residents with migration

background in the district and school's neighborhood.¹² The lower the social, cultural, and economic capital and the higher the migration background of the families the lower the social index. A low social index entitles a school to more financial assistance from the government, usually in the form of technology and/or additional teachers specializing in diversity and inclusion (Schulte, Hartig, & Pietsch, 2014).

School placements for the American PSTs range from schools with a social index of one (Third Schule) to five (First Gymnasium). Therefore, school placements and subsequently housing placements were an independent variable within the context of the study abroad program. Participants lived in neighborhoods close to their schools, so Sophia, who worked in Third Schule, lived in a more diverse neighborhood than Natalie and Gabi, who lived in the most privileged neighborhood.

¹² Social indices range from 1 to 5 with 1 being a low social index. A social index for a neighborhood or district is based upon the social and cultural capital of families living within that district or neighborhood. Social capital includes voter turnout, rate of unemployment, and questionnaires for parents and students (do children spend time with their parents or their peers?). Cultural capital includes number of books in the household and educational attainment of parents. Finally, country of birth and primary language spoken at home are considered (Schulte, et al., 2014).

Figure 4.1 *The German School System* (Vocational Education, n.d.)



Germantown

Germantown is a port city in Northern Germany consisting of 7 districts and 16 states. Germantown has a long history of being a free and independent state before joining the German Federation in 1815. Today Germantown is an independent Federal State within Germany. This history of freedom is an essential component of Germantown culture – from religion, to

education, to political affiliation. The total population of Germantown is estimated at 1.8 million.

School Placements

American participants were placed in German schools based on areas of interest and the availability of mentor-teachers and host families. The schools were in suburban areas outside of Germantown proper albeit within Germantown districts. Participants were initially concerned that they were not closer to central Germantown because they felt the program had been marketed as “Student Teaching in Germantown,” not “Student Teaching in a Suburb.” Public transportation was available, however, students often had to leave an hour in advance of the meeting time to get to the University of Germantown and to other school visits on time. School placements were set by Friedrich, Dr. Kurt, and Dr. Michaels. An exception was made for Sophia. She was given a choice between a school that was farther from her American colleagues but more progressive and innovative (see Third Schule), or a school geographically closer to her friends but not as innovative. Friedrich felt that it was important for Sophia to have a voice in this decision. Ultimately she chose the school that was more progressive and innovative. Other participants were not given the same voice because there was a limited number of site placements for middle school and high school teachers. Therefore several American PSTs were placed at the same school with the same mentor-teacher. See Table 4.2 for a list of American PSTs and their placements.

Table 4.2 *American PSTs and German Teaching Placements*

	German School Placement and Grade Levels	Student Teacher Role/Responsibilities	Distance to Germantown
Bruce	Second Stadtteilschule (5-13)	Undefined; Taught two classes on a global connection project	10.2 miles
Sophia	Third Schule (1-4)	Defined; Taught science and PE to two first grade classes	7.2 miles
Natalie	First Gymnasium (5-13)	Defined, but flexible; Co-taught 3-4 classes (mostly random English lessons)	11.6 miles
Gabi	First Gymnasium (5-13)	Defined, but flexible; Co-taught 3-4 classes (mostly random English lessons)	11.6 miles

In the following sections I will provide a brief overview of school placement, student teacher responsibilities, and describe the participants' homestays.

Student teacher responsibilities. Professors at the School of Education in Mountain View University broadly outlined roles and responsibilities for student teachers at their German placement schools. All final semester teacher candidates must take a second methods course in addition to their student teaching practicum. Although the participants in this exchange program had already successfully completed their student teaching practicum, they were missing the final month of their methods course. Therefore, professors of these methods courses collaborated to create an assignment that participants must complete in order to receive a passing grade in the class. This included keeping a daily electronic journal and answering four pre-determined questions. According to this assignment, participants were to “observe classroom teaching, lead or assist in leading units of study in agreement with [their] cooperating teacher, and take an active role in professional learning communities” (program assignment). Sophia received communication regarding her teaching assignments from her mentor-teacher prior to arriving in Germany. It is unclear why Sophia was the only participant to receive advance information. I

hypothesize that it is because she was assigned to an elementary school and therefore had set classrooms she would be working with.

Natalie's words illuminate the overall experiences and expectations for herself and the other PSTs regarding their school placements:

I think my biggest thing right now is that our, this is more of a logistically [sic] thing I think but like our role is not super defined here. And it is not super defined at school or in the classroom. Um, so going off of what Gabi was saying about classroom management things we've been in classrooms before where we are expected to be teaching them and leading them in activities but yet discipline is kinda a grey area. Are we allowed to take things away from them? Like the slingshots they are using in the back of the class? Whereas the teacher comes in and she doesn't do anything about it, so then are we really in a place to do something like that and so I don't know, I feel our role was better-defined student teaching in the US just because we had our classroom with our teacher and that was set for us. Where here it is like, at least at where I'm at First Gymnasium, they are trying to get us to experience as much as possible. And we are just floating around here and there. (Natalie, group interview 2, 4/21/16)

Natalie's comments represent the majority of the group in that they were allowed time to observe their schools, typically a week or more, but also lacked the face-to-face teaching time that they had experienced in the United States.

First gymnasium. Natalie and Gabi were placed at First Gymnasium, a school that focuses on its bilingual English program and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses. The mission of First Gymnasium is to promote a high level of education while developing community, personal responsibility, and social responsibility. Approximately 800 students attend First, and the school is located 11.6 miles east of Germantown. First Gymnasium has a social index of five, making it the most privileged school of the three site placements. Only 30.7% of inhabitants in this district have a migrant background, but only 47% of students attend a gymnasium (Statistikamt Nord, 2016).

Second stadtteilschule. Bruce was placed at Second Stadtteilschule, where he was the only American student teacher. Second is a Gesamtschule, a comprehensive school that educates students from grades 5-13. Second prepares students to take the Arbitur exam, but also includes more vocational classes for students not planning to continue their education at a college or university. Second has a total population of 1,500 students and is located 10.2 miles east of Germantown. Second Stadtteilschule has a social index of 4 and the district has a migrant background population of 35.5%; however, the number of individuals under 18 with a migrant background is 50.9%. Of school aged children, 41.5% attend a gymnasium (Statistikamt Nord, 2016).

Third schule. Third is an elementary school divided into two campuses. Within Third Schule are three focus areas: art and music, English immersion, and nature and environment. Parents can choose which path to enroll their students. Sophia was placed in a first-grade English immersion class. Preschool and first grade English immersion classes are on a separate campus from the second through fourth grade English immersion classes. The two campuses are located approximately two miles from each other and seven miles from Germantown in a southern suburb. Third Schule has the most diverse student population of all the study abroad placements, including a special school/program to educate children of recent refugees. The social index for Third is 1 and almost 60% of the population in this district have a migration background, including 77.8% of individuals 18 years and younger. Only 22.4% of students in this area attend a gymnasium (Statistikamt Nord, 2016).

Homestays

Participants had no choice in their homestays. They completed an information sheet answering questions about basic preferences (e.g., whether they were okay being with families who had pets, or kids, or who smoked), but due to the limited number of homestays available,

there was no choice. Information about the families was shared with the Americans once placements had been finalized, and the participants were encouraged to communicate with their families. Of the four homestays, two were overwhelmingly positive (Natalie, Sophia); one was mostly positive but Gabi admitted communication issues hindered “deeper relationships”; and the final one (Bruce) was not an overall positive experience largely due to conflicting expectations. Bruce had only positive things to say about his host family despite the fact that his host family reported to Geoff, the residential director, that they were unhappy with the current living situation. Bruce was unaware of how his host family felt about him. He learned from Geoff in mid-April that his host family was not happy and that changes needed to be made (program evaluation). Bruce’s family wanted him to be more involved in family affairs, such as playing with the kids and talking with the family, and they were upset that Bruce was spending so much time alone or away from the house. The circumstance behind Bruce’s unfavorable homestay was ultimately the result in a breakdown in communication.

Program Components

In this section I will outline several of the exchange program components, including school visits, seminars at The University of Germantown, participant journals, and other required excursions. These components were in addition to participants’ placement in host schools.

School Visits

To provide participants with a well-rounded representation of education in Germany, the study abroad program also included opportunities to visit different types of schools around Germantown. In addition to touring The University of Germantown, participants toured a Waldorf School (private) and a Stadtteilschule with a social index of one in a neighborhood primarily comprising of immigrants. This school was provided additional resources by the

federal government for technology and inclusion instruction for diverse learners, resources not provided to most other German schools.

Seminars

As I will discuss in Chapter 6, these seminars with Dr. Michaels became central to the American's experience. The American PSTs were required to participate in three seminars while in Germany, similar to the seminars Dr. Jones led with the German exchange students in the United States. Dr. Michaels, assisted by his doctoral student Mia, led the seminars at The University of Germantown. The schedule was as follows: Seminar 1 (4/8/16) – Presentation of German School System; Seminar 2 (4/13/16) – Discussion of emerging themes; comparing German and American school systems; Seminar 3 (4/27/16) – Continuation of comparing systems of education; Expand upon themes from Seminar 2; Takeaways and lingering questions. These seminars, which were also attended by some of the German teacher candidates, allowed participants the opportunity to discuss the differences and similarities in education. The seminars served a forum in which participants could grapple with educational questions that concern teachers around the world, including: (a) parent/student/teacher relationships; (b) tests, standardization, and accountability; (c) teachers as professionals; and (d) the classroom as a social space (seminar 3 notes, 4/27/17).

Participants were asked to evaluate how beneficial the seminars with Dr. Michaels were on their program evaluation. The responses were overwhelmingly positive. The following comments represent the kinds of remarks frequently made in the evaluations:

These seminars were probably the highlight of my experience. I love talking about pedagogy and education systems as a whole and having this international and focused dialogue about these issues were really some of my favorite activities of the program. Dr. Michaels and Mia did a great job providing structure and enthusiasm and making these conversations happen. (Gabi, program evaluation).

Absolutely beneficial - first, second and final seminars especially built on one another.

Anytime Dr. Michaels was involved (welcome event, seminars, [city] trip) the experience was positive. It is a privilege to be around an amazing professor like Dr. Michaels, who is also a leading language specialist in Germany...Having everyone together in one room was special and it was a great opportunity to meet and collaborate with multiple perspectives. (Bruce, program evaluation)

Extremely! They were vital to this trip. They pushed me to think deeply and critically about my experiences both in Germany and in America. They helped me to unpack and understand the benefits and challenges of both education systems. They helped me to grow as a teacher and as a person. (Sophia, program evaluation)

These seminars provided participants a forum for critical dialogue and personal reflection, two components essential in transformative learning and developing ICC.

An additional component of the international experience was for participants to also visit several historical sites and take city tours. These other excursions also proved beneficial for participants' reflections.

Other Excursions

Visits to historical sites were central to the study abroad program. Visits included a walking tour of Germantown and its harbor, a visit to a nearby concentration camp, day trips to neighboring historic cities, and a weekend trip to Berlin. The Berlin excursion included a visit to the Berlin wall, a tour of the Bundestag, and a tour of Sanssouci. These additional excursions were planned in advance and were mandatory for all participants. For many, these cultural experiences were just as memorable and important as working in German schools (journal entries). However, Bruce and Gabi, the two participants with a background in social studies education, appreciated the historical context of the experiences the most (program evaluations and journals). An analysis of the role a social studies background plays in Bruce and Gabi's transformations is outside the scope of this dissertation.

Journals

Participants were asked to keep a daily electronic journal and share it with the program director, interested professors in the United States (their methods professors), and me.

Participants were charged with creating a journal that focused on their personal and professional experiences. They were instructed to “collect data” from their experiences with “teachers, students, host family members, and friends” (program assignment). Although participants had discretion over the specific content of their journal, entries on the following broad topics were mandatory: culture, classroom instruction and assessment, instructional technology, and final reflections.

The quality and length of journal entries ranged widely. Bruce wrote in bullet points to create a list of everything he experienced with only occasional short explanations whereas Gabi took time to write thoughtful and oftentimes philosophical reflections of her experiences. While in Germany, participants lamented about the amount of journaling required (informal conversations), but upon further reflection at home, most were excited to have a detailed account of their time abroad. Natalie’s reflection is one such example:

I like the blog. I liked the blog a lot actually. It was, I think it was super helpful, I mean at times at night I was like oh I don't want to write this, but I thought it was helpful in just in the aspect of self-reflection and it was so much like I would be writing stuff and like oh I wanted to put this in or put this in, it definitely made me go through my entire day and think about everything. More from like a critical perspective, not just like critical in negative, but just like a critical perspective and that's something that I wish ... that throughout student teaching here [in the U.S.] throughout the whole semester that I think something like that, more of a self-reflection type thing like a journal or something that would've been helpful just because it makes you think about things differently. So I liked it a lot and I especially like having it now, like I still have mine so I can go back and read it. (individual re-entry interview 3, 6/22/16)

The opportunity for reflection is a key component of transformative learning theory (Cranton, 2006) and participants used their journals as a way to not only catalog all they had seen and done, but to also reflect on aspects of living and working in Germany that were different from

their previous assumptions about what Germany would be like. Participants were engaging in cross-cultural comparisons, a theme that will be explored in more detail in Chapter 6.

It is also important to note that writing in journals and reflecting, or saying that one is reflecting, does not mean that rich transformative reflection is taking place. Mezirow (1991) referred to three types of reflection – content, process, and premise. Content reflection evaluates the problem while process reflection focuses on asking problem-solving questions. Premise reflection, however, requires individuals to look at not only the problem or situation they are facing, but also to reflect on “Why it is important to them” (Cranton, 2006, p. 34). Participant journal entries include a range of information and types of reflection, with some participants engaging in premise reflection.

Conclusion

This chapter serves to contextualize the student teaching abroad program for the 2015-2016 academic year. The entire program was complicated and included many components and variables. The four American PSTs participated in all required program activities, yet their cases remain uniquely different. In the remaining chapters, I will identify and analyze emergent themes and major findings and I will use specific case narratives to explain, support, and complicate these findings.

CHAPTER 5 – CASE NARRATIVES

This chapter focuses on the experiences of four participants—Bruce, Sophia, Gabi, and Natalie—whose stories represent the uniqueness of a collective case study. The narratives in this chapter answer the sub-research question: How do pre-service teachers (PST) describe the student teaching abroad experience with respect to intercultural competence (ICC) and transformative learning?

The vignettes in this chapter combine the conceptual frameworks of transformative learning theory and ICC to analyze how participants came to understand and live as interculturally competent individuals in Germany. Transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1978; Taylor, 1994a, 1994b) explores the process of becoming interculturally competent whereas ICC describes the characteristics that should be conceptualized to effectively interact in an intercultural environment (Alred, et al., 2006; Bennett, 2008; Deardorff, 2008; Fantini, 2009). To review, ICC is broadly defined as the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to live and work effectively in an intercultural environment. More detailed definitions include questioning one's assumptions, "seeking to empathize with the experiences of others," personal reflection, and acknowledging multiple perspectives (Alred, et al., 2006, p. 2).

Overview of Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning theory can be used to understand how one person processes a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1978) through 10 phases of a transformation in order to transform their frame of reference (see Table 2.2). I adapted Mezirow's transformative phases from 10 down to 5 using data collected from this study (see Table 5.1). I used the modified

phases to analyze whether participants experienced transformative growth in a short-term teaching abroad experience.

Table 5.1 *Modified Phases of Transformative Learning and Definitions*

Phase	Definition
1. Disorienting Dilemma/Culture Shock	Individuals experience a situation that does not fit within their previously known frame of reference and that experience challenges them to check their own assumptions
2. Self-examination/Assessing the Situation	Individuals begin to critically reflect on the situation and their place within this situation (i.e. why it is disorienting).
3. Exploring New Options/Making a Plan of Action	Individuals explore what they need to do and make a plan, which includes acquiring the skills needed to implement the new plan. Acquiring skills could also mean leaning on resources in Germany, including cultural liaisons.
4. Trying New Things and Roles/Assessing Feedback	Individuals implement plans set forth in phase 3 and seek feedback on revised actions.
5. Reflection	Individuals reflect on their growth and progress through stages 1-4.

Modified phase one adds the concept of culture shock (see Taylor, 1994b). This phase aligns with Mezirow's phase one. Modified phase two combines the original phases two and three to create a new group dedicated to self-examination. Modified phase three combines Mezirow's original phases five through seven into one larger understanding of how to move forward from the disorienting dilemma. Phases 4, 9, and 10 in the original theory were excluded because they were not relevant to the context of a short-term student teaching abroad experience. Modified phase four is Mezirow's original phase eight. Modified phase five was not included in Mezirow's original phases but is vitally important to completing a frame of reference shift within the context of ICC.

In this chapter, I examine the process of better understanding ICC and the process of becoming interculturally competent by exploring the experiences of Bruce, Sophia, Gabi, and Natalie in their more detailed narratives. Their experiences broaden, confirm, and complicate how ICC and transformative learning theory are understood. The purpose of this exploratory study was not to measure the growth of specific ICC competencies but to identify the ways in

which participants defined, identified, and explained their understanding of ICC as the result of a short-term student teaching abroad program.

Bruce

Bruce's narrative broadens the current understanding of ICC and transformative learning. His story leads me to conclude that the process of becoming ICC involves self-development: to understand how to interact with others from a different culture, people must first understand how they are being perceived by others.

At the time of the exchange, Bruce was a 23-year-old, White male from rural-suburban¹³ North Carolina. He was a Master of Arts in Teaching Social Studies candidate with an undergraduate degree in history and a minor in education. Bruce's only previous experience outside the United States was a day trip to Tijuana, Mexico when he was in middle school. With limited international travel experience and a childhood in North Carolina, Bruce was reasonably sheltered from international perspectives and admitted to not always "understanding the perspectives and collective experiences of others" (personal communication, member checking notes, November 2016; pre-departure questionnaire). As part of the [State] Teaching Fellow Program, he traveled fairly extensively around the state where he was introduced to a more international and "regionally-diverse" populations. Bruce attributes these experiences to advancing his learning and development about different perspectives (personal communication, member checking notes, November 2016). Bruce is quiet and introverted; however, he participated regularly in group interviews and seminars in Germany.

Bruce was placed in Second Stadtteilschule where he was the only American student teacher. His role at Second was almost entirely undefined, which Bruce felt gave him great

¹³ Bruce's term.

flexibility to observe multiple classes and styles of teaching—a component of learning he felt lacking in his American student teacher placement. After following a one-week schedule prepared by his mentor-teacher, Bruce was free to organize his own classroom observations and teaching experiences and was able to work with students across all grade levels (5-13). Bruce was often asked to visit a classroom for a question and answer session in which he was viewed as the “expert on American things”¹⁴ (program evaluation). Bruce provided disclaimers about the “dangers of generalizations” and tried to avoid overgeneralizing “the experiences of diverse peoples and families...[,] but [he] probably included/reinforced some stereotypes ... about what America is like” (journal entry, 4/5/16). Bruce indicated that the teachers viewed him as an “English Language expert” (field notes, program evaluation). In his journal entries, interviews, and member-checking conversations with me, Bruce explained his role in his placement school—sometimes referring to himself as an English dictionary—and the implications of his actions on German students’ understanding of American culture. He believed the teachers and students in Germany viewed his responses to their questions “with greater scrutiny” and that he really represented one “perspective and interpretation from one person who lives in a part of America but [doesn’t] reflect the ideals, beliefs, or situations of all Americans (who are very diverse)” (personal communication, member checking notes, November 2016). Bruce recognized his privilege as a White male coming from a prestigious public university and did not want to provide German students with a single narrative of life in the United States.

Bruce viewed his time in Germany as an opportunity to create open communication between cultures and to foster a more inclusive community. The lesson plan Bruce taught on his

¹⁴ The phrase “expert on American things” comes directly from Bruce’s journals and evaluations. When Bruce read drafts of his narrative he provided clarifying comments about my interpretation of this phrase, indicating that he never viewed himself as an “expert.”

final two days in Second Stadtteilschule was an intercultural letter exchange with his former high school students. He presented the German students with letters from U.S. students and had the Germans write responses. Upon returning to the U.S. Bruce delivered the letters from German students to his former mentor-teacher. However, Bruce's story is not about creating dialogue among students. His story includes a more personal experience of realizing how perceptions can be misinterpreted.

Bruce's narrative represents self-development centered around the minor themes of intercultural communication, community building, and his relationship with his host family. Bruce and his host family struggled to communicate their expectations and needs with one another. Following outside intervention, however, Bruce began to reflect on the situation, and he made an effort to interact with the family more. Bruce said that his host family also tried to resolve the misunderstanding (personal communication, member checking notes, January 2017), but there is no data to support or refute this claim. Understanding how others perceived him became a central component of Bruce's narrative.

Intercultural Communication

Bruce's host family situation was not typical. In the history of the Mountain View/Germantown exchange program, only one participant has changed homes.¹⁵ Bruce spent two days getting to know his original host family when several members unexpectedly contracted influenza. Bruce temporarily moved in with Dr. Kurt and his family but returned to his original host family approximately one week later. This one-week temporary housing placement delayed Bruce developing a connection with his primary host family and created a situation whereby Bruce had become accustomed to a more flexible routine. With Dr. Kurt's

¹⁵ This participant changed homes because his original home did not have access to the Internet.

family, there were no set mealtimes or social expectations. Dr. Kurt and his older children (one in college and one in high school) were extremely busy and did not expect Bruce to sit down for family meals, as the family was rarely home for a meal at the same time. There was no curfew; therefore, Bruce could come and go as he pleased. However, when Bruce returned to his original placement, he experienced a more structured schedule (dedicated mealtimes and tea time) and concern from his host family about breaking a curfew (9:00 p.m.). Bruce said he only broke curfew a few times, that it was accidental, and that it was mostly due to getting lost on public transportation (personal communication, member checking notes, January 2017).

The family's principal concern was Bruce's lack of interaction with the family. Bruce self-identifies as quiet, and he prefers to listen than to speak; therefore, he was more likely to sit quietly and work on schoolwork at the dining room table or in his room than actively interact with his host parents and siblings. Contributing to the lack of communication was his host family's proclivity to speak in German and not English. Additionally, Bruce was under pressure to finish his final teacher evaluation portfolio (edTPA¹⁶) by April 13. Bruce considered his family to be very nice and accommodating; he was completely unaware of their feelings towards him and how disappointed they were with his lack of social interaction. Bruce was shocked and concerned to learn that his perception of how his host family felt about him did not align with their perception. However, upon receiving feedback about the family's feelings, Bruce began to reflect on how he was interacting with others and how these interactions were perceived (program evaluation; journal entry, 4/16/16). Bruce never blamed his host family, but he did mention their rules and curfews as being potentially restrictive (individual re-entry interview,

¹⁶ "edTPA is a performance-based, subject-specific assessment and support system used by teacher preparation programs throughout the United States to emphasize, measure, and support the skills and knowledge that all teachers need from Day 1 in the classroom." (Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity, 2017)

6/16/16). Bruce believed his host family was not comfortable with him because he was quiet (program evaluation), but learning that his behaviors were being interpreted differently by others shocked him and led him to reflect more on his own behaviors:

[Having] host families with different sets of norms and expectations was probably the most disorienting part of the trip. Being informed by program leaders of my host family's concerns over improving our communication and connection came as an unsettling surprise that led us to try different approaches for learning about one another's perspectives, interests and care. (email communication, member checking notes December 2016)

When Bruce mentioned a "host famil[y] with [a] different set of norms," he was referring to his host family's nuclear structure. Bruce's experience growing up did not align with the very close-knit, nuclear family he was living with in Germany: Bruce's parents are divorced, and he lived with his single mother and brother during his childhood. Therefore, he found his host family not only culturally different but also hard to understand and navigate. Bruce connected more with his host father who also grew up with parents who divorced (personal communication, member checking notes, January 2017).

Bruce internalized the feedback he received from Geoff and made efforts to interact more with his host family. He taught them how to fold origami paper cranes,¹⁷ one of his passions, and played chess with his host father (journal entry, 4/17/16). In his final journal entry, Bruce reflected that he had "virtually no regrets, except: more time/communication with host family and language barriers with learning/retaining German." In his program evaluation, completed just prior to returning to the United States, Bruce said "I probably should have tried to talk more with the family and ask questions about individuals and group interests." In that remark, he took partial responsibility for the first time. I do not believe Bruce was intentionally disrespectful.

¹⁷ Origami is a traditional Japanese art form of folding paper into shapes, such as animals. In Japan, the crane symbolizes good fortune and longevity.

He was simply focused on his remaining schoolwork (edTPA portfolio) and seeing as much of Germany as possible (journal entries) and therefore did not spend as much time with his host family as they had expected.

Community

Bruce often spoke of being a part of larger communities: a community of American PSTs in Germany, a community of teachers in his placement school, and a larger community of global educators. Throughout his journal entries and interviews, Bruce commented on the presence of a teacher community that he saw at Second Stadtteilschule and other German schools he visited:

I really liked how they had a lot of community, I think in their schools....So I feel like they had a very close knit group within their school, so they had a large teacher room where the teachers would have their own space to meet and talk during the day, during their breaks, in-between classes as well as a coffee room where they could just meet and talk and so that was different from what I've seen in schools in [my state]. (individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)

He felt valued as part of the group of American teachers in Germany and felt that his experience in Germany was defined a lot by interactions and shared experiences with all the participants in the program, especially fellow student teachers and educators from Mountain View University and the University of Germantown (personal communication, member checking notes, December 2016). He felt he was “contributing to [the] improvement/enrichment of education for multiple people” (final journal reflection).

We're definitely serving a bigger purpose [here] I feel here than if you we're kind of just back at home ... Yea. Global community ... I mean it's still an important community back at home but here you have an opportunity to do stuff that influences maybe larger scale. (group interview 2, 4/21/16)

Bruce learned that if he wanted to be a part of this community he needed to communicate his feelings. This reflection coincided with improved communication with his host family in late April. When asked if he learned anything about himself in Germany, Bruce responded with the following statement:

The need to ask for help if you need, like asking for help from other people, not doing things all by yourself, or trying to do it alone I would say. You have to ask for help and rely on other people for advice, and just getting around. (Bruce, individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)

Bruce's request for help was directly tied to learning he had to make revisions to his edTPA portfolio. Bruce informed his host family that he had not passed parts of his portfolio and that he needed help: "Explained situation to host family and asked for help – lots of support, encouraged talking/sharing with family, offered spaces to work" (journal entry, 4/26/16). Before his conversation with Geoff, Bruce had not communicated on that level.

Bruce successfully traversed the phases of transformative learning while in Germany. His disorienting dilemma was living with a host family with a different set of expectations and the shock of realizing his perceptions did not align with reality. As a direct result of his conversation with Geoff, Bruce began to reflect on his behavior, make a new plan of action, and ultimately tried to be more open with his host family. Finally, Bruce reflected on the situation as a whole and what he could or should have done differently. Table 5.2 outlines the phases of Bruce's transformation during his time in Germany.

Table 5.2 *Bruce's Phases of Transformative Learning*

Modified Phases of TL	Bruce's Actions	Supporting Data
1. A disorienting dilemma/culture shock	Living with a host family that have different expectations; Communication from program director	Expectation of eating meals with family, checking in, and being home by 9:00 p.m. (individual re-entry interview 3, 6/16/16)
2. Self-examination/assessing the situation	Reflections in journals	"Meeting with Geoff – feedback: need to talk more with host family, more than just sharing meals together; practice asking questions; interacting with kids" (journal entry, 4/16/16)
3. Exploring new options/making a plan of action	Vows to spend more time with the family and be more open	No evidence of specific measures taken.
4. Try new roles and assess feedback	Spending more time with host family and increased communication	"Folded Origami cranes with family; Chess Tournament Round 2 (Mike vs. Bruce) - 2 wins for Visiting Team! (2-2 tie) (journal entry, 4/17/16); Needed to cancel appointment with teacher for dinner due to numerous factors: distance, time, navigation/technology obstacles,

		wish to spend time with host family before trip to Berlin in morning” (journal entry, 4/21/16)
5. Reflection	Critical reflection was primarily a result of program requirements to reflect.	“I probably should have tried to talk more with the family and ask questions about individuals and group interests” (program evaluation); “Virtually no regrets, except: - more time/communication with host family” (final reflection journal entry)

Bruce’s narrative broadens the current understanding of ICC. He wanted to identify as interculturally competent and a member of a global community, but to do so he had to first become aware of how his interactions, behaviors, and mannerisms were being interpreted by others. To be a member of a community, a person needs to have the knowledge, skills, and attitude needed to work with the community, but they must also act appropriately, a judgment that can only be made by members of the host culture (Fantini, 2009). Bruce viewed his “performance” in Germany as effective, but his host family did not view his performance as appropriate (Fantini, 2009, p. 408). By reflecting on his actions and how he was being perceived, Bruce was engaging in perspective transformation, thereby working towards truly being a member of the global community.

Sophia

Sophia’s narrative confirms that ICC can be acquired or extended as a person develops sociolinguistic awareness and empathy (in Sophia’s case for refugees and English-language learners (ELLs]). Sophia is an early childhood education major, specializing in math and literacy. Her narrative differs from the others because she had already experienced severe culture shock during a previous trip to China, a component Mezirow (1991) considered essential for transformation to occur. Yet she still experienced transformation and a deeper understanding of ICC during a short-term student teaching abroad program in Germany, a country with a culture similar to the U.S. Sophia used her journals to reflect on past international travel,

comparing it with her experiences in Germany. She actively participated in the group interviews and seminars.

In June 2015 Sophia traveled to China for a five-week, university-sponsored program during which she interned with preschool and kindergarten classes. Sophia reported that this experience completely disoriented her. She was in a non-Western country, she did not speak the language, and very few people with whom she interacted spoke English; she was homesick and felt lost (pre-departure questionnaire). The cultural distance between the U.S. and China was more than Sophia could imagine and process, and she found herself being judgmental and non-reflective (informal conversations). Realizing that she was closed-minded about China, she approached the Germany trip with “an open mind and an open heart” (pre-departure questionnaire).

I have always been surprised by how different people live all over the world. Many times, I would have negative thoughts towards these differences, thinking that they were "weird" or "stupid." But being abroad has taught me to also be reflective. It has lead me to have deep conversations with my travel buddies about why we do things a certain way in America. Sometimes these conversations lead me to understand the benefits of doing things a certain way, other times it has shown me that the way I do things is silly or unreasonable. These conversations have also lead me to realize areas where I am being closed minded to other people's worldview. It has lead [sic] me to grow in my understanding of myself and how I view the world. (Sophia, pre-departure questionnaire)

Through her experience in China, Sophia came to understand empathetically how immigrants to the United States might feel, and she vowed to help immigrants in her classroom to feel at home, stating, “being in a new country where literally everything is different is so hard – much harder than I imagined. Because I experienced this, I am much more sensitive to immigrants in America” (pre-departure questionnaire). Because of her previous travel, Sophia was able to look past surface-level differences between the U.S. and Germany and began to think and reflect on a deeper level. Sophia began the Germany exchange program with a better understanding of ICC

than the other participants; however, as detailed in Chapter 6 Sophia still struggled to define ICC in her own words.

Sophia's school and host family placements in Germany were welcoming. Sophia was placed in a first-grade English immersion class (the equivalent of kindergarten in the United States) in Third Schule. Sophia moved between two first-grade classes, had a set schedule, and was responsible for teaching a science unit on nutrition. Her role was better defined than the other American PSTs, although she did not learn what science topic she would teach until she arrived in Germany. Sophia had a good host family situation. Her host parents had two kids who actively oriented Sophia, showing her places and making her feel at home. Sophia was comfortable talking with her host parents and enjoyed spending time with the family:

My host family was amazing!!!! They were so kind and generous and they made me feel so at home. ...I got to have a lot of great discussions with them about German politics, culture, and history. I also got to know their 2 sons, who are so sweet and accepting of me. I enjoyed my time with them very much and I will miss them a lot! (program evaluation).

Sophia's stable host family and structured school placement may have contributed to her ability to reflect deeply on what she was observing in schools and the community.

Two themes emerged from Sophia's narrative: curiosity and self-reflection. Sophia's curiosity and self-reflection led her to develop more empathy and sociolinguistic awareness for others.

Curiosity and Self-Reflection

Sophia was the most vocally curious of the participants; she sought opportunities to learn about Germans' perception of their history. Two topics of interest for Sophia were the Holocaust and the recent influx of Syrian refugees. She asked her host mom how she and other native Germans felt about the Holocaust and the refugee crisis. Sophia reported that their conversations about Syrian refugees had a direct impact on her: "I've learned more through these conversations

than any news channel could have taught me. They have helped me grow as a person as I begin to understand how complicated the situation is” (journal entry, 4/12/16). Those conversations initiated Sophia’s process of becoming interculturally competent.

Sophia was developing perspective consciousness (Hanvey, 1976), and it led to perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1978). She valued the opinions of those with whom she spoke, and they engaged in a genuine dialogue. She reflected on what it meant to be an outsider and to experience a different culture, mirroring the findings of Jiang and DeVillar (2011). She specifically reflected on the significance of diversity and privilege after she observed a German-language class for recent refugees:

I loved my time in their class. It made me realize how much I love diversity and how important it is to encounter people from vastly different walks of life. It opens your eyes and your mind and makes you think critically about your own privilege and experiences. (journal entry, 4/21/16)

In Germany Sophia was open to conversations with and about diverse populations:

I think experiencing culture and diversity is vital to my development as a teacher. It has forced me to challenge my own beliefs and ideas. It has forced me to have an open mind and made me a more sensitive and understanding person. In a time where religious, racial, and ethnic tension is as high as ever, experiencing diversity is absolutely vital. (journal entry, 4/21/16)

Through this trip Sophia became more aware: aware of her privilege as an American and an English-language native and aware of the sacrifices individuals made to make her time in Germany a memorable learning experience:

Part of me doesn’t feel good about this. I don’t feel good about coming to another country and expecting everyone I encounter to speak my language because I didn’t take the time or energy to learn theirs. I feel like I’ve jumped around from resource to resource (teachers, friends, family, places) and I’ve learned as much as I can from them and then I leave them. And I just don’t feel good about that. It feels selfish. (final journal reflection)

In the passage above, Sophia expresses feelings of guilt. Feelings of guilt lead to self-examination and situational assessments. Those processes, in turn, can lead to perspective transformation and plans for how to make amends or rectify the feelings of guilt (Mezirow, 2000):

But another part of me feels okay about it. I have accepted and fulfilled my role as a tourist. I have learned so much from my experiences here and they have helped me to grow personally and professionally. I feel okay about taking because I know that I am going give. I am going to give my students more independence and ownership of their education, as I have observed here. I am going to give people with different ideas and backgrounds opportunities to engage in conversations, as I recognize the value of diversity in a deeper way than I did before. I am going to give more generously, of my time, energy, and resources, because people have given so generously to me during my time in Germany. Because I have done so much taking, I know I have to do this giving. If I just went back to the US and didn't change anything about myself, that wouldn't be fair or right. The scales wouldn't be balanced. I might even go as far to say that this trip would have been for nothing. So by doing this taking I am held accountable to give back, even if it's indirectly. And I feel good about that. (Sophia, final journal reflection)

In this journal passage, Sophia was planning how she would apply what she had learned to her life in the U.S. Although not explicitly stated, Sophia was conceiving ways to use her new ICC in culturally diverse interactions she would experience in the U.S., specifically during her anticipated employment at an urban charter school in Brooklyn, NY. The two quotations reflect Sophia's process of perspective transformation related to ICC (Taylor, 1994a). Table 5.3 shows Sophia's phase of transformative learning related to an increased sociolinguistic awareness.

Table 5.3 *Sophia's Phases of Transformative Learning*

Modified Phases of TL	Sophia's Actions	Supporting Data
1. A Disorienting Dilemma/Culture Shock	Not knowing German	"I feel like I'm missing so much by not knowing any German. I see kids laughing but I don't know what is so funny. I see kids crying and I don't know why they're upset." (journal entry, 4/4/16)
2. Self-Examination/Assessing the Situation	Feelings of guilt for expecting others to speak English	"Part of me doesn't feel good about this. I don't feel good about coming to another country and expecting everyone I encounter to speak my language because I didn't take the time or energy to learn theirs." (final journal reflection, 4/25/16)
3. Exploring New Options/Making a Plan of	Tried to learn some German; host family and	"My host families [sic] son is helping me with my pronunciations. My students in the class are constantly

Action	students helped her with pronunciation	introducing me to more vocabulary.” (journal entry, 4/4/16)
4. Try New Roles and Assess Feedback	Tried speaking German	No evidence of specific measures taken.
5. Reflection	Wants to take what she has learned and use that in the U.S.	“Because I have done so much taking, I know I have to do this giving. If I just went back to the US and didn’t change anything about myself, that wouldn’t be fair or right. The scales wouldn’t be balanced. I might even go as far to say that this trip would have been for nothing. So by doing this taking I am held accountable to give back, even if it’s indirectly.” (final journal reflection)

Sophia’s transformative experience seems to support Taylor’s (1994a, 1994b) argument that transformation is not hierarchical, as indicated in Mezirow’s (1991) phases. Indeed, the phases of transformation can occur independently and nonlinearly and still transform the person’s perspective, thereby expanding the person’s ICC. When Sophia experienced her dilemma of not being able to speak with her students in German on April 4, 2016, she immediately began exploring ways to change the situation. Reflection, however, was an ongoing process for her. Following her visit to the refugee class and our second group interview (4/21/16), her reflection process seemed to become more critical, and she began examining herself and her role in the global community.

Sophia began the reflection process, I believe, during her trip to China (group interview 1, 3/15/16), but the process intensified when she was in Germany. Perhaps because Germany’s culture is more similar to American culture than is Chinese culture, she was less disoriented during her trip to Germany than during her trip to China. Or perhaps she was less disoriented because she learned from her not so successful experience during her student teaching in China. Feeling more stable may, in turn, have enabled her to think critically and not only process the guilt she felt for not speaking German but also set goals for her position as an in-service teacher. Sophia confirms the current understanding of what it means to be interculturally competent and of the process whereby individuals learn how to be interculturally competent. She was analytical

and affective (Taylor, 2009), she engaged in critical dialogue, and she challenged some of her own assumptions as she reflected on conversations.

Gabi

Gabi's narrative does not align with understanding of ICC and transformative learning as operationalized in this study. I imagined that Gabi would embody ICC because she was a highly successful student at Mountain View University and at the time of the exchange program she had already applied to teach internationally. Indeed, the data suggests that she learns through cross-cultural comparisons and is keenly interested in understanding more about the global community and how the world works, specifically systems of education around the world. However, her data did not provide evidence that she cultivated the competencies required to be interculturally competent by completing the modified phases of transformation that leads to ICC. According to transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991, 2000), her experiences in Germany seemed not to be transformative.

At the time of the exchange, Gabi was a 22-year-old, White female from North Carolina and a middle grades education major with specializations in social studies and math. Gabi participated actively in group interviews and seminars and even became the focal student in a promotional video sponsored by the University of Germantown. Gabi had extensive international travel experience prior to participating in the student teaching abroad program, though these personal and volunteer trips with family and church groups lasted 10 days or less. Gabi reported significant learning from her previous travel, and she thought these experiences would shape her approach to the Germany program:

My international experiences have been varied, but brief. One important lesson I have learned is that it is important to plan, but it is also important to not approach a trip with too much structured expectation. This could probably best be summarized by the advice to be prepared but flexible and open-minded. I have also learned that it is important to

balance trying to accomplish a great deal while also taking the time to actually experience being in another country. (Gabi, pre-departure questionnaire)

Anticipating the Germany exchange program, Gabi planned to be present in the moment (the here and now) and to avoid comparing her experiences abroad to her experiences living in the United States. Like Sophia, Gabi was culturally aware of how assumptions can change interpretations of events and exchanges, yet her narrative provides evidence that she nevertheless made assumptions.

Gabi's host family situation was amenable to hosting her but slightly strained by the situation. Her host parents had two young children, and Gabi felt they were overwhelmed with the addition of another person to their home (program evaluation). However, reflecting on her host family situation, Gabi recognized that she may have complained too much while she was there because she was accustomed to being independent and alone in college (individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16). Gabi talked with her host family some but did not show evidence of practicing the skills necessary for intercultural communication.

Gabi experienced no disorienting dilemma, no major culture shock, and no major personal revelation, except that she needed more time to herself. When she was in Germany, Gabi was already planning to teach in South Korea in her future, so this experience did not awaken in her a desire to travel and experience other cultures. She expressed no feelings of guilt or shame; nevertheless, she may have experienced these feelings but chose not to write or speak about them publically. One major theme emerged from Gabi's narrative: intercultural development through cross-cultural comparisons of German and American systems of education. Gabi's narrative complicates the accepted notion of ICC and transformative learning because she is an outlier. Questioning, comparing, and self-reflection are key components of ICC, yet there is little evidence of transformative experiences by Gabi during this short-term international

program. Instead, Gabi's narrative provides evidence that there are different levels of ICC and that progress toward ICC occurs at different paces for different people.

Comparing German and American Education Systems

Although Gabi was excited about all aspects of the student teaching abroad program, her narrative focused on comparing Germany and America and their systems of education. When discussing the upcoming trip to Germany during the first group interview, Gabi was already concentrating on how exposure to German classrooms could help her understanding of education: "I think it will expose us to a whole new school, school system, country system of education, and new mentor-teachers as well. So the more classrooms that I – that we see, I think the better teacher's we'll be" (group interview 1, 3/15/16). Her expectations for teaching were not met, however, because she reported that she did not learn any pedagogical techniques in Germany that she had not previously learned in America (reflection survey, October 2016). Moreover, although she appreciated the experiences she had at First Gymnasium, she lamented the lack of teaching time:

I think there would have been a benefit in having a specific unit that we taught... knowing what we were teaching and planning to teach it and working with kids we knew so that we could plan in the ways that we learned to plan ... instead of just walking in and sort of unprepared I guess. I think there would have been a lot of value in that because it would have been working with different students so getting more experience with that. And also working with students from a different culture to see how that's different and how they responded differently. I think that just having more days the way that Natalie and I taught at First wouldn't have added that much benefit to my experience. It's good to practice teaching without planning but I think we would have gotten more out of the experience for what it was if we had had a specifically defined role and planned. (Gabi, individual re-entry interview 3, 6/16/16)

Gabi would have preferred to have a dedicated class that she taught while in Germany, similar to Sophia's teaching placement.

In the quotation above, Gabi was referring to a situation at First Gymnasium in which she and Natalie arrived at school one morning and were told to teach a 5th grade English class with

no German teacher present. Whereas Natalie was completely disoriented, Gabi was accustomed to teaching without significant advance planning and her calm demeanor meant she used this opportunity to hone her craft. Unlike Natalie, when Gabi wrote about this situation, she concentrated more on the teaching and less on the circumstances: “we did not get through the entire lesson plan, but we felt that [it] went pretty well, and we enjoyed having the chance to teach!” (journal entry, 4/15/16).

Gabi consciously reflected what she was seeing and doing in Germany, and she quickly began to focus her attention on the differences between American and German systems of education. She was captivated by one main aspect of the German education system: that students are responsible for their learning:

I think it was helpful for me to be exposed to classrooms in other countries. Spending time in the German classrooms helped me think about what things I have taken for granted in the American classroom and question some of the things that we had been taught were necessary in our teaching preparation program. For example, the students in Germany were far more independent and motivated, and the students as a class had a collective sense of responsibility. (reflection survey, October 2016)

Gabi enjoyed the university seminars with Dr. Michaels during which she engaged in dialogues with her peers about the macro systems of education. Those seminars gave Gabi opportunities to situate what she was observing within a historical context and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each system:

These seminars were probably the highlight of my experience. I love talking about pedagogy and education systems as a whole and having this international and focused dialogue about these issues were really some of my favorite activities of the program. (Gabi, program evaluation)

During the third seminar (4/27/16), Gabi reflected especially on philosophical questions about education. She wanted to know if systems of education should be more transparent about “societal shortcomings”:

Is it better to, the way I think Germany approaches things, is it better to accept societal shortcomings up front and institutionalize and address them in schools, or is it better like we do in the U.S. to pretend the issues will go away on their own? But in that risk of not confronting things because it's hard. (seminar 3, 4/27/16)

In this quotation, Gabi was referring to the topic of inclusion, a primary topic of discussion in seminar three. She was comparing the German way of addressing inclusion—to have schools dedicated to helping a student population in need of more assistance, such as populations with physical disabilities, German-language learners (refugees), or students with academic difficulties—with the more mainstream approach in the United States to educating students with diverse learning needs. She noted that in the American approach, students with “exceptionalities are not singled out as much up front, but [she thinks] that the harms of this are ultimately felt when a student doesn't receive sufficient accommodation in the classroom” (personal communication, member checking notes, November 2016).

Gabi's story is one of “slow transformation and growth” (personal communication, member checking notes, November 2016). She enjoyed her time in Germany and had meaningful experiences and exchanges, but using the modified phases of Mezirow's transformative learning theory, she did not experience a relatively complete process of transformation. In their learning-growth model, Kim and Ruben (1988) refer to Gabi's situation as a “gradual change.” The learning-growth model is based upon the psychological adjustments and adaptations of an individual living for a length of time in a different culture. Dix (2016) argues that transformative learning theory inadequately explains the cognitive and metacognitive side of transformation and focuses too much on affective and behavioral. Gabi's development in Germany seems to have been cognitive and metacognitive, so the failure of transformative learning theory to address such developments may suggest that Gabi did transform in ways not measured fully by the ICC developmental theory (Deardorff, 2006). Regardless, Gabi's

experience indicates that the process of developing ICC is not limited to hierarchical or linear progressions, and can be iterative. As Gabi continues to reflect on her experiences in Germany over a longer period of time, she may become more aware of how her time there was in fact transformative.

It is not possible to conclude whether Gabi experienced a frame of reference shift. Gabi was deeply analytical in seminars and in her journal and she sought activities beyond those required as part of the program. For example, she met members of a local Moravian church, Gabi's religious affiliation in the U.S., and discussed her youth group and mission work with them. As Gabi continues to engage with people from different cultures, she will add to her knowledge, skills, and attitude, thereby informing her ICC. The following quotation best summarizes Gabi's experience in Germany: "I think that with intentional, observant, and thoughtful exposure comes understanding, and I think that was the case with my German experience" (reflection survey, October, 2016).

Natalie

Natalie was a 22-year-old, White female who was originally from the Chicago area but had lived in North Carolina for a long time; she was a math major with a license in mathematics education (grades 9-12). Natalie was quiet and reserved during groups interviews and seminars, rarely participating. A self-proclaimed planner and organizer, Natalie likes to be in control.

Natalie had some travel experience outside of the United States prior to student teaching abroad in Germany: she traveled to Italy and Greece on a 10-day family vacation when she was in the 7th grade. Lessons learned from this travel experience included being "flexible and understanding," specifically understanding that she could not control every situation and that "it is important to take things as they come" (pre-departure questionnaire). This theme of learning to be flexible was consistent throughout Natalie's experience in Germany.

When asked why she wanted to student teach in Germany, Natalie responded that her goals were to gain new skills in teaching (pedagogy) and to gain “a new perspective on teaching that [she has] not gotten in the United States” (pre-departure questionnaire). Natalie was slightly concerned with the language barrier in Germany but took measures to alleviate this concern by enrolling in an introduction to German language course (pre-departure questionnaire).

Natalie’s host family was especially accommodating, and they helped ease her transition (journal entries). Her host parents had adult children and were therefore able to spend quality time with Natalie, taking her places and making her feel at home. She said that her host parents treated her like a fourth child (individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16), and she appreciated the time she spent talking casually with them. Natalie also became very involved in family activities, including going to her host brother’s handball games and family birthday parties (journal entries).

In Germany, Natalie was placed at First Gymnasium with fellow student teacher Gabi. The American student teacher role at First was flexible. While at First, Natalie followed a student for a week, observed multiple classes and teachers, participated in question and answer classes with German students, and co-taught several English classes. Approximately two weeks of placement was pre-planned, and the remaining two weeks Natalie (and Gabi) had to make plans for after their arrival in Germany. Natalie and Gabi were also utilized as substitute teachers on at least two occasions.

Two themes emerged from Natalie’s story: developing self-confidence and being more flexible. I will discuss each in a separate section below.

Self-Confidence

Natalie experienced personal growth in self-confidence while in Germany. She had never traveled out of the country by herself and was nervous to do so (journal entry, 4/2/16). By

the end of April, however, Natalie was comfortable living in a foreign country; she reported that tasks such as navigating public transportation and ordering food, which had previously been difficult, were now much easier (journal entries):

Personally I would say that I'm more, more comfortable getting outside of my comfort zone. So I think I've seen things or read things before you know learning really takes place outside your comfort zone and ... after this trip I understand that more I think. I don't know, I would say going into college four years ago I would never have expected myself to study abroad and although this was only for a month it was a perfect amount of time for me. (Natalie, individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)

Natalie was also becoming more comfortable in the classroom. She and her co-teacher, Gabi, were thrown into teaching situations that were completely unfamiliar and unplanned. On several occasions, they were told to teach a group of students they had never met or a lesson they did not have time to prepare:

We showed up to find out that we were teaching a 5th grade English class!! Exciting, right? Then we found out that the teacher wasn't even here today, so we were completely on our own. With fifth graders. And fifth graders we had never met before... It was thrilling. We can't say we aren't learning anything here!! Nothing like teaching/lesson planning on the fly. The teacher had left some notes for us, so we had an idea of what we were supposed to do. One of the German teachers took us to the classroom, quickly introduced us to the students (in German), then left because he had to teach his physics class. Gabi and I looked at each other and said, "Here goes nothing!" (Natalie, journal entry, 4/15/16)

Despite the unusual circumstances and her predisposition to planning, Natalie succeeded in these unstructured settings, and this success gave her self-confidence as a classroom instructor.

Because Natalie's student teaching placement in the U.S. was completely structured with no major surprises, the spontaneous teaching requirement in Germany was equally challenging and rewarding:

Professional[ly] I think it honestly just gave me more self-confidence and more, student teaching obviously helped with that, but then I think being in a different country and a school that I'm not used to with students that we don't even come from the same place, we're not from the same country, but yet I was still successful there I would say that

gave me a lot more self-confidence within my professional career. (Natalie, individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)

This situation could be viewed as one of several disorienting dilemmas for Natalie.

Flexibility

Natalie's introduction to German classrooms was a shock because it did not align with her original conception of German classrooms. Instead of the well-structured, efficient classroom she had envisioned, many of the classes she visited and observed seemed disorderly and unstructured. Many of her early journal entries centered around a lack of classroom management, including young boys playing with slingshots while the teacher lectured:

One time we were in a class of sixth graders and the sixth graders were sling shotting [sic] each other with little things, and it was driving me insane. And the teacher was just like, yea, whatever. And so, ahhh, I don't know, it's very different from what we're used to because we would've taken those things away from them and made sure they weren't doing that. (individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)

When we were in Germany... there was not really structure at all. It was kind of just free will all the time. Even in the classes we were observing that's seems how a lot of the teachers taught... But I think that was my biggest thing that, was to be flexible and to understand that this didn't go how I wanted it to but it's fine, it went a different way and it was totally okay. (individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)

Natalie realized that this unstructured approach to classroom management was actually very German. The university seminars provided answers to questions about German teachers' classroom management techniques, and the seminars gave her an opportunity to compare her expectations of German teachers and students to U.S. stereotypes and expectations of U.S. teachers. Therefore, Natalie was able to reflect on the differences in structure between German and American schools. She learned to embrace this difference and be flexible.

Natalie's journal articles are full of insights and stories from her day-to-day life. She commented on German culture, such as Germans eating burgers with forks and knives and how out of place she looked for not doing so (individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16); she also

expressed her love of the afternoon cake and coffee custom. She appreciated the historical places she visited and the other schools she observed.

However, Natalie's story is not one of professional learning. She may have gained new perspectives on teaching, but according to her she did not learn any new pedagogical techniques or skills. Although she appreciated the student teaching part of the exchange, perhaps more than Bruce, Natalie's story is more about her personal journey. It is unclear why she did not have a transformative learning experience. Natalie did experience a disorienting dilemma or two – being asked to teach a spontaneous class and realizing most Germans eat burgers with forks and knives – but she did not self-reflect, make new plans, assess feedback, and critically reflect. If she did progress through the final four stages of a transformation, she did not write or talk about them. Perhaps Natalie's experiences in Germany will serve as a foundation for future transformations and upon her next international exchange she will be open to more self-reflection possibly leading to a perspective transformation. Or perhaps she did not experience the typical transformation because she was not alone professionally, instead, she was consistently in contact with another American participant when she was in Germany. Natalie's observations and reflections were surface level and did not go as deep into the why and how of what she was seeing. Nevertheless, Natalie's experience in Germany does provide evidence that short-term student teaching abroad programs can result in personal gains for individuals, including increased self-confidence and appreciation for international travel.

Conclusion

The four vignettes in this chapter illustrate how participants experienced a short-term student teaching abroad program in terms of ICC and transformative learning theory. Bruce's, Sophia's, Gabi's, and Natalie's experiences in Germany involve common elements— participation in pre-departure sessions, school and site visits in Germany, working and living in

German communities, and participation in Dr. Michael's seminars, yet their stories represent how significant other variables are to the formation of their narratives. Bruce and Sophia were in school placements by themselves whereas Gabi was placed with fellow participant Natalie. Each taught a different amount in their schools: from Sophia who taught weekly to Gabi and Natalie who taught four or five lessons to Bruce who only taught two lessons at the very end of the month. All four participants had varying levels of interaction and comfort with their host families: from Sophia and Natalie who were completely engaged and comfortable with their family to Gabi who felt like she was not always welcome. Finally, all four had different amounts of international experience prior to participating in the program in Germany: Bruce had almost no experience whereas Sophia had lived and student-taught in China for five weeks the summer before 2016.

What commonalities can be drawn across these four cases? A deeper understanding of ICC can be developed during a short-term student teaching abroad program, but in many ways with various forms, such development depends on the personalities, knowledge, and openness of the individual. Also, it is possible for individuals to undergo perspective transformation during a short-term international experience, but, as in the case of Gabi and Natalie, the transformative process may require a longer immersion experience or longer time for self-reflection. The common characteristic across three of the four narratives was their ability to self-reflect and think deeply about a situation that caused them to pause and, for some, to reevaluate their assumptions. Bruce reflected on how he was being perceived and his assumptions about how families work. Sophia reflected on the treatment of refugees in schools and her feelings of guilt for expecting others to speak her language. Gabi reflected on her assumptions about how

schools should operate and systemic issues, such as the purpose of inclusion in American and German schools. Natalie reflected, superficially, on her newfound self-reliance and flexibility.

In the next chapter I present the themes that emerged from analysis of the four cases presented in this chapter. Bruce, Sophia, Gabi, and Natalie experienced Germany in their own way and through a cross-case analysis an overall picture of how PSTs come to understand and define ICC will be developed.

CHAPTER 6 – EMERGENT THEMES

The purpose of this study was to explore if and how student teachers develop an understanding of intercultural competence (ICC) during a one-month international experience. In this chapter I highlight emergent themes using data extrapolated from my analysis of individual re-entry interviews, group interviews, journal entries, surveys, and questionnaires.

Six topic areas emerged from the data: (a) comparing German and American systems of education; (b) comparing German and American curriculum; (c) comparing treatment of refugees and immigrants in Germany and America; (d) speaking English in Germany; (e) learning about oneself; and (f) recognizing multiple perspectives. I grouped similar subject areas and formed four major themes: cross-cultural comparison, sociolinguistic awareness, self-development, and cultural awareness (See Table 6.1). Accordingly, this chapter is arranged around the four categories; each section contains data and interpretations significant to each major theme.

Table 6.1 *Categorization of Emergent Themes*

Cross-Cultural Comparisons <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comparing German and American systems of education• Comparing German and American curriculum, specifically the German class on the American “Culture Wars”• Comparing treatment of refugees and immigrants in Germany and America	Sociolinguistic Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speaking English in Germany
Self-Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning about oneself: self-confidence, flexibility, and positionality	Cultural Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognizing multiple perspectives

Before expanding upon the four emergent themes, it is important to establish how Bruce, Natalie, Sophia, and Gabi, defined ICC. They grappled with how to define ICC throughout all data collection points (pre-departure questionnaire, group interview in Germany, and individual re-entry interviews); however, they began to understand the attitudes, skills, and knowledge characteristics of ICC (Bennett, 2008; Deardorff, 2008) as they reflected on their own attitudes and compared Germany to the United States.

Definitions of ICC Before and After Student Teaching in Germany

Bruce, Natalie, Sophia, and Gabi received no training or instruction specific to ICC prior to this study. Therefore, definitions in this section are based on participants' own prior knowledge, understanding, and experiences related to what they believe to be ICC. See Table 6.2 for an overview of participants' pre- and post-definitions.

Table 6.2 Pre- and Post- Definitions of Intercultural Competence

Bruce	<p><i>Pre:</i> "An ability to work well with people from different places, understanding that cultures and contexts are interrelated and an important part of one's identity and how one interacts with or interprets the world around them." (pre-departure questionnaire)</p> <p><i>Post:</i> "Intercultural competence [is] the ability to successfully interact with people from different backgrounds and places, but going beyond that is the competence part really extends to communities so, involving multiple people and connecting I guess multiple people and across time." (group interview 2, 4/21/16)</p>
Natalie	<p><i>Pre:</i> "Being aware and understanding of cultures that are not your own." (pre-departure questionnaire)</p> <p><i>Post:</i> "I would say also that there is an aspect to [ICC] that ... want[ing] to learn about other cultures more so than it being forced upon you." (group interview 2, 4/21/16)</p>
Gabi	<p><i>Pre:</i> "[The] ability to respectfully interact with people of several different cultures. Strong intercultural competence would probably require more specific knowledge of various cultures and would likely result in stronger and more rewarding interactions/relationships." (pre-departure questionnaire)</p> <p><i>Post:</i> "I think intercultural competency is being able to get into a place and interact successfully with the people in that place, probably enough to get by and not offend people, and basically get along, whereas proficiency would include a deeper knowledge of the place and a deeper understanding of that place." (group interview 2, 4/21/16)</p>
Sophia	<p><i>Pre:</i> "The ability to understand different cultures. It is understanding the positive aspects as well as the challenges of those cultures. It is about reflecting and growing in your understandings of different walks of life." (pre-departure questionnaire)</p> <p><i>Post:</i> "I also feel like intercultural competence definitely requires interpersonal skills and that having a conversation, a civil conversation, about your own culture and their culture and trying to understand their perspective and then walking away and saying, agreeing to disagree maybe or just definitely having a deep respect." (group interview 2, 4/21/16)</p>

Pre-Departure Definitions of ICC

Participants were first asked to define ICC on their pre-departure questionnaire (March 2016). These definitions were very straightforward and included the acknowledgement and understanding of the ICC characteristics related to knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Bruce, Gabi, and Natalie begin with a basic understanding of ICC – being able to work and interact with individuals from different countries – although Natalie took this one step further indicating that one must be aware of and understand different cultures.

An ability to work well with people from different places, understanding that cultures and contexts are interrelated and an important part of one's identity and how one interacts with or interprets the world around them. (Bruce, pre-departure questionnaire)

Being aware and understanding of cultures that are not your own. (Natalie, pre-departure questionnaire)

[The] ability to respectfully interact with people of several different cultures. Strong intercultural competence would probably require more specific knowledge of various cultures and would likely result in stronger and more rewarding interactions/relationships. (Gabi, pre-departure questionnaire)

Sophia began with a reflective understanding of ICC.

The ability to understand different cultures. It is understanding the positive aspects as well as the challenges of those cultures. It is about reflecting and growing in your understandings of different walks of life. (Sophia, pre-departure questionnaire)

Whereas Natalie's definition included understanding cultures that are not your own, Sophia added to this definition by saying that you must also be able to reflect and "grow in your understandings" of other people and cultures. It was not evident what she meant by "understandings." Noticeably absent from these first definitions was a specific recognition of needing to know multiple languages, or at least the host-country language. Fonseca-Greber (2010) attributes participants' lack of initial language awareness to Americans' "immigrant past, which has served to reinforce a monolingual national linguistic identity" (p. 102).

Definitions of ICC in Germany

After three weeks in Germany participants were asked to define ICC again during a group interview (4/21/16). Each participant took time to answer the question and seemed to struggle with how they defined ICC and the language they wanted to use.

So mine was just ICC being the ability to successfully interact with people from different backgrounds and places, but going beyond that is the competence part really extends to communities so, involving multiple people ... and sharing perspectives. I think it is more than just the individual going out and talking with different people but then using that information to share it with different people and spread the network or connect different people. (Bruce, group interview 2, 4/21/16)

As we saw in Chapter 5, Bruce valued being a part of a global community. Bruce's definition indicated both a deeper understanding of what being intercultural means and a deeper understanding of himself. Bruce's definition went from being able to work with "people from different places" to being able to work and "connect with people from different cultures." Throughout his time in Germany Bruce learned that he is not always perceived by others the way he sees himself, therefore this definition of being able to connect with individuals from a different culture (not different place) and being able to communicate with them is not just about learning a foreign language. To Bruce, it also should be about appreciating different perspectives through self-reflection.

Natalie's definition expanded to include an intrinsic motivation to want to learn about other cultures and implies that in order to go beyond a superficial level of intercultural interaction and to appreciate a different culture one needs to have strong desires to learn about that culture.

I would say also that there is an aspect to [ICC] that ... want[ing] to learn about other cultures more so than it being forced upon you ... It's more this intrinsic motivation you want to know about other cultures and that's the sense that I get here more so than at home is that I feel the people here are like genuinely want to learn about America and want to know what these other cultures are like whereas I don't find that as much in the students I've seen at home. (Natalie, group interview 2, 4/21/16)

Her understanding of ICC highlights a concern of study abroad and ICC researchers that despite spending an extended period of time in a foreign country, stereotypes can be perpetuated and participants will leave with no more than a superficial understanding of that culture (Selby, 2008). Interestingly, as discussed in Chapter 5, Natalie did not undergo a perspective transformation and despite saying that ICC includes an element of intrinsic motivation to learn, her journals and interviews show no indication of curiosity of learning about Germany to the degree exhibited by Sophia.

Sophia's definition also included "learning about someone else's culture from someone from that culture." She was talking about using cultural mentors to help navigate the intricacies of living and working in a different culture (Bennett, 2008).

I also feel like intercultural competence definitely requires interpersonal skills and that having a conversation, a civil conversation, about your own culture and their culture and trying to understand their perspective and then walking away and saying, agreeing to disagree maybe or definitely having a deep respect. (Sophia, group interview 2, 4/21/16)

Inherent within her definition is curiosity, openness, and cultural awareness – specific characteristics of ICC.

Gabi's definition of ICC, however, did not change from pre-departure to the group interview in Germany.

So I think intercultural competency is being able to go into a place and interact successfully with the people in that place probably enough to get by and not offend people, and basically get along, whereas proficiency would include a deeper knowledge of the place and a deeper understanding of the place. (Gabi, group interview 2, 4/21/16)

Her definition echoes Fantini's (2009) distinction between effective and appropriate interactions and a recognition that deeper cultural knowledge (an ICC characteristic) may be needed to act appropriately.

Re-Entry Definitions of ICC

Largely, definitions of ICC did not change substantially between the group interview in Germany (April 2016) and the individual re-entry interviews (June 2016). Participants' initial definitions of ICC were abstract and oversimplified (see Table 6.2), which did not show their understanding of the richness of the concept as well as its complexities. After having been in Germany for almost three weeks, most participants' definitions and understandings of ICC became more complicated, amorphous, and real-life related. The longer participants were in Germany the more encounters they had leading to their better understanding and embodiment of intercultural. Participants had been living with host families for three weeks, working (including teaching) in German schools, having seminars with German PSTs and professors, and had visited several historical sites, including a concentration camp. They struggled with their understanding of ICC and concluded that the definition of ICC is much more complicated than just having the appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitude. Evident within participants' evolving definitions of ICC was a common theme of getting to know the host country.

I would say that it's being aware of more than your own culture, and then also being invested in learning that other culture. (Natalie, individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)

Participants seemed to understand that being intercultural was more complicated than just being able to work in a different culture or place.

I still think it's the ability to connect with people who are from different cultures and be able to communicate effectively with them. I would say maybe. ... I feel like every time the definition has been changing to try to include more, but it doesn't really successfully seem to do so. ... [It is changing] to be more complex than just being able to communicate with people. It's also immersion and understanding the culture that you are within as well as how it relates to your own culture. (Bruce, individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)

They were moving from a definition of intercultural to a definition of ICC; they were moving from a basic definition that a person should be able to interact with someone from a different

culture to a definition of the different characteristics a person must possess in order to effectively interact with someone from a different culture.

I think competence is being able to get by knowing those daily life things, and being able to get by without really offending someone or being late to everything or not paying enough or paying too much or whatever. So enough to get by but the cultural aspect. I think also brings in human interactions, like being able to interact with people in a positive way. So knowing enough about what their dispositions are. ... I think that having cultural competence at least means knowing how to navigate those sorts of confusions. Like maybe not necessarily knowing exactly what they mean in every instance but at least knowing how to navigate that uncertainty. (Gabi, individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)

Sophia even began talking about global competency or global awareness in connection with ICC, a concept I had not introduced.

So, ICC, the thing that comes to mind is just globalization and understanding how the world works on like a larger scale. I think that if you stay in America or even in the same place you just encounter people who think the same as you and are from the same area as you. You have definitely have a very limited world view and idea of the world. And I think traveling to other places or trying to understand the world on like a bigger scale. (Sophia, individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)

Again, noticeably absent from participants' post-definitions of ICC was language acquisition, an interesting finding considering all wished they had learned more German before arriving (group interview 2, 4/21/16) and because the second major theme that emerged from the data was sociolinguistic awareness. Yet despite commenting on their own lack of German language skills and recognizing the privilege inherent in speaking English, not one participant mentioned fluency in multiple languages in their definitions. This finding supports findings from other studies (Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2009) that concluded language fluency was not a common characteristic of ICC among top scholars in the field.

By understanding how participants came to define ICC at various stages of their study abroad program we gain better insight into the experiences throughout the month that affected

their understanding of ICC. The themes that emerged from the cross-case analysis mirror participant definitions of ICC across time.

In the sections that follow I will further explore the emergent themes, beginning with cross-cultural comparisons. Program components allowed participants to see different aspects of Germany, but it was participants' interactions in German schools and the comparisons they made regarding German and U.S. systems of education that accelerated participants' understanding of German culture.

Cross-Cultural Comparisons

In the context of this dissertation, cross-cultural comparisons refer to the instances in which participants compared German and American values and behaviors. Analyzing the data, I identified three major topics within this theme: (a) comparisons of German and American systems of education, (b) comparisons of German students' knowledge of the U.S. and American students' knowledge of Germany, and (c) American's comparing the treatment of refugees and immigrants in Germany to that of the United States.

Comparing German and American School Systems

Participants engaged in the intercultural practice of questioning (Alred, et al., 2006). Specifically, they were questioning and comparing German schools against their own knowledge and assumptions about schooling. The Americans wrote initial observations in their journals but lacked the contextual or historical knowledge to understand their observations. The following five cross-cultural comparisons were initially the most common observations.

- In Germany, unlike in America, students stay in one room, and their teachers rotate.
- In Germany, unlike in America, the responsibility for learning is on the student, not the teacher.

- In Germany, unlike in America, students have 20 minute breaks between classes and 45 to 60-minute breaks for lunch.
- In Germany, unlike in America, teachers have less control over classroom management.
- In Germany, unlike in America, there is a lack of inclusion in mainstream schools, and German students are grouped based on ability.

Participants were experiencing a type of culture shock whereby their assumptions about how schools operate did not align with their experiences in schools in Germantown. Integrating into a school environment that did not meet these expectations was initially confusing for the PSTs; however, they soon embraced aspects of the German system they found appealing, such as longer breaks between classes and extended lunches. Other differences in schools, such as classroom management, remained a concern while they were in Germany. The following sections highlight the American PSTs' shock at a perceived lack of classroom management in German classrooms and how they rectified these judgments.

Classroom management. Participants reported being shocked at the inconsistency of classroom management they experienced in German classrooms. Specifically, the Americans stated in their journals that the German teachers did not have control over their students. In her journal, Gabi reported a classroom management situation at First Gymnasium that disturbed her.

Natalie and I noticed that this was the first class in which the students truly seemed to be disrespectful toward the teacher. Students talked regularly and not even quietly; they were very disruptive. The teacher became noticeably irritated and called the students down several times, but they did not even really stop talking to listen to this. They also mocked her a little. (Gabi, journal entry, 4/7/16)

Gabi and Natalie also observed a class where students made slingshots out of metal compasses and the teacher did not attempt to correct the students (Natalie, journal entry, 4/11/16). Sophia made a similar observation in her first-grade class, commenting that “it seems as though the

students have little motivation for actually following the rules. There are no consequences or deeper meaning to follow the rules other than the teacher said so” (journal entry, 4/11/16). Bruce also commented on the lack of student motivation:

It was apparent that the teacher and students were struggling with classroom culture procedures ... to the point where it was distracting and constantly needing to be addressed.... [T]he teacher had several strategies she was clearly trying to enforce[;] ... however many of the students did not seem to seriously pay attention or ignored these used attempts, as consequences were minimal. (journal entry, 4/5/16)

Bruce was making an assumption about the culture of the German classroom based on one day’s observation. What he saw enacted in Germany did not coincide with instructions from Mountain View University on building rapport and classroom management techniques. Participants expected to observe classroom management practices similar to their experiences in U.S. classrooms and instead they saw students appearing to rule classrooms and teachers allowing this behavior.

The Americans lacked context to situate their observations. The American PSTs were able to discuss their shock and concern during Dr. Michael’s and Mia’s seminars at the University of Germantown. These seminars proved crucial for providing the Americans the opportunity to understand the cross-cultural differences between German and U.S. systems of schooling.

Seminars. As addressed in Chapter 4, these seminars were a vital component of the exchange program. Having the opportunity to reflect on what they were seeing and feeling as foreigners in Germany helped the Americans to process these cross-cultural comparisons and engage in the act of being intercultural. Three seminars occurred in Germany. The first was informal and followed a tour of the university. The second was held on April 13, 2016 wherein American PSTs collaborated with some of the German teacher candidates who had previously

traveled to the U.S. to discuss and compare teacher training and educational systems broadly. In the final seminar on April 27, 2016, American and German PSTs revisited the themes from seminar two and analyzed what they had learned from a “bird’s-eye view” (seminar 3, 4/27/17), or looking at their comments and observations more holistically.

To help the Americans situate these cross-cultural comparisons and to reflect on their biases, Dr. Michaels¹⁸ lectured on historical context, as appropriate. Natalie and Gabi began to see the value in how the Germans ran their educational system and even began to question the American system. However, by the time of the third seminar (4/27/16) both Gabi and Natalie recognized the benefits and flaws of each system of education. Gabi wrote the following journal entry after she and Natalie shared with their mentor-teacher, Felix, that they wished American schools had longer breaks and that the students had more responsibility for their own learning:

When we mentioned the fact that these were aspects we mostly appreciated and wished our system incorporated more, Felix said that he thought that these things might make their system somewhat chaotic. I found this interesting because it could be the case that we as Americans like these differences at first glance because we are approaching this experience knowing the flaws in our education system and having a critical view of our own system. I think we might be falling into the same pattern of error that U.S. education policymakers fall into when they want to change some aspect of education to something new simply because it is different. We see that something has potential, and we think we have seen it work well. However, we haven’t seen this thing in a huge variety of contexts or observed the long-term effects. (Gabi, journal entry, 4/13/16)

Gabi’s quote is one example of the American PSTs learning through observations of differences and information gathered from discourse with professors, mentors, and peers, and amending assumptions regarding schooling (Taylor, 1994).

¹⁸ Dr. Michaels connected the history of education in Germany and the emphasis for learning as a student’s responsibility to the post-WWII era ideology of not placing power in the hands of any one entity. Therefore, the purpose of schooling was to educate students to be independent thinkers and be able to take responsibility for themselves.

The Culture Wars

The American PSTs also compared the curriculum in Germany, specifically secondary education, to that of the United States. Gabi, Natalie, and Bruce were fascinated with a German class on U.S. culture that was required of all seniors. At Second Stadtteilschule, Bruce frequented the Culture Wars class and participated in conversations about the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. (group interview 2, 4/21/16; classroom observation, 4/19/21). Natalie and Gabi observed a Culture Wars class on socialism versus capitalism (Natalie, journal entry, 4/5/16) and abortion, drug and alcohol use, and purity rings (Natalie, journal entry, 4/28/16). Generally, the participants reported being surprised that topics such as abortion¹⁹ were openly discussed and debated in German schools. The following excerpt from Gabi's journal is an example of the types of discussions students had in the Culture Wars class:

Two students were leading class on a topic related to culture wars in the U.S., which includes any issues that tear U.S. society apart. The girls presented on abortion and showed a video from the U.K. of several "man on the street"-style interviews. They then asked for class participation to generate two lists on the views of the pro-life and pro-choice camps. (Gabi, journal entry, 4/26/16)

Lack of knowledge about the world can compound culture shock for individuals traveling overseas and lead to a larger socio-cultural adjustment period. Savicki, Adams, and Binder (2008) refer to this as a "skill deficit" which is illuminated through encounters with the host culture and that some individuals may be unaware of their existence until "something goes wrong" (p. 155). For the Americans in this study they recognized how little they knew about the world from their own schooling when they saw how much German students knew about U.S. society and culture. Participants were developing cross-cultural awareness by recognizing that

¹⁹ Abortion is a topic discussed in some schools and classes in the U.S. Participant surprise at the open discussion of abortion in German schools indicates that the U.S. PSTs did not have these conversations in their own experience of education and therefore discussion of this topic does not fit within their preconceived ideas of what schooling should look and sound like.

others do not have the same worldview as themselves, and that others' perceptions of the U.S. may not coincide with participants own thoughts and assumptions about their own country. The following statement from Gabi is one example of the types of questions the PSTs were asked that contributed to their awareness that not everyone felt the same way about the U.S. that they did:

One of them asked me if I thought, like did I consider the U.S. to be a terrorist organization. ... During class. And then also children told us that because we have wooden telephone poles, because we have trailer parks, because homework counts as part of your grade and all of those are reasons why the U.S. education system is worse. (Gabi, group interview 2, 4/21/16)

These students had a singular narrative of the U.S. just as the PSTs thought that the Germans would be very "cold and not receptive" (Bruce, group interview 2, 4/21/16) and that the students would be very orderly, like in the *Sound of Music*²⁰ (group interview 2, 4/21/16). However, their lived realities in Germany did not meet these preconceived ideas, which prompted the participants to start challenging their own assumptions. This quote from Gabi exemplifies that transition:

[To] shake assumptions and recognize that we have assumptions and ... instead of just assuming that they are like one way or another and that becomes especially important between cultures because a lot of cultural stuff internalized and implied but I think it can be generalized to interpersonal relations in general because it's hard to know where someone is standing,²¹ what their internalized assumptions of the world are. (group interview 2, 4/21/16)

Participants' cross-cultural comparison of curriculum specifically in combination with comparisons of German and U.S. schools broadly served as insight for the Americans into their own assumptions and stereotypes about other countries. For the participants, a short-term immersion experience was the catalyst needed to gain knowledge about another culture and

²⁰ Participants equated the dad in the *Sound of Music* as the stereotypical German, but in fact the family is from Austria.

²¹ This is a reference to a Haitian proverb that the participants referred to often – *we see from where we stand*.

perceptions of others who are culturally and linguistically dissimilar. Such was the case when the American PSTs engaged with refugees in a school.

Refugees and Immigrants

A final cross-cultural comparison that weighed heavily on the minds of Sophia, Bruce, and Gabi was the treatment of refugees and immigrants in Germany compared to immigrants in the U.S. In April 2016, the number of Syrians seeking asylum in Germany was still a topic of national concern. German Chancellor, Angela Merkel's, decision to open Germany's borders to Syrian refugees was controversial (see Visser and Roberts, 2010, for one example). Participants learned that each state in Germany was responsible for hosting a percentage of the refugees,²² and that support for Merkel was perceived by some individuals to come from the younger generation (informal conversations, 4/16/16). An influx of non-German speaking individuals, many of whom were of school age, meant an increased stress on Germantown schools. Natalie and Gabi mentioned that there was a "refugee class" somewhere in First Gymnasium, but they did not know where, and none of the teachers talked about it (informal conversation, 4/15/16). They could only hypothesize that no one discussed the refugee classes because First Gymnasium has a social index of five (see Chapter 4), making it one of the more privileged schools in its district. Teachers may have been concerned that recognition of a refugee class would reduce the school's social index.

The neighborhood in which Sophia lived had a lower average social index (1.14) than the other placement districts (Statistikamt Nord, 2016). According to 2016 data, 58.6% of inhabitants in Sophia's neighborhood had an immigrant background and 77.8% of inhabitants under the age of 18 were migrants (Statistikamt Nord, 2016). The average percentage of

²² See The UN Refugee Agency (2017) for more information on the exact number of refugees seeking asylum in Europe.

inhabitants with an immigrant background in the other participants' districts was 34.6% (Statistikamt Nord, 2016). Sophia's neighbors in Germany hosted a young Syrian male but she never spoke to him directly. Natalie, Gabi, and Bruce only interacted with the immigrant population during a school visit to a Stadtteilschule with a social index of one. During that school visit, Gabi and Sophia had the opportunity to visit a class specifically designed to assist with language instruction (English and German) for new residents. Bruce and Natalie were unable to observe the class due to time restraints. The following quotations illuminate Sophia's and Gabi's different reflections on the refugee situation in Germany and classes designed for German language learners.

Being in a classroom today with refugees it's incredible what they've been through and they have been here for how many months, like six seven eight months and they have already picked up almost two new languages. I think that's just been really, really interesting because ... I feel like the experiences I've had here are something I could never learn from just watching the news or reading articles about it. But to have conversations with people who this is their life and this is their experiences then really eye-opening in getting to see and hear about different perspectives and ideas and ways of life. (Sophia, group interview 2, 4/21/16)

I loved my time in their class. It made me realize how much I love diversity and how important it is to encounter people from vastly different walks of life. It opens your eyes and your mind and makes you think critically about your own privilege and experiences. (Sophia, journal entry, 4/21/16)

I observed a class for German language learners. This was a Verbundschule BiSS (Bildung in Sprache und Schrift), or a class for program training in language and writing. On [sic] this class, there were students from Syria, Romania, Turkey, and Russia (and probably other countries I forgot). I liked this class because it was immersive in that the teacher gave instructions in German, but she had a simple and direct style that still helped the students understand what was going on through other means besides language. Through this, I think they were able to connect the language and meaning. Repetition was highly emphasized in this class, which I also think is a priority in this kind of memory-demanding learning. Also, the language was broken down conceptually as the teacher explained it. For example, the teacher talked about the different German words for "store" and then drew lines from these words. She then provided and asked for examples of specific types of stores, representing the relationship between these different vocabulary words by drawing the lines in the diagram. Sitting in this class also helped me learn a bit more German! (Gabi, journal entry, 4/21/16)

Sophia focuses on the human aspect of the class; of the students who are learning to speak a new language and the very real emotions she felt while observing. Gabi, on the other hand, focused more on the practical elements of the class, the teacher's pedagogy and class structure.

Gabi reported developing empathy for individuals who are culturally, religiously, and ethnically different from herself in a way that she did not in her placement in the United States. She did not have extensive training in teaching English Language Learners (ELLs) during her teacher preparation at Mountain View University, which partially explains her focus on pedagogy. She also did not get to work with ELL students extensively at her U.S. school placement because they were pulled out of her class (individual re-entry-interview, 6/16/16). She reflected in her journal just days prior to visiting the German language class mentioned above about her own issues learning German and pedagogical techniques used to teach a second language.

At one point while we were in Sport class,²³ I referred to myself as a GLL (German language learner) in kind of an offhand way. This sounded odd, which led me to reflect a bit more on the language-learning aspects of schooling that we have observed. Seeing how bilingual education works at First Gymnasium has been really beneficial, especially since we have been able to observe techniques for teaching English – a relevant subject for us as Americans! However, I realized that I haven't really seen any students being taught how to speak the dominant or primary language, German. This is probably because students who still need to learn German would not attend a gymnasium, but I am just speculating. I am wondering how different the English-teaching and German-teaching techniques would be in Germany though, since the former is being taught as a supplementary language, and the latter would be taught as a primary language. I also wonder if GLLs would be treated similarly to how ELLs are treated and if teachers run into similar difficulties when helping these populations. (Gabi, journal entry, 4/17/16)

After reflecting on her experiences in Germany relating to language – trying to learn German, teaching English to German students, and observing the German language class – she developed a better understanding for the difficulties inherent in teaching students a second language.

²³ Physical Education class.

Discussing her upcoming employment teaching English in South Korea, Gabi made the following statement:

I think [it] is helpful but when I saw that they weren't super motivated by just - let's talk now about how to buy something - and they weren't particularly inspired or motivated by that. So I know I want to prepare more for that so I'm thinking about bringing word games, like catch phrase or something like that so they can practice in a more fun or something that seems to have a better objective. So learning from what I observed there, they did a lot of word searches and I think that might be a useful pedagogical technique. ... they did word searches and worksheet and then they listened and it was interesting to see what they would teach and how the students responded to some of those things, so I'm going to go and try a lot of those things I think and also see what they recommend [in South Korea] and not assume that something that didn't work in Germany with a class that I saw wouldn't necessarily work there [in South Korea]. (Gabi, individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)

Gabi used her experiences in Germany to try and understand how second language learners may feel about learning a second, or third, language and try to make the experience more relevant. She was inspired to teach differently.

Bruce did not comment as frequently on second language acquisition in his journal, but during the second group interview (4/21/16) he reflected on his experiences with language barriers and how difficult it can be to learn in a classroom where you do not speak or understand the native language.

I would just reflect on as personal growth the language, the different perspective of being someone who doesn't speak the native language and being kind of a minority within a German speaking country ... how difficult it really is if you don't, if you come to another country and don't speak the native language how difficult that would be.

Bruce continued to reflect on the plight of ELLs in his re-entry interview (6/16/16):

As someone who didn't know a lot of German, communication was very difficult in some places if you weren't about to communicate in English. So that attests to American privilege assuming that everyone speaks English, but also, just how very difficult it is to understand someone. I saw presentations in German, German classes that were entirely in German and I probably couldn't understand hardly any of it. And so, as a teacher, giving presentations or things, to students who may not have, like limited proficiency in English or who are learning English, it can be a big challenge. How you communicate

and get them to learn the information that you are trying to get them, I guess trying to convey. (Bruce, individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)

Bruce and Gabi's encounters with and reflections on second language learners may not have inspired them to change the world or live differently, but they were inspired to teach differently and to take the feelings of their ELLs into consideration. Sophia's experiences with language learners will be explored more in the following section.

Arguably, participant interaction with recent immigrants to Germany was limited. Due to timing and the availability of classes, Bruce and Natalie were unable to visit the German language class. Therefore, Bruce's thoughts on the influx of Syrian refugees stemmed from his own observations around Germantown and from conversations with his host parents. Natalie did not mention the refugee situation in any of her interviews, journals, or questionnaires. If she spoke with anyone about this topic, it is not reflected in the data.

I believe that in the case of this study, empathy was both a process of developing ICC and an outcome of ICC. According Daloz (2000, as cited in Bennett, 2008) participants engaged in "constructive engagement with otherness" (p. 19) that resulted in a "trigger event" that sparked transformative learning (Lyon, 2002). As part of their transformations, Sophia and Bruce processed their interactions with and feelings about immigration and refugees in Germany and the United States, including ideas about the education of immigrants, and came to an understanding of what these individuals might be feeling, even though the participants were not immigrants themselves. Through conversations, observations, and reflection participants empathized with the experiences of another, and as a result altered their points of view and began to shift their frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997).

This feeling of empathy that developed out of interactions with refugees extends to recognition of language differences and the role of language in being able to successfully interact

with individuals from different countries. In the next section I explore participants' growing ideas of sociolinguistic awareness.

Sociolinguistic Awareness

There is no consensus regarding the role of language in ICC (Deardorff, 2008; Fantini, 2009). Bruce, Natalie, Gabi, and Sophia did not connect foreign language acquisition or fluency directly with ICC. They did, however, connect ICC with being able to “interact successfully with the people” (Gabi), and this means being able to communicate. Deardorff (2008) defined sociolinguistic awareness as “how one uses language within a societal and social context” (p. 38). Byram (2012) connects linguistic awareness with cultural awareness which ultimately leads to ICC. The connection between language awareness and ICC is not just being able to effectively communicate in a foreign language, it is also about learning the role of language in that culture and the role of language in society (Byram, 2012). None of the participants in the student teaching abroad program spoke fluent German and only one (Natalie) had taken a course on German. Friedrich attempted to teach the participants some basic German during the pre-departure sessions; however, three sessions on the German language was hardly sufficient to ensure linguistic success in a foreign language. Participants were also informed that most Germans spoke English and that they would not need to know German to get by. Although the Germans they encountered did indeed speak English, participants quickly felt guilty for believing that speaking only English in Germany would be okay. Participants were beginning to recognize that ICC involves language awareness, including the role of language in society (Byram, 2012).

Speaking English in Germany

Participants stressed their lack of German language skills within hours of arriving in Germany and meeting their host families. Sophia's host mom, who spoke fluent English, said hello, loaded Sophia in the car, and then spoke German the entire ride home (group interview 2,

4/21/16). Bruce and Sophia commented that their families would often speak German after dinner; according to Sophia, when that happened, she felt like a “wall” had been put up because she could not contribute to the conversation (group interview 2, 4/21/16). All participants wanted to speak and understand German, but Bruce and Sophia mentioned the following encounters during which they were unable to communicate with German students:

I feel like I’m missing so much by not knowing any German. I see kids laughing but I don’t know what is so funny. I see kids crying and I don’t know why they’re upset. (Sophia, journal entry, 4/4/16)

Typical Americans – do not speak or understand German well (unfortunate)
Encountered student outside asking for teacher (Lehrer) – only fluent in English and German respectively; unable to be of assistance; language barriers.²⁴ (Bruce, journal entry, 4/19/16)

Feelings of foreign language inadequacy by participants mirror Savicki, Adams, and Binder’s (2008) findings regarding language. Participants in this study reported high concerns pertaining to language early in their sojourns, including frustration at a lack of fluency; late in their sojourns, they reported frustration at a lack of meaningful conversations (with students) due to fluency issues (Savicki, Adams, & Binder, 2008, p. 165).

Some participants were experiencing guilt at not being able to speak the language which led to feelings of being an outsider because they could not communicate in the host language.

Definitely the language. Definitely wish that I had learned more German. Although I took 101 and it didn't really help me that much. Wish I had known the language, only because I mean we got around just fine, and everyone there like I said pretty much knew English and it was fine, I survived obviously. But, it just made me feel like an outsider the whole time. It was like why would you choose to go to a country for a month and not know their language at all? So, I felt like an outsider. I think it would have been more inclusive if I had known the language. (Natalie, individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)

Participants also recognized the ethnocentricity of expecting others to speak English (Jiang & DeVillar, 2011; Medina et al., 2015). Making this connection indicated a gain in

²⁴ This quote is an example of the scattered and oftentimes incomplete nature of Bruce’s journal entries.

sociolinguistic awareness; thus, the participants gained knowledge necessary to become interculturally competent (Deardorff, 2006).

And there is just also something, I don't feel good about coming into your country and then saying okay come speak my language. And I don't know. I just like don't really feel good about that. So I think I would have felt better saying oh like well let me try to learn your culture and your language rather than you adapting to me. (Sophia, group interview 2, 4/21/16)

As someone who didn't know a lot of German, communication was very difficult in some places if you weren't about to communicate in English. So that attests to American privilege assuming that everyone speaks English. (Bruce, individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)

As mentioned before, awareness of language difficulties was a trigger moment (Lyon, 2002) for participants to evaluate their own assumptions about language and the role of spoken English around the world. Many did not reflect on how difficult it can be to learn in a language until they found themselves in a similar position in Germany; then they reported realizing how privileged they were to be a native English speaker and how many learning opportunities they might lose because they could not learn through the language (Byram, 2012; Fantini, 2009).

Cultural Awareness

The third theme related to participants' emerging understanding of cultural awareness. Cultural awareness involves individuals critically analyzing their cultural beliefs, values, and perspectives and becoming aware of the source of their cultural beliefs. During their time in Germany, participants began to compare their own values, beliefs, and perspectives against those of individuals who were culturally different from them, and in the process, they gained an understanding of what it means to live and work in a global society. The following quotes represent Natalie, Gabi, Sophia, and Bruce's awareness of multiple perspectives.

I think I can see where people with different backgrounds are coming from better than I did before. (Natalie, individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)

I think this trip helped me put America more in context ... I have comparative information now. (Gabi, individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)

I feel like it is really tempting to view things in black and white. ... And I think this has definitely taught me to say some things we have are both good and bad and some things here [in Germany] are good and bad. (Sophia, group interview 2, 4/21/16).

The different perspective of being someone who doesn't speak the native language and being kind of a minority within a German speaking country ... how difficult it really is if you don't, if you come to another country and don't speak the native language how difficult that would be. (Bruce, group interview 2, 4/21/16)

Hanvey (1976) refers to this process as gaining perspective consciousness whereas Mezirow (1997) and Taylor (2008) refer to this as perspective transformation and frame of reference shift respectively. One conversation in particular caused Gabi to reflect on how the United States was viewed by others from around the world: “The stereotypes of America are so varied. Like some of our students ... one of them asked me if I thought, did I consider the U.S. to be a terrorist organization” (Gabi, group interview 2, 4/21/16). Gabi did not have a clear answer as to how she responded to question from a German student. Unfortunately, this was a missed opportunity to discuss the past and current role of the United States in the world and its implication: why others may perceive our country to be a terrorist organization.²⁵

Most participants gained cultural awareness while in Germany and in the process learned more about themselves personally. In the following section I will discuss how the intercultural exchange resulted in self-development for some of the participants.

²⁵ Gabi made this comment during the second group interview. The question posed to the participants asked them about interactions with individuals outside of their host families. Throughout the course of the dialogue the conversation turned to breaking stereotypes, i.e. the participants let go of preconceptions and stereotypes of Germans and Germany after living in the country for three weeks. Gabi turned the conversation to stereotypes that Germans had of the U.S. and Americans. Participants asked her how she responded to the students, but Gabi continued her thoughts by providing an example of an encounter with someone who had a positive perception of the U.S. The conversation continued with a discussion of Germans perceived indifference to the U.S. I did not stop the conversation to pursue the “terrorist” comment because participants were engaging in a critical dialogue with each other. Unfortunately, due to time restraints I was unable to loop back to Gabi’s comment.

Self-Development

Self-development and intercultural exchanges are seemingly synonymous; however, self-development can be hard to measure (Wilson, 1982). Recent research on study abroad and student teaching abroad broadly categorize self-development as: gaining self-confidence, gaining responsibility, gaining flexibility, gaining patience or adaptability, and gaining personal changes, such as appreciation of home or changed outlook on life (see: Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Mapp, et al., 2007; Ozek, 2009; Sahin, 2008; Willard-Holt, 2001). Findings from this research support these studies in that participants grew personally during their sojourn to Germany. Some changes may be seemingly superficial, but self-development can lead to intercultural adjustment (Savicki, Binder, & et al., 2008) which is key to ICC development.

Most participants reflected that spending one month in a foreign country allowed them the opportunity to get to know themselves better and, therefore, I posit self-awareness allowed them to experience personal growth. Through their exchanges with host families, co-workers, and strangers, Bruce, Natalie, and Gabi learned what they needed to be effective internationally and in the process gained knowledge about who they are. Gabi needs time to herself; Bruce learned about how he is perceived by others; and Natalie gained self-confidence and flexibility. These deeply personal experiences reflected personal and cultural awareness that then freed these individuals to interact with others in a more authentic and honest way.

Natalie experienced a disorienting dilemma when she was spontaneously told to teach a group of 5th grade students she had never met. This was disorienting for Natalie because her student teaching placement in the United States was very stable and uneventful. Although Natalie and Gabi co-taught, the spontaneous nature of the experience did not affect Gabi as much as it did Natalie (journal entries, informal conversation). Through this experience and other successful teaching and traveling experiences in Germany (navigating the U-Bahn in Berlin),

Natalie gained self-confidence, as measured by her relative comfort with traveling. Prior to the program, she had never traveled out of the United States by herself and was nervous to do so (journal entry, 4/2/16). By the end of April, however, Natalie reported feeling “more comfortable” living in a foreign country and completing daily tasks such as navigating public transportation and ordering food that had once seemed difficult (journal entries):

Personally I would say that I'm more comfortable getting outside of my comfort zone. I think I've seen things or read things [that] learning really takes place outside your comfort zone and ... after this trip I understand that more I think. I don't know, I would say going into college four years ago I would never have expected myself to study abroad (individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16).

In her final journal entry, she reflected on new perspectives gained as a result of the experience:

I have gained a new perspective of both teaching and the world around me from the experiences that this trip gave me. ... It's hard to put into words what this trip did to me, but it changed my life. I'm the same person I was 30 days ago, but I have a different mindset now.

Increased feelings of self-confidence and flexibility are signs of successful intercultural adjustment (Savicki, Binder, & et al., 2008).

Gabi and Bruce both experienced personal growth through interactions with their host families. Gabi's host family situation was pleasant but slightly strained – her host parents had two young children and Gabi felt they may have been overwhelmed at the addition of another person to their home (program evaluation).

My host mom wasn't the warmest person, and I sometimes felt criticized by her. We also didn't all eat together as a family and I couldn't always find food too easily at their house, so I felt a little weird about eating their food (and usually tried to get food elsewhere because of this) even though they said I could eat whatever (program evaluation).

Later, Gabi reflected that she may have miscommunicated her level of discomfort with her host family accommodations because she was accustomed to being in college and living on her own (individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16). Regardless, she came to understand herself better in the

process: “I became more certain that I am introverted and need time to myself during the day” (individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16). This self-development was important for Gabi’s personal growth, but she was also aware that it could be an intercultural incident. She recognized that everyone has different personalities and different needs and that her wanting to be alone, if not properly communicated, could lead to a miscommunication of feelings, as was the situation with Bruce and his host family. Both Gabi and Bruce’s personal developments during their time in Germany led to a deeper understanding of intercultural communication.

Bruce’s interactions with his host family were the most transformative of any of the participants. Bruce needed time alone to work on his final student teaching assessment (edTPA) which was due to Mountain View University on April 13, 2016. He alternated between working in his room and at the dining room table, but for the first two weeks he was in Germantown, Bruce did not interact with his host family to their expectations and liking. Even when he was sitting at the dining room table, he was viewed by his host family as being antisocial (program evaluation; journal entries). Bruce was initially unaware of how he was being perceived until it was brought to his attention by Geoff, who revealed that his host family had been in communication with the residential director.

Conclusion

Participants understanding of ICC developed throughout the month-long experience in Germany, specifically through cross-cultural comparisons. According to Alred, et al. (2006), taking a comparative perspective is “in itself a characteristic of being intercultural” (p. 3). Participants questioned the differences between the education systems and sought to understand why they were different. They questioned pedagogical practices in the U.S. compared to Germany. They compared how German schools approach German-language learning to how ELLs are treated and taught in America. They realized the difficulties and complicated

situations ELLs may face. They even questioned their own assumptions about the role of the English language in non-English speaking countries. By questioning pre-conceived assumptions, listening to different perspectives, reflecting on their experiences, and engaging in dialogue with others, the American PSTs developed some of the characteristics of ICC.

Findings from this study support findings from other studies that student teaching abroad can result in individuals shift from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism (Jarchow, McKay, Powell, & Quinn, 1996), develop perspective consciousness (Mapp, et al., 2007; Marx & Moss, 2011; Malewski & Phillion, 2009), invoke personal growth such as self-confidence and agency in participants (Ozek, 2009; Sahin, 2008; Zhao, et al., 2009), and increase sensitivity and empathy for others (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Willard-Holt, 2001; Zhao, et al., 2009).

Revisiting Deardorff's (2006) characteristics essential for developing ICC, through their exploration of defining ICC and lived intercultural experiences, Bruce, Gabi, Sophia, and Natalie all developed the ability to understand others' worldviews and developed personal attributes including curiosity, general openness, and respect for others. Not as easily discernable is whether or not participants developed the skills to analyze, relate, listen, and observe. All four participants come from some place of privilege – White, English-speaking, of financial means to travel abroad – and not all of the participants addressed this privilege or acknowledged their Whiteness on more than a superficial level.

To conclude, as a result of a short-term student teaching abroad program, participants developed in their understanding of ICC. They used cross-cultural comparisons, cultural mentors (Bennett, 2008), and program-initiated seminars to process differences and to better understand interactions in an intercultural setting. Participants were able to build upon what they already knew and cultivate a deeper understanding of ICC.

CHAPTER 7 – DISCUSSION

Chapter 7 includes a discussion of the research questions, a brief summary of the conceptual frameworks and how they connect to the findings, and a discussion of implications and applications for future student teaching abroad programs. Limitations and future directions for research are also presented.

Overview of Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to explore whether and how student teachers developed an understanding of intercultural competence (ICC) during a one-month international experience. There was one main research question guiding this dissertation and two sub questions: (1) How does a short-term student teaching abroad experience inform pre-service teachers' (PSTs) understanding of ICC? (1a) How do PSTs define ICC at various stages of their experience? (1b) How do PSTs describe the student teaching abroad experience with respect to ICC and transformative learning?

To briefly review, I defined intercultural as the interactions between two or more individuals from different cultures (Bennett, 2009) where culture is defined as a shared set of beliefs, values, and norms. ICC is more difficult to define (Deardorff, 2006). For the purpose of this dissertation, I used the most common definition of ICC: It is the knowledge, skills, and attitudes an individual must possess to effectively interact with individuals from a different culture (Deardorff, 2008). In keeping with this definition, someone who has the following characteristics may have ICC:

- skills to analyze, interpret, relate, listen, and observe;

- the ability to understand others' worldviews;
- curiosity, general openness, and respect for other cultures (Deardorff, 2006)

Some have hierarchical or linear concepts of ICC development (see Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), but I conceive of such growth as iterative and cyclical, following Deardorff's (2006) Process Model of Intercultural Competence as a cyclical model of the developmental stages of ICC acquisition (see Figure 2.1). As I analyzed my data and developed my own concept of what it means to be ICC, I came to understand that individuals may possess behavioral and affective competencies and not cognitive competencies and nevertheless effectively interact with individuals from a different culture.

During the process of answering the research questions, I created a table that identified the ICC characteristics of each participant and their supporting data (see Appendix H). I used the table as a guide as I analyzed the characteristics of ICC exhibited by each participant and considered if each participant's growth matched with the modified phases of transformative learning (see Chapter 5). The findings led me to the conclusion that participants in the student teaching abroad program to Germany came to understand ICC better through their interactions with others and through their cross-cultural comparisons; however, only two participants (Bruce and Sophia) exhibited signs of a transformation during this short time period.

Discussion of Research Questions

Research Question 1: How does a short-term student teaching abroad experience inform PSTs' understanding of ICC?

For the PSTs who participated in this research study, the short-term student teaching abroad experience informed their understanding of ICC in the following ways:

- Teaching and working in German schools afforded participants the opportunity to learn about the purpose of education in a different culture.

- Navigating host families afforded participants the opportunity for personal practice with intercultural interactions.
- Participating in program components, such as the seminars, afforded participants the opportunity for critical reflection and discourse.
- Living in a foreign country for one month afforded participants the opportunity to try new things, including navigating a country in which they did not speak the native language.

Over the course of a short-term student teaching abroad program, four PSTs developed a more complicated understanding of ICC. The PSTs gained new insight into how to interact with individuals from another country and a new appreciation for second-language learners; however, overall, their understanding remained superficial. Participants developed many of the personal attributes of ICC, including curiosity, flexibility, self-awareness, sociolinguistic awareness, and cultural awareness. As they compared German and U.S. systems of education and compared the cultures in other ways, they were able to understand their own and others' worldviews better. The process of working within a vastly different system of education led the participants to question their assumptions about the following topics: how schools should operate, what responsibilities teachers and students should have, and what curriculum should be used. Initially the Americans judged the German teachers' (perceived) lack of classroom management skills. None of the participants overtly claimed to possess superior knowledge of how to manage a class, but they each conveyed a judgmental attitude through the tone of their journal entries. Through the seminars with Dr. Michaels, participants came to understand the historical context of the German approach to education; they then began to appreciate the context informing their observations about classroom management. Gabi in particular used the comparison of German

and U.S. schools to build a deeper understanding of the cultural history of Germany. Such development is a characteristic of ICC. In the end, Gabi and Natalie concluded that both systems had merit; they also concluded that they were closed-minded to assume that one system of education was superior.

During the program, the participants began to move from an ethnocentric state of minimization—in which they viewed their cultural worldviews as universal—to the ethnorelative state of acceptance: “the state in which one’s own culture is experienced as just one of a number of equally complex worldviews” (Hammer et. al., 2003, p. 425). Some participants moved a bit further into the ethnorelative stages; Sophia, for example, approached the adaptation stage through her empathy for German-language learners in the “refugee class.” However, she did not completely move into this stage because her empathy did not alter her behaviors; her shift remained cognitive (Hammer et. al., 2003). As a collective, the four cases in this study indicate that it is possible for participants to begin the process of moving from an ethnocentric state to an ethnorelative one over the course of one month. The individual re-entry interviews revealed variations between the individual cases, suggesting that people may adjust their ICC to differing degrees and in unique ways.

When asked if they knew more or less about ICC after participating in the study abroad program (see Table 7.1), Bruce, Sophia, Gabi, and Natalie all indicated that they knew more or thought they knew more. Gabi and Natalie commented that developing ICC is an ongoing process and that one-month was not sufficient to give them expertise. These comments are interesting for two reasons: First, as discussed in Chapter 5, neither Gabi nor Natalie experienced a perspective transformation, and secondly, Gabi and Natalie had little in common. The only common denominator between them, other than the required program components, was that they

taught at the same school and therefore saw each other every day. Gabi had more prior travel experience than Natalie. Gabi was less comfortable with her host family situation than was Natalie. Gabi was already planning to teach overseas the following year whereas Natalie was interviewing for a job near her home. Nevertheless, something in their experiences allowed them to see that ICC is a long-term investment. Natalie acknowledged that she did not know how interculturally incompetent she was until she lived in another country (individual re-entry, interview, 6/22/16). Gabi made no such claim, perhaps an indicator of her higher ethnorelative status prior to living in Germany. Natalie's understanding of ICC characteristics, namely cultural awareness, was basic. Her changes were cognitive and not behavioral (Bennett, 2008). Gabi, on the other hand, focused on living in an intercultural environment and the investment a person must make to develop deep friendships. Based on Gabi's statements, she had a cognitive shift, but unlike Natalie, Gabi seems to have shifted in slight behavioral ways as well. These two cases show individuals who did not transform their perspective, according to the modified Mezirow (1991) phases, but who nevertheless moved toward ethnorelativism and the development of ICC.

Table 7.1 Participant Responses to Whether They Knew More or Less about ICC After Participating in the Germany Student Teaching Program

Name	Data
Natalie	"I would say that I know more about cultural competency. I think beforehand I wasn't even really aware of it and I think that's what kind of opened my eyes during this trip was that I would say I was fairly [inter]culturally incompetent before ... I think being there and when I realized that the students there learn so much about the United States, they knew all about our political system; they knew so much about the United States and I know not really that much about Germany and I realized I don't know a lot about other countries. That I think it definitely made me more aware of [inter]cultural competency and again it makes me want to learn even more. I realize I don't know a lot and I want to learn more." (individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)
Gabi	"I mean I feel like I know more, I think I know more. Because now I've been through the process of trying to live in a society that's not mine on a daily basis and so I have some knowledge of what that experience is like. Yea and trying to form more long-lasting relationships with people so you have to invest more, know more about how to create a good relationship with someone from another culture. When it's a longer-term situation. Yea. So, I think I know more. I still don't consider myself an expert or anything." (individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)
Bruce	"Maybe so. Or it's more complex than probably previous definitions. ... Because you are dealing

	with two pretty complex definitions to begin with. Intercultural and competency. What defines competency is a really difficult thing to describe and it varies from person to person. ... to be more complex than just being able to communicate with people, it's also immersion and understanding the culture that you are within as well as how it relates to your own culture.” (individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)
Sophia	“So, cultural competency, I don't know, the first thing that comes to mind is the, I don't know, the learning about someone else's culture ... and making all these assumptions and putting all these stereotypes on someone Whereas I feel like definitely because of this trip that's stripped away and I just want to be well okay tell me more about your culture and just wanting [and a] willingness to understand rather than thinking you already do understand.” (individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)

Sophia and Bruce did transform their perspectives. As they each defined ICC, they indicated that it was more complicated than they initially thought, but they did not allude to the continual nature of ICC development. Sophia struggled to define any of the following concepts: cultural competency, intercultural competency, and global awareness. During her individual re-entry interview she was so unsure of how to answer my question that she asked me to give her a definition of ICC. Despite her difficulties her definition alluded to ICC as the ability to suspend assumptions and stereotypes and to not reduce an entire culture to a single story. She exhibited open-mindedness and respect, attitudes or dispositions of an interculturally competent person. Sophia's development of ICC was affective and behavioral with a slight movement towards cognitive, while Bruce's ICC development was mostly behavioral (Bennett, 2008). Bruce's definition attempted to break down the difference between intercultural and competency; in so doing, Bruce showed an awareness that ICC is complicated. He recognized that the definition of competency varies from person to person. His response directly related to his very personal experience with intercultural communication; it also indicated an awareness of the connection between cultural awareness and ICC. Compared to their first impressions of ICC, Sophia's and Bruce's later impressions were more complex. Nevertheless, they did not comment on how much they learned in Germany and how much they still have to learn. Those omissions surprised me because I expected the two individuals who experienced transformation to show

greater self-awareness than the participants who did not undergo a transformation. These two cases seem to suggest that evidence of transformation during a short-time may not be sustainable and that, as Medina-López-Portillo (2004) concluded, longer term immersion programs may offer a better chance for “achieving desired intercultural outcomes” (p. 179), and that individuals undergoing ICC development may experience periods of stagnation or regression (Fantini, 2009).

Research Question 1a: How do PSTs define ICC at various stages of their experience?

For participants in this study, defining ICC was more difficult after having lived in Germany for one month. To gauge participants’ understanding of the concept of ICC, I asked them to define ICC in three different stages: (a) before they departed (pre-departure questionnaire, March 2016), (b) when they were in Germany (group interview 2, April 2016), and (c) again upon re-entry during their individual interviews (June 2016). Their definitions of ICC in their pre-departure surveys indicated that they had a very simplistic understanding of ICC. The definitions were more about being intercultural than ICC; they suggested that a person should be able to interact with someone from a different culture, but they did not explore the competencies needed to do so. For instance, the definitions were about interacting with individuals from different cultures in a variety of contexts but not necessarily about the skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to interact with different individuals effectively. However, as participants interacted with individuals in Germany, both in schools and in their host families, they began to understand more about what it means to be intercultural, as reflected in their post-program definitions. Despite some changes in how participants defined ICC, the post-program definitions still indicated a surface-level understanding of what it means to be ICC. Participants moved towards ethnorelativism but largely remained in the final stages of ethnocentrism (Hammer et. al., 2003).

Research question one regarded what it looks like to be interculturally competent and how participants' actions and words indicated that they were interculturally competent. My aim in examining definitions across time was to determine whether participants truly understood and processed what it meant to be interculturally competent.

The data collected indicates a slight disconnect between participants' actions and words. Participants were able to effectively navigate a foreign culture, but may not have internalized a greater understanding of ICC. That disconnect calls into question whether they actually understood ICC and whether their understanding would translate into their practice; will they use their increased understanding of ICC as in-service teachers in the U.S.? In the next section, I present findings that I reached by using transformative learning theory to analyze the process of understanding ICC.

Research Question 1b: How did PSTs experience student teaching abroad with respect to ICC and transformative learning?

As indicated above, all participants experienced interactions that led to their understanding of ICC; however, only two of the four experienced a transformation over the course of the four weeks in Germany if we understand the transformation in terms of Mezirow's (1991) phases of transformation (see Table 2.2). Bruce and Sophia experienced perspective transformation stemming from their interactions with their host families and awareness of language, respectively. Gabi's experiences in Germany represent the longer perspective transformation process that some people experience. Natalie, on the other hand, did not experience a perspective transformation while in Germany, indicating that transformation may not take place, even when contributing factors such as disorienting dilemmas, reflection, and discourse are present. However, according to the theory that ICC develops cyclically and iteratively (Cranton, 2006; Deardorff, 2006), Natalie is positioned to think more critically about

her interactions in intercultural settings in future foreign travel. Participants do not need to go through a transformation to have a better understanding—and experience—of ICC.

Implications

Cultural Distance

Study abroad scholars disagree about the ideal cultural distance from participants' home culture and country and optimal learning experiences. According to Savicki, Adams, and et al. (2008), the “number and intensity of ... encounters may depend on factors such as the cultural distance between the home and host cultures” (p. 155). For participants in this study, Germany was midway between being culturally similar (another English-speaking country) and culturally distant (a non-Western country). Germany is not an English-speaking country, thereby making it more culturally distant and providing some challenges for participants to navigate. As a placement site, Germany did not provide a jarring culture gap for participants to navigate because participants could rely on English in Germany (because many Germans speak English) and because cultural norms were more easily understood. Studying abroad in a non-Western country may have produced more disorienting situations for participants (as was the case for Sophia in 2015), but findings from this study suggest that transformative interactions can occur in a country that is culturally similar to a person's own. Non-Western countries may have provided too much of a culture gap for some individuals to process in a short-time. Therefore, study abroad program coordinators may want to consider different program types based on a cultural distance and allow participants to self-select the program best suited for their needs (Medina-López-Portillo, 2004).

School Placement Sites

School placement and proximity to another participant may affect participants' transformation outcomes. Gabi and Natalie were placed at the same school in Germany, and neither experienced a transformation. Bruce and Sophia were the only U.S. student teachers at their placement sites, and they did experience transformations. Placement sites and proximity to other program participants may have contributed to overall transformations and of understanding ICC. Bruce and Sophia may have experienced transformations because they did not have another American with whom to talk regularly, potentially leading them to process their feelings on their own. Similarly, both Bruce and Sophia frequently explored Germantown on their own, thereby increasing the likelihood they experienced intercultural situations they had to navigate independently. Conversely, Gabi and Natalie were almost never apart. Perhaps they did not experience a transformation because they had a partner throughout the entire trip and were never truly on their own. However, Gabi and Natalie were the only participants to indicate in their individual re-entry interviews that they still had a lot to learn about being ICC. This insight could be a positive outcome of having someone with whom to reflect informally together on experiences, dilemmas, and lessons learned. Regardless, placement sites and proximity to other participants are variables that should be considered for future programs.

Length of Stay

Short-term study abroad programs are gaining popularity. Traveling internationally is expensive, and short-term programs are cheaper than traditional semester-long programs. Moreover, semester-long study abroad opportunities are often incompatible with strict course requirements for education majors and state requirements for student teaching hours. This study shows that a short-term student teaching abroad program can be beneficial for PSTs because some participants did make gains towards their understanding of ICC. However, a program

lasting longer than four weeks may provide participants with more opportunities for interactions, reflection, and discourse (Dunn, et al., 2014; Marx & Moss, 2011) ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of ICC. Individuals with previous international experience may develop higher levels of ethnorelativism from extended programs overseas (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012).

Review of Conceptual Framework

Findings from this study support the use of ICC developmental models and transformative learning theory as conceptual frameworks for describing the process of becoming interculturally competent. Mezirow's (1978) original theory stipulated that transformation took place only after a disorienting experience and the 10 phases of transformation. Over time and in response to some critics, he modified his theory to allow for more iterative and long-term changes. However, his 10 phases were still grounded in adult learning theory and applied to adults re-entering the work force. Other studies (Addleman, et al., 2015; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Dunn et al., 2014; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011) have used transformative learning as an analytical lens for study or student teaching abroad, and a few have used transformative learning theory in connection with ICC (Kambutu & Nganga, 2008). However, Mezirow's 10 phases of transformation have remained unaltered since 2000. Findings in my study may suggest various ways to rethink Mezirow's (1991) 10 phases of transformations, including modifying to 5 phases and make it applicable to short-term student teaching abroad (see Table 5.1). I used the findings to create the modified phases of transformation to analyze whether participants underwent a perspective transformation in regards to ICC understanding.

Two critical components of transformation and ICC development are reflection and discourse. Without these components individuals experiencing a disorienting dilemma may not process their experiences and thus miss an opportunity for a perspective transformation. Critical reflection and discourse are key components for processing intercultural incidents and moving

these situations from disorienting to cultural adaptations (Savicki, Cooley, & Donnelly, 2008). Journals and group interviews afforded the participants in this study the opportunity for critical reflection, and the seminars afforded an opportunity for discourse. Through this process, Bruce and Sophia experienced perspective transformation. Natalie did not. Gabi's data suggests that ICC development can occur through this process but that transformation may occur incrementally and over a longer period of time, thus supporting Deardorff's (2006) developmental model. Gabi's constant questioning, comparing, and overall philosophical approach to learning represents the characteristics of someone who is interculturally competent and who may have entered the study abroad program with a higher degree of ICC, thus decreasing the likelihood that a transformation would be apparent during a short timeframe. Whereas we could see specific stages of transformation in Bruce and Sophia, Gabi's phases are spread out over a longer period of time and may have occurred after her travel to Germany. Transformation can occur in a short-term experience, but I do not know whether Bruce and Sophia will sustain their transformations over the long-term or whether they will regress.

Findings from this study confirm Mezirow's ideas that disorienting experiences can lead to a shift in perspective, that transformations can occur as a result of critical discourse, and that transformations may take longer to develop in some individuals. Findings from this study also complicate our understanding of the theory because there is no evidence of the depth the transformations or that transformations inspired the participants to engage in social action, an element missing from transformative learning theory (see Baumgartner, 2012; Collard & Law, 1989; Taylor, 1997). Participants may experience transformation in a short time; however, it is unclear whether the characteristics or competencies developed as a result of the transformation may be sustained. Sophia alone considered social action when she spoke of wanting to help

others when she returned to the U.S., but I have no evidence of whether she did so. At the time of her individual re-entry interview (June 2016), she had not yet acted in any way to suggest a movement towards social action.

The conceptual framework employed in this study appropriately supports the methodology and findings; however, limitations of the framework emerged during data analysis. Using the developmental process model of ICC and transformative learning theory highlights how a student teaching abroad program can promote a more complex understanding of ICC. Unfortunately, the conceptual framework lacked a critical component and could have benefited from the addition of either narrative analysis or discourse analysis theories.

Also missing from the conceptual framework was an analysis of how the participants used newly acquired skills and knowledge, a component echoed by Mezirow's critics who wanted more social action within the theory of transformative learning. A way to frame the missing social action piece could be with global citizenship. Inherent within the concept of global citizenship is a call to action. Global citizenship education has emerged as a dominant topic in the larger field of global education (Bickmore, 2009; Davies, Evans, & Reid, 2005; Heilman, 2006; Myers, 2006; Rapoport, 2010). These scholars and educators focus on the interconnectedness of the world, a topic that has been explored in social studies education (e.g.: Agbaria, 2011; Kirkwood, 2001; Merryfield, 1998, 2007; Merryfield & Wilson, 2005; Tye, 2009). Global citizenship education and, accordingly, ICC can be viewed through the lens of developing a global perspective (Hanvey, 1976). These global connections do not occur naturally (Deardorff, 2009). Students must be taught the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to participate in a global society; they must be taught ICC. Participation in study abroad

is one way to provide a constructivist approach to global citizenship education and ICC development.

Findings from this study support the connection between global awareness, global perspectives, and ICC. Participants naturally reflected on global issues and showed an awareness of how the United States is positioned in the world. Many connected the process of gaining global awareness with developing the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to interact effectively in an international setting. Missing from the findings, however, is a call to action to take new knowledge and understandings one step further towards being a global citizen.

Transformation theory alone may not suffice in educating teacher candidates to work with diverse students. The conceptual framework employed in this study was significant for understanding how PSTs describe their international experience and for illuminating the aspects of the study abroad program that were best suited to help participants process information. However, future studies would benefit from including global citizenship education to the framework to assess if—and how—participants sustain their perspective transformations and employ global awareness as in-service teachers.

Applications

There are four main applications to be considered. These suggestions are relevant for individuals organizing student teaching abroad programs and teacher preparation programs, especially if organizers want to increase student teachers' understanding of intercultural situations occurring domestically as well as internationally.

Program coordinators need to decide whether developing ICC is a goal of their international program(s). Is the program seeking to help prepare PSTs to work in diverse settings in the United States? If so, then the international teaching experience must explicitly provide opportunities for teacher candidates to grow and develop not only their understanding of

ICC but also their embodiment of it. In this study, Mountain View University's program participants increased their understanding of ICC through visits to schools other than host schools, trips to the concentration camp and Berlin, and the seminars led by Dr. Michaels at the University of Germantown. However, the goal of the Mountain View University program was pedagogical in nature; it was not intended to promote ICC development. Coordinators of programs intending to promote ICC may want to consider the following applications.

Individuals traveling to foreign countries may gain a better understanding of ICC when they are educated in the characteristics of ICC. Pre-departure sessions are pivotal for participants' success in an international setting; these should include some coursework on intercultural student teaching (see Wilson & Flournoy, 2007). This coursework should help participants learn about the host culture in more detail before departure. Although individuals self-select to participate in a study abroad program, they do not intuitively know how to behave in interculturally competent ways. As participants become disoriented through program experiences, their perspectives can begin to transform; however, to increase participants' ability to effectively navigate unfamiliar situations, programs must provide them with the information needed to succeed.

Intentional ICC curriculum needs to be coupled with seminars and debriefing. In this study, the seminars provided a safe and trustworthy space for participants to grapple with what they were observing in schools and to engage in critical discourse with their peers and German contemporaries. Participation in coursework with host country students would be ideal; if that is not an option, program coordinators should attempt to replicate the seminars discussed in this study. Participants need opportunities to speak about what they are observing, to ask questions, and to converse about their understanding of situations. As participants reflect, they may

recognize assumptions and/or judgments they have made and potentially challenge or change them. Participants need not abandon their own worldviews; rather, they can accept that their worldview is not the only one (Hanvey, 1976). This reflective process equips PSTs to understanding better the various worldviews that their students bring to the classroom.

Third, participants must have a place to reflect privately on their experiences. The electronic journals used for this program were not private, and after the program director told participants to redact any identifying information (email communication, 4/11/16) they expressed concern about what they could honestly write. Students need a safe space to express their emotions, fears, struggles, and questions without fear of reprimand or judgment. For transformation of ICC to occur, there must be a space for critical reflection. Program coordinators should consider using password protected sites for journals rather than open online platforms like blogs.

Finally, I would argue that timing of the international teaching program should be considered. Timing is not directly related to ICC; however, participants expressed in their second group interview (April 2016) and individual re-entry interviews (June 2016) that the timing of the trip was slightly problematic due to the impending deadline of their edTPA portfolio. Because of the timing, Bruce spent free time working on assignments and not with his host family, and he experienced misunderstandings and disappointment with his host family. The opportunity for participants to debrief upon re-entry is more important than the portfolio deadline. I recommend that participants complete the student teaching abroad program in the middle of their student teaching experience. It would be advantageous for participants to study abroad when they are observing teachers in classrooms and just starting to understand what it means to be a full-time teacher, but not engaged in a full-time student teaching practicum. If

PSTs are given time to reflect on what they learned about themselves professionally and personally while overseas, then they might have the opportunity to apply new knowledge to their practice as full-time student teachers in a real-world situation (Kamdar & Lewis, 2015).

Model Program Overview

The ideal student teaching abroad program would be a component of an advanced methods course taught the semester before a full-time student teaching placement. This course would include three main components: pre-departure course content, student teaching in a host country, and re-entry course debrief and reflection. Assuming a 15-week semester, students would spend the first 5 weeks at their home institution enrolled in an advanced, content-specific methods course centered on educating diverse learners, where diverse learners is defined as students who come from different cultural, ethnic, and linguistic heritages and may also include students with diverse learning needs (academically gifted and/or students with individual education plans [IEPs]). The second five-week block would consist of student-teaching in the host country, and the final five weeks would focus on debriefing, reflecting, and creating an action plan for student teaching.

Students enrolled in the student teaching abroad course should have a choice of international destination. Ideally, home universities would offer two to three different student teaching abroad program sites and afford students the opportunity to participate in the program that best suits their needs. For instance, students should have the opportunity to choose between the following options: European, non-English speaking country (e.g., Germany, Italy, France); non-European, non-English speaking country (e.g., China, Japan, Mexico); non-European, English speaking country (e.g., India, Ghana, Belize). Some individuals (as Sophia demonstrated) may not be ready for an international experience to a non-European, non-English speaking country. The cultural distance between, for instance China and the U.S., may be too

jarring and therefore counterproductive thus possibly resulting in reinforced stereotypes and a lack of cultural empathy. Conversely, traveling to a European, non-English speaking country may provide students the opportunity to experience cultural immersion in a more familiar environment, which can lead to positive intercultural understanding. Thusly, these students may be more likely to travel to more culturally different locations in the future. Additionally, the students' final five weeks of debriefing could be enriched by their classmates' perspectives from different international placements.

Regardless of international placement, course curriculum centered on working with culturally and linguistically diverse learners is integral. Students would receive instruction on ICC development, second-language acquisition, intercultural communication, and culturally relevant pedagogy. Prior to departure students may visit cultural centers for their host countries where plausible or interact with guest speakers from the various host nations. Students would receive language instruction and complete a cultural project of their choosing (e.g., poster presentation, shadow box, video journal). During the five-week re-entry block students would have the opportunity to revise their pre-departure cultural project and write a reflection paper on the pre- and post-iterations. Additionally, the instructor would facilitate multiple whole-class debriefing sessions that analyze the collective international experiences of the participants and highlight possible applications for student-teaching the following semester. A final project for the entire course would be the creation of an action plan that students can implement during student teaching. Action plans could include activities for culturally relevant teaching, international exchange programs, or some equivalent. The purpose is for the PSTs to have a tangible plan, based upon their experiences student teaching overseas, that can be immediately implemented. It is my hope that by creating a teaching plan based upon cultural immersion

experiences that these student teachers would not experience regression in their ICC development.

Participants should have the opportunity to observe as many classes and teachers in their host schools as possible; however, they should be placed with content specific mentor-teachers and be expected to teach, or co-teach, a minimum of five lessons in total. Ideally, each PST should be placed in a separate host country school. If this is not possible and placing multiple participants at the same host school is required, each PST should have a separate mentor-teacher and work independently. Each participant needs to be on their own to grapple individually with the challenges and successes of teaching in an international setting. To supplement the student teaching abroad experience students should also visit a variety of schools and historical and cultural locations. Ideally the course instructor or instructors would visit all placement sites and conduct a seminar with their students and local PSTs, in conjunction with a local education professor, to provide participants the opportunity for critical reflection and discourse while in their international placement.

I understand that no study abroad or student teaching abroad program is perfect. The program mentioned above outlines a study abroad opportunity designed to foster participants' development of ICC based on working with diverse learners. A program designed to promote language fluency may have similar components, but would ultimately be designed differently (Engle & Engle, 2004). Research indicates, however, that desired outcomes for students are more likely to occur when programs are designed to include faculty guidance and mediation (Phillion, Malewski, Sharma, & Wang, 2009; Vande Berg & Paige, 2009).

Limitations

As with any research project of this size, this study is not without limitations. There were several limitations regarding participants. First, the sample size was small. Originally all

seven individuals traveling to Germany agreed to participate; however, due to attrition only four cases were included in this study. Given the very small sample size, the results are not conducive to larger generalizability. Secondly, there was little demographic diversity. All participants were White, and only one identified as male. No socio-economic data was collected; however, participants were able to afford the cost of student teaching abroad (approximately \$4,000). Finally, participants self-selected to participate in an international teaching experience; thus, they likely already possessed some of the dispositions of an interculturally competent person. Future studies should include a larger sample size with more gender, race, and social class variability by providing scholarships and other incentives to offset the out-of-pocket expenses.

Another limitation is the reliance on some self-reported data. This study did begin to fill a gap in the research literature by interviewing participants before, during, and after their international experience and by not relying on quantitative inventories to predict or define growth. However, the journals and surveys contained self-reported data. It is possible that participants did not honestly express themselves in these documents because they knew others would read them. The program evaluation sent out by Mountain View University was supposed to be confidential, but participants were required to put their name on the form so that the program director knew who completed the evaluations. This identification could have led to misinformation that skewed the data.

Additionally, the research setting can be seen as a limitation. Participants studied abroad in Germany, a Western country not culturally dissimilar to the United States. Participants were not given a choice of placement sites since Germany is the only international destination offered to teacher candidates at Mountain View University. It is possible that participants could have

experienced more disorienting dilemmas in a non-Western country and it is possible that more than two individuals could have experienced a perspective transformation if the individuals visiting a non-Western country also had reason to reflect and engage in critical discourse. However, it is also possible that participants studying abroad in a non-Western country could become so disoriented that they then closed their minds to the intercultural exchanges and ultimately fail to learn much related to ICC, as was the case with Sophia in China. Regardless, findings from this study suggest that, to some extent, participation in a student teaching abroad program in a culturally similar country can result in positive development of ICC and perspective transformation.

A final limitation is the role of the researcher. The amount of time I spent in Germany was not sufficient. Ten days was not sufficient to collect ample data on how the participants interacted with individuals from Germany. A more ideal study would have included more than one observation of participants in Germany and interviews with host families.

Future Research

Subsequent studies can extend this study in three main ways. First, the data needs to be analyzed through a critical theory lens. Although some studies in the area of ICC have used a critical lens (Carrington & Selva, 2010; Malewski, & Phillion, 2009) studies using critical theory (e.g.: post-colonial theory and neo-Marxism theory) with transformative learning theory are more difficult to find. I would assume that, with a group of more diverse participants and in a foreign site with multiple diversities in school and communities, the researcher may be able to collect different types of data, to analyze the data with more critical theories, and come to different conclusions. The findings may provide more direct applications in terms of how the PSTs may better work with culturally and linguistically diverse student in the U.S. schools based on their intercultural experiences in Germany.

Secondly, longitudinal studies that follow participants over the long-term—at 2 years, 5 years, and 10 years out—could reveal whether the experience of living and teaching in a foreign country continued to affect PSTs after they transitioned to in-service teaching. It would be interesting to see how participants define ICC at these later stages. For instance, would participants like Gabi and Natalie who did not have a transformation during the program be better able to define ICC after a period of further development? Likewise, it would be interesting to study whether participants like Bruce and Sophia regress in their understanding of ICC or translate their understanding into action.

Finally, future studies should explore both sides of the student teaching abroad exchange. Such studies could be situated within the larger context of teacher education; they could compare German teacher training to U.S. teacher training. Such studies should also include the voices of the international teacher candidates who travel to the United States as part of exchange programs.

Concluding Thoughts

Findings from the four unique cases presented in this dissertation suggest that a short-term student teaching abroad program can lead participants to understand the complexities of ICC; moreover, they suggest that a perspective transformation can happen in a short timeframe. Across all four cases, findings suggest that participants come to understand ICC better through cross-cultural comparisons, sociolinguistic awareness, self-development, and cultural awareness.

APPENDIX A – A LEARNING MODEL FOR BECOMING INTERCULTURALLY COMPETENT

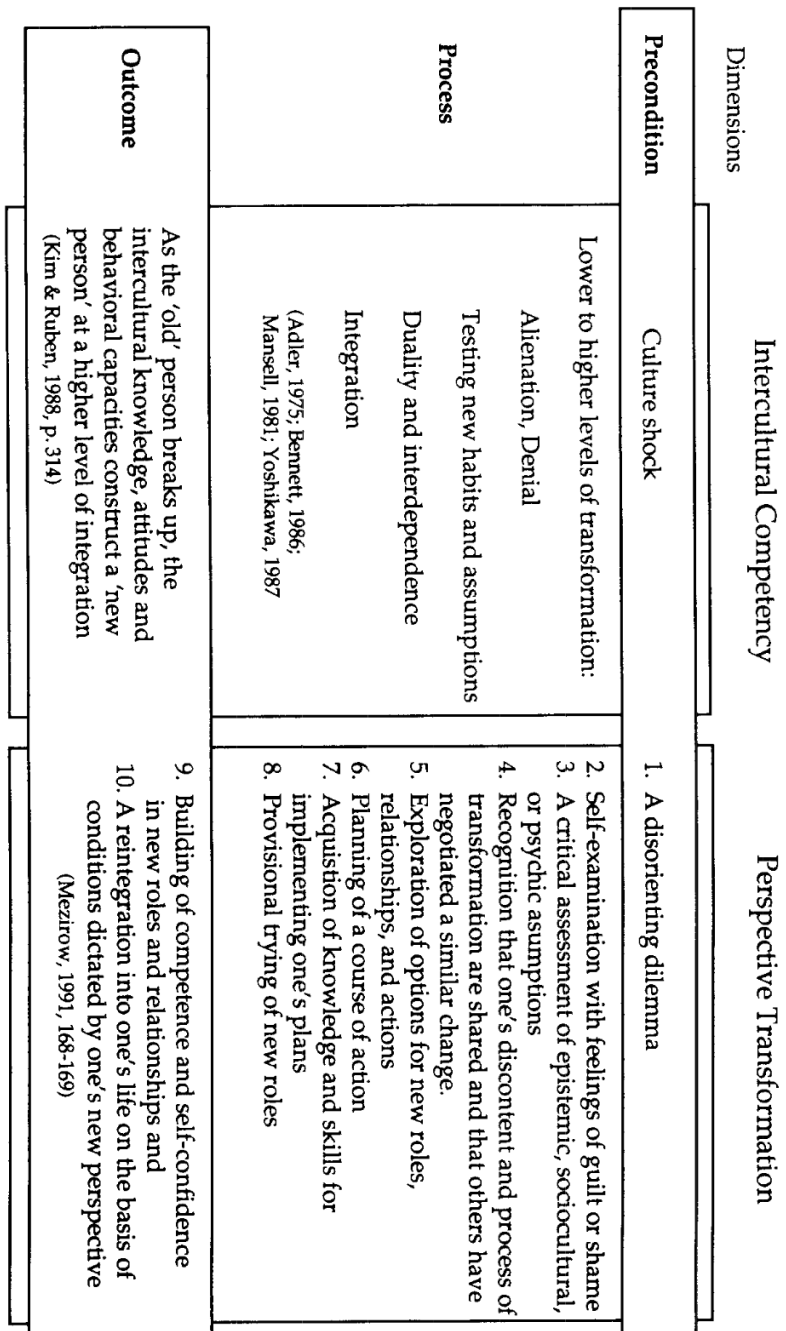


FIGURE 1. A learning model for becoming interculturally competent.

Note: Taken from Taylor, 1994a, p. 398

APPENDIX B – EXPLORATION OF KEY TERMS

A number of terms in this study have multiple definitions, or their definitions are contested. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the following definitions for these terms will be used throughout.

Adaptability

Adjustment to different contexts, including “switching between communication styles” (Deardorff, 2008, p.39).

Critical Reflection

“Being aware and critical of our subjective perceptions of knowledge and of the constraints of social knowledge” (Cranton, 2006, p. 13).

Critical Discourse

“The assessment of beliefs, feelings, and values” (Cranton, 2006, p. 24). Mezirow (1991) refers to engaging in discourse as a way to understand ideas as “validity testing” (p. 77). He argues that critical discourse can lead to individuals:

- Hav[ing] accurate and complete information
- Be[ing] free from coercion and disorienting self-deception
- Be[ing] able to weigh evidence and assess arguments objectively
- Be[ing] open to alternative perspectives
- Be[ing] able to become critically reflective upon presuppositions and their consequences
- Hav[ing] equal opportunity to participate (including the chance to challenge, question, refute, and reflect and to hear others do the same), and

- Be[ing] able to accept an informed, objective, and rational consensus as a legitimate test of validity (pp. 77-78)

Cross-Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness is a conscious understanding of one's own culture before studying other cultures. Cross-cultural awareness is defined as an

awareness of the diversity of ideas and practices to be found in human societies around the world, of how such, ideas and practices compare, and including some limited recognition of how the ideas and ways of one's own society might be viewed from other vantage points. (Hanvey, 1976, p. 8)

Cultural Self-Awareness

Individuals are aware of how they view the world (Deardorff, 2008).

Curiosity

Deardorff (2008) loosely defines curiosity as “tolerating ambiguity” (p. 37). I add to this definition an individual's desire to want to learn more about the history and culture of a place.

Deep Cultural Knowledge

“A deep understanding of other cultures, including a thorough understanding of other worldviews” (Deardorff, 2008, p. 38).

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand or share the feelings of another and has also been referred to as being able to walk a mile in someone else's shoes. Bennett (2008) labels empathy as one characteristic or skill, a behavioral competency, that constitutes ICC. Deardorff (2008) identifies empathy as an outcome of the process of becoming interculturally competent that results in “an internal ‘frame of reference shift’” (p. 28).

Flexibility

“The use of different behavioral styles in various intercultural contexts and in being able to switch between various worldviews when interacting with those from different cultural backgrounds” (Deardorff, 2008, p.39)

Frames of Reference

Part of Mezirow’s (1997) transformative learning theory, frames of reference are defined as structures individuals use to understand their experiences, including habits of mind and point of view. Taylor (2008) defines frames of reference more concretely as “structures of assumptions and expectations that frame an individual’s tacit points of view and influence their thinking, beliefs, and actions” (p. 5).

Global Awareness

Global awareness has five principles: perspective consciousness, “state of the planet” awareness, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choices (Hanvey, 1982, p. 162).

Intercultural

The interactions between two or more individuals from different cultures (Bennett, 2009).

Intercultural Competence

There is no consensus among scholars about how to define intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). The most common definition of ICC refers to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes an individual must possess in order to successfully interact with individuals from a different culture (Deardorff, 2008).

Openness

“Withholding judgement” (Deardorff, 2008, p. 37)

Perspective Transformation

Perspective transformation is the idea that a person can develop a more “inclusive, differentiated, permeable, and integrated perspective” through reflection and discourse.

(Mezirow, 1991, p. 155).

Respect

“Valuing all cultures” (Deardorff, 2008, p. 37).

Sociolinguistic Awareness

“How one uses language within a societal and social context” (Deardorff, 2008, p. 38).

APPENDIX C – ELECTRONIC INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent Form Student Teaching Abroad Project IRB # 16-0147

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the personal narratives of pre-service teachers and their perceptions of participating in a student teaching abroad program during their student teaching practicum. In working with participants, we hope to gain a better understanding of their sense of intercultural competence before, during, and after the student teaching abroad experience.

Procedures

The study involves a short open-ended questionnaire about your previous travel experience, experience with individuals from cultures different than yourself, and expectations about the upcoming trip to Germany. Secondly you will be asked to participate in three focus group interviews occurring before departure, during your time in Germany, and upon return from Germany. Depending on availability the third focus group may be replaced with individual interviews. All interviews will be audiotaped. We ask for permission to see copies of your journals and other assignments completed while in Germany and to videotape your teaching in Germany. Finally, we may ask to visit your classrooms for observations and interviews in the Fall of 2016 when you are full-time in-service teachers.

Risks/Discomforts

Risks are minimal for involvement in this study. I will take many measures to ensure that you will not be identified. I will keep your data only on password protected sites, secure servers, and encrypted computers. When reporting the findings, your name will be changed, and no information that could be used to identify you will be included. There is, however, a possibility that someone outside of the research team will find a way to access the data.

Benefits

The benefits to you are minimal, but the benefits to future students could be great. Findings from this study may be used to inform future student teaching abroad programs and could potentially help teacher educators better prepare future teachers to be inter-culturally competent.

Confidentiality

I will take many steps to protect your confidentiality. In any reports of the findings, your name will be changed. Details you tell us will be abstracted.

In addition, you will be given an ID number, and your name will not be attached to the data we store about you. The information you provide will be kept for several years, until all reports using the data are published.

Compensation

You will receive a \$20 Amazon gift certificate for completing all stages of the research project.

Participation

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to your academic status, GPA or standing with the university. If you desire to withdraw, please close your internet browser and notify the research assistant at this email: [email address].

Questions about the Research

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Betsy Barrow, at [phone number], [email address] or [research assistant] at [phone number], [email address].

Questions about your Rights as Research Participants

If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact Dr. [Advisor], [phone number], [office address], [email address]. Or contact the director of University's Institutional Review Board, [phone number], [email address]

I have read, understood, and printed a copy of, the above consent form and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Yes No



APPENDIX D – DATA COLLECTION PROTOCOLS

Pre-Departure Questionnaire

The following questions were formatted electronically and distributed using Qualtrics.

1. Demographics and background information:
 - a. What is your gender?
 - b. What is your race/ethnicity?
 - c. What is your age?
 - d. What language are you most comfortable speaking?
 - e. What other languages, if any, do you also speak?
 - f. What subjects/classes have you student taught?
 - g. If you plan to teach next year, in what type of setting would you like for it to be?
2. Travel experience:
 - a. Have you ever traveled outside the USA?
 - b. If so, what countries have you visited, and for what length of time were you there?
 - c. If so, what are the most important lessons you have learned from your travels?
3. How do you define intercultural competence?
4. Describe a time in the past when you have faced a challenge working with, understanding, or accepting someone who is different from you. Did you try to overcome this challenge? If so, what did you do to overcome the challenge? If not, why did you decide not to try to overcome the challenge? What did you learn from the experience?
5. What do you look forward to the most during your trip to Germany? Why do you look forward to this the most?
6. Given differences in culture and language between the USA and Germany, what concerns do you have about your upcoming trip? What can you do to prepare for the trip in order to help alleviate your concerns?
7. Describe an important learning experience that you have had that transformed an aspect of the way you think or understand. How did this learning experience take place?
8. What are your goals for student teaching in Germany?

Semi-Structured Group Interview Questions

Group Interview 1 - Pre-Departure (3/15/16)

- Personal introductions

- Remind everyone to please state their name before talking, such as: “This is Jack...” This will help with the transcription.

- Have any of you traveled outside of the United States?
- Where did you go?
- What kind of trip was this? Pleasure, study abroad, volunteer
- If you have been to multiple countries, how long was your longest trip?
- What was one thing that surprised you the most when traveling outside of the United States?
- What is the most important or valuable lesson you’ve learned abroad?

Intercultural Competence

- Please describe the first time you remember interacting with someone from a different culture, race, or ethnicity from you. What was that experience like?
- Do you regularly interact with people from other culture, races, or ethnicities in the United States? In what ways do you interact, and how do you feel about these interactions?
- What experiences with diversity have you had in your student teaching placements? How did you handle these situations? Did you feel prepared?
- How comfortable/confident are you with teaching students from different culture?
- How confident are you with teaching about different cultures?
- In what ways have you been prepared to teach students of different nationalities, cultures, races, ethnicities, religions, and sexual orientations?

Expectations for Germany

- Why did you sign up to student teach in Germany?
- What goals and expectations do you have for the MVU Student Teaching Abroad program in Germany?
- Do you have any fears or concerns? If so, would you mind sharing them?
- What are you most looking forward to?
- Do you believe that participating in the MVU Student Teaching Abroad program will make you a better teacher? Please elaborate as much as possible.

Group Interview 2: Germany (4/21/16)

- How has your experience in Germany been thus far?
- Please describe one thing that stood out to you the most upon arriving in Germany?
- Please describe one thing that has surprised you the most?
- How has your student teaching experience been going?
- How is student teaching in Germany different from student teaching in the United States?
- Are German students different from the students you had in your classes in the United States?
- What has living with your host family been like? Have you had any language barriers? Miscommunication? How did you resolve these potential problems?
- What experiences have you had interacting with the public outside of your schools and host families?
- In what ways were you prepared to student teach in Germany? Were there any classes you took at MVU that prepared you? What did you wish you knew before coming to Germany?
- At this point, what is the most important lesson you think you have learned about student teaching?
- At this point, has participation in student teaching abroad affected how you view others?
- How do you define intercultural competence?
- Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience thus far?

Semi-Structured Individual Interview – Post-Student Teaching Abroad (June 2016)

- Now that you have had some time to reflect on your time in Germany, what have you taken away from this opportunity?
- Was it worth the time away from student teaching in the United States?
- Did you have any experiences in Germany that affected you? If so, how did they affect you.
- What is the most important lesson you learned about student teaching?
- Describe interactions you had with individuals from Germany.
- What do you wish you had known prior to going to Germany?
- Do you think this experience has made you a better teacher?
- For those of you who have traveled before, how was this experience similar or different to other travel experiences? Why do you think these similarities or differences were?
- Do you feel you know more or less about intercultural competency after participating in this experience?
- How did this trip influence your willingness to travel outside the U.S.?
- How did this experience help you to gain global understanding?
- How did this trip affect you?
- How do you define intercultural competence?
- Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience student teaching abroad?

Reflection Survey – October 2016

The following questions were formatted electronically and distributed using Qualtrics.

- In what ways, if any, did participating in the student teaching abroad program help you in preparation to become a full-time teacher
- What types of students do you have in your classes now, in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, etc.? Do you feel that your time in Germany helped you to better understand these students?
- Do you talk about your time in Germany with your students? Why or why not?
- Do you feel that the student teaching abroad experience helped you to become a better teacher?
- Do you feel that your experience in Germany has helped you to understand people from different cultures better? Why or why not?
- Do you use any instructional techniques that you learned from the German teachers? Why or why not? If so, what are these instructional techniques?

Observation Protocol for Student Teaching in Germany

This observation protocol is for pre-service teaching in Germantown, Germany.

- 1) How does the pre-service teacher act in a German classroom? What is his or her body language?
- 2) How do German students respond to the American pre-service teacher (PST) teaching a lesson? What is their body language?

- 3) How do German students respond to the American pre-service teacher not in a teaching setting? (e.g.: When the American PST and German students are talking outside of class time.)
- 4) How often do the German students turn to look at each other? How often do they hold side conversations?
- 5) What does the classroom setting look like? Where are the students in relation to the German teacher and the American PST?
- 6) Are there any classroom misbehaviors? If so, how does the American student respond? How does the German teacher respond?
- 7) What type of lesson does the American PST teach? What is his or her body language during this lesson?
- 8) What are the interactions between the American PST and the German teacher?
- 9) During a lesson, how often does the American PST look for guidance from the German teacher?
- 10) How much time does the German teacher allow the American PST to lead instruction?
- 11) If applicable, what are the interactions between American PST and other officials/administrators in the German school?

APPENDIX E – ASSIGNMENTS AND JOURNAL REFLECTIONS

Student Teaching in Germantown

April 2 – 30, 2016

Program Objectives:

The School of Education of Mountain View University is committed to diverse, equitable, democratic learning communities. As a result, candidates are expected to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and dispositions that prepare them to support the development and education of all students. The MVU global teaching experience is designed to expand pre-service teachers' pedagogical content knowledge to include strategies used in school settings around the world. The goal of the Student Teaching Abroad Germany Program is to expose pre-service teachers to a variety of instructional strategies, technology and curriculum materials in their content area that are currently being used in internationally competitive schools in Germany.

Program Description:

The program begins on Saturday, April 2, 2016, when students need to be in Germantown and will move in with their host families; it ends on Saturday, April 25. Students are free to extend their stay in Europe after the end of the program. Each MVU pre-service teacher will be matched with a teacher in a German classroom at the appropriate level (pre K, elementary or secondary level). While in Germany you will observe classroom teaching, lead or assist in leading units of study in agreement with your cooperating teacher, and take an active role in professional learning communities. You will learn about life in Germany, experience the culture, and network with professional educators. You are expected to be at your school on Monday, April 4, no later than 7:30am (unless otherwise arranged with your mentor) and you should be present for 6-7 hours every school day, which will be 16 days in total. The last day of the internship is Friday, April 29. If for any reason you are not able to be in school on one of these days, you need to excuse yourself with your cooperating teacher and the resident director in writing by sending an email. Just as your presence at school on all 16 schooldays, all group trips are mandatory. Again, if you are not able to participate in an organized group activity, you need to excuse yourself in writing with the resident director. Problems or concerns with your host families or your school

are to be addressed first with them. If no solution can be found, you need to inform the resident director or the school contact person about the issue.

Assignment

While you are in Germany you will be documenting your experience and reflecting on what you have learned. You will collect data from classroom observations and interviews with teachers, students, host family members, and friends you meet along the way. Your task is to create a daily online journal focusing on both, your professional experiences in school and your cultural experiences with your host family and during your free time. The following topics should be covered in your journal:

- **Culture.** Describe your transition from [home state] to Germany. What cultural differences did you experience or observe? What things are the same? What barriers to success did you meet? How did you overcome these barriers? Describe the historical sites you have visited. Interview some of your new German friends and colleagues and ask them how Germany's past is impacting contemporary Germany? Reflect on the responses of your participants and describe how these align with your own preconceptions.
- **Classroom Instruction and Assessment.** Is the learning environment more student-centered or teacher/textbook driven? Does the environment focus on application rather than knowledge acquisition? What kinds of materials do teachers and students use and how do these compare to instructional materials used in [home state]? How do teachers monitor students' progress? What types of assessment are used (at school level and national level)?
- **Instructional Technology.** How do teachers use Instructional Technology in the classroom (compare [home state] with Germany)? Describe the type of instructional technology that was used in the classrooms you visited. Whom is it used by (teacher/student) and for what? Do students in technology-enriched classrooms demonstrate better use of higher-order thinking skills than do students in a traditional classroom (document specific questions posed by teachers)?
- **Final Reflection:** What would you share with future pre-service teachers who may be considering a student teaching abroad experience?

APPENDIX F – MEMBER CHECKING EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

Hi [Participant Name],

I hope you are doing well!

I'm attaching a draft of your narrative for you to read and comment on. Please keep in mind that this is a very early draft and will be edited extensively. I just want to make sure I am telling your story and the story of your experiences in Germany accurately. Listed below are some guidelines for member checking. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

1. Please try not to make any direct changes to the text, but if you do, please use track changes.
2. Please use the comment option to write down comments/questions/concerns/additions/omissions, etc.
3. Please answer the following question: *Do you feel that this narrative accurately portrays your experiences participating in the student teaching abroad program in Germantown?*
4. Be honest!

Once you have had a chance to look over this, maybe we can set up a time to talk.

Thanks!

Elizabeth "Betsy" Barrow
Doctoral Candidate (ABD) – Mountain View University
Curriculum and Instruction

APPENDIX G – CODEBOOK

Code	Definition	Example
A. Overarching Ideas about ICC	General ideas about intercultural competence.	“Intercultural competence is being aware and understanding of cultures that are not your own.” (Natalie, pre-departure questionnaire)
A1. Ideas about other cultures	Talking about other people in other countries; including expectations or assumptions about what they might (or did) observe.	“I think coming into Germany I don't [sic] know anything about it and there are, I see people with Chicago Bulls or New York shirts or American flag scarfs, American flag backpacks. which is I think is like really interesting.” (Sophia, group interview 2, 4/21/16)
A2. Cultural Interactions	Interacting with people in Germany.	“I do think that my experience in Germany has helped me to understand people from different cultures better. I was able to spend a lot of my time in my German school answering questions about American culture and asking questions about German culture in return. Our discussions, both formal and informal, with the German exchange students often incorporated comparisons of our two cultures, too.” (Gabi, Reflection Survey, October 2016).
B. ICC Cognitive Competencies (Knowledge)	Gaining knowledge related to Germany, German history, German schools, etc. that assists participants with appropriate intercultural interactions.	“The cultural context totally colors what we see and also that it is a historical context as part of a trajectory, like where they [the Germans] have come from and how we are arriving in the middle of it for just a month so how the past, and also where we are, has shaped what we are seeing.” (Gabi, group interview 2, 4/21/16)
B1. Cultural Self-Awareness	Awareness of one's own culture in relation to others.	“I think this trip helped me put America more in context. The things that are part of American culture I wouldn't have thought of as American culture I would have just thought it was part of society or part of life because I didn't have anything to contrast it with. I have comparative information now that I can say this is unique to America in comparison to Germany.” (Gabi, individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)
C. ICC Behavioral Competencies (Skills)	Characteristics and skills, including: “the ability to	“We showed up to find out that we were teaching a 5th grade English

	empathize, gather appropriate information, listen, perceive accurately, adapt, initiate and maintain relationships, resolve conflict, and manage social interactions and anxiety.” (Bennett, 2008, p. 19)	class!! ... Then we found out that the teacher wasn’t even here today, so we were completely on our own. ... Nothing like teaching/lesson planning on the fly. ... One of the German teachers took us to the classroom, quickly introduced us to the students (in German), then left Gabi and I looked at each other and said, “Here goes nothing!” (Natalie, journal entry, 4/15/15)
C1. Initiate and Maintain Relationships	Participant seeks out new friendships. Participant takes steps to maintain friendship. This could also refer to “buddies” or other cultural mentors.	“I am so appreciative of how much the buddies impacted our experiences here and genuinely made an effort to spend time with us and help us enjoy Germantown. I feel as though I have made some great connections (teacher solidarity) and better friends that I will hopefully be able to see again.” (Gabi, Journal Entry, 4/27/16)
D. ICC Affective Competencies	The attitudes and motivations for ICC, including: curiosity, “initiative, risk taking, suspension of judgment, cognitive flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity, cultural humility, and resourcefulness.” (Bennett, 2008, p. 18)	“I definitely think having an open mind has been a huge takeaway and understanding other people's perspectives.” (Sophia, Group Interview 2, 4/21/16).
E. Pedagogical Practices	Participants’ responses to or reflections on pedagogy.	“I wouldn't necessarily say that I gained teaching strategies or things like that um, just because things were so different there.” (Natalie, individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)
E1. Training	Participant’ reflections on how their teacher training at MVU did or did not assist them in Germany.	“Having taken social justice and the differentiation class that we took helped prepare me to view the [education] system [in Germany] more critically because the way it is set up is really different [than the U.S.].” (Gabi, group interview 2, 4/21/16)
E2. ELL	Participants’ reflections on their preparation to teach ELLs. May also include reflections on how student teaching in Germany has prepared them to teach ELLs.	“I didn't work with students who are ELLs here [in the U.S.]. I didn't really get to see that much, what we do with them here because when they work with a specialist they get pulled out of class.” (Gabi, individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)
E3. Role of Student Teacher (in Germany)	Participants reflections on their role as a student teacher in a German school.	“I think that just having more days the way that Natalie and I taught at First wouldn't have added that much benefit to my experience. It's

		good to practice teaching without planning but I think we would have gotten more out of the experience for what it was if we had had a specifically defined role and planned.” (Gabi, individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)
E4. Diverse Learners	I feel more comfortable teaching diverse learners now than I did before coming to Germany.	“I feel like it has helped me understand and interact with the diversity in the classroom. I know that my background and life is very different from my students life, but I am more comfortable with that because of my time in Germany.” (Sophia, Reflection Survey, October 2016)
E5. Different	U.S. and German schools are different, but one is not better than the other.	“First Gymnasium that Gabi and I were at was so different than I would say any public high school that I've ever been in in [home state] that I would say you can't necessarily take all the teaching strategies and discipline strategies and things that that they used over there [in Germany] just because that isn't how public schools here [in the U.S.] work.” (Natalie, individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)
F. Personal Growth	Learning about oneself.	“I think mine is more of a personal thing. But flexibility and going with the flow. I'm very much like a structured person and I like having a plan, this is both for in the classroom and outside of the classroom. And so I think being here has been a good space for me to like realize that not everything has to be perfect all the time.” (Natalie, group interview 2, 4/21/16).
G. Professional Growth	Learning about teaching and/or the teaching profession.	“I learned a lot from my mentor teacher. ... her reflection ideas and getting to know the students better and I really like how she worked to understand her students on a personal level and the families and really bringing that in the classroom and celebrating it rather than just trying to leave that all at the door and when we come in the classroom we're all the same. She like really worked to understand that and celebrate it.” (Sophia, individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)

H. Miscellaneous	Codes that otherwise do not fall into another category.	
H1. Visiting Historic Sites	Participant responses to and reflections on visiting historical sites in Germany, such as a concentration camp.	“Finding the words to describe an experience like visiting [the concentration camp] is challenging, not only because of the heavy emotions that accompany such an experience, but also because the reasons why we make such a visit are difficult to articulate.” (Gabi, journal entry, 4/10/16)
H2. Refugees or Immigrants	Participant responses to and reflections on the influx of immigrants, specifically Syrian, to Germany. May include interactions individuals had with refugees and immigrants.	“Being in a classroom today with refugees, it's incredible what they've been through and they have been here for how many months, like six seven eight months and they have already picked up almost two new languages.” (Sophia, group interview 2, 4/21/16)
H3. Stereotypes	Stereotypes of people from other countries/races/ethnicities/cultures	“I think we had preconceived notions that people in Germany were not nice, I mean people told us beforehand they could be harsh they're not super friendly, especially to people they don't know. and I didn't really experience that at all.” (Natalie, individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)
H4. Comparing Countries	Comparing the country you are visiting to the U.S. Could include participants' reflections on countries they visited before traveling to Germany.	“Even though Germans eats a lot of carbs and meat, over here [in the U.S.] we are much more okay with having processed and synthetic stuff I think. My family, my host family, talked about that a few times, how we have food that they wouldn't be able to have, or America might not have because it's organic and more expensive. So the way we handle our food.” (Gabi, individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)
H5. Trying new things	Being adventurous. Trying new food, exploring new places, or doing something the individual otherwise would not do in the U.S.	“I ate a traditional North Germany meal of herring and potatoes. I LOVE trying new food. I wasn't really sure what I was getting myself into with this one, but it was definitely different than anything I had eaten before.” (Natalie, journal entry, 4/3/16)
I. Overall Trip/Program	Overarching ideas about the program and trip. May include, but is not limited to: host families, length of time, and program components.	“I think one of the hardest parts was that I felt that our role at school wasn't very well defined. ... At least at First, I felt like we didn't, we weren't teach[ing], but we weren't just observing, we were kind of in the middle and some

		teachers wanted us to teach and others teachers didn't really want us to teach. And it was never really told what we were supposed to be doing. And before [went] to Germany it was kind of just like oh, your school will tell you, you will figure it out.” (Natalie, individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)
I1. Expectations	Participant expectations for the program and their time in Germany.	“I am going to try to be very open minded and learn as much as I can. I also want to be very reflective of my experiences. I don't really have any specific goals. I like to go to different countries without any expectations or assumptions, as I feel like that is the best way for me to learn.” (Sophia, pre-departure questionnaire)
I2. Initial Reactions	Participants’ initial reactions to being in Germany and German schools.	“The biggest thing that stands out is the language because you are just so used to having everything in English and just understanding everything.” (Sophia, group interview 2, 4/21/16)
I3. Concerns	Participants’ concerns about traveling to Germany.	“I am worried about violating the unspoken social norms in Germany. For example, I am worried that smiling too much or being too eager or opinionated or outspoken may be taken the wrong way and that I may give off a negative impression when I do not intend to do so.” (Gabi, pre-departure questionnaire)
I4. Goals	Participants’ goals for student teaching in Germany.	“International communications project for students/teachers in [home state] and Germany. Build on networks for future practice. Learn from mentor teachers - effective classroom practices to promote lifelong learning and engagement.” (Bruce, pre-departure questionnaire)
J. Disorienting Dilemma	Any experience or situation that is outside of a participants’ comfort zone. Might be referred to as culture shock.	“Gabi we are doing something wrong. I think we look really American right now. I feel like we are standing out.” (Natalie, Interview, 6/22/16)
K. Reflections	Reflecting on experiences in Germany. Could be situations that affected the participants or looking back on the experience as a whole.	“I think I can see like where people with different backgrounds are coming from better than I did before.” (Natalie, Interview, 6/22/16)

K1. Take away	The main things (pedagogical or personal) that participants are taking away from Germany with them.	"I would say the biggest things are... the conversations I've had and the people I've met. I think that's had the most lasting impact. I just think hearing other people's perspectives and understanding how the world works for different people and different parts of the world" (Sophia, individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)
L. German Education System	General comments or overview of the German education system.	"They give kids so much more freedom and that's because like they value independent and individualistic, that's just what they value. And how that reflects as a culture." (Sophia, individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16).
L1. Sense of Community	Participants' perceptions of the German schools as a place to foster community.	"So I feel like they had a very close knit group within their school, so they had a large teacher room where the teachers would have their own space to meet and talk during the day, during their breaks, in-between classes as well as a coffee room where they could just meet and talk and so that was different from what I've seen in schools in [home state]." (Bruce, individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)
L2. Classroom Management	Participants' observations, thoughts, and reflections on classroom management in German schools.	"one time we were in a class of sixth graders and the sixth graders were like sling shotting [sic] each other with like little things, ... And the teacher was just like, yea, whatever. It's very different from what we're used to because we would've taken those things away from them and made sure they weren't doing that." (Natalie, individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)
L3. Discussion of German Schools	Participants' ideas about how the German system of education works, how it is different from the U.S., and parts of the German school system they agree or disagree with.	"So they don't use, tech, as much technology. It's more of a, if you can that's a skill that you have but it's more hands on using just your general thinking skills and writing and they do a lot of workbooks, that's self-paced learning." (Bruce, individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)
M. Seminars	References to seminars with Dr. Michaels	"[The seminars] were vital to this trip. They pushed me to think deeply and critically about my experiences in Germany and in America. They helped me to

		unpack and understand the benefits and challenges of both the education systems. They helped me to grow as a teacher and as a person.” (Sophia, program evaluation)
N. Feeling Like an Outsider	Participants’ references to feeling outside of the mainstream; feeling isolated.	“I just feel like time and time again I feel like being in the school they speak German and English, I only speak English, I just put up a wall, made me feel like an outsider.” (Sophia, group interview 2, 4/21/16)

APPENDIX H – PARTICIPANTS ICC CHARACTERISTICS AND SUPPORTING DATA

	ICC Characteristic	Supporting Data
Bruce*	Sociolinguistic Awareness	“As someone who didn't know a lot of German, communication was very difficult in some places if you weren't about to communicate in English. So that attests to American privilege assuming that everyone speaks English, but also, just how very difficult it is to understand ... like German classes that were entirely in German and I probably couldn't understand hardly any of it.” (individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)
	Curiosity	“I mean just being there on the site itself [concentration camp] and then learning about the history and the things that had happened there was, it was upsetting obviously but just actually being there within this cultural site with all this history ... like with the wall [Berlin Wall], actually seeing the height of it and then trying to imagine that this was a wall that extended for miles and miles and, it was just out of reach and separating these two halves of the city East and West Berlin - um, and then just trying to imagine what life was like and that experience.” (individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)
Sophia*	Deep Cultural Knowledge & Curiosity	“I'm really grateful for the opportunity to discuss different aspects of German culture and history with native Germans. This is something I've valued most from this trip.” (journal entry, 4/12/16)
	Sociolinguistic Awareness	I think just being really aware of what language I'm using because you know I can't just get up there and start talk talk talk because they might not know everything I'm saying, so definitely using more visuals and trying to ... repeat a lot of key phrases and words ... so definitely a lot more aware of my language cause [sic] I feel like in [home state] you know you can tend to just go off on a rabbit trails or just trail off but I definitely tried to be more intentional about [her language]. (individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)
	Respect	“I would say my biggest takeaway from this [experience] is how important it is to think critically and analyze things and being here I see the way you do things and I think oh is this better? is it worse? is it somewhere in between?” (seminar 3, 4/27/16)
Natalie	Adaptability	“We showed up to find out that we were teaching a 5th grade English class!! Exciting, right? Then we found out that the teacher wasn't even here today, so we were completely on our own. With fifth graders. And fifth graders we had never met before... It was thrilling. ... Nothing like teaching/lesson planning on the fly. The teacher had left some notes for us, so we had an idea of what we were

	Cultural Self-Awareness	<p>supposed to do. One of the German teachers took us to the classroom, quickly introduced us to the students (in German), then left because he had to teach his physics class. Gabi and I looked at each other and said, “Here goes nothing!” (journal entry, 4/15/16)</p> <p>“I wasn't even really aware of [cultural competency] and I think that's what kind of opened my eyes during this trip was that I would say I was fairly culturally incompetent before going ... I know not really that much about Germany and I realized I don't know a lot about other countries.” (individual re-entry interview, 6/22/16)</p>
Gabi	<p>Deep Cultural Knowledge & Curiosity</p> <p>Respect & Openness</p>	<p>“I learned a lot from being there, like the touring that we did and being able to interact with Germans in an authentic way, because like we got to spend more time with the same kids and because we got to know the buddies I felt like they were really being honest with us about the ways things were and the way they thought about things, and stuff like that, so that was, pretty cool to understand how they [are] coming from different cultural perspectives sorta [sic] see things that relate to them and things that relate to us.” (individual re-entry interview, 6/16/16)</p> <p>“Today it occurred to me as I was walking through the park that I am glad to be spending an extended period of time in a household outside of the United States at a time in my life when I haven't yet decided exactly what life should be like. In other words, I am glad to be having this experience while I still possess a more philosophical mindset, but perhaps this will always be the case. For me, this experience is not only about noticing differences but weighing them and considering what is preferable and for what ends one way would be preferred over another.” (journal entry, 4/2/16)</p>

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates a participant who underwent a transformation while in Germany according to Mezirow's (1991) phases of transformation (see Table 2.2).

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