

**PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN COSTA RICA: DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS
WITH DIVERSE LEARNERS AND BUILDING CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS
THROUGH AN INTERNATIONAL FIELD EXPERIENCE**

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This case study examines six U.S. pre-service teachers' participation in an international field experience in Costa Rica. It evaluates participants' willingness and ability to demonstrate relationship building with students culturally and linguistically different from them, and describes and interprets the circumstances that either encourage or discourage such interaction. Results indicate that in certain contexts, program participants were both motivated and successful in establishing rapport with such learners. This implies that an international field experience may help to develop pre-service teachers' confidence and willingness to build relationships with diverse students back home.

Because of cultural and linguistic mismatches between teachers and their diverse students, teachers often lack the capacity to build relationships with students from diverse ethnic and racial groups and/or resist working in diverse classrooms due to their current attitudes and beliefs. This study employs the concept of "cultural responsiveness" as an analytic lens through which to examine the extent to which participants in the program were able to remedy such deficiencies and build such relationships.

Goals of this study were to (a) describe the attitudes, beliefs and actions of participants toward serving diverse learners, (b) understand how they enacted cultural responsiveness, and (c) assess how cultural responsiveness is developed through an international field experience. The study employed (a) surveys of program participants before and after their overseas experience, (b) field observations over the course of four days of instruction in Costa Rica, and (c) student journal entries and post-trip reflection essays. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, in which recurring themes and patterns of association and contrast were identified. Research questions were continuously refined over a two and a half year period of reflection and analysis.

Using cultural responsiveness as a concept to frame a discussion on developing relationship building, the significance of this study lies in its applications for: (a) schools of education as a tool to use to develop their students' understanding of diversity and (b) youth-serving nonprofits to strengthen the bridge between the educators with whom they partner and the diverse youth they serve.

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PREFACE

This study is dedicated to all the refugee and immigrant children who ever felt alone or isolated in a U.S. school. A very special thank you to Diwas Timsina and his family for opening up their heart and home and giving me familial insight into the challenges refugee students face in the U.S. Thank you to my entire doctoral committee for their time and effort. An extraordinary thank you goes out to Dr. Scaglione and Dr. Gunzenhauser who both gave immeasurable hours of their time to ensure that I eventually made it across the finish line. And finally, the ultimate heartfelt thank you goes to the two greatest loves of my life. The two who have loved me from the very beginning, who have supported me throughout life and will through eternity. My mother, Susan J. (Csernay) Laichak and her father, Francis J. Csernay. My grandfather, a WWII veteran and a renowned local barber, only had an 8th grade education—but was by far the most self-educated man I ever met. My mother, an extraordinarily brilliant and talented registered nurse in a NICU for 40 years, handed over her life to raise my handicapped sister, Cindy, and I. I will never be able to repay her for ensuring I am able to live the life I do now. I love both of them very, very, very, much. To my love, my Pap-Pap: “And we’ll tell the world ‘make way for us’/it’s a sweet and golden day for us/now the music starts to play for us” (Sammy Davis Jr.). To my Ma, whom I love with my entire heart and soul: “If the stars were mine/I’d give them all to you/I’d pluck them down right from the sky and leave it only blue/I would never let the sun forget to shine upon your face/so when others would have rain clouds you’d have only sunny days” (Melody Gardot).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This case study examines six U.S. pre-service teachers' participation in an international field experience in Costa Rica. The study analyzes the pre-service teachers' willingness and ability to demonstrate relationship building with students culturally and linguistically different from themselves. In spite of a rising culturally and linguistically diverse student population in the U.S. K-12 school system, teachers entering the profession continue to be predominantly White (NCES, 2013), bring misconceptions about various ethnic groups (Jennings, 2007; Trent, Kea, & Oh, 2008; Vaughan, 2005; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006), have feelings of inadequacy in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students (Helfrich & Bean, 2011) and lack experience with diverse populations (Hollins & Torres-Guzman, 2005; Milner, 2006). This study will illustrate how six White pre-service teachers from the United States, with little to no experience working with culturally and linguistically diverse students increased their confidence and willingness to work with this population of students after participating in an international field experience in Costa Rica.

Several vignettes will illustrate the program participants' self-prescribed goals and how/if they were reached or not. In a pre-program survey, program participants noted that they expected to achieve these skillset gains by the end of this field experience:

- wanting to learn how to face challenges in the classroom;
- becoming more confident with change;

- supporting their colleagues in the classroom;
- approaching and engaging in communication with diverse students and their families;
- incorporating these students into the classroom;
- becoming a “bridge” for the students; and
- ensuring the students are cared for, welcomed, and supported (by teachers and administrators).

Emerging findings describe lost opportunities of relationship building as well as examples of opportunities in which they *did* initiate and engage in relationship building. Most lost opportunities were in informal settings, which would have taken great confidence to initiate. A brief example of a lost opportunity was when we all attended a non-denominational church together one Sunday morning with faculty. After the church service Costa Ricans began milling about and greeting one another. I began a conversation with a Costa Rican woman who lived in Canada for many years. We spoke at length and she even offered for me to come to her home for coffee. As the minister, my new friend, and I were taking photos of the three of us outside of the building, I looked over to find all the pre-service teachers huddled in a corner and speaking to each other and not to the Costa Ricans. They also lost opportunities to initiate and engage in informal relationship building in the school setting itself, but outside of the classroom, such as during lunchtime with the students. Opportunities for relationship building presented to program participants in which they *did* participate were usually found in a host family setting or in a formal classroom setting. This case study illustrates the program participants’ role in relationship building with Costa Rican students through vignettes, which will describe the emerging themes from this study such as

- using inclusivity;

- being authentic/genuine/approachable/friendly;
- working through moments of awkwardness and uncomfortableness;
- pushing outside of the comfort zone;
- communicating through non-verbal means;
- working as a team with their colleagues to communicate with students;
- showing initiative to engage in communication; and
- using students' funds of knowledge to initiate and engage in conversation.

Teachers build the next generation of global leaders. They cannot do this, however, if they have no prior exposure to the world or diversity (Hollins & Torres-Guzman 2005; Milner, 2006). This case study will argue that if our current global economy is to thrive, teachers will need to build their capacities to be sensitive to, to understand, and to expect and cultivate academic achievement from their culturally and linguistically diverse students. Many teachers in the K-12 classroom today bring deficit-oriented stereotypes about culturally diverse students and little or no cultural background knowledge of their students to their teaching (Sleeter, 2008). The result is that teachers often lack the capacity to build relationships with students from diverse ethnic and racial groups and/or resist working in diverse classrooms altogether (Sleeter, 2008).

In response to a cultural and demographic mismatch between diverse students and a White population of teachers with little to no experience with diversity, researchers have been examining for quite some time the teaching practices of teachers who have been successful teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students through the conceptual framework of cultural responsiveness (Ladson-Billings, 1994b). Acknowledging that the term *culturally responsive* is usually used by authors as a way to describe an educator's pedagogy, actions,

and/or attitudes toward marginalized African, Latino, Native, Asian American students (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1994a, 1995; Gay, 2010; Milner, 2006), and “other children who have not been well served by our nation’s public schools” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 158). The meaning and theory of *cultural responsiveness* are considered broadly for the purposes of this particular research. For the purposes of this research, *cultural responsiveness* and the terms *diverse*, *culturally diverse*, and *culturally and linguistically diverse students* are used in combination to indicate a broader conversation about how teachers build relationships with refugee children, foreign-born children, and children who speak a language other than English in the home. Therefore, cultural responsiveness in this study serves as a theoretical framework to explain the attitudes, beliefs, actions, and activities program participants experience through participation in an international field program and how these attitudes/beliefs and actions/activities build pre-service teachers’ confidence and willingness to serve and develop relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The concept of cultural responsiveness becomes important in practice as it lends toward a discussion of how educators can best initiate contact with a population of students with which they have little or no experience serving. It may be used to describe action steps educators can take to engage in meaningful communication and relationship building (Gay 2000; Ladson-Billings 1994a; Sleeter, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). This may ultimately lead toward a successful personal and professional pathway for the students’ lives in their new homeland. Being able to build a relationship with a culturally and linguistically diverse student is a critical need to their success (Graybill, 1997; Pransky & Bailey, 2002).

The goals of this study are (1) to describe the thoughts, feelings, behaviors and actions six U.S. pre-service teachers demonstrate while observing and teaching students culturally and linguistically different from themselves during an international field experience in Costa Rica

and (2) to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of cultural responsiveness—how it is enacted by pre-service teachers and how it can be developed through an international field experience. One part of the concept of cultural responsiveness this study will focus on, through an analysis of the U.S. pre-service teachers, is how they built their capacity through this trip in developing relationships with students culturally and linguistically different from themselves.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

A demographic mismatch between U.S. K-12 students and their teachers, as well as a lack of cross-cultural capacity of teachers entering the profession, could have a detrimental effect on students whose cultural backgrounds and knowledge differ from those of their teachers. This problem could lead to teachers struggling to relate to and connect with students who differ from them in culture, ethnicity, race, and/or language.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2014b), 2010-2014 American Community Survey, in just a five-year period (2009-2014), the number of students identified as speaking a language other than English in their home rose by nearly one million. In the last 30 years, the United States has witnessed a significant increase in the number of culturally and racially diverse students in schools across the country (Malewski, Sharma, & Phillion, 2012). Demographers predict that by 2035, half the school-age population will be students of color (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). As Hussar and Bailey (2014) predict, “public school enrollments are projected to be higher in 2022 than in 2011 for Blacks, Hispanics, Asians/Pacific Islanders, and students of two or more races, and enrollment is projected to be lower for Whites and American Indians/Alaska Natives” (p. 3).

In spite of this changing student demography, teachers entering the profession continue to be predominantly White, monolingual, middle-class women (NCES, 2012). In 2011-2012, nearly 82% out of a total of 3,385,200 million public elementary and secondary teachers in the United States were White (NCES, 2013).

The problem of a demographic mismatch is compounded by the current attitudes and beliefs teachers bring to the classroom about culturally and linguistically diverse students. Mahon (2003) notes that “a large majority of teachers (90% in one case) had ethnocentric understandings of culture” (p. 138). A review of literature exploring pre-service teachers’ current attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs toward diverse learners reveals the value for pre-service teachers to gain international teaching experience prior to their career in an ever-growing diverse U.S. classroom (Bodur, 2012; Cho, 2005; Dong, 2004; Gay, 2009; Kyles & Olafson, 2008; Middleton, 2002; Polat & Mahalingappa, 2013). Pre-service teachers live in very different worlds from most of the diverse students they will teach and their prior interaction with diversity is sporadic, superficial, and their knowledge (or misinformation) about diverse students comes to them mainly from society-at-large and the mass media.

When teachers do have the opportunity to work with non-White students from diverse cultural groups, they often have lower academic expectations (Banks, 2006). Many teachers experience some ambivalence toward immigrant students and students of color (Hollins & Torres-Guzman, 2005; Sleeter, 2001) and doubt their efficacy in teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own (Helfrich & Bean, 2011). Culturally diverse students relate better to instruction that connects to their background knowledge and prior experiences (Malewski et al., 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2006; MacPherson, 2010; Nuthall, 2005). Literature in this field also indicates that culturally diverse students resist teaching practices that reflect the

knowledge and beliefs of dominant or majority groups (Causey, Thomas, & Armento, 2000). When teachers **lack cross-cultural perspectives**, they are unable to help culturally diverse students integrate new knowledge with prior knowledge, which results in their lack of interest in learning and low academic achievement (Banks, 1995, 2007; Banks & McGee, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2007).

1.2 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

A number of studies on international field experiences have shown the beneficial outcomes of pre-service teachers' abilities to negotiate diverse contexts, reflect on their own cultural beliefs and backgrounds, and compare and contrast the cultural beliefs and values held by the host community with the beliefs and values of their communities of origin (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; McCabe, 2001; Rios, Montecinos, & van Olphen, 2007; Roberts, 2007). However, Malewski et al. (2012) point out that little literature examines how international field experiences provide pre-service teachers the opportunity to enact cross-cultural awareness, cultural responsiveness, and relationship building through experiential learning (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Willard-Holt, 2001). In addition, Keel (2014) notes there is little literature available for studies on international field experiences and culturally responsive teaching (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Santamaria, 2009; Willard-Holt, 2001).

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The first research question is meant to orient the reader to the context of the case study:

1. What is the nature of the pre-service teachers' interactions with Costa Rica, their cooperating teachers in Costa Rica, their peers, their host family, other Costa Ricans and their host family?

Gay (2010) notes that when studying cultural responsiveness, it is helpful to research *both* feelings and beliefs as well as actions, activities, and knowledge. Therefore, the next three questions are:

2. What are pre-service teachers' personal **attitudes and beliefs** about serving culturally and linguistically diverse students prior to an international field experience and after?
3. What **actions/activities** do pre-service teachers participate in to **build their confidence and willingness** to serve culturally and linguistically diverse learners during an international field experience?
4. How do pre-service teachers **build relationships** with students who are culturally and linguistically different from themselves during an international field experience?

I developed this qualitative study to deepen the understanding of the how pre-service teachers may build relationships with students who are culturally and linguistically different from them. This study will also assist readers in better understanding how an international field program may be used as a tool to provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to enact cultural responsiveness and build relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. It will describe the pre-service teachers' attitudes/beliefs toward diverse learners—pre and post trip—as well as the actions and activities they participated in during the trip to build their confidence in and willingness to serve diverse students and build relationships with them.

1.4 EPISTEMOLOGY, THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE, AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is positioned within the theoretical framework of cultural responsiveness (Dilworth, 1998; Gay, 2010; Gay & Howard, 2000; Hollins, 1999; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994a, 1994b; 1995a; 1995b; Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) as a lens through which to question how an international field experience may prepare the next generation of teachers to communicate with and build relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Ladson-Billings (1995) notes that what she proposes in her theoretical framework represents “a range or continuum of teaching behaviors, not fixed or rigid behaviors that teachers must adhere to in order to merit the designation ‘culturally relevant’” (p. 478).

How can a theory be linked to a discussion on building relationships with diverse learners in the classroom? Rist (1990) notes that, “The power and pull of a paradigm is more than simply a methodological orientation. It is a means by which to grasp reality and give it meaning and predictability” (p. 83). As Ladson-Billings (1995) began developing her grounded theory of culturally relevant pedagogy, she realized that the *ways* in which various teachers she observed in her research met the criteria for enacting cultural responsiveness varied widely. What *is* common, and therefore predictable, between the teachers she observed enacting cultural responsiveness, however, is their belief and ideologies—particularly the manner in which their social relations were structured with students and their conceptions of how knowledge is constructed. She also observed that teachers in her study who enacted cultural responsiveness demonstrate “spontaneity and energy that came from experience and their willingness to be risk takers” (p. 479). International field experience can not only lend itself toward program

participants gaining experience with diverse learners but it also can provide them with a variety of opportunities to be risk takers. The opportunity to take risks may enhance program participants' confidence in and willingness to serve students who speak a language and come from a culture in which they have no prior experience.

Cultural responsiveness provides a framework for explaining how and why pre-service teachers hold certain beliefs about diverse students and enact certain behaviors toward them, such as relationship building, in a wide variety of ways. Several authors offer various indicators of a culturally responsive educator for possible use in this study. Cultural responsiveness as a concept used in this study comes from a synthesis of several notable researchers' definitions (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings 1995; Sleeter, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Someone who demonstrates cultural responsiveness (a) holds affirming views and high academic expectations of students from diverse backgrounds, seeing them as resources for learning rather than viewing differences as problems to be overcome (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002); (b) sees himself or herself as both responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make schools more responsive to all students (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas & Lucas, 2002); and (c) gets to know the students and their lives outside of the school and thereby encourages them academically by remaining flexible enough to teach in a way which builds on what they already know and what interests them through the use of the students' funds of knowledge (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

This three-part definition serves as a framework for a discussion of the findings of this study. Part one of this definition will be most useful in framing the findings for research question two on attitudes and beliefs. Part two of this definition will be helpful in framing the

findings for research question three on actions and activities pre-service teachers participate in during an international field experience to build their confidence and willingness to serve culturally and linguistically diverse students. Part three of this definition will assist in framing the findings for research question four on how pre-service teachers build relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

1.5 EMERGENT THEMES

As explained in more detail in the methodology section, this study was designed with a pre-post survey tool used to gather data on pre-service teachers' attitudes and beliefs on serving culturally and linguistically diverse students, their willingness and confidence to serve them, their expectations of the trip, goals they wanted to accomplish from the trip, and how they wanted to or felt they did communicate with and build relationships with Costa Rican students. I was a full participant in this study. I lived with a host family and a program participant. I traveled each morning with a program participant to the school site over a four-day period and observed them teach. I also led and coordinated many of their teaching experiences. I recorded what was occurring around me along with my own feelings and insights. In addition, I was with the participants during cultural excursions and witnessed their reactions to and participation in seeing a volcano, shopping at an open air-market with locals, zip-lining, hiking and birdwatching in the rainforest, attending church services and watching an entire band march through a local Wal-Mart.

After an initial analysis of the data, the first set of results to emerge describe the program participants' attitudes and beliefs toward working with diverse students prior to going to Costa

Rica and upon returning. This set of data will demonstrate the program participants' thoughts, feelings, and knowledge base of working with diverse students in the US, their expectations of what Costa Rica—the country, its students, and teachers—would be like, and what they ultimately experienced and learned while in Costa Rica. This set of data will be framed by a review of literature based on attitudes and beliefs pre-service teachers hold toward working with diverse students.

The second set of projected results to emerge focus on describing the actions/activities the pre-service teachers participated in to build their confidence and willingness to serve culturally and linguistically diverse learners. This data describes findings such as the program participants pushing themselves out of their comfort zone in the classroom, facing and solving situations challenging to them, and describing how they have begun to understand the importance of supporting, caring for, welcoming and celebrating culturally and linguistically diverse learners—and how they wish to do this in a U.S. classroom.

The third set of projected results to emerge describe how pre-service teachers build relationships with students who are culturally and linguistically different from themselves. This data describes findings such as how the program participants used Costa Rican's students' funds of knowledge in the classroom to engage them in learning, used inclusivity while teaching, and how they gathered first-hand knowledge of Costa Rican families (e.g., living with host families) and community (e.g., by attending various religious ceremonies).

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE

Demographers predict that by 2035, half the school-age population will be students of color. In spite of this changing student demography, teachers entering the profession continue to be predominantly White, monolingual, middle-class women. Many of these K-12 teachers bring deficit-oriented stereotypes about culturally diverse students and little or no cultural background knowledge of their students to their teaching. The result is that teachers often lack the capacity to build relationships with students from diverse ethnic and racial groups and/or resist working in diverse classrooms altogether. Although international programs for pre-service teachers are on the rise, pre-service teachers still study abroad in smaller proportions than other university students. However, participating in an international field experience could be paramount in providing opportunities for enacting cultural responsiveness and learning how to build relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse students through hands-on experiential learning.

A study on pre-service teachers having the opportunity to enact cultural responsiveness and relationship building with culturally and linguistically diverse students abroad holds significance as “current efforts to close the academic gaps that exist between diverse student groups require today’s teachers to become multi-culturally literate” (Salmona, Partlo, Kaczynski, & Leonard, 2015, p. 49). A deep cultural gap between students and teachers and an opportunity gap between learners all lead to a more urgent demand for pre-service teachers to participate in international field programs. As Gay (2000) states, “low achievement” for children of color is “too devastating to be tolerable” (p. 1). Schools across the nation continue marching toward greater student diversity while K-12 teachers and administrators’ diversity remains virtually locked in place (Jiang, Coffey, DeVillar, & Bryan, 2011). Morrison, Robbins, and Rose (2008)

note that, “educators are faced with an extraordinary social justice mandate or ‘demographic imperative’ (Banks, 1995) to find teaching approaches that ensure all children’s success” (p. 433). Ease into next quotation. “Instead of continuing this cycle of labeling our students as inadequate, a culturally responsive [educator] will cultivate a climate for excellence, capitalizing on what our students bring to the classroom, potentially transforming the outcomes for students in school” (Keel, 2014, p. 55). Therefore, the funds of knowledge, pedagogical skills, attitudes toward and ability to develop relationships with diverse learners that pre-service teachers bring with them into the U.S. classroom when working with students of cultures different from their own is of utmost importance when trying to close the achievement gap as well as the wider cultural gap. International field experiences have been successful in demonstrating ways pre-service teachers may develop all of these skills in order to bridge the deep cultural divide that currently exists. Teaching and immersing oneself in a culture other than your own and learning what it is like to be the “other” may assist in future teachers’ understanding and comfort with initiating and engaging in relationship building with those who culturally and linguistically differ from them.

1.6.1 Professional and personal significance

Through my 17-year career working with refugees and immigrants, I have observed other Americans working with this population in various schools and other settings and have observed a wide cultural gap firsthand. Some attitudes, behaviors, and actions I have witnessed over my last seven years at Junior Achievement from local educators upon my asking them about their refugee and immigrant population are as follows:

- “Thank GOD the refugees decided to move out of our community and go to another school district.” (Central Administration Official)
- “If they stopped hanging around with their own kind all the time, then maybe they COULD intermingle with American kids.” (Superintendent)
- “All they want to do anyhow is just have babies and get married, so who cares how they perform here in school?” (Early Childhood Education Coordinator)

I have also heard:

- “Thank you, Amanda, for bringing the refugees to my attention. It has been such a JOY working with them. I have been with the district for six years and never worked with them before.” (Gifted Coordinator)

These comments, as well as from what I have been hearing locally from refugee and immigrant children themselves (mainly that they feel very isolated at school, they would like to build relationships with their peers and teachers, and they wonder why they are not being reviewed for gifted courses), were the main catalysts for this study. I kept wondering how I could best assist in changing the attitudes, behaviors and actions of educators toward refugee and immigrant youth. I also became curious of how we can best prepare our future workforce of educators to serve the needs of, as well as feel confident in and be willing to build relationships with, an increasingly diverse K-12 student population. My answer, eventually, became to study international field programs and the opportunities they provide for pre-service teachers to participate in culturally responsive actions and activities including, but not limited to, relationship building. International field programs are potentially useful for pre-service teachers to gain valuable field experience, to learn what it is like to feel like “the other,” to informally initiate communication with students who are not like them (under less stress than in a setting of

being employed by a school), and maybe even to build relationships with students unlike themselves. It is also a strong opportunity for pre-service teachers to learn about another culture and another way of life and learning. Ultimately, I would like to find out how an international field experience may help bridge the opportunity gap (cite opportunity gap here), as a way for pre-service teachers' to begin viewing diverse students with the same affirming views and high expectations they would any other student they serve and therefore, allow for and offer them the same care, attention and opportunities as any other student.

1.7 ROAD MAP

Chapter 2 describes three sets of literature. These sets explore prior research on three main themes of the study and provide evidence to assist in interpreting the findings. The three sets of literature to be illustrated speak to the following themes:

- widening cultural divide due to a demographic mismatch in schools between teachers and the student population;
- attitudes and beliefs educators currently hold about culturally and linguistically diverse students; and
- cultural responsiveness as a theoretical framework and actions and activities educators enact in the classroom.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology chosen (i.e., a qualitative case study) and the methods which used to collect data (i.e., a data collection schedule is illustrated), analyze data (i.e., narrative analysis) and interpret findings (i.e., a showcasing of vignettes describing how indicators of cultural responsiveness were enacted by pre-service teachers in Costa Rica as

grounded in evidence found in current literature). It explains in detail how the findings, or themes, emerged. It describes the value to using this particular methodology and methods for this type of study and how literature guided that choice. This chapter then discusses how the results from this study could be deemed as valid, trustworthy, and reliable. It also highlights my role as a full participant, and not as a neutral observer. Limitations of the choice of methodology and methods taken are discussed.

Chapter 4 will describe the data collected and the themes, which emerged from the data. The findings will be framed through indicators of cultural responsiveness found in the literature. The findings will be showcased through vignettes, which will describe actions and activities the pre-service teachers enacted during their time in Costa Rica.

Chapter 5 will discuss implications of the findings for further research. In particular, the findings on attitudes/beliefs, actions/activities and relationship building—all under the umbrella of the concept of cultural responsiveness—will be discussed for future use in youth development nonprofits which work with K-12 educators and the diverse youth which they serve. These findings will be discussed as a way youth-serving nonprofits can be a bridge between K-12 educators and a rising number of diverse youth.

2.0 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of the review of literature is to provide synthesis of prior research and theory, which informs a study on pre-service teachers building their capacity in relationship building with culturally and linguistically diverse youth by participating in an international field experience. There are three main parts to this literature review. Each part is a core theme, which is used to inform the findings for a particular research question.

The first part of the literature review illustrates the need for this study by highlighting the current demographic mismatch in schools between teachers and the student population they serve. There has been a rapid population shift to minorities becoming the majority in U.S. schools over the past several years. The teacher force has remained stagnant in its demographic makeup and background. This has led to an ever-widening cultural divide. This part of the literature review will assist in informing the data used to answer all four research questions.

The second part of the literature review explores attitudes and beliefs pre-service and in-service teachers currently hold about serving culturally and linguistically diverse students. It synthesizes research findings about current teachers' ethnocentric understandings of culture, lack of cross-cultural perspective, lower expectations of culturally and linguistically diverse students as well as their own ambivalence and doubtfulness of their efficacy to teach them. This part helps to inform the data collection strategy used to answer the second research question and further illustrates the need for the study.

The third part of the literature review discusses the concept of cultural responsiveness and offers indicators of particular thoughts, feelings, behaviors and actions educators may exhibit when building relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse students. This review, and the indicators produced from it, informs the methods used to answer the second, third and fourth research questions. Gay (2010) notes that when studying cultural responsiveness, it is helpful to research feelings and beliefs as well as actions, activities, and knowledge base of cultural responsiveness. The theory of cultural responsiveness serves as a conceptual framework for the study.

2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC MISMATCHES

In the last 30 years, the United States has witnessed a significant increase in the culturally and racially diversity of students in schools across the country (Malewski et al., 2012). Simultaneously, however, teachers and administrators have remained predominately White and monolingual (NCES, 2013). This ever-widening gap in demographics is the foundation for the need for this study.

2.1.1 Total population shift

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2010) the United States witnessed significant shifts in its ethnic composition in total population between 1980 and 2008. Although the White population represented about 80% of the total population in 1980, this number decreased to 69% in 2000 and 66% by 2008. This shift has not slowed down. In 2014,

the White population represented 61% of total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014a) (see Chart 1 in Appendix A).

2.1.2 Public school population

This swift demographic shift is mirrored in schools. According to the National Center for Education Statistics Mobile Digest of Education Statistics (NCES, 2014), the percentage of students in public elementary and secondary schools who were White decreased from 67 to 51 percent between 1992 and 2012. Data is not available for ethnicity distribution for private elementary and secondary schools. There is also no data for total enrollment *and* enrollment by race and ethnicity for two sets of the same years to identify total numbers of students and therefore the actual number of decrease in White students in public schools. There are no statistics shown in this database for *total* public elementary and secondary school enrollment for 1992, there is for 1990 (i.e., 41,217 students) and 2012 (i.e., 49,771 students). In 2012, 24,388,000 students across the United States in public elementary and secondary schools were not White. The breakdown of rise in various ethnicities between 1992 and 2002 are described during this time in percentages only in this database and are shown in Chart 2 (see Appendix A):

- Hispanic rose from 12% to 24%;
- Asian/Pacific Islander rose from 3% to 5%; and
- Black rose from 16% to 17% between 1992 and 2002, and then decreased to 16% in 2012.

The percentage of students who are White is expected to continue declining as the enrollments of Hispanics, Asians/Pacific Islanders, and students of two or more races increase through at least fall 2024. Specifically, between 2011 and 2022, enrollment in public elementary

and secondary schools is projected to (a) decrease by 6% for White students; (b) increase by 2% for Black students; (c) increase by 33% for Hispanic students; (d) increase by 20% for Asian/Pacific Islander students; and (e) increase by 44% for students who are two or more races (Hussar & Bailey, 2014) (see Chart 3 in Appendix A).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2014b), 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate the number of students, aged 5-17, speaking a language other than English in the home is on the rise. *In just a 5-year period (2009-2014), the number of students identified as speaking a language other than English in their home rose by nearly one million* (see Chart 4 in Appendix A).

It is interesting to note that in the same set of time from the same data source (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014a) it has been shown that the number of foreign-born children has been declining (i.e., 2,557,174 in 2010 to 2,246,765 in 2014).

2.1.3 Public school teacher/administrative population

In stark contrast to the above data on the rise of a diverse student population, in 2011-2012 nearly 82% out of a total of 3,385,200 million public elementary and secondary teachers in the United States were White (NCES, 2013) (see Chart 5 in Appendix A). Administrative leaders of these teachers are also overwhelmingly White. In 2000, 5.1% (113) of the superintendents participating in a study done by Glass, Bjork, and Brunner (2001) reported that they identified as a minority out of 2,262 surveyed. In 2011, Kowalski, McCord, Peterson, Young, and Ellerson surveyed 1,867 superintendents. Among the 1,800 who were surveyed, 94% identified themselves as White, while the remaining 6% (i.e., 108) constituted the minority. Therefore, between 2000 and 2011 the majority of superintendents continued to identify as White.

2.2 ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

This section describes the need for the study by describing current attitudes and beliefs educators hold toward serving culturally and linguistically diverse youth. The first part of this section provides an overview of the current demographic mismatch of educators and the students, which they serve. The second part provides a more in-depth description of attitudes and beliefs educators currently hold toward culturally and linguistically diverse learners. This section contributes to the need to do this particular study.

Culturally and linguistically diverse learners (culturally and linguistically diverse students), for the purposes of this paper, are K-12 students who are currently enrolled as English Language Learners (ELLs). The bulk of literature on attitudes and beliefs were based on this particular population of Culturally and linguistically diverse students, but the findings of this study are intended to be used across the population of Culturally and linguistically diverse students, those who have recently exited an English as a Second Language program, or those who primarily speak a language other than English in their home or community. Culturally and linguistically diverse students are considered any learner who “comes from a home or community where English is not the primary language of communication” (Garcia, 1991, p. 4).

2.2.1 Defining attitudes and beliefs

The cultural and demographic mismatch noted earlier between a rising diverse student population and a continued growth in middle-class, White teachers, has led to what Tatar and Horenczyk (2003) have identified in their study of Israeli teachers handling a large influx of former Soviet Union students as “diversity burnout.” This is when an increase in cultural

mismatch leads to increased teacher anxieties, concerns and resistance. In the long-term, this can lead to negative attitudes toward culturally and linguistically diverse students. It has been shown that generally burned-out teachers with negative attitudes provide significantly less information, less praise, and less acceptance of the students and their ideas, and they interact with them less frequently (Beer & Beer, 1992). Nieto (1995) argues that the attitudes and practices of schools, communities, and society dramatically control the opportunities for success among various populations of students. That being said, this section of the literature review explores the attitudes, beliefs and misconceptions pre-service and in-service mainstream teachers hold about culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Research has shown that teachers' beliefs and attitudes have profound influences on their instructional judgments and actions (Knopp & Smith, 2005; Pajares, 1992; Smylie, 1995). Therefore, identifying current attitudes and beliefs held by pre-service teachers and in-service teachers about ethnic diversity is the first step toward modifying attitudes and beliefs, if needed, in order to meet the academic needs of an ever-growing diverse population (and close the achievement gap)—as mainstream teachers in the United States are more likely to experience a culturally and linguistically diverse student in their classroom now than ever before.

Where do erroneous beliefs stem from which lead to faulty practices in the classroom? There are a variety of ways teachers beliefs are ingrained. Hearsay, misinformation given to them from others in the media (or even from their own school of education instructors and peers), a lack of training in working with culturally and linguistically diverse students or English Language Learners (ELLs), a lack of information on second language acquisition, as well as their own observations of teachers as a student—what Lortie (1975) refers to as an “apprenticeship of observation”—all lead to erroneous beliefs which then leads to flawed instructional and personal

interactions with culturally and linguistically diverse /ELL students.

Limitations to this portion of the literature review should be noted, however, as several of the authors from the reviewed literature have pointed in their research to the lack of literature on the nature of teacher beliefs and attitudes (or predictors of attitudes and beliefs) surrounding culturally and linguistically diverse/ELL students and/or culturally and linguistically diverse students/ELLs academic success in mainstream classrooms (Polat & Mahalingappa, 2013; Youngs & Youngs, 2001; Byrnes & Kiger, 1994; Reeves, 2006). Even though there is scant research on the attitudes and beliefs of mainstream teachers toward culturally and linguistically diverse students/ELLs, Byrnes and Kiger (1994) explain that a minimal history of research on this topic has existed as far back as 1972—and has shown past themes such as: a close relationship between public-school teachers’ attitudes toward culturally and linguistically diverse students and their expectations of their academic performance; teacher’s attitudes toward students in various ethnic groups reflected their expectations toward their language capacity; pre-service teachers preferring to teach in a school setting similar to where they grew up; teachers’ attitudes significantly affected the content and interaction around instruction of immigrant students; beliefs about culturally and linguistically diverse students were based on hearsay and misinformation; and due to a lack of training, teachers often engage in teaching practices that are based on naïve notions of language proficiency (Williams, Whitehead, & Miller, 1972; Williams & Naremore, 1974; Sparapani, Abel, Easton, Edwards, & Herbster, 1995; Kelly, 1988; Clair, 1995). Do mainstream¹ in-service teachers’ attitudes and beliefs differ from those of pre-service

¹ **Mainstream.** Mainstream teachers have been defined by Walker, Shafer and Iiams (2004) as “those who are either elementary classroom teachers or are core content teachers at the middle school and secondary school levels” (p. 138); Reeves (2006) defines mainstream as “subject-area teachers and their core or elective courses they teach...ESL teachers are not considered subject-area teachers...ELLs, ESL courses and ESL teachers are commonly outside the center or mainstream of school life socially, academically, and even spacially” (p. 139).

teachers? The short answer is that there is really no difference between pre-service teachers and ITs attitudes and beliefs toward culturally and linguistically diverse students/ELLs. The main reasons for this lack in significant difference would be lack of training to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students/ELLs and lack of personal experience with this population (at both levels-pre and in-service). Thus why both subsets of literature (in-service and pre-service teacher beliefs and attitudes) have been reviewed for this section of the literature review. In addition, as noted in earlier statistics, the number of culturally and linguistically diverse students has sharply increased since the period of 1972-1995 and exhibits no sign of slowing down or stopping anytime soon. This illustrates the urgency for more research on examining mainstream teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward culturally and linguistically diverse students.

The terms “attitudes” and “beliefs” will be used heavily throughout this section of the literature review and have been defined throughout the literature as such:

- Attitudes – “made up of multiple beliefs obtained from experiences with the environment and with other people and arise from single and multiple experiences, both direct and indirect” (Middleton, 2002, p. 346); attitudes have also been defined as something which “forms a whole constellation of working rules about the world and reactions to it” (Sapsford, 1999, p. 141).
- Beliefs – “dispositions to action and major determinants of behavior, although the dispositions are time and context specific . . . beliefs can develop into values and . . . an individual's beliefs, attitudes and values make up his or her belief system” (Middleton, 2002, p. 346).

2.2.2 Development and identification of attitudes and beliefs

Where do erroneous beliefs stem from which could lead to faulty practices in the classroom? There are a variety of ways teachers beliefs are ingrained long before they enter a school of education to become a teacher. In Bodur's 2012 study of pre-service teachers' attitudes and beliefs held by about cultural pluralism in the classroom, all first-semester pre-service teachers surveyed noted that their beliefs about teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students came from their personal experiences. In addition, pre-service teachers bring with them to the beginning of their academic career their own observations of teachers as a young student themselves. This is what Lortie (1975) refers to as an "apprenticeship of observation" and may lead to erroneous beliefs, which could lead to flawed instructional and personal interactions with diverse students. There is some evidence that these beliefs are resistant to change (Bodur, 2012). One of Bodur's study participants noted that while they were growing up they witnessed their own teacher mistreating culturally and linguistically diverse students in their classroom and not giving them a chance to express themselves. This is one example of how an "apprenticeship of observation" may affect a diverse students' academic potential.

2.2.2.1 Raising awareness of cultures and diversity: Self-identifying

Beliefs are important to identify, especially in pre-service teachers, as they may affect the extent to which they are learning and internalizing what is presented to them throughout their teacher education program (Bodur, 2012). Not only are pre-service teachers victim to the "apprenticeship of observation"; many of them do not think about their attitudes and beliefs about diverse students, nor are they aware of other cultures. This can slowly develop over time as pre-service teachers participate in coursework and field experiences through their

undergraduate academic career. Joseph Ponterotito et al. (1998) developed the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS). TMAS measures “teachers’ awareness of, comfort with, and sensitivity to issues of cultural pluralism in the classroom” (Bodur, 2012, pp. 44-45). The quantitative result of Bodur’s study was that third-semester pre-service teachers score significantly higher on TMAS, and therefore held significantly more positive attitudes and beliefs toward culturally and linguistically diverse students than first-semester students. First-semester pre-service teachers stressed the importance of *awareness* of other cultures, while third-semester pre-service teachers went one step beyond awareness to add the importance of *taking proper action* through curriculum and instructional practices for this population of students.

2.2.3 Conditions affecting teachers’ attitude and belief development

Once pre-service teachers become employed, in-service teachers, what conditions may continue to shape their attitudes and beliefs toward serving culturally and linguistically diverse learners (culturally and linguistically diverse students)? Studies have indicated that numerous conditions can predict attitudes and behavior of mainstream teachers toward culturally and linguistically diverse students. For the purposes of this study, lack of experience (with diversity/diverse students) will be the main condition of focus. However, some other conditions include

- type of immigration to the United States (e.g., migrant, refugee);
- No Child Left Behind Act (now defunct and replaced with ESSA);
- lack of job training/higher education;
- type of language/type of culture; and
- current school culture.

2.2.3.1 Type of immigration

How schools receive culturally and linguistically diverse students—how many, how often and why—may influence teachers’ attitudes and behaviors. For example, schools which receive refugee youth through the U.S. refugee resettlement process will receive students on an ongoing basis, throughout the school year, with little to no warning. Due to U.S. resettlement laws, all refugee youth must be enrolled in a U.S. school within seven days of arriving in the United States—and resettlement agencies themselves are told only one to two weeks prior to their arrival that they are coming at all. This places tremendous pressure on both local schools (which some must welcome refugees on a constant turnstile) and on the students’ themselves as they try to acclimate. Walker, Shafer, and Iiams (2004) explored mainstream teachers’ attitudes toward ELLs by surveying 422 K-12 mainstream teachers across three types of communities: (a) rapid-influx, (b) low-incidence, and (c) historically migrant. Rapid-influx communities are those which have high populations of/waves of refugees entering their school systems over a short period of time due to the U.S. Refugee Resettlement process. Valdes (2001) describes teachers faced with this situation: “Some teachers feel angry. They feel cheated at not having the ‘good’ students they once had . . . Principals, however, do not have easy solutions. Sometimes, they, too, wish that the new children would simply go away” (p. 31). Low-incidence communities are schools with less than a 10% Limited English Proficiency (LEP) enrollment and those which usually only serve one LEP family at a time—and usually it is a Western European exchange student. Historically migrant communities are those that enroll students in the beginning of the year, and then see them leave by mid-October when harvesting is finished, then some return in the spring. These schools have relied heavily on “sink-or-swim” tactics and have placed a large number of these students in special education programs. In low-incidence schools, the

participants generally had a neutral attitude toward culturally and linguistically diverse students. They felt that these students brought a “great learning experience for all” (p. 148). In rapid-influx schools, the participants generally had a neutral to positive attitude toward culturally and linguistically diverse students. This population of teachers, out of the three communities, most wants culturally and linguistically diverse students in their classroom. In Historically Migrant communities, the participants generally had a neutral to highly negative attitude toward culturally and linguistically diverse students. This group of educators is the most likely to view these students as poor performers who have come from countries with inferior education systems.

2.2.3.2 Lack of job training/experience/higher education

Many schools lack teachers who have personal experience with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Walker et al., 2004; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). In addition to this challenge, many schools do not have the time or resources to set aside to train teachers on how to work with this population. Schools with a shortage of funds to train teachers are usually the low-incidence schools. Unfortunately, these types of schools are more common than rapid-influx schools—and rely on immediate inclusion for culturally and linguistically diverse students. This ultimately, sets the stage for teacher frustrations, which lead to negative attitudes (Reeves, 2006). A little training can go a long way in preventing and improving negative teacher attitudes. Walker et al. (2004) showed statistical results from their research which indicates that teachers who reported having at least *some* training in ELL education were more likely to (1) want ELLs in their class, (2) be more receptive to the idea that ELLs bring needed diversity to the school, and (3) hold a stronger belief that mainstream teachers need to adapt their instruction for limited proficient students.

A lack of training, support, and/or resources leads teachers to becoming frustrated in the classroom, which lead to negative attitudes and lower expectations of ELLs/Culturally and linguistically diverse students (Byrnes & Kiger, 1994). Any formal training working with linguistic-minority children will make teachers more likely to have a positive attitude, as was found in a study by Byrnes & Kiger (1994) as well as a study by Youngs and Youngs (2001). Byrnes and Kiger and Youngs and Youngs also both found that teachers who had overall experience with culturally and linguistically diverse students and a graduate degree were more likely to hold positive attitudes of culturally and linguistically diverse students. In addition, Youngs and Youngs (2001) found that teachers who have taught outside of the United States *showed the largest significant difference in attitude toward ELLs above all other forms of educational experiences.*

2.2.3.3 Type of language/culture

The type of language students speak or culture they are from does not affect teachers' attitudes (Walker et al., 2004). This is because immigrant youth, especially with a minority language, are usually the only one or one of a few in their school—they are not highly concentrated (Walker et al., 2004). This could lead to the belief that mainstream teachers with various different ethnic and linguistically diverse/minority languages represented in the classroom could lead to increased frustrations. However, Garcia (1991) shows that teachers' attitudes toward language-minority students "are consistent across target groups, whether the students speak a more common language like Spanish, or a less common one like Vietnamese" (p. 641). The frequency and intensity of contact with ELLs was shown as not a significant factor in predicting attitude toward ELLs (Youngs & Youngs, 2001). However, *diversity* of ELLs is a factor in predicting attitude. The more world regions represented, the more positive mainstream teachers are toward

ELLs. A study done in 1997 by Byrnes, Kiger, and Manning, however, notes opposite of Youngs and Youngs (2001) as it found that increased contact with ELLs did, in fact, lead to increased positive attitude toward ELLs.

2.2.3.4 Current school culture

Administrators with negative attitudes about ELLs can create school climates that transmit and perpetuate negative attitudes among teachers (Levine & Lezotte, 2001; Wrigley, 2000). An administrator can “create a school ethos that not only tolerates but promotes the ideology that ELLs are to blame for their own social and academic failures” (Walker et al., 2004, p. 143). The ELL teachers interviewed in Walker et al. study noted that the largest obstacle to having a quality ESL program is negative teacher attitudes. The ESL teachers lamented that they have difficulty finding mainstream classroom teachers who will work with ELLs and collaborate with ESL teachers. The ESL teachers interviewed felt frustrated that mainstream teachers feel that ELLs are the sole responsibility of ESL teachers. The ESL teachers interviewed often noted that administrators are responsible for negative teacher attitudes toward ELLs. One frustrated ESL teacher commented, “sometimes it is really defeating to think that nobody is backing you up here and nobody sees the great potential” (p. 144).

The impact of school culture on students and teachers is discussed in more detail in the next section. Horenczyk and Tatar (2002) conclude that the organizational culture of a school should be the focus in trying to understand mainstream teachers attitudes toward culturally and linguistically diverse students. This is due to school culture leading to reinforcement of erroneous behaviors and attitudes of mainstream teachers leading to poor academic achievement of culturally and linguistically diverse students. This study noted a juxtaposition of Israeli society’s view to welcoming diversity and the school’s view. Findings showed that Israeli

society holds pluralistic attitudes toward the influx of former Soviet Union citizens into Israeli society in general. However, when the authors surveyed 422 Israeli teachers in primary and secondary schools, they found that the discourse and attitude held by teachers toward approaching the influx of Soviet immigrant children into their schools were more predominately assimilationist in nature. This welcoming-unwelcoming attitude leads to the next section on the importance of building school culture and the prevalence of the welcoming-unwelcoming syndrome within schools.

2.2.4 Raising awareness and modifying attitudes and behaviors: Change needed in teacher education

Identifying and changing long-held, and often misinformed, attitudes and beliefs of pre-service teachers takes continuous dialogue between supportive teacher education instructors, instructors knowledgeable about diversity and a “personal transformation” by the pre-service teacher (Gay, 2009, p. 145). Trent, Kea, and Oh (2008) note that, “what goes unacknowledged ultimately becomes invisible” (p. 346). Therefore, it is of utmost importance, not only to first *identify incorrect pre-service teachers’ attitudes and beliefs* about diverse students. It is imperative that teacher education programs are also able *to dislodge them and identify appropriate instructional behaviors/actions* moving forward, as beliefs and attitudes are deeply connected to increasing pedagogical skills and expanding subject knowledge (Gay, 2009).

Awareness may be raised through coursework, but modifying attitudes and behaviors and feelings of being ill prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students, may need more than coursework alone. Bodur (2012) notes that third-semester pre-service teachers in this study state that their beliefs about serving culturally and linguistically diverse students had

developed over time—as a result of taking education courses that dealt with multiculturalism, participating in their field experiences, *as well as* having personal experiences. All three are important in changing attitudes and beliefs. Three of the four first-semester pre-service teachers in Bodur’s study explained culturally and linguistically diverse students’ poor performance on “language barrier” or “limited personal and educational care received at home” (p. 49), while all four *third-semester* pre-service teachers—who had observed the shortcomings of school education in field experiences—noted “low teacher expectations, insufficient resources, and a mismatch between school and home culture” (p. 50) as major causes of poor academic performance.

Bodur’s 2012 study illustrates that changes are required in teacher education in relation to teaching about culturally and linguistically diverse students, but change is happening slowly. Gay (2009) describes these same necessary changes in teacher education as “second order” (p. 143). Change is occurring slowly due to teacher education instructors having misconceptions. Cho (2005) points out in her research that her own colleagues did not believe that their pre-service teachers had an attitude problem with diversity and therefore, they did not support changes to the teacher education program. Cho (2005) argues, “teacher education programs need to develop students’ awareness of the organization and function of societal structures that foster and maintain disparity” (p. 25). Cochran-Smith, Davis, and Fries (2004) stress the important role of teacher educators in preparing pre-service teachers to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students:

As teacher educators, we cannot shy away from unpleasant and uncertain conversations because the failure and unwillingness to look, listen, and learn about diversity, oppression, and the experiences of the cultural other significantly interfere with the

ability to critique and problematize schooling or “teach against the grain.” (Gay, 2009, p. 145)

However, change is occurring, albeit slowly. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, for example, it is now mandatory for all pre-service teachers to take at least one ESL course—due to the rise in culturally and linguistically diverse students (Polat & Mahalingappa, 2013). In an ESL course for pre-service teachers, they usually discuss a variety of diverse learners and how to best work with them.

2.2.4.1 Coursework alone not enough to modify attitudes and beliefs

While there was an overall significant increase in the positive beliefs and attitudes in pre-service teachers toward culturally and linguistically diverse students as a result of completing a multicultural education course, pre-service teachers did, however unfortunately, “identify a willingness to teach from a multicultural perspective--while simultaneously portraying misunderstandings and misinterpretations of multicultural education, diversity, and the attitudes and skills needed for successful cross-cultural teaching” (Middleton, 2002, p. 348). Pre-service teachers need to be guided with well-established parameters in identifying and analyzing their beliefs as well as changing their behaviors; as Gay notes (2009), while the pre-service teachers in her research were able to successfully state their beliefs about culturally and linguistically diverse students, they still had difficulty specifying appropriately related behaviors.

In order for students to understand better how theory relates to practice when it comes to serving culturally and linguistically diverse students, two major studies have been completed which describe the importance of bridging the gap between theory and practice for pre-service teachers (Bodur, 2012; Middleton, 2002). Both studies stress the need for not only identifying and examining pre-service teachers’ attitudes and beliefs—but also giving them hands-on

experience with culturally and linguistically diverse students in the mainstream and ESL classrooms.

2.2.4.2 Pairing coursework with fieldwork for pre-service teachers

Most of the progress made in teacher education programs has increased pre-service teachers' awareness of culturally and linguistically diverse students, but not necessarily changing their instructive behavior toward them (Gay, 2009, p. 150). Gay (2009) noted that, "while the peak of the resistance curve to including cultural diversity in teacher education has flattened considerably, the ways in which it is actually dealt with are not as successful as they need to be" (p. 149). According to Cho (2005) by 2020, culturally and linguistically diverse students will comprise approximately half of the entire public school population in the U.S. Preparing pre-service teachers for working with culturally and linguistically diverse students through a combination of coursework and field experiences have been noted in the literature to be the strongest way to raise awareness of attitudes and diversity while simultaneously helping to modify behaviors and actions teachers take toward culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Bodur, 2012; Gay, 2009; Polat & Mahalingappa, 2013).

This combination becomes important for schools of education to consider for implementation as several studies found noted that while multicultural education courses and/or ESL courses (many of which are now required for all pre-service teachers to take in some states) are helpful in increasing *awareness* for pre-service teachers (Cho, 2005; Gay, 2009; Middleton, 2002), pre-service teachers still feel a sense of being *ill-equipped to teach* culturally and linguistically diverse students. Cho (2005) reports an increased awareness and appreciation for culturally and linguistically diverse students after 18 pre-service teachers in her study participated in a multicultural education course; however, these same pre-service teachers noted

that they felt ill prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students, in addition to having a fear of rejection from the students and/or parents due to being ethnically different from them.

2.2.4.3 Limitations

Limitations shown in studies on the effects of coursework and field experiences should be noted. Bodur (2012) points out that the research available on preparing pre-service teachers for working with culturally and linguistically diverse students presents inconsistent results. Some studies have revealed positive changes in pre-service teachers' attitudes and beliefs because of participating in a multicultural education course and field experiences, while other studies have reported little to no change. In addition, several studies, Bodur (2012) reports, show merely short-term positive results. Overall, however, the literature has leaned toward recommending pre-service teachers not just take a stand-alone multicultural education course—as it may not be sufficient to change their beliefs and attitudes in preparation to teach culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

Myths and misconceptions about the idea of professional development have caused teachers to not want professional development, as one teacher noted about her reluctance to professional development by saying, “It would require learning Spanish. I don’t know if I want to do that” (Walker et al., 2004, p. 151). If myths and misconceptions cause teachers to resist professional development, then training alone will not help identify and change their attitudes toward ELLs. In addition, teacher training programs must take into consideration attitudes about culturally and linguistically diverse students found at the school level—as well as at the societal level. Horenczyk and Tatar (2002) note that attitudes in-service teachers hold toward culturally

and linguistically diverse students need to be understood not only within the context of the school culture, but also in the context of the larger society.

2.3 CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

This section describes the conceptual framework of this study, the theory of cultural responsiveness. The first part of this section provides an overview of various authors' descriptions of cultural responsiveness. The second part of this section provides this particular study's definition and use of cultural responsiveness as a way to frame the discussion of emerged findings.

For well over 30 years, anthropologists have looked at ways to develop a closer fit between students' home culture and the school. This work has had a variety of labels including "culturally appropriate" (Au & Jordan, 1981), "culturally congruent" (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981), "culturally responsive" (Cazden & Leggett, 1981; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982), and "culturally compatible" (Jordan, 1985; Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1987). Researchers have

attempted to locate the problem of discontinuity between what students experience at home and what they experience at school in the speech and language interactions of teachers and students. Educators traditionally have attempted to insert culture into the education, instead of inserting education into the culture. This notion is, in all probability, true for many students who are not a part of the White, middle-class mainstream. (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 159)

Several researchers believe that failure to acknowledge the role of culture in the teaching-learning process may explain why students from culturally diverse backgrounds do poorly in

school (Irvine, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995a). Failure to acknowledge cultural differences frequently results in miscommunication between the teacher and students, misunderstanding of the students' behavior and abilities, student withdrawal, and low academic achievement (Irvine, 1990; Irvine & Armento, 2001). Culturally responsive teaching facilitates and supports the achievement of all students. It requires teachers to create a learning environment where all students are welcomed, supported, and provided with the best opportunities to learn regardless of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Gay, 2000).

This study is framed around the concept of cultural responsiveness as enacted in an international field program. An international field program is one of several tools schools of education may use to help pre-service teachers develop the skillset of cultural responsiveness. I acknowledge that the term “culturally responsive” is usually used by authors as a way to describe an educator's pedagogy and way of behavior toward marginalized African, Latino, Native, and Asian American students (Gay, 2010). I am using a broader meaning of the theory of cultural responsiveness to serve as a framework to discuss how an international field experience allows opportunities for pre-service teachers to enact cultural responsiveness and develop relationship-building skills with learners culturally and linguistically different from them. This may have consequences for their future work in the United States with refugee children, foreign-born children, and children who speak a language other than English in the home.

The changing demographics of U.S. schools require a discerning look into the mismatch of schooling practices and the children served in the classroom. What occurs in many situations is a conglomeration of “Christmas around the World” days or a focus on Black History Month and other token holidays highlighted throughout the school year (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Birkel,

2000). This is a misunderstood method to being a culturally responsive teacher (Keel, 2014); however, it is the option of practice teachers lean toward:

The tendency to view culturally responsive pedagogy as cultural celebration that is disconnected from academic learning seems to be fairly common among educators who have not examined their own expectations for the academic learning of historically underachieving students, and whose attention has become focused on learning about other cultural traditions as an end itself. (Sleeter, 2012, p. 569)

Cultural responsiveness may include cultural celebrations and learning and teaching about another culture; however, that should not be the only ways this conceptual framework is put into practice in the classroom. Keel (2014) notes that, “cultural competence extends beyond just knowing about peripheral details about students such as cultural food, hairstyles, and music” (p. 55). Cultural responsiveness is a concept which teachers may enact in (and out of) the classroom every day to eliminate the current disjointed classroom experiences of a growing number of diverse children (Edwards, et al., 2010; Gay, 2010; Howard, 2010). Engaging in cultural responsiveness

permeates many dimensions within a school including the relationship between the teacher and their students, the climate of the classroom, management, and assessments. All teachers within a school can and should be involved in the efforts of cultural responsiveness through collaboration. (Keel, 2014 p. 56)

2.3.1 Cultural responsiveness as described in literature

“Cultural responsiveness” as defined by Gay (2010) is “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make

learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches to and through the strengths of these students” (p. 31). Ethnically and linguistically diverse children need, according to Sleeter (2008), an educator who can (a) hold high expectations for their learning, regardless of how they are doing now, (b) encourage them academically by building on what they know and what interests them, (c) relate to their families and communities and read them as well as their families in accurate ways, and (d) envision them as constructive participants in a multicultural democracy. Gay (2010) and Sleeter’s (2008) definitions align closely with the leader in research on cultural responsiveness, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994a).

Ladson-Billings (1995) developed the concept of culturally relevant pedagogy as a way “to argue for its centrality in the academic success of African American and other children who have not been well served by our nation's public schools” (p. 159). She developed three major criteria for culturally relevant pedagogy. Many researchers over time have developed **a set of standards**, which clearly describe the practices of culturally responsive teachers. These standards are outlined and organized here under each of Ladson-Billings’ tenets.

The main criteria of a culturally responsive educator, which will be used for the purposes of this study, is someone who exhibits the following:

- Tenet 1: Holds affirming views and high expectations of students from diverse backgrounds, seeing them as resources for learning rather than viewing differences as problems to be overcome (Ladson-Billings, 1994a).
- Tenet 2: Gets to know the students and their lives outside of the school and thereby can encourage them academically by remaining flexible enough to teach in a way which builds on what they already know and what interests them (Ladson Billings, 1994a).

- Tenet 3: Views himself or herself as both responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make schools more responsive to all students (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

2.3.2 Ladson-Billings (1994a) Tenet 1: Holding high academic expectations

Hold affirming views and high expectations of students from diverse backgrounds, seeing them as resources for learning rather than viewing differences as problems to be overcome.

In this tenet, Ladson-Billings (1994a) and other researchers describe how cultural responsiveness as a concept **helps to support teachers in using challenging academic curriculum—as students must experience academic success**. In a study done by Ladson-Billings (1995) the teachers **demand, reinforced, and produced academic excellence in their students**. Thus, culturally responsive teaching **requires that teachers attend to students' academic needs, not merely make them "feel good"** (p. 160). The trick of culturally relevant teaching, according to Ladson-Billings (1995), is to get students to "choose" academic excellence:

Instead of continuing this cycle of labeling our students as inadequate, a culturally responsive approach to teaching will cultivate a climate for excellence, capitalizing on what our students bring to the classroom, potentially transforming the outcomes for students in school.” (p. 55)

Teachers' attitudes toward and expectations of diverse students can affect academic outcomes. Villegas and Lucas (2002) note that various authors have shown that teachers' attitudes toward students significantly shape the expectations they hold for student learning, their treatment of students, and what students ultimately learn (Irvine, 1990; Pang & Sablan, 1998).

Affirming attitudes have been shown to support student achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1994b; Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990; Nieto, 1996). Teachers who respect cultural differences are more apt to believe that students from non-dominant groups are capable learners, even when these children enter school with ways of thinking, talking, and behaving that differ from the dominant cultural norms (Delpit, 1995).

When teachers are culturally responsive, they make student success a nonnegotiable mandate and an accessible goal. This has the potential to alter students' beliefs about themselves and the ability to initiate a positive impact on diverse students in schools (Gay, 2010; Keel, 2014). "When schools support culture as an integral part of the school experience, students can understand that academic excellence is not the sole province of white middle-class students" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 12).

From this tenet, three main standards arose for teachers to follow in developing this portion of cultural responsiveness. The first standard of this tenet is the **use of modeling, scaffolding, and clarification of challenging curriculum**. Teachers may encourage students to collaborate with and model for each other (Stuart & Volk, 2002), clearly outlining expectations (Brown, 2003; Hollie, 2001), and closely monitoring student learning (Gutierrez, 2008 Jiménez & Gertsen, 1999; Sheets, 1995). **The second standard of this tenet is teachers using students' strengths as instructional starting points**. This may be done by planning activities or sequences of activities that allow students to have positive first encounters with subject matter before moving on to areas of greater challenge (Brenner, 1998; Brown, 2003; Powell, 1997; Sheets, 1995). **The last standard of this tenet is teachers** creating nurturing and cooperative environments while showing genuine care for the students. These environments are ones in which students would feel motivated to work to their utmost. Teachers may create a caring

environment by engaging students in activities aimed at creating a sense of belonging. These activities include such things as morning circle, sharing events, classmate interviews, assemblies, and picnics (Brown, 2003; Howard, 2001a, 2001b; Jacob, 1995; Lynn, Johnson, & Hassan, 1999; Wortham, & Contreras, 2002). The impact of showing genuine care for the students has been observed by Howard (2001b). The students in this study described the teachers as caring about them, creating community and family-like environments in the classroom, and making learning fun. As a result, they wanted to participate.

2.3.3 Ladson-Billings (1994) Tenet 2: Cultural competence

Get to know the students and their lives outside of the school and thereby can encourage them academically by remaining flexible enough to teach in a way which builds on what they already know and what interests them.

Ladson-Billings (1995) posits that the goal of culturally responsive teaching is not to have students achieve and acquire the norms of the dominant culture. It must develop in students a sense of cultural competence, a “dynamic or synergistic relationship between home/community culture and school culture” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 467). It must utilize students’ culture as a vehicle for learning. This includes helping students to develop positive ethnic and cultural identities; and helping them to realize that they need not give up their cultural identity in order to achieve academically. Rather, meeting high academic expectations is more possible when teachers promote and develop children’s cultural competence.

Step one for teachers in developing this tenet of cultural responsiveness is to develop a rich knowledge base of their students’ cultural background:

The cultural content contained in this knowledge base includes but not limited to the following: Communication style (e.g., body language, gestures, eye contact); Social interaction style (e.g., collectivistic and individualistic orientation, and social distance); Response style (e.g., time orientation and planning for the future); Linguistic style (e.g., use of Black English Vernacular); and Values and Traditions.” (Siwatu, Putman, Starker-Glass, & Lewis, 2017, p. 14)

Culturally responsive teachers use this knowledge and create a culturally compatible learning environment (Allen & Boykin, 1992; Assembly of Alaska Native Educators, 1999; Au & Kawakami, 1994; Brown, 2003; Foster, 2001; Gay, 1993, 2002; Hilliard, 1992, 1995, 1998; Irvine & Armento, 2001; King, 1994; Kunjufu, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1993, 1995b; Melnick & Zeichner, 1997; Schuhmann, 1992; Shade, 1994; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

According to Ladson-Billings (1995), through this tenet “students learn that what they have and where they come from is of value” (p. 161). Teachers must help learners build bridges between what they already know and believe about the topic at hand and the new ideas and experiences to which they are exposed. Villegas and Lucas (2002) view this outcome as occurring through

involving and engaging students in questioning, interpreting, and analyzing information in the context of problems or issues that are interesting and meaningful to them. Teachers need to continuously adjust their plans of action to meet students’ needs while simultaneously building on their strengths. (p. 25)

Teachers may encourage students’ cultural competence in a variety of ways, including building on students’ funds of knowledge, and establishing relationships between school and the children’s homes. Nykiel-Herbert (2010) notes the misunderstanding of the use of this tenet as,

“one of the major reasons why minority students in general, and immigrant newcomers in particular, perform poorly in schools is that their home cultures, while being ‘celebrated,’ are not sufficiently utilized as a resource for their own learning” (p. 2). Considerable theory links culture and learning (e.g., Nasir & Hand, 2006; Rogoff, 2003; Sleeter, 2012). Grisham-Brown and McCormick (2013) found that pre-service teachers, through their international experiences, came to know two truths: education can occur in the jungles of the Amazon or in the heart of a large city. It needs two ingredients: (a) a willing, intentional teacher and (b) a responsive student. Grisham-Brown and McCormick (2013) also note that, “although attractive materials and environment facilitate learning, the ‘natural environments’ perspective of using whatever is naturally present in the child's environment holds true across the globe. Good teachers use materials that are ‘there’” (p. 9). Banks (2001) notes that, “using knowledge about the social, cultural, and language backgrounds of their students” is a way for students to experience school success (p. 233).

From this tenant, two main standards arose for teachers to follow in developing this portion of cultural responsiveness: building on students’ funds of knowledge and encouraging relationships between schools and communities. "The essential cultural practices and bodies of knowledge and information that households use to survive, to get ahead, or to thrive" (Moll, 1992, p. 21) are called funds of knowledge.

2.3.3.1 Funds of knowledge

When building on students’ funds of knowledge, school learning is connected to children’s prior knowledge and experiences. This notion is paramount in the literature on culturally relevant pedagogy. Culturally relevant teachers take actions to connect children’s cultural experiences to the content and practices of the classroom (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994a). The terms

“cultural experiences” or “funds of knowledge” assume a broad range of elements in a child’s life ranging from tangible cultural or family experiences, events, or artifacts, and equally important, the intangible cultural or family ways of being, as in values, feelings, language, and identity.

Villegas & Lucas (2002) note that, “to engage students in the construction of knowledge, teachers need to know about students’ experience outside school” (p. 26). From a constructivist perspective, learners use their prior knowledge and beliefs to make sense of new input (Piaget, 1977). As this suggests, the knowledge children bring to school, derived from personal and cultural experiences, is central to their learning. Villegas and Lucas (2002) note that, “to overlook this resource is to deny children access to the knowledge construction process” (p. 25). Teachers who know about their students’ hobbies and favorite activities as well as what they excel at outside school can systematically tie the children’s interests, concerns, and strengths into their teaching, thereby enhancing their motivation to learn (Ladson-Billings, 1994b).

Learning about elements of students’ culture through research and by developing personal relationships with their students is how to build on the students’ funds of knowledge. Teachers must build caring relationships and use students’ prior knowledge as a scaffold to assist them in learning new concepts, principles, facts, and ideas. Stemming from this understanding, the teacher develops a repertoire of instructional examples that are culturally familiar to students (Assembly of Alaska Native Educators, 1999; Boykin, 2002; Escalante & Dirmann, 1990; Floden, 1991 Foster, 2001; Gay, 1993, 2002; Gutstein, Lipman, Hernandez, & Reyes, 1997; Hollins, 1999; Irvine, 2003; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Kunjufu, 2002; Leavell, Cowart, & Wilhelm, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994b, 1995a; Melnick & Zeichner, 1997; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Garza, Ryser, & Lee, 2009). Teachers should “bring to the classroom an awareness of

diverse cultural possibilities that might relate to their students, but then get to know the students themselves” (Sleeter, 2012, p. 571).

Knowing how to communicate with students who are developing a mastery of the English language (i.e., English Language Learners) is another way to build on what they already know—language-wise (Brown, 2003; Curran, 2003; Jolly, Hampton, & Guzman, 1999; Moll, 1999; Schuhmann, 1992; Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997). Dong (2004) notes that pre-service teachers who complete a field experience abroad now see the urgency and importance of addressing language needs, as they, themselves, had trouble communicating abroad and it causes anxiousness and fear in them.

Giving students opportunities to share their personal experiences to gain insight about their lives also helps a teacher to gain knowledge in what the students’ already know. This may be done through teacher questioning and/or during classroom discussions (Benson, 2003; Hefflin, 2002). Brown’s (2004) study of 13 teachers’ practices found that many of the “teachers take time out of each day to communicate individually with many students on non-academic matters” (p. 275).

Making learning meaningful and relevant to them in order to engage them by using information about students’ lived experiences to build bridges between their funds of knowledge and the curriculum. Several small-scale studies connect cultural responsiveness with student engagement, suggesting that academic learning follows engagement (e.g., Copenhaver, 2001; Hill, 2009; Nykiel-Herbert, 2010; Rodriguez, Jones, Pang, & Park, 2004; Thomas & Williams, 2008). Teachers may build bridges between what students already know and new knowledge to be attained by activating prior knowledge relating to a particular topic or using examples from the children’s lives when teaching about certain concepts (Cahnmann & Remillard, 2002;

Christal, 2003; Conrad, Gong, Sipp, & Wright, 2004; Ensign, 2003; Hefflin, 2002; Howard, 2001a; Jiménez, 1997; Jiménez & Gertsen, 1999; Lee, 1995; Lynn et al., 1999; McGill-Franzen, Lanford, & Adams, 2002; Newell & Sweet, 1999; Tate, 1995). In a study by Civil and Khan (2001), the authors/teachers taught mathematics based on a garden theme that built on their students' families' concrete experiences with gardens. The researchers reported that the children's prior knowledge gave the students more confidence in learning the multiple, authentic mathematical processes. Numerous other studies have been conducted describing culturally responsive teachers designing curricula, thematic units and instructional activities in which the subject matter is perceived by students to be meaningful, useful, important, interesting, and relevant to their lives outside of school (Boykin, 2002; Gay, 2002; Irvine, 1990; Kunjufu, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Muhammad, 2003; Perkins, 1999; Shropshire, 1999; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Educators using this standard

see all students, including children who are poor, of color, and speakers of languages other than English, as learners who already know a great deal and who have experiences, concepts, and languages that can be built on and expanded to help them learn even more. They see their role as adding to rather than replacing what students bring to learning. They are convinced that all students, not just those from the dominant group, are capable learners who bring a wealth of knowledge and experiences to school. (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 23)

Allowing the students' to use their home languages whenever possible, whether that language is native to the teachers' cultural heritage or not. Frequent examples of affirming students' identities were related to language (Brenner, 1998; Cahnmann & Remillard, 2002; Henry, 1996; Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003; Howard, 2001a; Hyland, 2005; Jiménez, 1997;

Jiménez & Gertsen, 1999; Pierce, 2005; Powell, 1997; Sheets, 1995). In addition, this can assist teachers in supporting language acquisition and enhance English Language Learners' comprehension of classroom tasks (Au & Kawakami, 1994; Curran, 2003; Jolly et al., 1999; Moll, 1999; Schuhmann, 1992; Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997).

Using a variety of instructional methods to attend to students' different learning styles as a means of building on students' funds of knowledge, thus enhancing academic success while maintaining cultural competence. Specific learning styles attended to included allowing a collaborative work style (Benson, 2003; Brown, 2003; Brown 2004; Cahnmann & Remillard, 2002; Howard, 2001a; Jiménez & Gertsen, 1999; Parsons, 2005; Sheets, 1995; Stuart & Volk, 2002; Wortham & Contreras, 2002); allowing for a high amount of student movement during lessons and throughout the school building (Christal, 2003; Hollie, 2001; Wortham & Contreras, 2002); providing for active, hands-on learning and different formats for assessment, projects, group-work, and field trips (Assembly of Alaska Native Educators, 1999; Brenner, 1998; Hale, 2001; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997; Shade, 1994; Vilegas & Lucas, 2002); and allowing for more student choice (Brenner, 1998; Morrison, 2002; Powell, 1997; Wortham & Contreras, 2002).

2.3.3.2 Encouraging relationships between schools and communities

Sleeter (2012) asked some administrators and teachers about connections the school had built with the community it serves, and they note that these administrators “fumbled to answer my question, saying things such as the community was hard to reach, the school serves different communities, and there are no existing community networks to work with” (p. 569). As Sleeter (2012) pressed the idea that community networks probably exist, responses suggested that these educators were unsure of their relevance. Gay (2010) states that being culturally responsive is

validating because it acknowledges the cultural heritages of children while building connections between home and school.

Developing an understanding of students' home life is paramount to building cultural competence. This includes information pertaining to the students' family background, parent's expectations for discipline and behavior, language use, childrearing philosophy, religious and spiritual practices, and gender role socialization (Assembly of Alaska Native Educators, 1999; Curran, 2003; Hollins, 1999; Kunjufu, 2002; Schuhmann, 1992; Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Accessing the funds of knowledge that families bring to the classroom (Cochran-Smith, 1995; Moll, 1992) is an important way for teachers to bridge the cultural divide between themselves and the families of the children in their class. Teachers who are knowledgeable about their students' family lives are better prepared to understand the children's in-school behavior and to incorporate into classroom activities the "funds of knowledge" those families possess (Moll & Gonzalez, 1997). Grisham-Brown and McCormick (2013) note that, "respect for and acknowledgement of the strengths and interests of these families will support positive interactions, promote good will, and increase family involvement" (p. 8).

2.3.4 Villegas and Lucas (2002): Educators as change agents

Views himself or herself as both responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make schools more responsive to all students.

Like Fullan (1999), Villegas and Lucas (2002) see change agency as a moral imperative. Students depend on teachers to have their best interests at heart and to make sound educational decisions. Teachers have an obligation to do all they can to fulfill these expectations and to do so for all children, not just for some (Goodlad, 1994; Tom, 1997). Teachers can increase access

to learning and educational success for all students by becoming agents of change within their schools through challenging the prevailing perception that differences among students are problems rather than resources. Villegas and Lucas (2002) note that a host of factors work against teachers becoming agents of change, including the hierarchical and bureaucratic nature of the educational system, time pressure, insufficient opportunities for collaboration with others, resistance by those in positions of power to equity-oriented change, lack of personal understanding of oppression and empathy for those who are oppressed, and despair that change is possible. Therefore, to prepare prospective teachers to overcome these barriers, “teacher educators must take steps to ‘deliberately socialize’ themselves [and others] into the change agent role” (Cochran-Smith, 1991, p. 285). International field experiences help to cultivate this disposition of “change agent” by providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop empathy for students of diverse backgrounds as well as a host of other positive attitudes and beliefs toward diverse learners and of what they are capable of accomplishing. In addition, Oakes and Lipton (1999) describe teaching, in general, as something that cannot be reduced to a rigid prescription that, if faithfully followed, automatically results in student learning—teaching demands thoughtful decision making in situations that are ever changing and characterized by uncertainty. By participating in an international field experience, pre-service teachers are given the opportunity to practice being flexible and adapt to continual change and challenges in the classroom, which is a major part of culturally responsive teaching.

In conclusion, attitudes are quick to develop and slow to change. As was briefly described in this chapter, professional development and teacher education on diverse learners needs to be comprehensive, appropriate and long-term. Creating a positive attitude among educators about serving culturally and linguistically diverse students starts with a school-wide

positive approach, increased teacher training set in the context of the school and community, starting in pre-service years and continuing throughout. In addition, having teachers and administrators explore their own attitudes and beliefs, building a stronger support system for mainstream teachers working with diverse students and increasing collaboration between mainstream teachers, administrators and ESL teachers may also help to change overall school culture and attitudes toward serving diverse learners. Tatar and Horenczyk (2003) stress the urgency to identify and modify erroneous attitudes and beliefs mainstream teachers hold about CLDs, while giving teachers the tools, resources and support necessary to effectively educate this population of students: “it would seem that the challenges posed by cultural diversity are so visible and concrete that they cannot be put aside; they will keep creeping out even if teachers try to ignore them” (p. 405).

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research embraced a qualitative methodology to investigate six U.S. pre-service teachers' participation in an international field experience in Costa Rica. The characteristics of a qualitative study that align with this research include: (a) a natural setting, (b) researcher as a key instrument, (c) multiple sources of data, (d) inductive data analysis, (e) participants' meanings, (f) emergent design, (g) theoretical lens, (h) interpretive inquiry, and (i) holistic inquiry (Creswell, 2007, pp. 38- 39). In this chapter, I briefly summarize the methodology I use in this study, my research questions, the participants of the study, the type of data I collected and how it was gathered as well as how the data has been initially analyzed and will be further analyzed. I also discuss the limitations of this study.

3.1 RATIONALE: METHODOLOGICAL STANCE

Yin (2009) notes that, "while [some qualitative research designs] are limited in their ability to explain 'how' or 'why' [something] necessarily worked, case studies can investigate such issues" (p. 16). Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2012, p. 390) note that case studies build knowledge or theory and are characterized by three features:

1. Focus on a selected case or cases – the unit of study in this particular research are the pre-service teacher program participants.

2. Desire for in-depth understanding – a narrative analysis technique will be employed.
3. Collection of data in many different ways, but with a focus on qualitative methods – data will be collected from pre- and post-trip surveys, field observations, reflective essays, and journal entries of program participants; field notes were the primary method of data collection.

The qualitative research design of this study allows for an emergent outcome (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) rather than a priori construction of the outcome. The outcome of this qualitative case study will assist in deepening the understanding of six U.S. pre-service teachers' participation in an international field experience in Costa Rica. It evaluates participants' willingness and ability to demonstrate relationship building with students culturally and linguistically different from them, and describes and interprets the circumstances that either encourage or discourage such interaction.

This case study will be guided by four research questions:

1. What is the nature of the pre-service teachers' interactions with Costa Rica, their cooperating teachers in Costa Rica, their peers, their host family, other Costa Ricans, and their host family?
2. What are pre-service teachers' personal attitudes and beliefs about serving culturally and linguistically diverse students prior to an international field experience and after?
3. What actions/activities do pre-service teachers participate in to build their confidence and willingness to serve culturally and linguistically diverse learners during an international field experience?
4. How do pre-service teachers build relationships with students who are culturally and linguistically different from themselves?

3.1.1 Examples of case study as a methodology used in this field of literature

There were several assumptions made for this study. One was that case study would be the correct methodology to choose and the proper type of data to collect was mainly through observational field notes and pre-post trip surveys—as similar studies have been completed in this field of research using this method and source of data. Although there are limited studies on international field experiences and cultural responsiveness, the studies that are available used a qualitative design (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Santamaria, 2009; Willard-Holt, 2001).

Sleeter (2012) notes that while there is research on the preparation of teachers for cultural responsiveness and what cultural responsiveness looks like in action, it is thin and consists mainly of case studies exploring the impact of specific kinds of pre-service and professional development programs, such as school–university partnerships (e.g., Bales & Saffold, 2011). These studies, as noted by Sleeter (2012), may be based on interviews with minoritized students (e.g., Garza, Ryser, & Lee, 2009), or classroom observations along with interviews (e.g., Duncan-Andrade 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1994a; Milner, 2011; Sleeter & Stillman, 2007). For example, Mitchell (2010) analyzes the teaching practice of three African American professors to illustrate key dimensions of cultural responsiveness, noting that culturally responsive teachers are “students of their pupils’ communities” (p. 626).

Case studies of teachers’ learning cultural responsiveness illuminate problems and barriers in teachers’ experience, sometimes showing how those problems can be addressed (e.g., Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2007; Milner, 2010; Patchen & Cox-Petersen, 2008; Sleeter & Stillman, 2005). One example of this is a research project in New Zealand. Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, and Teddy (2009) studied the impact of professional development on the

enactment of cultural responsiveness in the classroom for 422 teachers in 12 schools in New Zealand. They found a shift in teachers' pedagogy from didactic to discursive and relationship-based teaching. Models of case study used as a qualitative method to study teachers enacting cultural responsiveness as it relates to relationship building (and the barriers to enactment) have been described above. Case study, therefore, will be the qualitative method of choice for my study as it also describes and interprets the circumstances that either encourage or discourage pre-service teachers from enacting cultural responsiveness and ultimately building relationships with diverse learners.

3.2 RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

I began my career as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher of children and adults in Poland. I taught independently throughout Poland and not with any U.S. based group. I spoke very little Polish and learned a great deal of survival skills both personally and professionally. Upon returning to the United States, I became an adult ESL teacher for Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3 (AIU3) in Pittsburgh. I welcomed and taught hundreds of adults from around the globe for over five years through this program. I learned a great deal about relationship building with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. I always seemed to excel at immediately forging a bond with any international—even if it was someone I met not in a classroom setting. I always wondered what unique personality characteristics and interpersonal qualities I had which allowed me to easily build relationships and communicate with those very different than most of us in predominately White society—and why it seemed so difficult for others to do. I have no formal background as an educator. My bachelor's degree is in pre-medicine and cultural anthropology.

My masters is in international development (non-profit management). I earned my CELTA (Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults) certificate from the University of Cambridge while in Poland teaching ESL. I was observed teaching ESL learners and provided feedback in Poland during this certificate program by professors of education from the University of Cambridge. It was the only time I ever participated in a formal teacher training program. It was a one month-long program. Currently, I am the Vice President of Education for Junior Achievement of Western Pennsylvania. In this role, I coordinate special one-day and weekly events for K-12 classrooms/schools/school districts in a seven-county region using local community volunteers (i.e., parents, high school students, corporate sponsors) to teach our curriculum on entrepreneurship, financial literacy and work readiness in K-12 classrooms. I have been with Junior Achievement for nearly eight years.

In addition to an awareness of myself, I had to position myself in relation to the program participants. Understanding their backgrounds and experiences—in relation to my own—was key to researching them and their enactment (or not) of cultural responsiveness. Milner (2007) states, “Truth or what is real and thus meaningful and ‘right,’ for researchers and participants, depends on how they have experienced the world” (p. 395). My truths, based on my life events are different than my program participants’ truths from their personal and early professional background. Remaining cognizant of that is part of fully representing and understanding my participants. Both a strength and limitation of this study is my background living and working independently in Poland as well as working with internationals from around the globe in Pittsburgh as an adult ESL teacher. It is a strength, as I understand how relationships are built with diverse learners from a young/new teacher’s perspective as well as the challenges that emerge with teaching this population of students. However, my background is also a limitation

as there are a variety of ways to enact cultural responsiveness and develop relationships—many ways I may not have been aware of nor used myself prior to this study but which the program participants enacted and/or I read about through the literature. I may have observed some of the program participants’ teaching through my own lens of relationship building.

Entering this study, I had a single role, that as participant-observer. Being a participant-observer “involves getting close to people and making them feel comfortable enough with their presence so that you can observe and record information about their lives” (Brand, 2011, p. 275). Participant-observation is a strategic method, which “puts you where the action is and lets [the researcher] collect data” (Brand, 2011, p. 276). As a participant-observer I immersed myself into the context of this study, but I learned how and when to remove myself from that every day immersion so that I could “intellectualize what [I] have seen and heard, put it into perspective and write about it convincingly” (Brand, 2011, p. 277). I am not a pre-service teacher myself. Therefore, I was able to participate in many aspects of this program for pre-service teachers in Costa Rica, while simultaneously being an outsider and recording what I observed happening around me. As a participant-observer, I became an instrument of data collection and data analysis.

Data collection while doing fieldwork may sometimes feel invasive, but participant observation allows researchers to engage in many intrusive acts of data collection. For instance, as a participating observer I was able to live with a host family and a program participant, attend all cultural excursions alongside the participants, and take field notes on the interaction the program participants had with the Costa Rican students they taught each day. Going into this study, I assumed that my only role would be as a participating observer. However, the role of coordinator of field experiences for the program participants was unexpectedly placed on me

while juggling being an observer. The faculty did not set up each program participant prior to us arriving with a willing cooperating teacher. Therefore, at the beginning of each day the program participants were at the middle/high school, I had to go to each classroom door, and ask in my broken Spanish if each teacher would allow a program participant to come and observe and teach in their classroom that day. By setting up each teaching experience for the participants, I was setting up the only way I would be able to collect meaningful data on them teaching—instead of sitting there in the classroom observing them sitting and observing Costa Rican teachers teach. My study was not designed nor focused on collecting data on the participants observing other teachers. Rather, my study was designed to observe program participants building relationships with Costa Rican students, which meant they would need to interact with them through teaching lessons to them.

My dual roles of participant observer and field coordinator at times, were often overwhelming—especially under such a time constraint as only having four days to collect data of the program participants in action teaching/interacting with students. Marshall and Rossman (2011) describe participant observation as, “participant observation demands firsthand involvement in the social world chosen for study-the researcher is both a participant (to varying degrees) and an observer (also to varying degrees)” (p. 140). Ultimately, I was able to negotiate a balance between being an insider (somewhat program participant and field coordinator with past ESL teaching experience) and an outsider (observing researcher) in this situation. I recorded what was occurring around me along with my own feelings and insights. I had to be cautious while in classrooms observing the program participants. I did not want my known background of ESL teacher and current work role in coordinating school experiences for new classroom volunteers (as I do through Junior Achievement) to be misconstrued as having all the

answers to the teaching challenges they encountered or for lesson ideas. I worked to make sure that I could be there to support them if needed (in my unexpected role as coordinator of field placements) but to also allow them to take the lead in teaching and planning so that I could observe and collect data on their participation and choices.

I came into this situation in Costa Rica wanting to observe how pre-service teachers—who maybe have had little to no contact ever in their lives with others who are culturally and linguistically different from them—build relationships with diverse students. I wanted to better understand how pre-service teachers develop their own unique personality characteristics and interpersonal qualities as I had, to help support diverse students in their academic success. However, I came into this study with a set of assumptions. Some of these assumptions proved to be correct, some of them proved to be incorrect. Each of them unfolded in their own unique way. I assumed the trip would be well planned and executed and it would be easy for me to collect meaningful observational data on the program participants. This proved to not fully be the case and I describe later how that unfolded. I assumed the program participants would have little to no experience with culturally and linguistically diverse students prior to this field experience. That was more or less the case. Four out of six of the participants had been abroad prior to this study (see next section), but mainly to Canada. Only two out of those four were to any other international sites other than Canada. I assumed that by merely participating in an international field experience, pre-service teachers would have unique opportunities to enact cultural responsiveness through initiating and engaging in communication with culturally and linguistically diverse students. I realized that is not the case and that initiating and engaging in communication is a choice—and that some opportunities presented to them were indeed, lost

opportunities. I assumed that the audience of this study would be faculty and administrators of teacher preparation programs. This is still the case.

3.3 PARTICIPANTS

3.3.1 U.S. pre-service teachers in Cartago, Costa Rica, 2015

During ten days in May 2015, I traveled to Cartago, Costa Rica with a group of nine pre-service teachers, juniors and seniors from Seton Hill University. They were enrolled in a program for three course credits entitled: *EDU 305: Multicultural Practicum Costa Rica*. According to the university's faculty member who established this program in 2013, the goal of this program is "to help pre-service teachers become models of global competence while increasing their sensitivity to and understanding of students in their classrooms who come from diverse cultures and languages." Most of the participants had never been outside the United States, and most grew up in the area in which the university is located. The group included seven females and two males, they were all 19-21 years old and White, and none spoke Spanish enough to communicate on even a basic level.

Table 1. *Participant Demographic Information*

Name	Age	Year in School	Gender	Prior Travel Outside U.S.
Samantha	21	Senior	F	N
Melissa	20	Senior	F	Y (Canada, Japan)
Ava	20	Senior	F	Y (Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Switzerland)
Fred	20	Junior	M	Y (Canada)
Susan	21	Junior	F	N
Luke	19	Junior	M	Y (Canada)

During the trip, the participants were able to observe Costa Rican classrooms, teach, and experience the culture through a variety of tours and excursions. Observations and teaching were four days in length. Some participants chose a private pre-K school and others chose a semi-private middle/high school. Each participant stayed with a Costa Rican host family (one of the host school's teachers or administrators) for four days of their stay in Costa Rica. Two faculty members were on the trip for the entire duration of the time, but did not do daily observations at the two schools.

I stayed with a program participant, Susan, in a Costa Rican teacher's home. This stay helped me to engage in daily informal conversation with Susan. This helped me to get to know her and her life experiences, which ultimately led to a richer understanding of the data I collected on her. For example, she grew up in a trailer park community (the rest of the participants were middle to upper class), her family works at a discount drug store, she has never been on an airplane before, and she has never been in an airport (she was shocked to find a mall at the Pittsburgh Airport).

Unfortunately, I did not collect the same amount of detailed background on every participant—as they were living in a variety of host family homes and some were teaching at the Pre-K school and I did 3 out of 4 days of observations at the middle/high school. Therefore, the bulk of my field notes are on Susan, Luke, Samantha, and Riley and not so much on the participants at the Pre-K school. I have field notes on Riley but she did not participate in the surveys. Therefore, she is not part of the survey data, but she is referred to in the field notes. Although six of the program participants overall took pre- and post-surveys and I collected field observations on them as well.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe the stance of a naturalistic inquirer who enters the field of data collection as “not knowing what is not known” (p. 235). The phases of data collection take the same approach of exploring the unknown. I entered this research actively seeking to understand how pre-service teachers build relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. I realized during the study that relationship building can be described through the conceptual lens of cultural responsiveness. Once I learned more about the actions and activities involved in cultural responsiveness, I then shifted my study to focus on the enactment of these activities and actions as the way to explain the phenomena of building relationships between teacher and student.

One of the three main characteristics of a case study is the collection of data in many different ways, but with a focus on qualitative methods such as observations, interviews, and the study of existing documents. Yin (2009) notes that data in a case study are richer and enhance

credibility when collected at different stages of the research process. Yin (2009) suggests that researchers collect at least six types of data from each participant to provide rich data for comparison and contrast across participants and for the purpose of developing thematic generalizations—a key feature of a case study. Different research questions may require different variants of the method of data collection. Therefore, this case study collected pre-post surveys from the participants, participant journal entries, field notes and a few participant post-trip reflective essays. (See Appendix B for the pre-survey tool used and Appendix C for the post-survey tool used.)

Hancock and Algozzine (2017) note that surveys serve as a “powerful means for collecting information...pertaining to the researcher’s specific questions” (p. 8) as they are being given to individuals who have insight into the phenomena being studied. However, the disadvantage of using surveys is that they are primarily instruments of self-reported measures. Unfortunately, research reveals that people do not always portray themselves truthfully when asked to respond to surveys (Creswell, 2012; Glesne, 2010, 2015; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Hatch, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Merriam, 2001).

Data collection occurred through a variety of means with the 2015 participants. I collected data from six of the nine 2015 program participants in a variety of ways, including classroom observations, pre-/post-surveys, informal interviews, and review of participant reflective journals. In addition, I stayed with one of the program participants in a host family setting and was able to continuously informally speak with her throughout the trip. Program participants submitted daily journal entries with guided prompts from the faculty. They received informal feedback from the faculty throughout the trip.

3.4.1 Data collection schedule

The following plan, Table 2, depicts the phases of data collected throughout this study. Description of each phase according to the duration, focus, and the methods of data collection are explained in the following section. Each phase, focus, and data collection method was designed to best triangulate (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) the data to make the findings more dependable, or reliable, in order to evaluate participants' willingness and ability to demonstrate relationship building with students culturally and linguistically different from them, and describe and interpret the circumstances that either encourage or discourage such interaction.

Table 2. *Phases of Data Collection*

Duration	Focus	Methods
Phase I: Pre-Departure		
February, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-departure meeting over Skype with the Travel Agency in Greensburg and 2015 program participants and faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes
May 1, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-departure dinner meeting with past participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes taken from memory after dinner on what past participants told me to pack and how the trip helped them in the US classroom now that they are employed
May 8, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-departure dinner meeting with current participants • Informed consent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes
Phase II: Initial Arrival in Costa Rica & Cultural Excursions		
Day 1: May, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave Pittsburgh and arrive in Cartago, Costa Rica • Take tour of coffee plantation and arrive at resort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass out pre-trip survey • Field notes • Journal entries
Day 2: May, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit an open-air market • Visit a volcano • Visit a local Catholic church and attend mass • Shop locally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes • Journal entries
Day 3: May, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend a non-denominational church • Went to a restaurant in the mountains • Met host families and moved in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes • Journal entries

Table 2 (continued)

Phase III: Experience in Schools in Costa Rica		
Day 4-7 May, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reside with host family • Observe and/or teach at a private Pre-K or semi-private middle/high school in Cartago • Ongoing data analysis and writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes • Journal entries
Phase III: Additional Cultural Excursions		
Day 8-9: May, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel to and stay in an ecological reserve in the rainforest; hike through the rainforest, observe coffee/chocolate production, bird watching, and zip lining through the rainforest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes • Journal entries
Phase IV: Departure		
Day 10: May, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board plane in San Jose for Pittsburgh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes • Journal entries
Phase V: Closure and Reflection		
May-June, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send out post-trip surveys via email and continuously remind folks to turn them back in • Finalize data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-trip surveys • Collect additional journal entries and reflective essays participants wrote to faculty
June, 2015-Present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to analyze data for emerging themes

3.4.2 Phases of research

The previous table describes the timeline including data, the focus of each phase and the data collection methods. Phase I of this research, the pre-departure experience, was the beginning of

the research and includes logistical and cultural preparation for the trip. Phase II of this research consists of our initial arrival in Costa Rica and the first part of our cultural excursions. Phase III of this research includes the second portion of our cultural excursions. Phase IV of this research includes departure. Phase V of this research includes closure and reflection. Information regarding the type and use of data collected in each phase is as follows.

3.4.2.1 Phase 1: Pre-departure experience

Initial entry to this field of study occurred in Spring, 2014, right after the first year of operation of this program in 2013. In May, 2013, four pre-service teachers observed and taught Costa Rican high school students through EDU 305. In the spring of 2014 I surveyed and interviewed in depth two of the four 2013 program participants. Therefore, as I was preparing to go to Costa Rica in May 2015, I touched base again with the participants from the May 2013 trip. We had dinner on May 1, 2015. I had an informal conversation with two of them on how the trip had affected their teaching locally—now that both of them are employed. They provided a wealth of information, which assisted in designing my study of the Costa Rica program in May 2015. For example, they told me that by participating in Costa Rica they were able to overcome barriers in their local classrooms in the U.S. One 2013 participant noted that the trip helped her to better understand poverty in her local classroom, while another participant told me it helped push her to accept the challenge of taking on a job in which she would need to learn Braille. They provided so much useful information (both for logistics, such as what to pack, and for further research). Therefore, I asked them both to return to this restaurant a week later to speak to the May 2015 participants for our pre-departure dinner.

After evaluating EDU 305 as a program in the Spring of 2014, I asked the faculty at Seton Hill if I could participate on their next trip scheduled for May, 2015. In February of 2015

I virtually met over Skype all nine of the program participants to attend the trip in May, 2015. We had a Skype meeting with the travel agent, who addressed their questions about international travel, such as how to get a passport. I then introduced myself to the participants and explained my role on this trip. I described the study and how it would be implemented. I took field notes on this initial meeting and what we discussed.

On May 8, 2015, I met all the program participants in person for the first time at a dinner, which the faculty members hosted at a local restaurant. Dr. Beverly Hall, the founding faculty member of this program, greeted all of us and briefly reviewed a list of things to do and not to do when traveling abroad. She introduced me and allowed me to explain my research to the participants. I then passed out a document, which explained my research and had an informed consent form for them to sign to show they were willing to participate. I explained that all pre-service program participants are eligible to participate in the study. She allowed the past participants to then speak. They described what they liked about the trip, a few of the challenges and how much they miss the people. They explained what to pack and buy pre-trip. I took field notes on this experience after I exited the restaurant.

3.4.2.2 Phase II: Initial arrival and initial cultural excursions

Our first day together as program participants, researcher, and faculty began early in the day. We arrived at the Pittsburgh International Airport around 1:30 a.m. for the 3:30 a.m. flight to Costa Rica. All of us, including myself, were extremely tired and we had not even left yet. Once we landed in San Jose, Costa Rica, we then took a bus to a coffee plantation where we had lunch and a tour of the plantation. Right after this we got on a bus which drove for several hours to until we finally arrived at the resort where we stayed for the first two days called “Grandpa’s House.” This was such an incredibly long day for everyone (including myself who felt

nauseous) that I did not pass out the pre-trip survey until the next morning once we all had sleep and some breakfast in us. At the time I passed out the pre-survey at breakfast in paper format, I explained again that participating is voluntary, but that I would very much appreciate full participation. From a total of nine program participants, later that day I received six surveys in return. These six participants also took the post-survey once we arrived back in the U.S. All program participants also had daily journal entries to write and email to the faculty members with us. Dr. Hall sent me some of them post-trip for further data to analyze. During this first day of travel and nonstop movement, I took fieldnotes on my iPhone notebook.

On Day 2 of the trip, we visited an open-air market in the crowded town square of downtown Cartago, minutes from where we were staying and close to the schools the participants would experience teaching. We sampled the foods of Costa Rica—including coconut juice from a freshly cut coconut—and we tried to guess what most foods were as we all walked around in wonder at all the exotic sights and smells. I enjoyed attempting to speak Spanish with the local vendors and taking photos of them and the wares they were selling. We then boarded the bus again and visited a volcano. Feeling the ground of volcano underneath my feet was extraordinary. Boarding the bus again, there was the option to attend a Catholic church for mass that evening. This was a unforgettable experience as we watched Costa Ricans enter the church—on their knees. Listening to the hymns in Spanish was a joyous experience. After mass, we had the opportunity to shop locally in the community on our own. This was an interesting time to observe and notice how the program participants were (or were not) beginning to feel comfortable in the community and were (or were not) taking this opportunity to initiate and engage in communication with Costa Ricans. Again, because we were constantly on the go

this day as well, I took my fieldnotes on my iPhone notebook and had student journal entries to review later about this time.

On day 3 of the trip, we were given the option to attend a non-denominational church in the morning. This was the church of Dr. Hill's adopted Costa Rican son, Ricky. Ricky is a high school teacher at the middle/high school the program participants would teach, he was also our cultural translator throughout our trip, and he hosted myself and one program participant (Susan) in his home with his wife and two young children. At this church the minister gave a very moving speech about forgiving parents who are absent in our lives. After the service, the Costa Ricans began milling about in fellowship. During this time, I initiated a conversation with a Costa Rican woman who had lived in Canada. We struck up a great conversation and she offered me to come to her house for coffee later that day. She and I then headed outside to take photos of the minister and us. After photos were taken of us, I noticed that all of the program participants were standing together in a corner outside and not talking to any Costa Ricans. After this, we boarded the bus and headed to a quaint, semi-outdoor restaurant high up in the mountains. After lunch we had time to walk around and pet the zoo animals they had nearby. The program participants readily and willingly interacted with the zoo animals, but when it came to talking to Costa Ricans, they shied away. There was an elderly Costa Rican couple sitting on a log near the petting zoo. It struck me as such a unique photo opportunity to capture native Costa Ricans on film, that I asked their younger daughter if I could take their photo. Susan, one of the program participants, was with me and was stunned that I was asking this. We then boarded the bus again and headed to the middle/high school where we met and disbursed with our host families whom we would live with for the next four days. The host families were all teachers or school administrators of the host pre-K and middle/high school where the program

participants would complete their fieldwork. During this time, I completed my field notes in my iPhone notebook as we were constantly on the go.

3.4.2.3 Phase III: Experience in schools in Costa Rica

On days 4 through 7, the program participants were in their assigned sites. I spent three out of these four days at the middle/high school. On our first day, I went to the middle/high school. Susan, Samantha, Riley, and I began our day in a teacher's lounge until Ricky came and collected us to go on a tour of the school. As he showed us around, he noted that the school is known for its stress on environmentalism. It could be seen all around, but especially with all the colorful recycled tires used as seats and flowerpots. He then began going door to door with us and handing each teacher a schedule of today and the name of the U.S. student teacher with which they would be paired. You could tell that this was the first time the cooperating teachers were hearing about this as they reacted with anxiety and being upset toward Ricky. They noted to him that they were all going through mandatory testing of their students that week and would not have time to have a U.S. pre-service teacher in their class. At the end of this, Ricky handed us the schedule with paired up names and told us to go find the rooms and begin.

As I explain later in more detail, I ultimately had to go door-to-door to match each program participant with a willing host teacher. It was tough, especially due to the language barrier, but after many attempts, I found a few teachers willing to cooperate. Each day we were there, I took copious field notes in my hardback Hello Kitty beach themed notebook—which doubled as an icebreaker when I entered classrooms and sat in the back and began taking notes on everyone's actions and activity.

One day out of the four, I went to the pre-K classroom and took field notes there in my notebook of the other program participants (Ava, Melissa, Fred, and Luke—Luke would

ultimately spend the rest of his time teaching at the middle/high school where I also took field notes). At the end of each school day, we were taken back to our host family's house via their car and have a home cooked meal or go out to eat at a local restaurant. At the end of each day, as every day, the program participants would write in their journal entries and email them to the faculty. I would re-read my handwritten notes of that day and analyze them initially for any emerging themes which I may want to take note of for further analysis and observation as I continue to observe the participants in the classroom.

3.4.2.4 Phase III: Additional cultural excursions

During days 8 and 9 we traveled to and stayed in an ecological reserve in the rainforest. The first day we arrived, we walked through the forest and observed coffee and chocolate production. We then took a longer hike. The next morning we had the option to wake up very early to go bird watching before we departed by bus to go to a zip lining resort. Each line got progressively harder—higher off the ground and longer in length. By the time we were about to get on the last line, we were told it was 1.2 miles in length and we could not see clearly to the other side from the starting point. It was sheer joy to zip through the wind and mist of the rainforest but also terrifying at the same time. We then boarded the bus and began our journey to spend the night in San Jose. All field notes were taken at the end of each of these days on my iPhone notebook as we were enroute.

3.4.2.5 Phase IV: Departure

On day 10, we departed Costa Rica for Pittsburgh via San Jose. The program participants were very tired, but also simultaneously sad and happy. They had grown quite close to their host families. Again, I took field notes via iPhone notebook.

3.4.2.6 Phase V: Closure and reflection

After arriving home in Pittsburgh, I emailed the participants the post-survey and requested that they return it to me in the next two weeks. All six participants who completed the pre-survey completed the post-survey, although some of them returned it well past the two-week mark. I also began receiving from the faculty some (not all) of the journal entries from some of the participants, which they were writing throughout the trip. I also received some of their reflective post-trip essays from faculty, which the students were also asked to complete. I then began the process of sifting through all the pre and post survey data, journal entries, and reflective essays and began looking for points of interests, things which I found in the literature on cultural responsiveness as well as recurring patterns or themes.

3.4.3 Data analysis: Thematic analysis method

In this study, I use thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012;) to explore six U.S. pre-service teachers' willingness and ability to demonstrate relationship building with students culturally and linguistically different from them, and to describe and interpret the circumstances that either encourage or discourage such interaction. The research questions are approached through the program participants' responses to pre-post trip surveys about such factors as their attitudes, beliefs and prior experiences working with diverse learners as well as observations made by the researcher in the field as the participants interact with culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

The preliminary themes of this study were identified refined, modified, and constructed through an ongoing data analysis as well as a literature review. I may ultimately write about these preliminarily identified themes or I may eventually merge some of them during the final

analysis. The literature review assisted in narrowing the number of themes initially found in data collection. The literature review helped me to identify the unit of study (i.e., the pre-service teachers/program participants) and the conceptual framework (i.e., cultural responsiveness) which combined helped to narrow the specific themes for further investigation.

3.4.4 Finding themes and formulating research questions

The themes for this study emerged through the use of a narrative analysis technique known as “thematic analysis” (McClelland, 1964; Winter & McClelland, 1978). According to this method of analysis,

any text can be examined for thematic content that might reveal the ideological, motivational and idiosyncratic meanings individuals and groups attach to words, relationships, symbols, and institutions. Analysis of thematic content generally involves noticing recurring themes, as well as patterns of association of content, in a single text and comparing different texts to detect particularized meanings by contrast. (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004, p. 225)

Merriam (2009) notes that, “data analysis is the process used to answer your research questions . . . these answers are the themes, categories or findings” (p. 176).

The preliminary themes identified for this study are as follows and were found after an initial analysis concluded on the survey and field notes data. These preliminary themes will be further analyzed. Some will ultimately be showcased alone or merged with other themes in the findings through 3-4 vignettes in the case study:

- showing initiative;
- demonstrating engagement with students;

- building rapport with students;
- confidence building;
- pushing outside of the comfort zone;
- supporting peers;
- asking for help;
- demonstrating genuineness;;
- use of students' funds of knowledge; and
- being inclusive.

A theme, as defined by Saldaña (2009) is a “phrase or sentence that identifies what a unit of data is about and/or what it means” (p. 139). You know you have found a theme “when you can answer the question, ‘What is this expression an example of?’” (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 87). Some themes are “broad and sweeping constructs that link many different kinds of expressions. Other themes are more focused and link very specific kinds of expressions” (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 87).

Thematic analysis, as a method of content analysis, is similar to other qualitative data analysis techniques. It shares features of methods of interpretation (Geertz, 1973; Ochberg, 2003), constant comparison (George & Bennett, 1979), logical combination and induction (Becker, 1998), and grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). All of these techniques involve “the inductive generation of themes through interpretation and the identification of patterns of association and contrast” (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004, p. 225). This is the process I used to identify my preliminary themes during the initial analysis process. As I scanned through the data I was searching for data which was alike (i.e., alike between survey participants and alike between a program participants' voice on a survey

and my voice in field notes), but also data which was different from each other (i.e., different between participant surveys and also different between survey data and data in my field notes). As I was scanning for items that are alike and different, I was keeping my research questions in mind. The research questions are the guide used while skimming through data in search of themes/findings, but they also are able to be informed/reformed in light of the data. Hancock and Algozzine (2017) describe this process of searching for themes/findings through data as a new researcher, such as myself:

Thematic analysis is often preferred by novice researchers; through use of this strategy, each new piece of information is examined in light of a particular research question in order to construct a tentative answer to the question. Tentative answers are categorized into themes. The process continues until themes emerge that are well supported by all available information...these themes are retained and reported as findings. (p. 67)

Hancock and Algozzine (2017) describe a set of criteria to use in order to judge the extent to which a researcher's themes "accurately and comprehensively represent the information collected in the study" (p. 67). First, the themes must reflect the purpose of the research and respond to a research question. Second, the themes must evolve from an analysis of all collected data—until the researcher exhausts all information gathered which is relevant to the research question. Third, even though themes are sometimes interconnected, beginner researchers should want to develop themes that represent "separate and distinct categories of findings" (p. 67). Fourth, each theme should be as specific and explanatory as possible. Finally, themes should be of "comparable complexity" (p. 67).

I will analyze data in two phases for this study including initial and final analysis. The initial analysis took place in May through August of 2017; it helped to define the view of this

study, formulate the research questions and “establish an achievable research analysis objective through the lens of the data” (Guest et al., 2012, p. 27). The initial analysis (i.e., May-August, 2017) identified various components of the case; the final analysis (i.e., May-August, 2018) will organize these components into individual stories, which will construct the case.

Initial analysis in May-August of 2017 began with a scan of the data to help formulate research questions and to find a “fit between the research focus [I] want to generate (the analysis objective) and the data at hand” (Guest et al., 2012, p. 27). My analysis objective is to identify data, which illustrates how an international field experience gives opportunities to pre-service teachers to build their capacity to develop relationships with diverse students. Therefore, I was scanning the data to find items that fit my research focus. I noticed certain data emerging again and again, which led to the themes to further analyze as well as the formation of research questions for this study as were noted earlier in this document:

1. What is the nature of the pre-service teachers’ interactions with Costa Rica, their cooperating teachers in Costa Rica, their peers, their host family, other Costa Ricans and their host family?
2. What are pre-service teachers’ personal attitudes and beliefs about serving culturally and linguistically diverse students prior to an international field experience and after?
3. What actions/activities do pre-service teachers participate in to build their confidence and willingness to serve culturally and linguistically diverse learners during an international field experience?
4. How do pre-service teachers build relationships with students who are culturally and linguistically different from themselves?

This initial analysis of data and formation of research questions above occurred through a systematic comparison of texts of survey data and field notes to be able to note similarities and differences (constant comparison). I also stayed vigilant of missing data. If there was something I expected the participants to talk about through the data, and they did not, I noted this as well (Guest et al., 2012).

The initial analysis process helped me to identify the components, which will eventually help me to answer the research questions through a case study constructed of individual stories. A large chunk of the data was about what the participants expected to see, do and experience in Costa Rica—and if those expectations were met or not. This portion of the data will assist in answering research question one. Another part of the data spoke to the participants' attitudes toward serving culturally and linguistically diverse students prior to the trip, during and after. This will help to answer research question two. A large portion of the data illustrates how willing and/or confident the participants were in working with culturally and linguistically diverse students, described through their own voice and mine. This data will help to answer research question three. This trip also led to the participants discussing through the survey data their own view of how and when they felt they enacted relationship building with the students in the Costa Rican classroom and how they could build relationships with diverse learners in their future classrooms. I also describe through field notes how they enacted relationship building with diverse learners. This portion of the data will help to answer research question four. The data also showcased the participants' voice in describing how and when they felt they enacted relationship building with Costa Ricans outside of the classroom setting. This part of the data will help in answering research question one.

3.4.5 Intensive thematic analysis: Detailed next steps to finding themes

Initial data analysis involving the creation of preliminary themes occurred during May 2017, as described in the previous section. During this time, I engaged with all of the data collected from the trip to Costa Rica in May 2015, in a much more detailed manner than ever before which will be described in this section. Due to the data being collected in 2015 and the findings published in 2017, the data went through an ongoing refinement process—over a two year period—leading up to the narrowing of themes to focus on for the dissertation and finalization of research questions found in this document.

During this initial phase of analysis (i.e., May-August, 2017), I organized all the survey data from the pre-and post-surveys. I did this in four steps. First, I placed each participant's name into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, then placed each survey question into this spreadsheet, and then each answer from each participant verbatim into this same spreadsheet. I then highlighted in yellow the cells in this document which were striking to me, or were a “key moment” (Sullivan, 2012) during the initial scan of the document. A key phrase that Saldaña (2016) uses has been employed for the entire initial phase of data analysis, and that is, “What strikes you?” (p. 22). Replaying this question in my mind as I read and re-read over the data eventually led me to identification of categories. Secondly, after an initial scan of the pre- and post-surveys, I placed some themes that kept emerging into a bulleted list in a Microsoft Word document to review for later as I figure out which themes to eventually focus in on. Next, I typed all pre- and post-survey questions into a separate word document and then placed all the participants' answers below each question. I then highlighted key phrases that stood out to me as well as words that kept being repeated by the participants. Finally, I created a record of my

emergent codes on notebook paper: “coding is always secondary to an initial thematic analysis—in which patterns of association and contrast are uncovered” (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004, p. 225).

A codebook of 40 key descriptive nouns based on a word which was used across several participants, or a concept which several participants describe in the pre and post surveys has been initially developed. Guest et al. (2012) note that, “a thoughtfully developed codebook serves as a taxonomy, a rich summary description of the range and depth of the data” (p. 40). Codes were developed as I re-scanned the original surveys and for each answer to each question and gave each answer at least one code (if not two—a “simultaneous code”) (Saldaña, 2016, p. 6).

The dissertation will show in the appendices a full listing of codes and their “job description” which includes an explanation of each of its “purpose” and “performance” in the analytic scheme (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 256). A codebook, along with its description of each code and its source (i.e., participant or observational setting) “permits a systemic exploration of relationships in the data as well as a comparative analysis of those relationships” (Guest et al., 2012, p. 40). The procedures used in thematic analysis (i.e., interpretive analysis of association and of contrast) is what yields this codified set of themes that enables a systematic content analysis of many texts (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004).

In the first phase of analysis, I also organized all the field notes data. All of my field notes were hand written in a notebook in Costa Rica. Upon returning to the U.S. in May 2015, I typed in a Microsoft Word document all of the handwritten notes. In May 2017, I then re-read over all of the field notes and engaged in constant comparison of my data noticing similarities and differences (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and organizing them into emerging patterns of association or contrast. This initial organizing of findings from the surveys and field notes allowed initial emerging themes to arise and helped to better define the research focus and

research questions. I eventually pulled out seven main vignettes, which describe in rich detail similar findings that emerged from the survey data. These vignettes themselves still need to be coded as it is “important to process the words spoken by the study participants [survey data] separately from those spoken by the data collectors” (Guest et al., 2012, p. 29).

The final step in the initial analysis would be to place all the codes which are developed through the survey data and the field notes data into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and then place the data which fall under each code from the survey and the field notes under each code (Saldaña, 2016, p. 30). I have not done this step yet, but will before beginning the final phase of analysis, which will take place between May 2018-August 2018.

Once I had gone through my survey data and field notes data in the initial phase of analysis, highlighting key moments that stood out to me for further analysis—tagging survey data with initial codes and noting emerging themes from the field notes—I then turned to Saldaña (2016) to guide me with next steps. Saldaña (2016) offers several coding suggestions for researchers to consider as they begin contemplating how to code large amounts of data. Saldaña (2016) notes, “sometimes the participant says it best, sometimes the researcher does. Be prepared to mix and match coding methods as you proceed with data analysis” (p. 109). Saldaña (2016) describes several types of coding methods. It is difficult for me to choose just one. In my initial phase of analysis the method of coding I use is descriptive coding. This type of coding “summarizes in a word or a short phrase—most often a noun—the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data. These codes are identification of the topic, not abbreviations of the content” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 102). This type of coding method is appropriate for beginner qualitative researchers and studies with a wide variety of data forms. This type of coding is a proper fit for first cycle of coding as it helps the researcher to develop a “basic vocabulary of data” (Saldaña,

2016, p. 102). It provides an “index of the data’s contents” and “is essential groundwork for second cycle coding and further analysis and interpretation” (Wolcott, 1994, p. 55). During second cycle coding, I will most likely use values coding (Saldaña, 2016). Values Coding is appropriate for virtually all qualitative studies but “particularly for those which explore belief systems, participant experiences, and actions in case studies” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 132).

3.4.6 Initial major concepts identification

Through initial coding of survey data and emerging themes arising from the field notes, I began seeing that I could link the survey outcomes with the outcomes found in my field notes. Charmaz (2001) describes coding as the “critical link” between data collection and their explanation of meaning (Saldaña, 2016, p. 4). Coding is not just labeling, it is linking: “it leads you from the data to the idea and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea” (Richards & Morse, 2013, p. 154).

The key moments highlighted for further intensive thematic analysis, and the codes which were then initially chosen to be synthesized into three major concepts for further discussion through the research questions in the dissertation were chosen due to two factors: (1) either it was something that “strikes me” and/or (2) it was an element of what was found in the literature review on the conceptual framework on cultural responsiveness. Layder (1998) contends that, “pre-established sociological theories can inform, if not drive, the initial coding process itself” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 15). Various qualitative studies in the literature on the enactment of cultural responsiveness provided a substantial “scaffold” for the design of this study (Guest et al., 2012, p. 38).

The three major concepts, which came out of the data and eventually led to the redevelopment of the research questions, were (a) attitudes and beliefs toward teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students, (b) actions and activities that enact cultural responsiveness toward culturally and linguistically diverse students, and (c) building relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse students.

After using an inductive, iterative process of reading and rereading the data gathered, several, more specifically defined, subcategories emerged from these three initial overall themes found. These subcategories are the most notable findings, thus far, which were found to repeat throughout the initial scan of data. Subcategories included learning about the students' community, using the students' funds of knowledge, building a collaborative/inclusive classroom, using a variety of teaching methods, and risk taking/pushing outside of the comfort zone.

3.4.7 Next phase of analysis

The next step in the analysis process (May-August, 2018) will be to assimilate all of my data into 3-4 individual stories, or vignettes. Each vignette will highlight the most notable findings, some described above, of a constructed case study (Hubbard & Power, 1993 Lincoln & Guba, 1985). During this final phase of analysis, I will first compare the data from the emerging findings on program participants' attitudes and beliefs as well as their actions and activities demonstrated in Costa Rica (from the survey data and field notes predominately) to that of the literature. The literature review is on attitudes and beliefs educators hold toward culturally and linguistically diverse students as well as the conceptual framework of cultural responsiveness (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

The literature review on cultural responsiveness describes subcategories of actions and activities, which are indicators of cultural responsiveness. Therefore, in this final phase of analysis, I will partition and assign statements from field notes and survey data into the subcategories of actions and activities, which are indicators of cultural responsiveness listed by the literature review as well as to main findings from the literature review on attitudes and beliefs.

This will help to establish the credibility of findings by comparing my collected and coded data to data obtained to previously published research findings [on indicators of cultural responsiveness and attitudes and beliefs teachers hold toward working with diverse students] (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). This will also help to build the case for international field experiences as a strong tool schools of education may use to give opportunity to pre-service teachers to link theory and practice. One goal of this study is to assist in promoting additional concrete examples of what cultural responsiveness looks like in the context of an international field setting.

3.4.8 Data representation

Stake (1995) notes that the case study report usually falls somewhere between storytelling and the traditional type of research report and that a case study may integrate vignettes with a field observer's commentary. Data, which emerged from field notes in Costa Rica, triangulated with survey data (as well as data collected from reflective post-trip essays and during-trip journal entries) will be connected to the literature on cultural responsiveness as well as on attitudes and beliefs. This connection will be showcased through vignettes highlighting the most notable survey and field notes findings. These vignettes will describe and interpret the circumstances

that either encouraged or discouraged program participants' interaction and relationship building with Costa Rican students as grounded in evidence found in current literature.

Cultural responsiveness, as noted above, can manifest in a variety of ways, such as: a program participant showing initiative to (or not to) engage in conversation with a culturally and linguistically diverse learner, showing inclusivity in a classroom of diverse learners, demonstrating the use of building upon learners' funds of knowledge to engage them in classroom discussion, and/or to push themselves through a professional challenge or struggle that they have in order to engage the learner. These vignettes of the program participants enacting cultural responsiveness, as noted above, will be described, analyzed, interpreted and situated within two bodies of literature: (1) literature describing attitudes and beliefs pre-service teachers hold about culturally and linguistically diverse learners and (2) literature describing culturally responsive teaching.

The data is framed through the lens of Ladson-Billings' (1995) tenants of cultural responsiveness and will be presented very similarly to Siwatu's 2005 study. Siwatu believes that preparing culturally responsive teachers involves (1) transforming pre-service teachers' multicultural attitudes (Cabello & Bumstein, 1995; Gay, 2000; Pang & Sablan, 1998; Phuntsog, 2001; Ponterotto, Baluch, Greig, & Rivera, 1998; Shade et al., 1997 Villegas & Lucas, 2002), (2) increasing their culturally diverse knowledge base (Avery & Walker, 1993 Barry & Lechner, 1995; Guillaume, Zuniga-Hill, & Yee, 1995; Hilliard, 1998), and (3) equipping them with the skills needed to effectively teach culturally diverse students (Leavell et al., 1999). The themes emerged from my study will illustrate the attitudes and beliefs the program participants held about teaching diverse learners prior to their experience in Costa Rica and after they returned. It will also demonstrate how they increased their culturally diverse knowledge base by getting to

know their students, their students' community, culture, values, and social norms. Finally, the data will demonstrate the culturally responsive actions and activities the pre-service teachers enacted in Costa Rica to build relationships with the students.

3.4.9 Confirming and reporting findings

Before the case study is reported to a wider audience, the findings will be confirmed in several ways. I will share the findings with the program participants themselves. Their perceptions of the plausibility of the findings will help to bring more credibility to the study itself. In addition, I would like the findings to be reviewed by a researcher who holds expertise in case study methodology and/or the topic itself under study. I will also describe my own background and biases that were brought into this study and my attempts at mitigating them as well as demonstrate how the findings were based on various sources of data, or triangulated to ensure robustness and validity of data.

Due to time constraints on my particular study, as well as the small program participant pool from which to gather data from, a case study design will hopefully prove effective. Stake (1995) illuminates the use of case study design when facing a short timeframe by noting that, "The real business of case study is particularization, not generalization. We take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is, what it does" (p. 8). Case study will allow me to give the reader a deeper understanding of a particular international field program and how it illustrates participants' willingness and ability to demonstrate relationship building with students culturally and linguistically different from them, while describing and interpreting the circumstances that either encourage or discourage such interaction. Yin (2009) notes that, "while [some designs] are limited in their ability to

explain ‘how’ or ‘why’ [something] necessarily worked, case studies can investigate such issues” (p. 16). This qualitative case study of pre-service teachers will hopefully give schools of education a deeper understanding of how and why an international field experience provides opportunities for pre-service teachers to enact cultural responsiveness with culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

3.4.10 Limitations

There are multiple factors that affect how or why a pre-service teacher enacts cultural responsiveness that could not be determined prior to, during, or after the study such as participants’ prior travel abroad experience, experience with speaking Spanish, prior knowledge and practice of cultural responsiveness, and/or prior experience with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Recognizing that these multiple variables exist—and that participation in this study/program is not the only reason participants will choose to enact cultural responsiveness—is a limitation on this study. I tried to mitigate these other variables as best as I could by asking the participants in the pre-survey to self-report to me their prior travel abroad experience, their level of speaking Spanish, and their prior experience with working with diverse students—as well as to define what diversity means to them.

In addition, often assumptions may lead to limitations in a case study. My assumption that the trip would be well planned/executed and would allow easy observational opportunities to collect data proved to be wrong. The cooperating teachers at the middle/high school in Costa Rica where I went to collect observational data were told on the day we arrived that we were coming. Due to a lack of faculty presence on the field site, I coordinated each individual participant’s field experience of which I took observational notes. Therefore, I did not just allow

for the context in which to observe to happen naturally. I had to set it up myself in order to collect meaningful data on pre-service teachers having the opportunity to enact cultural responsiveness. Otherwise, I would have only had data on pre-service teachers sitting and watching Costa Rican teachers teach. I attempted to mitigate the effects of my setting up each field placement with trying my best not to interfere further in the natural flow of the experience once the program participant was matched with a willing cooperative host teacher. Once I matched them, I then sat in an unobtrusive place in the classroom, took field notes, and tried not to intervene further to allow for the natural flow of experiences to observe to occur.

Hancock and Algozzine (2017) note that a case study researcher must “recognize his or her personal role and biases related to the research” (p. 54). This is due in part to the fact that unlike other forms of research in which the researcher may be able to maintain distance from the study, case study researchers are often immersed in their work. This was very true in my study, as I was living with a program participant in a host family’s home and going to the site with the program participants daily. Therefore, one of my biggest limitations in this study was my own background, biases and running the risk of becoming too close to the program participants. I had to try to be conscious of preconceptions I may have developed about them along the way and stay vigilant of our personal relationship.

In addition, in my current role at Junior Achievement I am used to constantly coordinating events between K-12 teachers and volunteer mentors-teachers from the community who have little to no teaching background. It quickly became apparent during this study that my background as an ESL teacher, combined with my current role at JA, could affect the data being collected. For example, once as I was observing a pre-service teacher attempt to teach a classroom full of rowdy Costa Rican chemistry students, I could see her anxiety becoming more

drastic as she could not get them under control—and the cooperating teacher was not assisting her at all. Therefore, I stepped out of the researcher role, gave her quick advice to put them into small groups and assign them certain elements to discuss in the groups then have them give feedback to the entire group on what they already know about each element of the periodic table of elements. Therefore, again, I was setting up a situation to observe and gather data on and not allowing for it to unfold naturally—as I wanted meaningful data (as well as to be able to give the pre-service teachers a chance to actually practice teaching skills and cultural responsiveness). I tried to mitigate this instinct to want to orchestrate what was happening—as I wanted meaningful data but I also wanted the program participants to have a meaningful experience. Hancock and Algozzine (2017) note that the case study researcher needs to “conduct the observation in a setting chosen to maximize the usefulness of data gathered” (p. 54).

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 CONTEXT

The following story tells the 10-day journey of a 37-year old doctoral researcher (who has lived/worked and/or traveled to more than 25 countries) and nine pre-service teachers, aged 19-21, most of whom have never been outside of the U.S. with the exception of Canada. This study took place within an international field experience program for pre-service teachers designed by Dr. Beverly Hall of Seton Hill University. International field experiences are a unique setting in which pre-service teachers may develop their capacity of relationship building with students culturally and linguistically diverse from themselves. Pre-service teachers may learn how to develop relationships with diverse learners who are already in the United States, but adding the extra layer of being outside of the United States—becoming the “outsider” themselves—adds an interesting element to a field program for pre-service teachers. In addition, international field experiences bring their own unique challenges and benefits as a field placement for pre-service teachers. Mainly for these reasons, I am dedicating a chapter to a condensed narrative of the field experience. There is a need for the reader to have a clear understanding of the context in which the data was being collected as well as challenges faced while collecting data in order to more deeply understand the findings. The context of a qualitative study is an integral component, according to Maxwell (2005), because the researcher must consider the influence of

the context on the participants' actions.

The overall purpose of this particular international field program, from the viewpoint of Dr. Hall, was “to foster a true understanding and appreciation of subtle but significant cultural differences and the ways these differences affect how children from diverse backgrounds and their families approach school” (B. Hall, personal communication, February 17, 2014). From her 2013 experience with program participants, she notes:

While the experiences they had were life-changing in many ways, staying with host families and observing and teaching in the Costa Rican schools will undoubtedly have the most impact on the way that these prospective teachers view students in their future classrooms, particularly ones who come from diverse backgrounds. (B. Hall, personal communication, February 17, 2014)

This last quotation of Dr. Hall's highlights my overall research objective: to be able to deepen the reader's understanding of how an international field experience provides opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop relationships with diverse learners—with the hope that they in turn use these newfound skills in their future U.S. classrooms. This is a story about nine pre-service teachers, none of whom speaks Spanish and most of whom have never left the country (with the exception of Canada). It is a story that describes the unique challenges these program participants faced while trying to build a bridge between them and students who are culturally and linguistically different from them. It is a story about young, pre-service teachers taking chances, risks, and pushing outside of their comfort zone to build relationships with students with whom they may not yet fully understand how to connect.

4.1.1 Situating the study

Gay (2010) notes that when studying cultural responsiveness, it is helpful to research feelings and beliefs, as well as actions, activities, and knowledge. While I was taking field notes during our 10 days in Costa Rica, I was focused on observing how the program participants were developing relationships with their Costa Rican students through the lens of cultural responsiveness.

Due to a lack of study abroad opportunities for her education majors at Seton Hill—and due to her adopted son, Ricardo, being a Costa Rican High School teacher—Dr. Hill developed a 10-day international field experience for her students at Seton Hill. She first took students in 2013 and then again in 2015. The 2015 trip was the last trip Seton Hill students took to Costa Rica as she has since changed universities. This program/course was titled EDU 305: Multicultural Practicum Costa Rica Experience. Each student (including myself) paid \$2,500 to participate. This payment covered the one credit they would receive to fulfill their required “Multicultural Field Experience,” airfare, meals, lodging, ground transportation and cultural tours. This program/course included one pre-departure meeting in January 2015, a 10-day stay in Costa Rica and one post-trip follow-up meeting. Knowledge of Spanish was not required for this trip. The students spent the bulk of their 10 days in Cartago, Costa Rica, which is a suburb of the capital of Costa Rica, San Jose.

4.1.2 Preparing for this study

In 2014, I did an evaluation of this program and interviewed in-depth and became friends with two of the 2013 program participants, Emily and Adele. Due to this, I had my own “pre-

departure meeting” with them prior to meeting the 2015 participants. In that meeting, Emily and Adele told me everything I needed to pack, what to expect, what challenges they had while there and what they wish they knew back then that they know now. They told me to buy hiking boots for the rainforest that covered the ankle and were high and snug, to buy tight/quick air-dry yoga pants and socks for the rainforest walk and tight, long sleeved shirts as well for this walk. They told me to pack long flowing skirts as that is what is least frowned upon by locals for women to wear. They told me to dress in layers—as this is actually a cold part of their season (which came as a shock to the 2015 participants when they arrived). They told me about the insects and huge geckos that can get inside your bedrooms. They told me to pack peanut butter as it is not sold there and sometimes food is scarce (that turned out to be true). They also shared with me their biggest frustration of their trip—they were under the assumption they would get to teach, when in reality they sat in a corner every day and observed most of the time.

I felt very prepared after our meeting and therefore I asked Dr. Hall if I could bring them to the 2015 participants’ pre-departure meeting. In addition to telling me what to pack, they also told me what they learned from their journey to Costa Rica. This helped me in the design of the study. They described how the trip has helped them in their current employment in two local school districts as well as how it has shaped their overall outlook on U.S. education:

- “Costa Rica helped us overcome barriers of the unknown.”
- “Costa Rica helped me not be fearful of my blind student. It was because of Costa Rica that I was willing to accept this assignment with the only blind student in [my local school district of employment] and take on the challenge of learning braille so I could communicate with her.”
- “Students value education SO much more in Costa Rica than in the U.S.—with a lot

less resources.”

- “I thought it would be dirty at the Costa Rican school, but it was SO clean.”
- “Seeing the poverty there made me better understand the poverty here in the U.S.”
- “Other teachers who have not been abroad are SO more fearful of working with students who are ‘the other.’ Due to this trip I now know what it was like to be ‘the other’ and that has helped me to better work with and identify with ‘the other.’”
- “I feel that if I had gone to Costa Rica sooner, I would have been closer to my neighbor who was handicapped.”
- “There's a special needs building on campus in Costa Rica—and it's SUCH a happy place—not like in the U.S.”
- “We are overly cautious and overly sensitive compared to Costa Rican teachers—4 year olds cutting lemons to make lemonade with big knives and turning stoves on.”
- “Discipline issues were barely an issue there. They are like mini-adults.”

4.1.2.1 Pre-departure meeting

This was a meeting held in January 2015 at a Mexican restaurant in Greensburg, PA near Seton Hill University. It was the first time all program participants were meeting each other and me. Dr. Hall led the meeting and introduced the other faculty member that would be joining us, Dr. Mary Mansour, as well as her spouse and Dr. Hall's spouse. Dr. Hall also introduced me to the group and allowed me to speak for a few minutes on what my purpose was in joining this group on their journey. I was also able to meet for the first time the student who would be my roommate for the duration of the trip, Susan. Susan was assigned to me by Dr. Hall. Dr. Hall gave me the option of not living with a student and their host family on the trip and to stay on the

resort the entire trip with the faculty, as she viewed me as quasi-faculty. However, I wanted the full experience of the trip—through the eyes of a program participant—and therefore I requested to be placed with a student in a host family setting. Dr. Hall assigned Susan to me before this meeting as she noted, “I would like you to be with our most quiet and reserved student as she needs someone like you to be able to open up more during this trip and get the most out of the experience.” I was up to the challenge!

At this meeting, we ate Mexican food and learned that the food we will eat on the trip will mainly consist of fruit, rice, and beans. We were not told, however, that we would only be fed twice a day and not three—as is in our culture and dietary timeframe/needs of some participants. We were given a list of dos and don’ts in how to act during the trip to avoid any hassle, as well as a short list of any intercultural sensitivities we should be attuned. For example, women were asked to dress modestly, particularly at the schools. We were told not to flush any toilet paper in the toilets and to not touch the showerheads in any showers for fear of electrocution. The program participants were not told in this session (or at any time prior to departure) what they would be doing day to day in the classroom and what to prepare beforehand.

While the 2013 participants, Emily and Adele, joined us and told the 2015 participants at their pre-departure meeting how much they enjoyed the experience, and showed them photos of them with the teachers and children in Costa Rica, they did not have the time to relay to them some of the vital packing/what to buy information as well as what they did (or did not do) in the classrooms—as they shared with me. This was unfortunate, as it helped me tremendously to know what to buy and pack leading up to the days of the trip.

4.2 JOURNEY TO PURA VIDA, COSTA RICA

Costa Rica is a Spanish-speaking, tropical country in Central America, bordered by Nicaragua to the North and Panama to its South. It has a population of more than 4.9 million. Costa Ricans are often called “Ticos.” Despite limited resources and poverty, the literacy rate is high at 94.9% (Hall & Faszer-McMahon, 2014).

4.2.1 Pre-journey worries and concerns

Before we even boarded the plane on May 15, 2015, the students and I were feeling anxious and knew we were running out of time to purchase everything we needed, to pack, and to prepare (if we even knew how/what to prepare) to ensure a positive teaching experience for the Seton Hill students and the students they were about to come into contact with in Costa Rica. The week leading up to departing on a plane was just a whirlwind for me of shopping every single night for things I needed for this trip after long days of working full time and preparing my staff to be without me for nearly two weeks during our busiest season of the year. I had to buy hiking boots, long enough skirts, sweaters, Dramamine (I heard the bus rides could cause nausea), and everything else in between. I was very excited to have the opportunity to go abroad again and to be with international students and to finally feel like a “real” researcher by doing fieldwork for my unique study. I was excited to begin to collect data but also keenly aware that anything could go wrong at any time and thus could affect the data. As I was most worried at this time about buying/packing the right items and continuing to be anxious about collecting “usable” data, the students themselves had their own anxieties as they note in their journals leading up to the day of departure:

These past few days leading up to our departure have been filled with a whirlwind of emotions! I have had feelings of pure excitement and anxiousness all within a matter of an hour. Living in a new country, experiencing new things and meeting new people will be fun and amusing, but there are still so many questions on my mind. Will my host family and students like and accept me? Am I prepared enough? Did I remember to pack enough sunscreen and bug-spray?!? (Ava)

We leave for Costa Rica in two days and I could not be more afraid. I keep saying that I do not feel prepared, but aside from packing, I am not sure what else I can do to prepare. I keep trying to tell myself to stay calm. Still, I am very excited and looking forward to everything we will experience. **While we are going to teach** and further foster our educational skillset, I am unbelievably excited to leave the country for the first time and be exposed to an entirely new culture. (Fred, boldface added)

I'm excited to not only play the role of tourist, but to also engage in my major in a very personal way by teaching at a bilingual school. I'm also a little wary of accidentally offending the native people by doing/saying something improper. As I'm packing, my mind wanders off to thinking of the children I will have the chance to work with throughout next week. I hope I am able to be an effective communicator, despite my lack of Spanish. I'll just have to be a good nonverbal communicator. (Luke)

4.2.2 Journey: Day one, May 15, 2015

In the wee hours of the morning of May 15, 2015, after getting zero sleep that night, I drove to the Pittsburgh International Airport around 2 a.m. to meet the program participants and faculty in the lobby by 3:30 a.m. for our 6 a.m. flight to San Jose. As the parents started to trickle in the

ticketing area with their sons and daughters I was not sure who was more nervous, the student or the parent. The students appeared exhausted and exasperated with their very worried and concerned parents. As Fred's parents dropped him off, his Mom was talking to him in a firm, yet rapid speed as she was trying to ensure he had everything he needed and was prepared for the trip—even though he was only semi-listening.

Susan, one of the program participants and my soon-to-be roommate and close buddy on this trip had never been in an airport or on a plane. She comes from a working class family living in central Pennsylvania. Both of her parents work at a discount drug store. She took out more loans to come on this trip, as she noted to me that it's "once in a lifetime." She was amazed by the airport tram ride in Pittsburgh and when we got to the top of the escalator, she exclaimed, "Wow!!! There's a whole shopping mall in here?!" Once we boarded the plane, most of us were asleep instantly after all of the stress of the week and lack of sleep. Once we landed in San Jose, it began another whirlwind of activity that my body was physically not prepared for. The students had their own reactions upon touchdown:

Upon getting out of the airport, it seemed to me that [San Jose] was more like what I was used to than I expected. I think the diversity and first world influence taking shape in San Juan has had both its positive and negative effects on the city. I can see the influence of certain Americanized institutions, like vehicles and fast food, has really taken shape amongst the Costa Rican people. (Luke)

Once we touched down we boarded a small shuttle bus, which would be our bus for all cultural excursions on the days in which we were not in the schools. We met our 30-something, rugged, all smiles and friendly driver, Roger, who spoke no English. I was the only person on the bus who spoke enough Spanish to communicate with him and was therefore the sole

communicator with him when we did not have our translator with us, Dr. Hall's son, Ricardo (Ricky). Roger quickly whisked us away from the airport to a coffee plantation. During this ride I looked out the bus window and saw a little girl in white ruffle panties bend over in the park in San Jose and playing with pigeons. So many people were outside in the main town square area with their families walking, cycling, shopping, talking, laughing. Beautiful. I never see this in the US. Susan agreed with me. Once we exited the bus at the coffee plantation, Doka Estate, we had an enormous lunch full of a variety of fresh fruits, fruit juice, rice and beans (a Costa Rican staple!) and sausages. On one hand, I was so very hungry since we had been traveling for what seemed like ages to get to this point. Yet, on the other hand, I felt extraordinarily nauseous. Therefore, I ate what I could and then was sad I had no room for their tapioca pudding at the end.

Right after lunch, we began our walking tour of Doka Estate. A 20-something Costa Rican girl carrying a large white plastic basket (laundry basket) with a leather strap attaching it to her body began the tour by explaining to us that this is what the Nicaraguans in the fields use to pick and gather the coffee beans. It quickly became apparent throughout my time in Costa Rica, beginning on this tour, that Costa Ricans look down on Nicaraguans and use them as low-wage heavy labor—similarly to how I have observed Americans utilize Mexicans in the U.S. We walked through the plantation and saw a variety of flowers and plants, which were new to us, and then we entered their factory where they separate the beans and make coffee. We were offered to drink various samples and choose one or two we would like to purchase a bag of to take home from their gift shop. They even showed us how they used to sell coffee in the past using large wooden very colorfully painted red carts. I wound up buying a replica of one of these carts as a decoration for my home to remind me of Costa Rica.

After the coffee tour, we then boarded the shuttle bus and had a lengthy nighttime ride to

get to our final destination, Grandpa's House. This is the name of the resort where we stayed for the first two nights. By the time we arrived around 9 p.m. everyone was thoroughly exhausted, including myself. Ava cried on the bus ride to the hotel. Mainly out of exhaustion, as we have been going since 2-3 a.m. and by 6:40 pm Costa Rica time we had already had two flights, lunch and a coffee tour. It was an extraordinarily long day for everyone.

Grandpa's House was absolutely gorgeous but we could not tell that yet as it was pitch black dark. Our room was unusually large for just Susan and me. Before we headed to our rooms though, they fed us dinner, which was rice, beans, and fruit. Once we arrived in our rooms, I told Susan she could shower first and I would wait. She exited the shower to find me eating large amounts of crunchy peanut butter with the handle of my toothbrush while perched on a bench built into the wall. She giggled and then asked me what I was doing and I explained that there was no protein served at dinner and I was starving. We promptly went to bed, as we were beyond exhausted and never slept so hard in our lives. Even though it was a fast-paced day for us, the Costa Ricans we encountered seemed calm and relaxed, as Luke notes:

All of my encounters with locals so far have been really positive experiences. Costa Ricans, as a whole, seem to be such a nice, welcoming people. "Tico time" is something I will really have to get used to, especially as an American that loves to hurry around and do as much as I can in one day.

4.2.3 Journey: Day two, May 16, 2015

Susan and I took a walk on the grounds of Grandpa's House after breakfast when she told me she lives in a trailer back home. She is such a lovely, genuine, kind-hearted young lady. After our walk, we boarded our bus to go to an open-air market. It was an overload of the senses. It was

so sunny, so crowded and colorful and everyone seemed so friendly and warm. We saw a variety of things for sale at this market. I saw a crematorium being advertised there among the fruit booths. Several of us bought and drank coconut water out of a coconut. I also bought strawberries, cherry tomatoes, berries, and guanara. I was very eager and excited to get out there, try some of my Spanish, and mingle with the locals. The students on the other hand, mainly kept to themselves while I walked around and asked several of the market stand operators if I could take their photos. The students note in their journals about items that they begin to notice about Costa Rica, but not too much about their own interactions with Costa Ricans—even though opportunities were presented to them:

Having the opportunity to witness firsthand the Saturday market...I thought it was curious how a lot of the fruits were familiar to me, but typically smaller than I have seen in the past at American open markets. Another culture shock for me was the infrastructure of Cartago, especially when we would walk outdoors in the city. Those sewers are dangerous!! It is definitely necessary to watch your step when traveling in the city, particularly when crossing the street. (Luke)

After we concluded our time at the open-air market, we boarded the bus and went to our next stop, Volcano Irazu. It was pouring rain. I decided to wear my hiking boots for the first time that day, as I had no idea what to expect once we arrived at the volcano. We exited the bus and began walking toward the Volcano. It was a paved path. Not what I expected at all. We spent only a few minutes at an overlook at the Irazu Volcano to take photos and then walked back toward the bus. On the walk back, if I walked a bit off the trail, I would step into mushy, black substance. Which is what I thought the entire walk there would be like.

We had nothing to eat this day besides breakfast until we arrived at a five-star restaurant

at 4 PM called 1910. After this lunch/dinner we then went shopping at a local Wal-Mart before we went shopping at various small stores in the city. During my purchase of two pairs of jeans at the Wal-Mart, an entire Samba band passed through the aisles dancing in colorful spandex costumes of all yellow, all red, all blue, or all orange adorned with tall feathers and sequins. It stopped all of us in our tracks—including the Costa Ricans themselves.

We then headed toward the Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels in Cartago for mass that evening. It was an unforgettable experience to behold. Just walking toward it was breathtaking as it is a magnificently large historic structure. I saw people entering church before and after mass—on their knees. Something I have never witnessed before as a Catholic. I was very excited to hear what type of music they would play. They had an exquisite singer on a microphone and canned music behind her. When she began singing the famous Catholic hymn, “Pescador de Hombres” (i.e., “Lord, When You Came to the Seashore”) during communion, I began to cry. It was gorgeous when she got to the chorus of that song and exploded with “Señor.....” The students were also very touched by this unique service: “Another beautiful experience was Mass. As a life-long Catholic, it was perhaps the most unique liturgy I have ever attended” (Luke).

After mass was completed we then boarded the bus to head for a quick ice cream stop before heading back to Grandpa’s House. Once we arrived at Grandpa’s House the only food they had waiting for us was wine and cheese the faculty purchased for our dinner. Yet again, I retreated to my room afterwards for large globs of peanut butter while Susan and I showed off our amazingly large room to all the program participants (the other participants were strewn about the resort in very tiny one-room log cabins. Needless to say, at the end of this trip when I weighed myself there was a number on the scale so low I had never in my life seen those

numbers on a scale for myself nor did I think I would ever see them. As these first few days wore on though, the participants and I were exhausted from all the running around and lack of food, but we were all still excited as Ava notes on this day, “The more I am here, the better my [very minimal] Spanish is getting, which makes me even **more excited to begin teaching!**”

4.2.4 Journey: Day three, May 17, 2015

We woke up, had breakfast at Grandpa’s House, then off we went on our bus to Ricardo's non-denominational church for their Sunday service. Both this service and the Catholic mass last evening were presented as optional experiences for the program participants to partake in. Upon entering the building, it was loud and exciting and filled with music and people with arms raised in the air. The pastor gave a very heartfelt homily about honoring your parents and ways in which children can do that—even if the father (they spoke specifically about the lack of a father) abandoned the children or was a poor father. It touched the hearts of many, including mine, as my dad was physically present in my life but had little to do with my success in life. Ricky stood up in front of the congregation next to the pastor to translate for us what he was saying in his homily. In the middle of translating it all Ricky began to cry. The pastor held him in his arms and laid his head on his chest. That is when I burst into tears. For the rest of the service I could not stop crying because then the pastor said, "If your mother or father are near you, hold them now" and everyone held each other near them. Then the pastor said, “If they are not near you or not on earth, just think of them and know they are near.” He then noted, “Please know that if your own father doesn't love you, I love you. God loves you.” It was truly amazing. I cried the entire time. The students were also very moved as they note their feelings below:

I am so grateful that I was able to attend the service at Ricky's church. The spirituality

radiating from everyone in the room was an absolutely overwhelming experience. Knowing that we all worship the same Lord and savior feels as if we have an aspect to bring us all closer, despite our ethnic and cultural diversity. (Ava)

I was truly overwhelmed by the friendly, welcoming, family-oriented message from the pastor, the Christian rock music, and the over-all kindness shown by people who are practically strangers. This might have been my favorite part of the trip so far. (Luke)

At the end of mass the Costa Rican worshippers began approaching all of us. I met a woman named Florey. She lived in Canada for nine years then moved back to Costa Rica. When I asked her what made her move away to Canada in the first place, she paused and then thoughtfully noted, "God had a plan for me." I could tell she is happy here. As I began talking further to her, the program participants began to shy away. They did not seem interested in wanting to talk to her—or anyone else for that matter. They kept collecting themselves in groups inside or outside of the church. When I asked the program participants if they could join the pastor, Florey and me in a group photo they hesitated at first and did not eagerly join us; rather, they felt compelled to as I was encouraging it. They were not initiating in taking photos with themselves and Costa Ricans. They were still a bit fearful at this point of approaching Costa Ricans, whereas, I feel that I can—and want—to embrace approaching them head on.

Susan told me later this night that a band member initiated conversation with her at the end of church and she lit up as she described to me her interaction with him and how he is a mechanical engineer who decided to teach computer technology in schools. She told me that Ava and Samantha (two other program participants) just stood there frozen, not knowing what to say to him—they did the same thing with Florey and me. I wondered at this juncture: Will the program participants get better as the week wears on? Maybe they will become more

comfortable with the unknown and being the “other” or different from the Costa Ricans?

After the church service, we traveled on our bus through exquisite mountainside to a restaurant for lunch high up in the mountains. It was open-air and super tasty. Everyone was intrigued by the whole fish Ricardo got for lunch with the eyes still in it. We had a great time exploring the grounds around the restaurant afterwards and taking photos of animals at a small nearby petting zoo. We saw a playground as well as began seeing grave poverty. The bus driver, Roger, even pointed out a waterfall to me in the mountainside and said it in English and I asked him for the word in Spanish—*catarata*. In addition, as we were walking near the playground, I saw this lovely elderly couple sitting nearby with their daughter who appeared to be around my age. I approached the daughter and asked in Spanish if I could take a photo of her parents. Susan followed suit and asked her if she too could take a photo of them.

After all of this excitement we then boarded our bus again and headed off to meet our host families at a central location. All of the host families are teachers or administrators/owners of the two schools the program participants would be at for their field experience. At the particular stop, I got off at to leave with my host family—who happened to be Ricardo, his wife and their lovely two children—I heard Dr. Hall begin to ask the host families for their phone numbers and addresses in case of emergency. This, compounded with the lack of food made me begin to realize that this trip was not as organized as I had hoped. I began to question in my mind, “How could the faculty not know the addresses and phone numbers of the host families they were sending students off to live with for several days”? This seemed like an extraordinary risk to their safety that should have been thought of well in advance.

Once Susan and I arrived at our host family’s house we were pleasantly surprised to find out how nice it was. It was a lovely 3-room and 3-bedroom house in a gated community. There

were bars in front of the house and in front of the windows. Normal for me as I have traveled to many developing countries but this was not normal for Susan. Due to my previous travels, I thought this house was fairly high standard compared to other Costa Ricans. Yet, we soon came to find out that the rest of the program participants were living in wealth beyond our imagination—by U.S. or Costa Rican standards. This became a bit bothersome to me, as I truly wanted myself and the program participants to be living with your “average” Costa Ricans. However, in international field programs, this may not be possible due to safety risks for participants. Upon further reflection, I came to realize that there are hard choices to make when planning field experiences: either place them in reality of the local economy or ensure they are safe. However, sometimes you cannot have both. Nonetheless, the program participants were anxious to meet their new host families for the next four days:

At first, Fred and I were a little worried because the family we are staying with didn't know a lot of English, but that mattered little. Non-verbal communication—gestures, raising/lowering voice, and facial expressions—did so much for us in maintaining conversations with our host family. The father of our family spoke the best English, which was some very basic phrases at best. This posed a challenge for Fred and I, but one well worth the experience. We were also so surprised by how big and beautiful the house was. (Luke)

During the evening at our new home we ate dinner together at home and then spent the rest of the evening playing with their children, Maripos and Matias, 6 and 3 respectively. They are cute as buttons and bilingual! Maripos had the best English skills in the house next to Ricardo. His wife speaks no English and this proved a good thing as it forced me to speak more in Spanish—as well as forced Susan. After I finished playing the violin with Maripos for a

while, it was off to bed—excited for what was to come tomorrow—as were the program participants as they noted in their journal: “I can't wait **to start teaching tomorrow!**” (Ava)

4.2.5 Journey: Day four, May 18, 2015

Susan and I woke up around 4:30 AM, took semi-cold showers, ate a quick breakfast, and were whisked off by Ricardo in his car to the semi-private middle/high school where he teaches English. Not all of the program participants would have their field experience at this school. The participants were broken up into elementary education majors and secondary education majors. The elementary education majors were told before departing on this trip that they would be placed at an elementary school, while the secondary participants were told they would be placed at a middle/high school. The elementary majors found out today that they are actually being placed at a very exclusive, expensive, private daycare center, which also functions as a pre-school for ages 0-6, called, Maleku. I would only spend the next day observing these program participants, as today I came to find out that there was a pending teacher strike at the high school the next day. Therefore, in order to not lose any precious time or data to be gathered, I decided to spend tomorrow at Maleku.

Upon arriving at the middle/high school, Ricardo, our host dad (who is younger than me), gave us (Susan, me, Samantha, and Riley) a tour of the school while introducing us to the principal and teachers. Ricardo noted with pride on the tour that this is a semi-private school with “stuff done that you won’t see in other schools.” Ricardo noted to us that this 7th-12th grade high school is ranked 9th in all of Costa Rica for academics. It is partially private and students wear uniforms. The school was very colorful and they emphasize the environment, conservationism and recycling in everything at the school. Everywhere I looked there were

recycled tires turned into seats in the outdoor hallways, all desks are painted by the students with an environmental theme, and recycled plastic water bottles are hung up in the hallways with flowers growing from them. All the hallways connecting the classrooms are outside and I could feel the fresh air blow through my hair as I changed classes. Very refreshing indeed. There was lots of green grass and a variety of plants and trees everywhere on the sprawling campus. The classes we walked through during the tour were interesting. Most were loud. But as soon as we walked in and the teacher called attention, they immediately came to attention. All the program participants with me noted that they were shocked by the level of respect to adults these students have vs. US students. In addition, Riley mentioned how much the students seem to love to learn English and how US students only learn another language “if they are forced to.” Luke notes in his journal, later in the week when he visits the middle/high school, what he notices as the major differences between this high school and ones in the U.S:

At the high school, the major differences included a campus set-up, less technology, and a more flexible schedule. For example, Ricardo had to coach a varsity basketball game during the middle of the day, and at least a third of the teachers allowed their students to go to the gymnasium to watch the game. (Luke)

After the tour completed, Ricardo brought us back to the teacher’s lounge in the administrative building. While it was just the four of us seated in the teacher’s lounge area the program participants began confessing to me how anxious they are to teach—as they have prepared nothing. They told me that they repeatedly asked Dr. Hall and Dr. Mansour in advance what to prepare, but were never given explicit instructions which now makes them extremely nervous. [As is noted in journal entry quotes shown earlier in this document, the program participants assumed they were going to teach. This is noted in quotes above in bold]. Samantha

noted that her host family's kids showed her their science books last night and that the science books here are easier to understand and better formatted than U.S. books. Samantha is a science education major and has been hoping/assuming she will experience teaching science here.

Ricardo then returned to the teacher's lounge to pick us up to take us to our assigned classroom for the day. Ricardo had a document in his hand as he went room to room to introduce us to our assigned teacher. Each room we stopped at Ricardo would show the document to the teacher who then kept appearing confused and surprised to hear they were having a guest student teacher in their class that day. At the end of all this we had zero teachers agree to do this—as final grades were due for the students—and we could tell this was a last minute ask and not prepared in advance. Finally, we had a few other teachers—who were not on Ricardo's original list of cooperating teachers—agree to accept having a student teacher in their class for today. As Ricardo and I began dropping off the program participants to these rooms, they appeared very anxious and even a bit terrified. I did not blame them.

Samantha, who is a seemingly very confident, bright, and mature beyond her years, asked me to join her first in her class, as her assigned teacher, Marlene, speaks no English and Samantha speaks no Spanish. Samantha is learning to become a high school science teacher—so she was happy she was paired with a high school science instructor. Marlene asked Samantha (through an interpreter/student and me) to teach the periodic table of elements. Samantha asked what exactly does Marlene want her to teach. Camila, an 8th grade student/our translator was very helpful. Samantha asked Camila to explain to Marlene that she would like to first observe Marlene teach today, then prepare a lesson on elements another day. The teacher very briefly explained to Samantha what to prepare and gave her a textbook to take home with her that day.

The entire text, however, is in Spanish, and she instructed Samantha to explain which elements are found where in Costa Rica [not a very easy task indeed!].

Samantha and I did not observe Marlene teach anything that day—as final grades were due and Marlene was at her desk the entire time doing that while the class of 30 continued to be rowdy and entertain themselves. Samantha and I spent 40 minutes sitting there in the corner working on our journals and then I finally decided to have us leave and go to another class as we both grew in frustration. Samantha felt bad, as had she had known the teacher had nothing prepared to teach that day, Samantha could have prepared something to teach. I was gaining more frustrated by the minute as I could tell that I was going to be solely responsible for coordinating and negotiating the daily details of every program participant’s field experience at the high school—as the faculty members were not present.² This is not what I signed on to do. I assumed I was going to be a quiet, observing doctoral student. I assumed I would be taking fieldnotes while the program participants taught lessons to the children.

Samantha and I decided to move to Susan’s class. Susan was assigned to a Costa Rican English as a Second Language teacher named Jennifer Vargas. We went to this 8th grade class so we could observe Susan and also have an opportunity to interact with some students. Jennifer told us before class began that she had planned on showing the students a movie today, but once she found out that she had an American student teacher coming, she saw this as a “golden opportunity” for her students to speak with Americans. This was a very different reception than

² The only time the faculty were ever present at the middle/high school was at the end of the first day to ask us (myself, Samantha, Susan, and Riley) for feedback. We had a very serious discussion with them about how this experience should have been coordinated/front-loaded in advance. Susan, Samantha, and Riley noted to faculty at this meeting that they would have been lost/benefitted less/wasted their time and \$3K if I had not been there to move the experience forward for them. The faculty were also present one more time at the school for a musical concert we had for all of the students on the last day. They never once stepped into a classroom with us to observe the program participants.

what Samantha and I had from the science teacher earlier—and from what we would experience from the other teachers—as many teachers planned on showing movies to their students as they graded papers and prepared final grades.

When we walked into Susan's/Jen's classroom there were a group of students tightly grouped around Susan. Susan was sitting at a desk and they were standing around her—they were so excited and engaged with talking to her—that they did not want to leave the class to go to their next class when the bell rang. We got in a circle in the next class period with Susan and the English teacher. There were 13 students and me, Samantha, Susan, and Jennifer. We had the students go around and give their names, what they like, favorite school subject, and what they want to do for a job after high school. All the students gave very, surprisingly, adult answers about what they want to be when they get older (e.g., neonatologist, anesthesiologist, and pathologist).

As time marched on during this class, Samantha and Susan became much more comfortable with the students and vice versa. But in the beginning, I sense that Samantha and Susan were more nervous than the students. At several points in the group conversation, the students would initiate questions and conversation when the program participants could not or went quiet. I asked the students to give me their impression of Nicaragua and Panama—their neighboring countries. All students seemed to look down upon both countries and called them both “rude.” This question prompted Samantha to become more confident in asking more controversial questions such as “How are your hospitals here?”

After lunch, I took Susan and Samantha to their next assigned teacher, Margarita. She immediately told us that she is showing her students a movie and began ushering us promptly out of the room. The students were, again, just milling about loudly. This teacher was a young

teacher and Susan could tell she had no control over the classroom. Most teachers that first day at the high school seemed to have no idea what to do with the program participants. They seemed to have no idea we were coming—as all of them had made other plans. You could tell they were not told earlier about our arrival nor was there any buy in from them to have us there. Ultimately, Margarita agreed to let Susan and Samantha stay to conduct a group talk with her students. However, it was not a small, intimate, group talk as in Jen’s class earlier. It was 30 rowdy, out of control students in their seats all facing the front of the room as a very terrified Samantha and Susan stood there and tried to have a conversation with them, after I initiated the conversation. Samantha did a great job at wrapping up and transitioning a very long and complex conversation about the Amish, which Susan initiated. As it began going south, and Susan continued to speak about the topic, Samantha chimed in with, “I really didn’t have any expectations of Costa Rica. The most amazing thing we have encountered here though is the food. And the U.S. is WAY more fast paced.” On our way to the next class, Samantha noted that she still learns new teaching skills from this trip, even when she is simply observing a class, which has grave behavioral management issues.

All four of us (Samantha, Susan, Riley, and me) went back to Jennifer’s classroom after lunch, as that seemed about the only place we were going to gain a high-quality field experience. After this, Susan was supposed to go back to Margarita’s class next—but before we went, I was desperately trying to persuade her into staying in Jennifer’s class instead—with Riley and Samantha. She seemed adamant, however, to go to another class. As we were standing outside in the school’s hallway (outside) she finally admitted to me that she felt as though she was being “steamrolled” by Riley and Samantha just now in this period of Jennifer’s class (as those two are strong speakers and leaders). Susan said a bit angrily to me, “Music people don’t work with

other people, we work alone. And I did NOT sign up to ‘peer teach.’ I want to teach on my own here.” I then walked with her to Margarita’s, which was, again, another disaster. Margarita was unprepared for us, again, and unfortunately after much negotiation between her and I, we decided Margarita would grade papers and give out final grades for the next 45 minutes and then we would return.

We then returned to Jennifer’s class and got asked more questions about us and our trip here in Costa Rica. When the questions began to subside from the students, however, Susan spoke up! She asked the students, “Who plays a musical instrument?” She then, much to my surprise, even used the famous ESL (English as a Second Language) textbook, “Word by Word” photo dictionary and showed photos of various musical instruments. I was so very proud to watch her grow like this—it took a lot of leadership skills and confidence to be able to get out of her shell for a moment, speak up and take over the class—even in the presence of the other two of her peers. When we got home that evening, Susan noted how she connected with the students today by saying to me, “The students are so connected to the whole world and so interested in the world pop culture and world news—unlike U.S. students—they even told me they are working on making me a list of global music videos to look up online”. This is an interesting observation Susan made, as international students usually are more globally minded and I was glad she got close enough to some students to notice this. One student even asked me, “Where are you originally from in Europe?” My first thought was, I highly doubt a U.S. student would ever ask me that.

Not only did the first day of teaching at the middle/high school bring about some good beginnings of relationship building, but the first day at the pre-school, Maleku did as well—even with very young students with limited language capabilities, as Luke and Ava note in their

journals:

I really bonded today with a student by the name of Raphael, who gravitated towards me during the various activities (particularly outdoor free time). On the other hand, the other big personality in the Kindergarten classroom, Matias, befriended Fred. The way this dichotomy played out was humorous because each child would gather “their” team together and request that Fred was on one team (Matias’ team) and I would be on the other (Raphael’s team). (Luke)

Leave it to me to make friend with the most ornery girl in the class! There were so many hugs given and laughs to be had. I look forward to actually teach tomorrow and spend more time with the students! (Ava)

4.2.6 Journey: Day five, May 19, 2015

Luke explained it best in his journal entry today what happened to us at the middle/high school:

For the students [program participants] observing the high school, plans had to be changed because the school went on strike. I learned that this happens about three times a year to protest inadequate pay (which, at about \$22,000 per year in Costa Rica, makes more sense than when teachers strike in the United States with their reasonable salaries and great healthcare options). As a result of the strike, the students originally scheduled to visit the high school had the opportunity to come and work/observe at Maleku.

Today we all descended upon Maleku. As I noted earlier it is a very exclusive pre-school in Cartago and costs families \$300 USD per month per child.³ This school is very brightly lit with natural sunshine through its many windows and brightly colored paint on the walls, newly built, and well designed in interior and in curriculum. It houses students aged 0-6. Teacher Sandra's kindergarten class was the first class I observed. Seven students were in this class and all dancing and singing in Spanish with their peers. Susan noted to me that she was happy to see this, as in schools in the US, teachers have done this "to help the students learn to move to a beat, learn rhythm and move as they see fit—as well as learn fine and gross motor skills." I was happy that Susan was connecting her music major to what she was observing at Maleku. Sandra then sat them down cross-legged in a circle and began a lesson about plants. She passed around some dirt from a real plant sitting in front of her. Each student got to hold a handful of dirt. Luke even jumped in and said (this was after he was dancing with them, while Susan, Riley and Fred stood off on the sidelines) to the student that, "dirt in English is 'dirt.'" The student then mimicked his word. The teacher did not need to prompt him to help the students say, "en ingles, 'tierra' es 'dirt.'"

Next, the teacher passed around a plant with the roots exposed and said the word for roots over and over in Spanish while they passed roots around. This time, Luke stayed quiet, but he stayed in the circle with the students and engaged them while the others (Susan, Fred, and Riley) continued to chat in a corner. Next, Sandra had them sit at their assigned seats and had one "star kid" (star on a hat) pass out empty eggshell containers to each child. Fred sat down first next to a child and began chatting with him. Susan then sat down and began chatting with three children explaining that she only speaks a bit of Spanish. The young boy first spoke to said the English

³ Currently, in 2018, the average gross national income for a Costa Rican is \$6,810 (compared to the \$47,390 of the U.S.). <https://www.costarica.com/relocation/cost-of-living>

word for “duck” and that started an entire conversation between Susan and this 6-year-old boy where he was teaching her Spanish and she was teaching him English as he worked on his “egg plant.” Susan also pointed to different parts of her face and asked him to tell her what each is in Spanish and in English. Ultimately, it is her genuineness, which has won the students over to her. Luke is also doing well, as he physically gets close to the students by sitting next to them or doing the dance earlier with them.

Genuineness and close physical contact to the students helped Susan and Luke to build these relationships. However, physical modeling also helped them. While the students were watering their “plants” (dirt = cotton; planter = egg shell), they were each given a dropper to suck up water from a community cup of water given to each group at each table. One student was having difficulty getting the dropper to work. Susan then modeled the actions for him. Susan then realized that physical modeling crosses language barriers.

While I walked around Maleku more, I came across another room where Melissa was playing with a little boy who was sitting in her lap, who hardly spoke any English, and she lamented to me that “He’s my little buddy, but I wish I could communicate with him better.” The program participants had a positive experience, overall, at the Pre-K school albeit while trying to communicate with very young children with limited English skills:

School was fantastic today! The kids all opened up so much and began to speak more to us in both English and Spanish. Matteus is my best friend and he wouldn’t let me leave his side. (Fred)

The next class I went to was an ESL (English as a Second Language) class with five- and six-year olds. The teacher, Glory Masis, was phenomenal. A true natural. She taught via singing and using motions to correspond to each word she was singing. The students would then

mimic her. All three program participants in this room (Fred, Luke, and Riley) were actively involved/engaged. One of the songs they sang together was “5 Little Monkeys.” Luke put 5 monkey finger puppets on one hand and an alligator puppet on the other hand to eat them. One part of this song they sang, Luke was given a gallon jug dressed up as a monkey with a “mouth slot” for bananas. The students had bananas, and Luke collected them in the jug while verbally counting aloud in English with them while motioning the number with his hand. He also showed a very relaxed nature with the kids and had a great rapport built with them. Luke notes in his journal his thoughts on this experience:

Today was even more exciting than yesterday because I had the experience of actually teaching lessons to the children. In the English Classroom, I was able to do a math lesson with the Kindergarteners by teaching them the “Five Little Ducks” song with hand motions, as well as using a hand-puppet monkey to count and eat the laminated bananas the children would “feed.” I would rate these moments of instruction as successes, since the children enjoyed our efforts.

4.2.7 Journey: Day six, May 20, 2015

Today Samantha, Luke, and I experienced Ricardo’s English class. He teaches English to 12th graders. Ricardo placed the entire class into two groups. One group being led by Luke and one group led by Samantha. Ricardo asked Samantha and Luke to each show a photo of their families. He then asked the students, “What do you see beyond what is evident in this photo?” Samantha and Luke both began the group discussion by describing basic facts about the photo to the students and asked them to tell them what they saw first, what else they see, and prompted them to ask questions about the photo. Luke notes in his journal about what he took away from

this particular classroom experience:

Getting to teach at the high school today was an experience that I will cherish and look back at for a long time. I was first placed in Ricardo's classroom, and had the opportunity to interact with students in the 7th grade. Most of the time, my job was to interact with his students in small groups and engage them in English about a particular subject. I was able to use a picture of my family in the classroom. The students would ask questions about people in the picture, where it was taken, and what my family was like. It was a fantastic experience to bridge our cultures in a way that was so personal for me, and to see their excited faces when I told them something about myself or my family, which they could relate to. Perhaps even more impressive than that was the students' appetite for learning. I have never experienced in my entire life a group of students so eager to learn—and so respectful of authority.

After lunch, I observed Luke leading a conversation role-play activity about mixing up dates in Jennifer's English class with a group of 14 students. As the students were in pairs Jennifer said to me,

I wish Luke could stay year-round, as the students are mimicking his American accent. I've never heard their pronunciation and accent this good. They usually just mimic me as a Spanish-English teacher, or just give up altogether trying to work on their pronunciation.

Jennifer then noted with a huge smile on her face to me, "Look what happens when one becomes flexible!" She was referring to herself having absolutely no idea she would have a U.S. pre-service teacher in her classroom this week—even though she, too, was busy with preparing

final grades. She has been very accommodating and flexible during our trip—and the program participants themselves have noted this to me.

Due to what I observed while watching Luke teach (his use of students' funds of knowledge, his inclusivity of students in classroom activities) it led me to urge him to think about getting his K-12 ESL certification. When I brought this idea up to him today he said, "I would like to do that, but I don't know any other languages, and don't those teachers need to travel abroad first?" I was shocked at what a misunderstanding he had of what constitutes an ESL teacher—especially since he is the head of the Education Student Group at Seton Hill.

4.2.8 Journey: Day seven, May 21, 2015

This was the last day of teaching. For some of the program participants, these past few days helped them increase their confidence in their teaching skills as well as helped them to realize that teaching *is* for them (as a few were on the fence about the teaching profession in general prior to the trip). The program participants reflected on their final and favorite teaching moments from the past four days:

I truly cannot believe that it was my last day with the teachers and the students. This beautiful experience has done wonders for my self-confidence in teaching. In all honesty, I have had many thoughts that perhaps teaching wasn't the right field for me. I have been afraid that I would not be an effective teacher and students may even get bored with me and my teaching style. After seeing the children laugh and smile everyday when I have stood in front of them to teach the about apples, colors, animal sounds, and numbers, I feel so much better about going into my student teaching this Fall and I know that this is the right field for me. Teaching is what I was meant to do in life and I really

can't picture myself doing anything else. (Ava)

I think one of my favorite teaching moments at the high school was when a student asked me what I thought of about one of the lines [from the Bryan Adams song we were reviewing today, “Have You Ever Loved a Woman”] that went “then when you find yourself lyin’ helpless in her arms,” and I tried to explain that line in my own words. I don’t think I’ve ever openly talked about love with someone who was a complete stranger to me, but that’s what this student just did for me—and it was freeing emotionally. (Luke)

Later that night, we had a final gathering of all of the teachers from Maleku, all of the program participants, the faculty members, their spouses, and me at Luke and Fred’s host family’s cousin’s house—which was one of the biggest mansions I think all of us have ever seen in our lives. Luke and Fred summed up the evening the best by noting:

I was expecting Costa Rica to look like a third-world country. My view of the socioeconomic condition of Costa Rica might be skewed by my host family’s exceptional living conditions. At the party tonight, not only did we get to enjoy authentic Costa Rican food, but we also had a surprise visit from some traditionally costumed dancers [who were around 12 ft. in height] and a Mariachi Band. It was great fun with great friends and great food—an awesome way to close out our homestays with our host families in Cartago. (Luke)

The party was incredibly fun. I loved how everyone was having so much fun and just enjoyed themselves and danced. Dancing is something you don’t really see in our culture. The only time my family ever dances is at weddings, and it’s never like this.

The sense of family among the actual family and then friends is so incredibly present and close. (Fred)

This trip enhanced and expanded the students' view of family and closeness between people in another culture, not only through the party gathering, but also through their stay with their host families as they note in their journal:

I think it's so very sweet that Karla [part-owner of Maleku] and her family are so close. It makes me wish that my family was as close as hers. How amazing is it that everyone in the household is considered to these people as "family," whether they were related or not. Every evening before I went to bed, Martina would tell me, "my home is your home and you are welcome back at anytime." I've only known [this household for a short time], but it is safe to say that I consider them as my own family. (Ava)

Our host father said, "My family is your family. My home is your home. Any time you are in Costa Rica this is your home". He jokes saying he is our Costa Rican papa. This family has become like a second one to me and I hate to think of leaving them. (Fred)

This trip opened my eyes to a new culture—a people that know how to celebrate and to love each other so authentically that it brought me and my colleagues to tears. THAT is what I didn't expect. (Luke)

4.2.9 Journey: Day eight, May 22, 2015

This was the last day of our journey with our host families. Today we all had to say goodbye to the schools, the children in our classrooms and to our host families. We all met at the high school in the morning where all of our host families dropped us off in the parking lot to board

our tourist shuttle bus again. There were a great deal of tears being shed as the program participants had to hug their host families goodbye. Tears were being shed both by the program participants as well as by the host families themselves. Then, right as we were about to board the shuttle bus, about 100 high school students descended upon the parking lot out of nowhere to hug all of us goodbye. As the bus pulled away I am not sure who was crying more, the host families left in the lot, the Costa Rican students or the program participants themselves. They surely received more from this experience than what they were initially expecting:

I originally thought that, upon embarking on this trip, I would be experiencing mostly differences from what I was used in the States. After this experience, I have come to see that this journey abroad was not really about the differences so much, but more about what connects our cultures and our values so intrinsically. The differences between our cultures really were at the surface-level. The stuff that really matters unites us, like respect, integrity, sharing, and loving. I know this all might sound very cheesy, but it reinforces the ideals of global citizenship for me in a personal way I never would have felt without having gone on such a trip. (Luke)

Today was a lot of traveling, but very enjoyable despite the bouts of sickness going around the shuttle bus. The scenery outside was unmatched—from the majestic mountainsides, to the deep jungles and absolutely stunning water falls. Because of a closed road, we were able to take a more scenic route to the rainforest, and we exited the bus and got close up to one such waterfall.

Once we arrived at the rainforest resort, we were all excited to see what adventure lay ahead of us. We were first whisked off on a tour in the rainforest of cacao bean production. On this tour, we went to a pavilion where we sat in wooden bleachers and witnessed Costa Ricans

taking beans and making them into chocolate we first ate as milk chocolate and then drank as hot chocolate. We even got to volunteer in the production process ourselves, all the while watching a variety of animals scurry around us.

We then checked into our hotel rooms at the rainforest resort in Sarapiquí. Everyone welcomed the air-conditioned rooms, as the rainforest was much more warm and humid than the more chilly weather we experienced while at the schools. We suited up in our hiking gear in our rooms then met back in the lobby to take a walking tour of the rainforest surrounding the resort. It was not at all what I thought it would be like. It was a mainly paved path, sometimes gravel. I had hiking boots on (that I bought especially for this trip) when I could have worn sneakers. We crossed a lot of lengthy wooden suspension bridges along our hike. We even came across our first sloth! Slowly but surely it made its way up a tree as we all stood there with our mouths hanging open, totally captivated by this amazing creature which we had never seen before. The program participants enjoyed their trip through the rainforest as Luke noted, “The rain forest is just like the exhibit in [Phipps] Conservatory—and really, so much more impressive than I even imagined.”

After our hike completed, we all hung out in the resort gift shop for a few minutes. What struck me as odd (as someone who went on her first study abroad trip in 2000) was watching the program participants call their family on their iPhones, place them on FaceTime, and show them everything in the gift shop and ask them what they wanted. Most of the program participants spoke to their family every day on their iPhones via FaceTime while there. A few months after we returned to Pittsburgh, I noted to Fred that when I first went abroad on Semester at Sea for three months, I was only able to speak to my Mom for a few minutes at each port city we landed in every week or two—after I found a place to buy a phone card and a phone booth in which to

use it. Fred understood what I had noted and sadly said to me in return,

Yeah, I have been thinking lately...I would have gotten SO much more out of that trip had I not been on the phone all the time with my family, or on Facebook or Instagram. I truly thought I was going to be cut off more from the world, and I was looking forward to it.

Fred even notes his hopes for this in his journal before he departed on the trip:

The next ten days are for me to open myself up to new experiences and cultures and to get away from everything I hold so routine and comfortable to me. I'm going to learn and try new things and not be held down with people or thoughts from home. For once I will be without my family and friends having such a strong influence on me and I am so excited to experience that.

4.2.10 Journey: Day nine, May 23, 2015

Today I did something I have never done. I woke up super early as an option. We were given the option yesterday to meet in the resort lobby at 5 AM to be taken on a bird-watching tour of the rainforest. As I am an avid bird watcher (mainly of all the interesting birds in my backyard in Pittsburgh), I was very much drawn to attend. I left my room early. Susan was still asleep. I made my way to the lobby to find only Dr. Hall, her husband and one other program participant. We started out on the tour, and did not see many birds at all—as it was beginning to rain. Our tour guide gave us all ponchos and umbrellas to continue on with the tour. However, the further we got on the tour, the less birds there were to see. I was sadly disappointed, but happy that I took a chance and attended.

Afterwards we ate a buffet style outdoor breakfast of rice, beans, fruit and sausages then

boarded the shuttle bus to head to our long-awaited day of zip-lining through the rainforest. I was very apprehensive of doing this before I left the U.S. My mom reminded me that I am young but once in life and that I will regret it forever if I do not try it. Here again, I decided to take all the options of fun offered to us. Our shuttle bus stopped at a zip-lining resort. The program participants, faculty and I approached two zip lines on a very old and very worn down platform which went over an empty field of mainly hay in what seemed to be an old farm turned into a “zip-lining resort.” The program participants took one look at the facility and how worn down it appeared and immediately came to consensus that they were not going to go on this “ride.” We then boarded the bus again. The faculty were feverishly looking up on their iPhones where the next place to go may be located—and if there were even another one located near us. By this point, the program participants on the bus were starting to get very upset as they were told they would get to zip-line through the rainforest and now it appeared that we may miss this opportunity altogether—due to a lack of planning ahead of time.

The faculty ultimately found another place nearby. This one appeared to be a very actively used, updated, safe, legitimate zip-lining resort—and not just an add-on to an outdated farm. We wound up going on twelve zip lines in total! Each zip-line got progressively higher off the ground and longer in length. Fred and I both got more and more scared as we kept zipping from tree to tree through the dense rainforest. The last one we went on the zip-line tour guide turned to us on the platform and announced, “This next one is your last line and is 1.2 miles long...” I did not hear anything after that, as I became stone-cold terrified, but there is no other option but to cross using the zip-line. I closed my eyes for the first minute or so going across. I just felt the wind, rain, and mist go through my face and hair. It was so exhilarating! For most of the lines, I looked around and squealed in joy, mainly the words “pura vida”! Twice

I got stuck in the middle of the zip line. The first time I got stuck, I started screaming in English for help. When no one came to help, I then started screaming in Spanish and a guy eventually threw me a rope so I could pull myself to the next tree. In the end, I was relieved it was over but sad at the same time.

After a quick stop at the zip-lining resort's gift shop, we were on the road again back to San Jose for our final evening in Costa Rica at a Marriott Hotel near the airport. As we entered San Jose, the poverty, the density of people, the amount of garbage sliding down hillsides and the usual open sewers everywhere...the poverty hit me all of a sudden like a ton of bricks. Soon we would be in our hotel room and getting ready to go hit the town for dinner and ice cream before resting up for our long flight the next day.

4.2.11 Journey: Day ten, May 24, 2015

I did not take any field notes about the last day—and neither did the students in their journals. I truly believe we were all beyond the point of exhaustion that day. We all flew home together from San Jose to Pittsburgh, extraordinarily grateful for our time spent in Costa Rica. As soon as we landed and the students greeted their families in the Pittsburgh International Airport there was a buzz of initial excitement as they began quickly chatting away to their parents about their new Costa Rican families and friends they had made. Dr. Hall could see that everyone was excited to share their stories but was also starting to feel a bit down about leaving one another, especially after such an extraordinary experience. She announced to our group that she would be emailing all of us in about a month to invite us to her home for a reunion dinner to informally share some of our stories with each other from the trip. That brightened up the program participants a bit as they ended their journey from Costa Rica. They left the airport to begin their next journey

toward finishing their degrees from Seton Hill and ultimately gaining employment in local school districts where they would be able to use their newly gained relationship building skills with local students.

5.0 FINDINGS

I began this study to gain insight into international field experiences as a tool to give pre-service teachers opportunities to engage in relationship building with culturally and linguistically diverse students. I wanted to observe their actions toward and activities with these students in a Costa Rican classroom, as well as survey their feelings and beliefs toward serving a diverse population of students before the trip and after. I was observing their actions in the classroom—and outside of the classroom with Costa Ricans in general—through the lens of cultural responsiveness. I wanted to observe opportunities of relationship building presented to them during the trip—and note if and how they capitalized on these opportunities.

Gay (2010) notes that, when studying cultural responsiveness, it is helpful to research *both* feelings and beliefs as well as actions, activities, and knowledge. Therefore, the first research question of the study orients the reader to the context of the study, while the next three research questions are about attitudes, beliefs, actions, and activities:

1. What is the nature of the pre-service teachers' interactions with Costa Rica, Costa Ricans, their cooperating teachers in Costa Rica, their peers, and their host family?
2. What are pre-service teachers' personal attitudes and beliefs about serving culturally and linguistically diverse students prior to an international field experience and after?

3. What actions/activities do pre-service teachers participate in to build their confidence and willingness to serve culturally and linguistically diverse learners during an international field experience?
4. How do pre-service teachers build relationships with students who are culturally and linguistically different from themselves during an international field experience?

Four main findings organize this chapter. The four findings, which emerged from the analysis process, provide evidence of understandings constructed through my own field notes throughout the trip as well as the pre- and post- survey results completed by six program participants. Within each of these four sections is an explanation of each finding. Each finding consists of multiple categories and data samples shared are exemplars of data comprising each finding.

5.1 FINDING ONE

Program participants did not capitalize on opportunities to initiate relationships with Costa Rican students outside of the classroom nor with the general Costa Rican population.

International field experiences provide unique opportunities to build relationships with those culturally and linguistically different from the pre-service teachers both inside and outside of the classroom. Program participants in an international field experience have many opportunities to become immersed in not only the school and school culture, but the community members and community culture as well. As finding four notes, the program participants were able to push themselves out of their comfort zone in order to build confidence in serving and building relationships with those culturally and linguistically different from them inside the

classroom setting. However, when it came time to push themselves out of their comfort zone and initiate relationship building *outside* of the classroom setting they did not do so.

A language barrier was the number one challenge all program participants expected to have while on this trip, according to their pre-survey results. All of the participants noted in the post-survey that they did not feel “uncomfortable” around Costa Ricans (due to their lack of Spanish/ability to communicate) but that they felt *challenged* due to the language barrier, as Fred notes in his post-survey:

I felt surprisingly comfortable [with Costa Ricans]. You can still communicate without language, and I feel this was done often on the trip. It was definitely challenging, but not necessarily uncomfortable.

On their post-survey results, all of the participants noted that they did, in fact, speak to Costa Ricans in the community-at-large while on this trip. When asked on the post-survey to self-report what level of frequency they spoke with Costa Ricans in the community (1 = not at all and 5 = very frequently) they self-reported an average of 3.4. However, Samantha self-reported a frequency of 2.5 and notes:

I was not confident by any means [to speak to Costa Ricans in the community]. When we went to eat with Ricardo and his family, he made me order without his help and I did fine. I think it’s all about pushing yourself past your comfort zone. I wish I would have spoken to more Costa Ricans.

The program participants’ self-reported response was quite different from what I witnessed in the field. The first vignette for this finding describes an experience that took place on the first weekend we were in Cartago. That weekend we went to Ricardo’s non-denominational church. At the end of the church service, everyone began milling about the

room. I met a woman named Florey. She is Costa Rican and lived in Canada for nine years then moved back to Costa Rica. When I asked her what made her move away to Canada in the first place, she paused and noted, “God had a plan for me.” Florey appeared happy to be back in Costa Rica and at this church. As I excitedly continued to talk with her, most of the program participants began shying away. They did not seem interested in wanting to talk to her—or anyone else for that matter. They kept collecting themselves in groups inside or outside of the church.

Near the end of my talk with Florey, I asked her if we could take a photo together outside of the church. She and I went outside and asked the pastor to join us in our photo. When I asked one of the program participants to take the photo, they were even reluctant to leave their group in the corner of the outdoor patio to take a photo of us. The program participants seem fearful of the unknown, of the “other.”

Susan told me later this same night that a band member initiated conversation with her at the end of church and she lit up as she described to me her interaction with him. She excitedly told me how he is a mechanical engineer who decided to teach computer technology in schools. She told me that Ava and Samantha just stood there frozen as she was speaking to him, as (according to Susan) they did not know what to say to him.

This pattern of not initiating conversation with Costa Ricans outside of a formal classroom setting—and congregating in their own groups—continued throughout the 10 days. I would argue that this was somewhat due to language barrier but also due to the group model of this international field program—and the lack of needing to be self-reliant in the Costa Rican community. The program participants never needed to do any of the following activities alone (as I did when I lived and worked as an ESL teacher in Poland, and therefore was forced to speak

to Polish people outside of the classroom): seek out their own food, shop for their own food, find and use transportation, find housing, and find and secure employment. Due to this lack of need to be self-sufficient in Costa Rica, and being sheltered from having to seek out daily needs, they did not interact much with Costa Ricans—as they did not need to in order to survive.

The second vignette is set at the middle/high school. At lunchtime on our first day at the school Samantha, Susan, Riley, and I all sat down outside at a round table with benches around it. Two Costa Rican high school senior girls were sitting there already. I was very excited to interact with them as I am always looking for an opportunity to make new friends—especially those who are different from me. It was very difficult for me to reign in my internally building excitement to want to capture this unique opportunity to have time to chat informally and get to know these two Costa Rican students. However, I did not want to be the first one to initiate conversation. I wanted to allow the program participants the opportunity to initiate and engage in natural, informal conversation and relationship building with these girls—on their own. Therefore, I begrudgingly held back my natural instinct to begin conversing with them. I remembered that I was there to allow others the opportunity to build relationships with Costa Rican students. I stepped back into the researcher role to observe how confident, capable, and comfortable the program participants were with casual conversation and rapport building with Costa Rican students outside of a classroom setting.

After sitting there for approximately five minutes while eating my lunch I looked around and noticed that while the two Costa Rican girls were on one side of our circle-shaped table chatting to each other in Spanish while eating, Susan was silently eating and Samantha and Riley were chatting to only each other. I began suspecting that none of the program participants had any plans on starting up a conversation with these two lovely girls. “WHAT an opportunity

wasted!” was what I was thinking. A bit annoyed by their lack of being able to push outside their comfort zone and initiate conversation, I decided to take the reins in my own hands. I began speaking to the two girls. Susan seemed to appreciate that I did this, as her entire face lit up as soon as I began engaging these two girls in conversation and she slowly dove in to a rich conversation with these two girls while I backed away a bit. Riley appeared to be bored and annoyed and said nothing. She totally resisted joining in on our conversation. Samantha joined in the conversation but only slightly here and there. This was nearly a totally lost opportunity for the program participants, which was an easy opportunity to take—as we were all sitting at the same small round table facing each other.

From these two vignettes set in the church and then at the lunch table, it can be illustrated that while the language barrier challenged the program participants and pushed them outside of their comfort zone, it did not push them outside their comfort zone enough to *initiate* conversation with Costa Ricans outside of the classroom. The concept of cultural responsiveness becomes important in practice as it may be used to describe action steps educators can take to engage in meaningful communication and relationship building (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994a; Sleeter, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

The program participants self-reported on the post-survey that they spoke to Costa Ricans outside of the classroom fairly frequently throughout this trip, however that was not what I observed while in the field. I would estimate that their self-reporting is different from what I witnessed in the field due to me not being with all of them in their host families’ homes. I did not experience how much they attempted to communicate with their host families—many of whom spoke no English. I also was not with them when their host families took them on outings around the town in the evenings. Therefore, they may have made attempts that I did not witness.

In addition, several participants expressed in their journal entries and on their post-surveys that they did make attempts at speaking with their host families and that it was difficult due to the language barrier, yet they were proud of themselves that they did attempt. However, during the cultural excursions they went on during the weekends when I was with them, I rarely saw them initiate conversation with the general Costa Rican population, nor did I observe much initiating of conversation between them and students at the school outside of the classroom.

This lack of initiating conversation—when there is not an immediate need to other than wanting pure casual conversation—could be due to the challenge of the language barrier, or to a fear of speaking to individuals they do not know well, or to not being forced to interact with any other Costa Ricans other than the host family. The host family provided them with all of their survival needs and therefore they had to communicate with them in some way. This may be why they reported that they did, in fact, speak to Costa Ricans outside of the classroom.

Even though the program participants initiated conversations and built relationships with students *inside* the classroom, they were not building relationships with the general Costa Rican population *outside* of the classroom. Being culturally responsive has the potential to alter students' beliefs about themselves and the ability to initiate a positive impact on diverse students in schools (Gay, 2010; Keel, 2014). Being a culturally responsive educator demands that educators be able to build a genuine relationship with students *both inside and outside* of the classroom.

5.2 FINDING TWO

Program participants became empathetic toward the students they were serving and this developed into their increased willingness to serve these students. Empathy and willingness combined to help build their disposition to become change agents and demonstrate for other educators AND ADMINISTRATORS how to care for, welcome, and serve culturally and linguistically diverse students

Marx and Moss (2011) note that studies of international field experiences for pre-service teachers have generally found that these programs provide opportunities for program participants to develop cultural awareness and empathy for diverse student populations. Post-survey results of my study illustrate how participating in this field experience in Costa Rica led to the program participants becoming empathetic and being able to put themselves in the shoes of a student new to the United States, when they were asked, “How do you think it feels for a culturally and linguistically diverse student when they first come to the U.S and begin schooling?”

Absolutely nerve-wracking, just similar as it was for me going into an unfamiliar high school knowing that many students only spoke Spanish. (Samantha)

Samantha demonstrates empathy toward students due to a language barrier, as she notes that like a student new to the U.S., it felt nerve-wracking to enter into her first day at a Costa Rican high school knowing only Spanish would be spoken. Susan notes below how she was similarly terrified, like Samantha, due to the language barrier. However, she also adds the aspect of culture to her description of why students may be terrified:

I think they are completely terrified because they are entering a culture they know little or nothing about and they are also going to be submerged in a language they may be unfamiliar with. When we first entered Costa Rica, listening to everyone speaking in

Spanish was so fascinating but I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to communicate with everyone like I wanted to. I now understand how students from foreign countries would feel if they moved to the U.S.—even with an interpreter. (Susan)

Susan describes how “even with an interpreter,” it would be terrifying entering a U.S. school as a new student—due to the lack of understanding of the culture. This is in addition to the element of a language barrier. This additional barrier of a cultural difference is yet another way program participants may experience empathy by participating in an international field experience. Luke, much like Samantha, addresses empathy through the pressures of a language barrier, in his quote below:

Another reason I feel more equipped in addressing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students here in the United States is due largely in part to the fact that I went through a similar experience through my time in Costa Rica, so I am able to relate at least minimally to the pressures they probably feel immersed in an English-speaking world. (Luke)

Two tenets of cultural responsiveness (Ladson-Billings, 1994a; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) have been used to frame this study and work together in providing evidence for finding two. International field experiences help to cultivate this disposition of “change agent” by providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop a personal understanding of oppression and empathy for students of diverse backgrounds as well as a willingness to serve these students as well as a host of other positive attitudes and beliefs toward what these students are capable of accomplishing. Luke demonstrates in his quote below how this international field experience has led not only to his willingness to serve this population but also how he has been socialized into

the change agent role, as he describes culturally and linguistically diverse students as positive resources for his classroom:

I feel so much more comfortable not only engaging students who are linguistically different from me, but who also come from a different cultural background. This experience has opened me up to serving the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students, not only for deserving an equally successful education, but because they also add an intrinsically unique element to the classroom that elevates the learning/teaching experience for everyone involved.

Willingness to teach culturally and linguistically diverse learners begins with teachers' expectations of them and attitudes toward them. Often when teachers have the opportunity to work with students from diverse cultural groups, they have lower academic expectations (Banks, 2006). Becoming empathetic toward culturally and linguistically diverse students, I would argue, helps to develop a willingness to serve them. If educators come to a diverse student with a deficit-oriented attitude, then they will be unable to build a relationship with the student and/or resist working in diverse classrooms altogether (Sleeter, 2008).

A willing, intentional teacher and a responsive student are the two main ingredients found in any successful classroom—no matter the setting of that classroom (Grisham-Brown & McCormick, 2013). In the pre-survey, one out of six participants noted that they expected the Costa Rican students to be less academically successful than U.S. students. Five out of six participants in the pre-survey noted that they expected the Costa Rican students to “be about the same” as their U.S. counterparts. However, in the post-survey, four out of six of the participants noted that the students they worked with in Costa Rica were far more advanced academically than those in the U.S. This revelation helped greatly to build their willingness to work with

diverse students.

Ultimately, this study found that this experience has developed their empathy and willingness as well as their intentions to teach this population of students. This study suggests that the development of the program participants' empathy may indicate a disposition toward becoming a change agent. This is an important finding to note as literature has shown that attitudes and practices of schools, communities, and society dramatically control the opportunities for success among diverse populations of students (Nieto, 1995). Attitudes and beliefs have also been shown to influence instructional judgments and actions (Knopp & Smith, 2005; Pajares, 1992; Smylie, 1995).

Developing a disposition toward becoming a change agent was suggested by participants as they noted a variety of ways they would like to coach other educators and administrators on how to be welcoming toward and willing to serve this population. On the post-survey the participants were asked, "What can teachers and administrators do to ease in a culturally and linguistically diverse learner into their school/the U.S. system of education?" Their responses suggest their willingness to serve this population of students and learn about their cultures, their empathy toward this population and their want to become change agents in schools where the willingness or skills may not yet be demonstrated to welcome and serve this population.

Samantha and Susan note the importance of a teacher or administrator being willing to learn about the background of a new incoming student from another country or culture:

Be willing to learn too (about the students' background and life). Just because you are higher up doesn't diminish your opportunity to learn. (Samantha)

Do research on incoming students. Mainly because you don't want to be unfamiliar with their cultures and offend them. (Susan)

Melissa and Susan highlight the importance of not only teachers and administrators welcoming culturally and linguistically diverse learners and how they may do so by offering specific examples—but also noting that teachers need to be sure their own peers are welcoming and understanding of diverse students entering their classroom:

Teachers and administrators can welcome the culture of the ELL student into the classroom, while introducing American culture at the same time. Music, food, dancing, etc. are all easy ways to introduce a new culture into the classroom, make the ELL student feel welcome, and get the other American students interested in a new culture. (Melissa)

I think teachers and administrators could hold a welcoming for the student to include some of their culture into the school or the classroom and provide a map of the school with pictures indicating where their classes are as well as a picture-based schedule. (Susan)

Making sure that the other students in the classroom welcome them and understand the culture of that student. (Melissa)

Luke goes one step further than Melissa, Susan, and Samantha. He does not discuss “welcoming” in general, but he outlines a specific system of support, which is a description of how teachers and administrators can lead the school culture into being more welcoming:

I think assigning a specific student who either has a background similar to the culturally/linguistically diverse students, or simply a student with the maturity and desire to learn more about their diverse peer, would create an excellent support system for the newcomer/ culturally/linguistically diverse child (much like our “pen pals” from Costa Rica). (Luke)

The quotes noted above demonstrate that through this international field experience, the program participants have a deeper understanding of how and why educators should learn about and welcome other cultures, while simultaneously helping the new student better understand their new school culture and American culture. The importance of developing more welcoming educators is noted in literature as it demonstrates that many mainstream teachers in the U.S. hold neutral or non-enthusiastic feelings about welcoming or serving culturally and linguistically diverse students in their classroom (Reeves, 2006; Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004; Youngs & Youngs, 1999; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). In general, when mainstream teachers are surveyed about their attitudes toward this population of students, they may respond, “Yes, diversity is good and yes, my school embraces diversity, but don’t you dare put that [culturally and linguistically diverse student] in MY classroom” (Gitlin, Buendía, Crosland, & Doumbia, 2003, p. 141). This phenomenon, the “welcoming-unwelcoming” of immigrant students (Gitlin et al., 2003), can lead to serious consequences for instructional practices and therefore academic success. This study’s finding on international field experiences leading to a development of empathy and willingness to serve this population of students—while also assisting in building their disposition toward becoming a change agent for their future U.S. schools’ culture—is significant for the academic success of future culturally and linguistically diverse students.

5.3 FINDING THREE

Program participants who were able to access students’ funds of knowledge were also able to engage students in learning and relationship building at various ages and at various English language levels.

International field experiences provide unique opportunities for pre-service teachers to gain experience in engaging culturally and linguistically diverse students in learning and relationship building—students with whom they do not share the same background and experiences. One of the most interesting parts of this research was for me to observe the program participants’ various attempts at relationship building with the students in Costa Rica. Some of the participants easily succeeded in engaging the students’ in conversation and learning and some did not. Throughout the entire trip, I kept asking myself in my field notes, “What is the secret sauce? Why are some more successful than others in their ability to engage the students’ in learning and relationship building?”

I realized long after the last field notes were taken that the reason one program participant may have succeeded more in relationship building than another was due to their ability to access the Costa Rican students’ funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992) in order to engage them in learning and knowledge construction in the classroom. One of Ladson-Billings’ (1994a) tenets includes funds of knowledge as a standard and provides the evidence with which to frame the data for Finding Three.

The first vignette for this finding describes two program participants, Samantha and Luke, working with twelve 7th grade students in Ricardo’s English class. It illustrates their varied levels of ability in accessing students’ funds of knowledge and the impact that has on being able to build a relationship with the student and successfully engage them in learning.

Ricardo began class by placing the entire class into two groups. One group Ricardo assigned to Luke to work with and one group was assigned to Samantha. Ricardo asked Samantha and Luke to each show one photo of their families to their group of students (they

were asked to bring these to the trip itself and to the class prior to this lesson). In Luke's pre-survey he notes:

To be honest, culturally and linguistically diverse students often make me uncomfortable because I feel like I am unable to connect with them. I really hope to learn how to build those bridges during the course of this trip.

This vignette will demonstrate how Samantha and Luke built (or failed to build) those bridges between themselves and the students. Ricardo begins the activity by asking the two groups of students, "What do you see beyond what is evident in this photo?"

I then began toggling between the two groups to observe what would happen next. Samantha and Luke both began their group discussions by describing basic facts about the photo to the students. They both asked the students to tell them what they saw first, what else did they see, and both of them prompted the students to ask them questions about the photo.

In Samantha's group, I heard her begin describing her photo by noting that her family is at a "Polish club" in Ford City, PA, where she is from. The students asked, "What is 'Polish'?"

Samantha showed her confusion to this question by her facial expression, but then quickly recovered and asked the students, "Do you know about Poland or where it is? Polish is the people."

Luke, on the other hand, had already begun expanding his conversation from just his photo of his family to asking the students, "What do you think is in the U.S. and how does it differ from Costa Rica?"

This made the students really excited. Their excitement grew as they were able to use the knowledge they already have about the U.S. and their own country, plus their English skills, to engage in conversation. This excitement was developed and led by Luke's ability to build on

students' funds of knowledge. He was able to connect school learning to the students' prior knowledge and experiences (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994b). This led to the students becoming very excited as they confidently began to explain their answers to Luke by describing examples of how their high school alone differs greatly from even other high schools in Costa Rica due to the artwork being done by the students (let alone high schools in the U.S.). The students became even more engaged with Luke as they proudly began showing off their artwork to Luke that is already showcased in Ricardo's classroom. They showed him and described to him in detail murals on the classroom walls, painted desks and leatherwork that they completed. Each and every student had the opportunity to engage in conversation with Luke. Luke took this opportunity to catapult the conversation and engagement level even further about their excitement for artwork as he then asked them, "What are you making right now?"

They all jumped up from their desks excitedly and began to show off their individual art portfolios to him and describe their art plans for the future. Luke's group was now becoming even louder as everyone was chiming in again—and this time at an even higher level of excitement. The students in Luke's group are much more excited to learn than Samantha's group as Ladson-Billings (1994b) notes that teachers who know about their students' hobbies and favorite activities as well as what they excel at can systematically tie the children's interests, concerns, and strengths into their teaching, thereby enhancing their motivation to learn.

This was not the case with Samantha's group. Samantha's group at the same time was much quieter. She had shown various photos of her family and her own life to the students, but she was not able to engage them in conversation. They sat in her circle, mainly quiet with long faces. At this point, I was not sure if the issue was the students assigned to Samantha were simply a more quiet group with less English language skills or if it was something with

Samantha herself—as she was allowing opportunities for them to speak, as was Luke. I observed her speaking a lot at them (mainly about her own life and her own experiences) and not with them, unlike Luke who is engaging with them in conversation via providing follow-up prompting questions about their life and past experiences. He is learning about elements of his students’ culture by developing personal relationships with them while building on their funds of knowledge. He is doing what Sleeter (2012) notes that every teacher should do and that is to “bring to the classroom an awareness of diverse cultural possibilities that might relate to their students, but then get to know the students themselves” (p. 571).

Ricardo then prompted each group of students to tell Samantha and Luke about their favorite singer, country, etc. from a chart shown in their textbook, which prompts them to discuss certain items, which are their favorite. At this point, I immediately assume this will help Samantha and her seemingly shy students to open up to her. I go into this activity assuming that even shy students will have the opportunity to speak during an activity such as this where the teacher must prompt each student to give their own individual answer.

In Luke’s group, after each student speaks, he responds with follow-up questions and his own comments about their particular favorite. You can tell he is deliberately doing this in order to further the conversation and maintain the level of engagement and excitement. It did keep all of the students in his group engaged as well as attentive to be ready to speak. Luke led this activity by calling on each student, one by one, to speak. However, in Samantha’s group for this same activity, I observed her allowing the group decide who wants to speak up first, then a student would speak briefly and then the other students would not volunteer so quickly to speak next. At that point, when the volunteering to speak died down, Samantha then opened up the group to asking her questions about the activity itself. Here again, at this juncture, I was still not

sure if the students were just shy or not comfortable with Samantha and her teaching methods. Samantha never asked the students any follow-up questions after each student, eventually, described to her their favorite item. Therefore, she never gave the students additional opportunities to engage them in further conversation using knowledge they already have. At the end of my entire observational period in this classroom, I realized that the few follow-up questions she did ask the students only necessitated a yes or no answer from them or answer or a who/what answer. I then realize, in order for her to engage the students, she will need to ask them more how/why questions as well as gear the conversation toward what they already know and are excited about.

Ricardo now switches the lesson to talk about descriptive adjectives. The students all read an article with descriptive adjectives in bold in a story about Cappadocia. Various students take turns reading aloud for the entire class. Ricardo then directs the students to “use descriptive adjectives to describe two to three of the most amazing places you have been to.” Ricardo then kept the two groups of students in their original two groups—but then switched Samantha and Luke—upon my request. Now Luke is with Samantha’s quiet, long in the face group and Samantha is with Luke’s loud and engaged group.

It becomes apparent quite quickly that Luke is gifted at adding appropriately to the students’ answers—so as to get them to talk more, but not overpowering them. He allows space and opportunity for ongoing and comfortable dialogue. Samantha’s former students are now very engaged with Luke. All of them have their eyes on Luke (they are no longer looking at the floor or looking away from the program participant) and are excited to take part in the conversation. Luke keeps the conversation relaxed and naturally flowing. When the students get quiet, he prompts them with, “Tell me more about Cartago.”

Of course the students all began speaking excitedly and became even more engaged with Luke. These were the same students, who minutes ago, were barely speaking. This vignette shows the importance of the program participants' learning how to help learners connect what they already know and believe about the topic at hand with the new ideas and experiences to which they are exposed. Villegas and Lucas (2002) view this outcome as occurring through: involving and engaging students in questioning, interpreting, and analyzing information in the context of problems or issues that are interesting and meaningful to them.

There are several main differences between Samantha and Luke's approach to this activity. A major one observed is that Samantha talks a lot about herself, where she is from, what she knows, what her life experiences are, etc. She has difficulty connecting her own experiences back to the students and allowing them an opportunity to talk about their own experiences in relation to hers as well as to add to the conversation and expand it themselves. Luke also talks about himself and his own experiences, but then allows the students to ask questions about it, to add-on, and then build their own stories about the same topic—using his own stories as the foundation of a conversation between him and all the students, as he included everyone. Grisham-Brown and McCormick (2013) note that, "Good teachers use materials that are there" (p. 9). Luke notes his own thoughts on how he felt he reached his goal of wanting to be able to engage the students in learning and build bridges between him and the students in his post-survey:

I feel confident in my ability to approach the class with differentiated instruction, using several different learning styles to ensure full participation and inclusion. Although my time was limited, I feel that I established "rapport" with students by being authentic and communicating in English as clearly as I could. I think it also helps that I constantly

smile while I talk, which was typically receptive to most as a welcoming gesture to join in dialogue.

Luke succeeded more than Samantha in this vignette in engaging the students in learning by making learning meaningful and relevant to them. He engaged them by continuing to ask them about their own lived experiences as a way to build bridges between their funds of knowledge and the curriculum. This vignette demonstrates that when the program participants' focus on using the students' own knowledge, funds of knowledge were being accessed. The program participants who were able to access students' funds of knowledge throughout the time I observed them teach in the classroom were the most successful at engaging with the students and building relationships with them—even though the program participants themselves did not realize this is the pedagogical tool they were using in order to successfully engage the students. This vignette illustrates that by being able to access students' funds of knowledge, Luke was successfully and comfortably able to engage the students in constructing a rich dialogue in a language that is not native to them. This is important to note, as several small-scale studies connect cultural responsiveness with student engagement, suggesting that academic learning follows engagement (e.g., Copenhaver, 2001; Hill, 2009; Nykiel-Herbert, 2010; Rodriguez et al., 2004; Thomas & Williams, 2008). Therefore, in order for culturally and linguistically diverse students to be able to succeed academically, teachers must first be able to engage genuinely with them.

The second vignette describes another opportunity Samantha had to allow the students to build new knowledge by accessing their own funds of knowledge. Samantha was given the opportunity to lead an English class on her own as the teacher, Samantha, wanted to sit right outside of the classroom and give students their final grades, one on one. Samantha was very

nervous about teaching an English class on her own, but she really wanted to have some more science-based teaching experiences while in Costa Rica, so she agreed to lead a class debate on private vs. public healthcare systems in this class. Before teaching this class, she met with teacher Samantha for only a few minutes. She was scared to lead this debate and voiced her concern to Samantha and me in no uncertain terms. She noted to us that she has no background knowledge or experience with public vs. private healthcare systems in developing nations. However, she told both of us she was willing to try. Before she entered the classroom, her anxiety heightened as she said to me, “I have NO idea what public vs. private even means . . . is our own system in the U.S. public or private? Can I Google this before I get into the classroom?”

I kept trying to keep her calm by telling her that it is way less important to know the content, as the students will bring that to the table, but that she must figure out how to facilitate a rich and engaging debate and allow for a debate to occur. I kept reminding her that the students will bring the content. I told her that she needs to keep in mind how to get them to talk more/get them to engage more with her and each other. I suggested that she not start the debate with questions starting with, “who/what/when” but with “how/why.”

Villegas and Lucas (2002) note that, “teachers need to continuously adjust their plans of action to meet students’ needs while simultaneously building on their strengths” (p. 25). She apparently listened to my advice, as the following occurred, and led to a much different outcome than the discussion she led in Ricardo’s earlier class. Samantha began the debate by asking questions to each of the debate teams that began with words such as “Can you tell me why is that . . .?” and “Help me to better understand . . .”

Even though she may have listened to my suggestions, she still sometimes cut the students off mid-thought or mid-sentence. However, she did keep them engaged almost the

entire time with some follow-up questions about their own life experiences with the Costa Rican health care system, which led to her being able to access the students' funds of knowledge and thereby made learning exciting and meaningful for the students:

- Now, you told me you have health insurance, how does that work?
- Now are the clinics you are talking about part of the private or public system?
- Explain the process to me of what happens if you get sick . . . walk me through the steps.
- So, say I am sick in CR, what do I do next?

Samantha learned a valuable lesson from both of these particular experiences (i.e., Ricardo and Samantha's classes) in tapping into what students' already know. As her post-survey quote below illustrates, when she shifts her pedagogical approach, and begins accessing the students' funds of knowledge, she is able to succeed in the classroom:

Every student has a different story regardless of their location or background. We learn from them [culturally and linguistically diverse students] just as much, if not more than what they learn from us. Be willing to go above and beyond, learn the different language, find different cultural experiences to tie into their lives, etc. I have learned that YOU must show interest in order for your students to show interest. If they see you care, they too will care.

The third vignette describes the program participants working with very young students' with limited English abilities and opportunities they had to access these students' funds of knowledge in order to engage them in learning and relationship building. Knowing how to communicate with students who are developing a mastery of the English language (Brown, 2003; Curran, 2003; Jolly, Hampton, & Guzman, 1999; Moll, 1999; Schuhmann, 1992; Shade et al.,

1997) is another way to build a relationship with students as you are building on what they already know—language-wise.

At Maleku, an exclusively private English immersion pre-school/daycare, program participants had the opportunity to engage very young English language learners in new knowledge construction by accessing their funds of knowledge through allowing students to use their own language, engage in hands-on activities, and involve them in a variety of movement during instruction. Maleku is a very brightly colored, full of natural sunlight, newly built, and well designed in layout as well as in curriculum. Teacher Sandra was the lead instructor in the first Kindergarten class I observed. Seven kindergarten students were in this class. They were all dancing and singing in Spanish with their peers as I entered the room. Susan noted that she was happy to see this, as she observes:

Teachers have done this in schools in the U.S. to help the students learn to move to a beat, learn rhythm, and move as they see fit—as well as learn fine and gross motor skills.

Sandra then sat them down cross-legged in a circle with the children sitting around her and began a lesson about plants. She passed around some dirt from a real plant sitting in front of her. Each student got to hold a handful of dirt. In the room at this time were Susan, Luke, Riley, and Fred. At the point I entered the room, all of them were standing in a corner chatting to each other with the exception of Luke—he was dancing with the students. At this point, however, Luke jumps right in and says to the student sitting next to him while pointing to the dirt, “‘Dirt’ in English is ‘dirt.’”

The student then mimicked his word. The teacher did not need to prompt him to help the students say, “en ingles, ‘tierra’ es ‘dirt’” (as she went on to do for the next part of the lesson. Luke was one step ahead of her, only he was pointing to the physical item of dirt instead of using

the Spanish word). Allowing the students' to use their home languages whenever possible, whether that language is native to the teachers' cultural heritage or not is a part of helping the student to build new knowledge by accessing their funds of knowledge. In addition, this can assist teachers in supporting language acquisition and enhance English Language Learners' comprehension of classroom tasks as it was in this classroom in Maleku (Au & Kawakami, 1994; Curran, 2003; Jolly et al., 1998; Moll, 1999; Schuhmann, 1992; Shade et al., 1997).

Next, the teacher passed around a plant with the roots exposed and said the word for roots over and over in Spanish while they passed roots around. This time, Luke stayed quiet, but he stayed in the circle with the students while Susan, Fred, and Riley continued to chat in a corner. Next, Sandra had them sit at their assigned seats and had one "star kid" (star on a hat) pass out empty eggshell containers to each child. Fred sat down first next to a child and began chatting with them. Susan then sat down next to a child and began chatting with three of them explaining to them that she only speaks a bit of Spanish.

Susan truly began to engage the students in painting eggshells, as they learn the process of planting. A young boy she began working with said the English word for "duck" and that started an entire conversation between Susan and this 6-year-old boy where he was teaching her Spanish and she was teaching him English as he worked on his "egg plant." Susan also pointed to different parts of her face and asked him to tell her what each is in Spanish and in English.

This is a way to further engage very young students with limited English skills—is to build their confidence in learning new English words by allowing them to use the English they *do* know. Without knowing it, Susan was using students' strengths as instructional starting points—one of Ladson-Billings' (1994a) standards in one of her tenets on cultural responsiveness. Accessing students' strengths as instructional starting points allows students to

have positive first encounters with subject matter before moving on to areas of greater challenge (Brenner, 1998; Brown, 2003; Powell, 1997; Sheets, 1995).

Both Susan and Luke, as well as other program participants, have learned how to genuinely engage the students in constructing new knowledge, engaging in conversation and ultimately building relationships with very young English language learners through accessing what they already know (Moll, 1992), using hands-on activities (Assembly of Alaska Native Educators, 1999; Brenner, 1998; Hale, 2001; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Shade et al., 1997; Shade, 1994; Vilegas & Lucas, 2002), physically getting close to them, encouraging their use of Spanish in the classroom, as well as encouraging a high level of movement (Christal, 2003; Hollie, 2001; Wortham & Contreras, 2002) through dancing and playing outside.

The participants describe how they feel they engaged the students at Maleku and were able to build close relationships with very young, low-level English language learners through accessing what they already know, using hands-on activities, physically getting close to them, encouraging their use of Spanish in the classroom as well as encouraging a high level of movement:

I built incredibly meaningful relationships with my kindergarten students at Maleku! Mati and Raphi will never leave my heart and will always be in my thoughts when teaching. I was surprised to see how much communication could be implemented without spoken word. The first day was difficult to interact with the children. However, by day two they were more comfortable and started to open up to us. I was able to build these relationships by appealing to the students' interests and working myself into the class in an approachable and friendly manner. (Fred)

I believe I am more prepared to teach [culturally and linguistically diverse] students because I have learned that I need to simplify some things to these students and make connections to what they are familiar with. Singing, dancing and playing with the students at Maleku really helped them to warm up to us. (Susan)

I feel that I especially built rapport with the students on the playground. The students always wanted me to push them on a glider and they would hold my hand and lead me to where they wanted. I think I also learned that a smile is the universal language. A smile can go a long way. You don't have to be fluent in the same language to know that you are loved and cared for. (Melissa)

A smile is a universal language. Although sometimes we could not understand each other through language, smiling, laughing, helping, and playing with the students helped us all become closer and form a strong band of trust. (Ava)

I found that the best way for me to build rapport in the Kindergarten classroom was through positive body language, engagement during free play, and giving English equivalents for simple words, while also practicing my own limited Spanish. (Luke)

The program participants at Maleku also note how culture affects the social interaction style and communication style as they make attempts at developing relationships with young English language learners, as Melissa notes:

There was a lot of hugging and sitting in my lap. I was surprised to see how much the teachers touched and interacted with the students. For example, hugging was very welcome at Maleku.

Ladson-Billings (1994a) notes that step one for teachers in developing the second tenet of cultural responsiveness is to develop a rich knowledge base of their students' cultural

background including communication style (e.g., body language, gestures, eye contact) and social interaction style (e.g., social distance).

Dong (2004) notes that pre-service teachers who complete a field experience abroad now see the urgency and importance of addressing language needs—as they, themselves, had trouble communicating abroad and it causes anxiousness and fear in them. Luke, Fred, and Melissa all note the importance of allowing the students to use their own language while in an English immersion school, the benefits it has on the students—as well as the benefits it has for developing a teacher-student relationship:

I found it very helpful to allow the children at the Pre-K/K level to teach me how to say certain words in Spanish, raising their self-esteem in a mutually beneficial teaching moment. (Luke)

The most defining moment was seeing the children grow in their relationship with me over the days at Maleku. Even on the second day they opened up so much more and were involved and communicating with me in Spanish and English. Most memorable is Raphael and Mati incessantly proclaiming “Jugar futbol jugar futbol!” (Fred)

It is important to learn words in that students’ language and to explore their culture, while introducing your culture at the same time. (Melissa)

While the students were watering their “plants” (dirt = cotton; planter = eggshell), they were each given a dropper to suck up water from a community cup of water given to each group at each table. One student was having difficulty getting the dropper to work. I then observed Susan modeling the actions for him. Susan succeeded in developing relationships with very young students with limited English and building a bridge across language barriers through physical modeling. From Ladson-Billings’ (1994a) tenet on cultural responsive educators being

someone who holds affirming views and high expectations of students from diverse backgrounds, sees them as resources for learning rather than views differences as problems to be overcome—three main standards arose for teachers to follow in developing this portion of cultural responsiveness. The first standard of these three is the use of modeling, scaffolding, and clarification of challenging curriculum. Susan describes her own astonishment that she was able to engage these students in new knowledge construction using this standard:

When we were at Maleku and working with the Kindergarten class, most of the students only spoke a couple of words of English at the most. While they were painting their eggs to plant beans in, they were talking to me in Spanish and we were talking back and forth. I would point to something that I didn't know and the three boys I was sitting with would explain to me what it was. I would then explain to them what it was in English and we kept talking like that. It was amazing that I could be a part of their learning process. I noticed that the other students from Seton Hill stayed to themselves and tended to not be too much of the process because they couldn't communicate with the students well. They learned some of the likes of the students and were able to play with them during play times but in class, they seemed to feel out of place.

Not only did the participants learn that they could build relationships with very young English language learners through play, accessing what they already know, using hands-on activities, physically getting close to them, and encouraging their use of Spanish in the classroom, but they also realized that developing relationships starts with creating a nurturing and cooperative environment while showing care for the students.

A standard of a culturally responsive educator (Ladson-Billings, 1994a) is one who creates a nurturing and cooperative environment while showing genuine care for the students.

These environments are ones in which students would feel motivated to work to their utmost. Teachers may create a caring environment by engaging students in activities aimed at creating a sense of belonging (Brown, 2003; Howard, 2001a, 2001b; Jacob, 1995; Lynn, Johnson, & Hassan, 1999; Wortham, & Contreras, 2002). As Ava notes, creating a sense of belonging is what she would like to take back to her future learners from what she observed at Maleku:

Spending time at Maleku has done wonders for my future career in education. There were many teaching techniques that I picked up on that I could use in my classroom to better adapt to students who are diverse. My favorite for example, was the star student. Each week, a new student was chosen to talk about his or her favorite items, simply to give a background on them. This would help the rest of the class get an idea of who this student is and also help the star student introduce themselves to the class in a relaxed manner. (Ava)

The impact of showing genuine care for students and this leading to them wanting to participate in learning has been noted in literature (Howard, 2001). Fred describes the level of genuine care demonstrated through the school culture he observed at Maleku:

At Maleku, I feel the teachers had a much more personal relationship with the students. The teachers all genuinely loved and cared for their students. While I see this affection at younger levels in our culture, Maleku staff was far more caring for their students.

5.4 FINDING FOUR

Program participants were able to push themselves out of their comfort zone and adapt to challenging situations both in the classroom and with the international field program itself. This

led to their increased confidence in their teaching abilities overall and with serving culturally and linguistically diverse learners. This finding also demonstrates how increased confidence led to program participants' deciding that teaching is the right profession for them.

This particular international field experience was quite challenging for the program participants. It provided a context whereby program participants were immersed in a culture they were completely unfamiliar with, were placed in a program which lacked organization and led to frustration, being able to teach a small amount, and/or having to teach in a field they did not want to teach in due to it not being their own area of expertise. All of these challenges led to them being pushed outside of their comfort zone, becoming more confident with change, learning how to face and adapt to challenges, and learning how to rely on each other for support in the field. Ultimately, facing all of these challenges led to building their confidence in their own teaching abilities and led to their final decision to enter the teaching profession.

At the beginning of this trip, when the program participants were asked, "What are your expectations of your teaching experience for this trip?" Participants noted their expectations—and excitement—of having the opportunity to teach:

While we are going to teach and further foster our educational skillset, I am unbelievably excited to leave the country for the first time and be exposed to an entirely new culture.

(Fred)

Ava noted on day two prior to teaching, "The more I am here, the better my [very minimal] Spanish is getting, which makes me even more excited to begin teaching!"

Susan and Luke's answers illustrate the lack of faculty's organization and communication to the participants of what is expected prior to departure:

This one, I am not sure of. I'm hoping the [cooperating] teachers know what we will be doing because I am clueless as to what is expected. I'm hoping that someone has a plan for how everything is going to happen because I am confused as to what is expected.

(Susan)

I have no idea. I hope I really like it, and I learn a lot of new strategies. (Luke)

Clearly, their expectations were a mix of confusion and a hope that they were going to teach. On our first day at the middle/high school, after Ricardo gave Riley, Samantha, Susan, and I a tour of the campus, he brought us back to the teacher's lounge in the administrative building. While it was just the four of us seated in the teachers' lounge area the program participants began confessing to me how anxious they are to teach—as they have prepared nothing. They told me that they repeatedly asked Dr. Hall and Dr. Mansour in advance what to prepare, but were never given explicit instructions which now makes them extremely nervous.

As Ricardo and I began dropping off the program participants to their assigned classrooms (assigned by Ricardo one day in advance) they appeared very anxious and even a bit terrified. I could see that they had prepared nothing and they had been given no knowledge on what the expectations were of them or of the cooperating teachers themselves. No expectations had been set either way. It was beginning to become clear to me during the first five minutes that this was one of our biggest challenges.

All, but one, program participant noted on the pre-survey that the biggest challenge they expected to face on this trip was a language barrier—as none of the participants spoke enough Spanish to carry on a strong conversation. However, on the post-survey numerous challenges they faced were listed (including language barrier) such as: exhaustion, transportation, having to say goodbye to the host family, using the bathrooms, being thrown into classrooms “sink or

swim,” being able to relax in a new teaching setting, relating to the students in a way that was both genuine and straightforward, a lack of organization of the program itself and having to be flexible. As Samantha notes her realization about the last challenge:

Prior to this trip, I was flexible to the very least. After this trip, you realize not everything is going to go as planned, and that’s okay. It could be a blessing in disguise.
(Samantha)

Samantha’s quote above begins to illustrate how the theory of transformative learning (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Mezirow, 1991, 1994, 1996; Taylor, 1994; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011) and the theory of consonance and dissonance (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Brindley et al., 2009) provide evidence for Finding Four of this study. I would argue that there is a multitude of opportunities through participation in an international field experience where a participant may experience discomfort. This discomfort leads to a feeling of disequilibrium (Mezirow, 1991) which in turn develops into transformative learning. Finding Four highlights several incidents of critical dissonance which led to transformative learning.

It was through these very challenges the program participants faced, where their confidence began to bloom. The language barrier itself helped to begin to increase participants’ confidence while also experiencing challenge:

I tried to speak Spanish when I felt relatively comfortable. I wanted to challenge myself while showing respect to those I spoke with by trying to speak their language. Many Ticos I spoke with were surprised and seemingly pleased when I said something correctly in Spanish. It was even more rewarding for myself to communicate correctly. (Fred)

I had no background in Spanish prior to this trip. Although my lack of their native tongue would occasionally hinder me in social situations, it gave me a greater

appreciation for the unspoken bonds that could be made from one person to another. In my case, nonverbal communication in the form of gestures and facial expressions gave me the opportunity to express myself in very authentic ways that the spoken word can so often disguise. Using nonverbal cues and simple English words/phrases seemed to get me through most conversations. Perseverance and patience were qualities I quickly developed amidst conversations with ticos. (Luke)

Challenge experienced by the participants through a multitude of “sink or swim” moments led to their increased confidence. These moments pushed them outside their comfort zone and led to increased confidence and flexibility. Two vignettes demonstrate such “sink or swim” moments, which were overcome and turned into moments of confidence building for the participants. The first of these moments occurred in an 8th grade science classroom with Samantha. The second occurred in a 7th grade English as a Second Language classroom.

The first vignette describes Samantha observing Marlene teach science to a class of thirty 8th graders. Marlene speaks no English. Samantha was terrified to work with her/teach this class. Marlene began the lesson, all in Spanish, while Samantha and I observed, as Samantha requested. In the deal Ricardo negotiated in Spanish with Marlene less than an hour ago in the school parking when we first arrived in the morning, Samantha is then supposed to jump in at some point and teach the periodic table of elements to this class. Samantha found the table online before entering the class but that is about all she has prepared.

Marlene began teaching in front of a fairly rowdy class. They slowly calmed down. She read straight out of the Spanish textbook (given to Samantha a few days ago), then she had the students read a bit aloud. She then wrapped up in about 10 minutes by explaining to the students, in Spanish, that Samantha is going to review the periodic table of elements with them.

Samantha is very scared and getting more scared by the minute. She is having difficulty figuring out exactly *how* to have the class “review the table of elements.”

Five to ten minutes before she entered this class, she confessed to me that she knows nothing about the periodic table of elements. At this point, it is curious how this can even be possible as she is studying to become a science teacher in the United States. As she began teaching the lesson, I sat in a seat in the back of the classroom to observe. However, she began floundering and seemed truly lost and desperate for some help. I stepped out of my observer mode and suggested that she begin class by asking the students what they know about the elements then add on to that. Samantha then began her portion of the class by asking:

- Do you know how the elements are organized?
- Point out Lithium, Berillium, Boron.
- How many atoms are in each?
- Do you guys notice a trend across the table?

After a few minutes of this type of full class questioning using their textbooks, the class was losing interest and engagement. I then suggested that she ask different students to come to the board, write the element as it appears in their book, practice their pronunciation of the element in English, then have them explain where this element is found in Costa Rica (as Marlene requested her to do). Once Samantha began calling on random students to come to the board, things began to calm down a bit. However, as each student was at the board by themselves, the others were still rowdy.

I then suggested that she put them in groups of five and allow them to discuss the elements in small groups. Once they got into groups, they seemed excited and more engaged. Samantha then directed them:

I want each group to pick five different elements. Each person in the group will describe one element on the board for all of us and give us one fact about their element.

The groups worked well together and were very engaged. Samantha was now moving from group to group and helping them to better understand the directions of the activity and what her expectations are as well as helping them to pronounce the elements in English for their upcoming group presentation of the elements. Samantha then called time on the activity and announced to the group, “Group one, bring your books and your facts to the board.”

She brought each group up to the board and had them present their element and fact. Unfortunately, the class ended before we could get to all the groups, but this set-up was operating much better by the end than at the beginning. Samantha reflects on this “sink or swim” challenging moment in her post-survey and post-reflective essay and how it led to building her confidence in her teaching abilities:

I was thrown into almost every lesson I did – sink or swim I guess. The last day we were in the schools, I was given the opportunity to teach in a Chemistry classroom. I tried different groupings and that didn’t work – I couldn’t keep their attention. So after some help (thank God) I got them. It’s not that they didn’t want to listen – they were just a talkative 8th grade group of kids. This was a new experience, and I needed to let it happen. It was challenging and quite nerve wracking at first, but you get comfortable. Nothing great ever comes from staying in your comfort zone. This international practicum has pushed me out of my comfort zone. If one would tell me I would have done this years ago, I wouldn’t believe them. When I first walked into this class and I was told I was going to be teaching, I actually almost threw up and/or cried. I was so nervous. However, once I had engaged the students, I was so excited. When I left that

room I felt like a million bucks. There are many challenges teachers face, and we have to almost roll with the punches and do what is best for our students. Sure, some things may not work out at first, but trial and error. You never know what to expect. Do your best and make sure your students know you are confident – don't show weakness. Show you care.

Samantha's reflection on her "sink or swim" moments on this trip—and how she transformed through them—demonstrates that a primary process of transformative learning theory is critical reflection. Through critical reflection in her daily journal and on her post-survey Samantha was able to question, evaluate, and compare her experiences in order to make sense of incidents. Transformative learning theory involves reflecting on and analyzing experiences in order to construct new knowledge. When critical reflection is employed during a state of disequilibrium, learning can ensue (Mezirow, 1998).

The second vignette of a "sink or swim" moment turned into a confidence building opportunity also displays the challenges of both pushing outside the comfort zone and having to be flexible. These challenges were presented and conquered in an English classroom with teacher Jennifer and program participants Samantha, Susan, and Riley. In this class period, Jennifer asked her 7th grade students to role-play in pairs. One student is to be a famous person and answer questions and the other student is the interviewer. Jennifer asked the program participants to move around the room and help the students prepare.

Riley was the first one to jump in and help. She walked with confidence right through the circle of students seated and began asking the pairs of students if they needed help. She even modeled a few examples for them. Samantha and Susan appeared to be more afraid, but eventually Samantha got into it. She modeled examples as well. Susan must have looked way

too timid throughout this activity as Jennifer eventually just gave her papers to correct in the corner. Jennifer later told me that she did that because, “I think she is very shy.” I replied to Jennifer, “That’s why I pushed Susan to get back out there and try to help the students, to work with them. She needs to get out of her comfort zone.” Samantha, on the other hand, was helping a particular girl one-to-one for a long time, even going word-by-word through this activity, Samantha notes about this experience:

I was in Jennifer Varga’s classroom ending a 7th grade English lesson – they were learning how to ask questions in past tense and I was helping two female students. The one really struggled with her English and they volunteered to share their questions. After class, the friend of the girl who struggled thanked me and told me I was an amazing teacher and that her friend has been struggling with this lesson for a while and she understood it when I helped her. That’s when I knew, I am in the right profession.

This moment helped to boost Samantha’s confidence and lessen her anxiety and nervousness about this entire teaching experience. Samantha notes how this moment of confidence building also led to her realizing that she chose the right profession.

As Jennifer’s class was ending, Susan was scheduled to return to Margarita’s class, but before we went, I was trying to persuade her into staying in Jennifer’s class instead—with Riley and Samantha—as I truly felt she could receive a richer teaching experience with Jennifer than with Margarita. She seemed adamant, however, to go to another class. Therefore, we left Jennifer’s class and began walking in the outside hallway to Margarita’s classroom. As we were walking along, Susan stopped dead in her tracks and turned to me to tell me that she feels as though she was being “steamrolled” by Riley and Samantha just now in this period of Jennifer’s class. Susan’s tone then became more firm and emotional toward me as she angrily stated to me:

Music people don't work with other people, we work alone. And I did NOT sign up to 'peer teach.' I want to teach on my own here.

The incident noted above with Susan illustrates an example of dissonance. Dissonance is a feeling of tension or stress, which is related to disequilibrium, a feeling of imbalance. When pre-service teachers feel imbalanced abroad, stress ensues. Therefore, when abroad, they are likely to reject information or experiences that contradicts their frames of reference in order to regain a sense of equilibrium (Mezirow, 1994) as well as feel discomfort during periods of dissonance. However, one cannot transform their thinking unless they first become uncomfortable within their existing frame of reference (Meizrow, 1991). Cochran-Smith (1991) notes that, "Programs which aim to create critical dissonance are intended to be transformative" (p. 108). The next part of this story demonstrates how Susan was able to use this period of discomfort to transform her thinking and actions.

I reluctantly escorted her to Margarita's classroom, which I had a feeling was going to be a disaster due to the lack of classroom control during Samantha's earlier experience. Margarita was unprepared for us, again, and unfortunately, after much negotiation between her and I, we decided Margarita would grade papers and give out final grades for the next 45 minutes and then we would later return. Feeling defeated, Susan then heads back with me to Jennifer's class. We then headed back to Jennifer's class where she allowed her students to freely ask the program participants questions about Americans and our thoughts on Costa Rica. When the questions got less and less though, and the room went silent, Susan spoke up! She asked the students, "Who plays a musical instrument?" She then, much to my surprise, even picked up a nearby, well-known ESL textbook, "Word by Word" Photo Dictionary and showed photos of various musical

instruments. It took great confidence for her to be able to get out of her shell for a moment, speak up and take over the class—especially in the presence of the Samantha and Riley.

Next in the formal lesson, Jennifer showed the students a video biography narrated by an elderly couple from New York City through video and photos. The voice of the elderly couple was difficult to hear. The students then had to put their life events in chronological order after listening to the video a second time. The program participants then went around the room and helped the students complete this activity. Susan and Samantha quickly jumped right in to help the students. Susan seemed to be slowly getting over her fear of working with her peers (and students), as she was helping a student one-to-one and asked Riley to help her as well. Susan notes in her pre-survey that one of her goals for this trip was “to become more confident with change.” The vignette described above demonstrates that she did, indeed, reach her goal during this trip. Susan notes below about overcoming her challenges and how the students themselves helped her to build her confidence in her ability to teach:

Much of this trip itself was a challenge and we all had to adapt. I am not an English major and, honestly, I struggle with writing. To be placed in an English classroom was terrifying. But the more I was in those classrooms, the more I realized that these students were able to express themselves no matter where they were. They were challenged and encouraged in their classes and, through this, there was little fear of messing up. Of course, my presence made them a little nervous but, once they were more comfortable, they were able to communicate what they were thinking or how they felt. Their ability to adapt is inspiring and I hope to emulate their adaptability in my classroom.

The post-survey, results illustrated that this trip helped all the participants realize that they are able to adapt to challenging situations in the U.S. classroom. All six of the survey

participants noted in the post-survey that the trip had helped them to adapt to challenging situations. Fred and Luke explain below:

I feel that any practicum or field experience betters my ability to adapt to challenging situations. These opportunities always provide us with first-hand experience to realize how quickly we need to adapt and how to better handle situations that can be seen as challenging. (Fred)

Throughout all the various challenges presented to the participants throughout this trip: the lack of program organization, having to “sink or swim,” learning to remain flexible, and adapting to change—all of the program participants noted that this trip has increased their confidence to serve culturally and linguistically diverse students. Many of them noted (unprompted by a survey question on this exact topic) how this experience has also led to them realizing that they had chosen the proper profession:

I was having doubts about being in the field of education prior to the trip. However, after working with the students and the teachers, I saw how well I connected with them and am excited to begin my career as a teacher! Not only was I able to help teach students, but the teachers as well. I showed them some classroom techniques I use back home and taught them words and phrases in English. After this trip, I truly cannot picture myself in any other field!” (Ava)

I think a defining moment for me on this trip were the lessons I taught on Wednesday in Teacher Jennifer’s classroom. It was the first time I really felt like a teacher instead of an education student. The children were very receptive to my lesson, and the teacher was openly willing to share her lesson, which was a wonderful change from what I have been used to in past practicum experiences. (Luke)

I was very hesitant before, during, and still after the trip if I really will make a good teacher or not. Prior to going on this trip, I had been up in the air about going back to school to get certified in my Pre-K to 4. I had no idea what I wanted to do and I was lucky to get to get a taste of both the Pre-K/K students as well as the MS/HS students. My worst fear is being a poor teacher to my students. However, after teaching and seeing the impact I can leave on those students in just a short amount of time was amazing. It truly was. I wanted to come back to the United States never being the same, in a good way and that I did. I have an entirely new outlook on both life in general and in teaching. (Samantha)

It is in going abroad that I have been able to best look at myself introspectively, recognizing my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher and moving forward in a profession I have come to love and respect as an institution of social consequence. It is in Costa Rica that I have come to fully embrace my calling to teach. (Luke)

Lu and Soares (2014) note that “international [field experiences] can be a journey to transformative learning; learning that permits a world view to emerge in a context that causes one to scrutinize their values and beliefs through continual reflection” (p. 59).

Adapting to the culture, and particularly, the international practicum, was really a matter of realizing that I won’t always be comfortable, and that it will be through these awkward and uncomfortable experiences that I will be able to appreciate a culture different from my own in a very real way. (Luke)

Vatalaro, Szente, and Levin (2015) note that international field experiences have already been considered to be a transformative process in the current literature (Taylor, 2008; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Wells, 2008). Learning is transformed through making meaning of social

experiences (Mezirow, 1997). Thus, “the pre-service teacher who reflects on the [international field experience] forms new global perspectives that can inform teaching practice and strengthen global competence” (Vatalaro et al., 2015, p. 45). Luke summarizes below how this trip has transformed him not only into a more professional developed educator, but also into a more globally competent individual.

My original goal for completing this international field experience was to earn credit for my multicultural practicum. I really saw anything aside from earning that credit class as additional experience for me both personally and professionally. In accomplishing this goal, I began to realize more and more that the “class” portion of the trip in documenting my experience and writing journal entries was far less important than the human interaction and appreciation for cultural and linguistic diversity—the kind of stuff that will not only make me a better teacher, but also a better person.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This dissertation examines six U.S. pre-service teachers' participation in an international field experience in Costa Rica. It examines participants' willingness and ability to demonstrate relationship building with students culturally and linguistically different from them, and describes and interprets the circumstances that either encourage or discourage such interaction. The findings from this study are significant for those interested in understanding how an international field experience could assist pre-service teachers in developing their relationship building skills with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The audience that can benefit the most from what I have learned from this study are university faculty and staff who are involved with coordinating and/or leading international field programs for pre-service teachers.

This research is relevant due to continual cultural and linguistic mismatches between teachers and their diverse students. Teachers often lack the capacity to build relationships with students from diverse ethnic and racial groups and/or resist working in diverse classrooms due to their current attitudes and beliefs. Based on my research observing and surveying six pre-service teachers on a 10-day international field experience in Costa Rica, I conclude that international field experiences bring significant value to the education of a pre-service teacher.

However, these programs come with a variety of choices of how to coordinate and implement them abroad. These key choices made by the U.S. university sending pre-service teachers abroad affect how beneficial the experience is to their personal and professional

development as educators. I learned from this trip that planning, coordinating and implementing an international field program is quite challenging, as there are continually numerous moving parts. I also learned that developing and implementing an international field program in order to develop pre-service teachers' skillset in relationship building is a *process* and not achieved through a short trip.

Using the methodology of a qualitative case study, this dissertation seeks to help deepen the understanding of how an international field experience may provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in activities that could ultimately lead to relationship building with those culturally and linguistically different from them. In this chapter, I review the key findings of the study, the study's limitations, suggestions for practice and future research, as well as implications for the theory of cultural responsiveness.

The results of the study demonstrate that even though the program participants initiated conversations and built relationships with students *inside* the classroom, they were not equally as confident in building relationships with the general Costa Rican population *outside* of the classroom. This finding could have resulted from a host of factors, some of which include: participants being shy in general, participants self-reporting inaccurately, my not being present on participants' weekday evening excursions with their host family, not living in the country long enough to feel comfortable around locals in the community, not being housed solo or in peer groups on their own in the local community, not speaking Spanish, and/or not having the faculty allow for more immersion opportunities. All of these factors may also be seen as limitations to the study. If any of these circumstances were present, they could have greatly modified and/or enriched the data and ultimately the results of the study.

6.1 IMPLICATION ONE

International field programs contain several common elements, which provide and guide program participants with opportunities to engage more deeply in the local community in order for immersion to occur and for empathy to develop. These elements are to be carefully considered by a U.S. school of education when planning an international field program.

Learning about a student's community is a critical link to becoming a culturally responsive educator and building relationships with diverse students. Those developing an international field program should be the leader in providing and guiding program participants with opportunities to communicate with the general population in their host country. These opportunities, I would argue, can be woven into the program *as a necessity to daily navigation of life tasks during the program abroad* via the U.S. school of education choosing various types of elements of the program to offer to the program participants in order for them to gain greater immersion in their local community abroad.

After a review of literature, I ultimately would argue that the participants being more confident in building relationships with the students they encountered in the classroom in Costa Rica, rather than the general Costa Rican population was due to the small amount of immersion opportunities offered to the program participants by the faculty. This emerging finding implies that U.S. schools of education, when developing or reexamining an existing international field program, should carefully consider the following common program elements to allow for the greatest amount of immersion possible: (a) duration of trip; (b) traveling solo vs. in a group; (c) housing, exploring the community through cultural tours; (d) choice of culture or country (e) participating with students in after-school activities; and/or (f) participating in community service-learning projects.

Findings from this study suggest that greater immersion could lead to greater empathy. Empathy as a concept plays a significant role in this study as it helps to better understand how pre-service teachers come to understand, be aware of, be sensitive to, and vicariously experience the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse students. The findings from this study follow literature in suggesting that there are a variety of ways schools of education can increase the level of immersion in which program participants are placed in, in order to enhance empathy (Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Phillion, Malewski, Sharma, & Wang, 2009; Polat, 2010).

A future study could be done comparing different program models of international field programs through the common elements they all share and measuring various levels of immersion due to the type of elements chosen for the program participants. An extension of this future study could be one that would also measure immersion as it relates to the development of empathy. For example, one may speculate that a future study may illustrate that the longer time a program participant spends abroad and the more they are immersed in a culture different than theirs via independent housing in the local community, and/or participating in service learning projects with locals, and/or participating in after-school activities with their students, the greater their empathy—and therefore their understanding of the feelings, thoughts and experiences—of their students will be.

The results of my study connect to prior research which shows that when schools of education are the leader in providing immersion opportunities for pre-service teachers to be on their own or in small groups of their peers, whether in short-term or long-term opportunities abroad, it helps them to begin to initiate communication and relationships with those in their international community (Landerholm & Chacko, 2013; Lu & Soares, 2014; Quezada, 2004;

Stachowski & Sparks, 2007). Therefore, when schools of education are preparing international field programs there should be some element to the program whereby the pre-service teachers must fend for themselves—at least in minor ways or for very short amounts of time. There is a hint of this implication in Samantha’s post-survey as she her own realization that there could have been benefits to being on her own a bit more during our trip to Costa Rica:

Ricardo was [our cultural] translator and our saving grace for a lot of the trip. Without him I think it would have been challenging. However, without him, I think it would have made us forced to go out of our comfort zone and that may have been more beneficial.

I reviewed each element of immersion separately in the literature to understand how my findings supported or advanced current literature. Looking first at the duration of the program abroad, we were only in Costa Rica for 10 days. Out of those 10 days each program participant spent only four teaching and living with a host family. The rest of the time was lived in hotels and spent in group, cultural excursions with a translator at all times. Future studies should look at the level of immersion as it relates to traveling solo vs. in a group—as well as to the length of time in the country.

The findings from this study support literature which notes that even though participants can become immersed and develop empathy in a short-term trip, longer-term trips abroad are more beneficial in providing greater immersion and more opportunities to develop empathy and build relationships while immersed in the community. Malewski et al. (2012) recommend, “longer-term study abroad programs” to “maximize the benefits . . . by offering extended opportunities for cross-cultural interaction” (p. 36). Samantha hints in her post-survey that a longer-term stay in Costa Rica may have led her to be more immersed in the community. She describes the empathy she developed in a short amount of time through a short-term immersion:

I just wish we had more than 10 days. I was just getting use to the school and my wonderful students and adapting and we were pulled to leave for the rainforest. I never thought in 4 days those students and my family would leave such a huge impact on my heart and in my life. The willingness to learn, the respect, and the overall intelligence and kindness of my students were amazing.

For a student like Susan, however, with high anxiety, little independent life experiences gained prior to this trip, a group trip is the right decision *before* going on a solo trip so she could somewhat more comfortably get out of her comfort zone. For a student like Luke, however, with strong leadership skills, he could have done an immediate, solo, deep-dive immersion trip and would have been able to navigate through the disorienting experiences being abroad for the first time brings. This finding from my study supports literature that describes why schools of education really need to know their pre-service teachers' strengths and weaknesses in order to be able to develop their growth opportunities around a group or solo experience.

Not all participants are able to handle a solo, deep-immersion experience in another country. There are elements of longer-term experiences abroad, which would be difficult for some participants to handle. Some participants may have never lived alone, traveled domestically alone and/or had to solve daily life issues alone, which arise domestically. Therefore, they may not be able to navigate and solve challenges, which arise and are unique to living abroad. For example, grocery shopping, paying bills, taking public transportation and interacting with others in an unfamiliar language may be barriers too steep for some participants to climb over as well as barriers they may never had to face yet domestically.

Housing provides an opportunity for greater immersion and it gives program participants a major indicator of how the general population in another country live. However, sometimes a

false indication is extended. While in Costa Rica, all of the program participants (except Susan and me—as our house was much smaller and in much more humble conditions than the other host families’ homes) lived with Costa Ricans who were living in extremely wealthy conditions, even for U.S. standards. Several of the program participants noted their surprise to find the amount of wealth that they did in Costa Rica—even though this is not how the average Costa Rican lives. This finding of lack of immersion into the reality of Costa Rica due to the housing provided to the participants supports literature, which notes that program participants should be given a variety of options for housing while abroad based on their personality, varying comfort levels as well as safety in order to lead to greater immersion. Such options could be a university dormitory, a homestay, or an independent stay in an apartment among the local residents in the school’s community.

If housed independently in the local community, students would have opportunities to grocery shop and transport themselves, rather than rely on a host family to do it for them. That option increases cultural immersion and critical incidents of dissonance—especially if some pre-service teachers are placed in rural environments (Landerholm & Chacko, 2013; Lu & Soares, 2014). Program participants can also stay in independent housing for the bulk of their stay with an option of a short-term homestay with locals (Malewski et al., 2012) to gain the benefits of both independence and the inside view of the community’s culture, which a homestay may provide. Therefore, a question for future research would be to understand better how a school of education develops an international field program with the least risk involved for the participants with the maximum amount of participant immersion into average living standards of the host country.

The literature supports group excursions for immersion opportunities in other programs

(Malewski et al., 2012; Landerholm & Chacko, 2013). However, literature has also suggested that the most impactful cultural experiences and opportunities to engage in conversation with locals may be the ones program participants find on their own, such as public transport, grocery shopping, and speaking to locals who do not speak English (Dunn, Dotson, Cross, Kesner, & Lundahl, 2014). Therefore, this may imply that a mix of group and solo activities may be appropriate for schools of education to provide for participants, as here again, their comfort levels to immerse fully into the local community may vary.

One of the greatest challenges to immersion noted by participants of this study was the language barrier. This finding supports the literature (Yang, 2011) which notes participants may have difficulty building relationships with students due to the language barrier. This implies that some similarities in language may be advantageous when planning an international field program. Therefore, U.S. schools of education should consider the choice of country when establishing an international field program. The variety of countries to which pre-service teachers across the U.S. are completing their field experiences abroad is extensive, but could be more diverse.

While all the program participants in this study experienced teaching in Costa Rica, they experienced teaching in a classroom each day in which all the learners were of the same cultural and linguistic background—it was a homogenous classroom. However, in many classrooms considered to be “diverse” in the U.S., students may represent a multitude of various cultures and native languages. This implies that choosing a culture to work within is important when defining the parameters of an international field experience. International field programs are a vehicle by which to prepare pre-service teachers for a diverse classroom—and in the U.S. that may mean a classroom with a multitude of cultures present. Therefore, countries that have schools with

cultural and linguistic diversity among their students may be the best fit for U.S. pre-service teachers to gain field experience.

Ultimately, the key findings from this research helped to advance the understanding of which particular elements of an international field program are key to providing greater immersion and developing empathy in order to build relationships with those culturally and linguistically different than the program participants. Much nuance is present while choosing between various elements of programming when developing an international field experience. This process of choosing through various program elements can greatly affect the experience and outcomes for the participants.

In Costa Rica there was a gross amount of visibly lacking prior collaboration, communication, and organization between the U.S. school of education faculty who created this program and the Costa Rican schools with which they partnered. There was also a lack of faculty leading the implementation in the field, a lack of buy-in from the cooperating teachers in the field, a lack of preparing participants for the trip itself as well as a lack of setting appropriate expectations and goals for the participants' experience in the classroom. However, through **all which was lacking, it helped to generate a level of discomfort (more than what was already present from simply being in an unfamiliar culture and navigating the challenges of a language barrier) among the participants which ultimately led to their increased confidence in the classroom** and with serving culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

6.2 IMPLICATION TWO

Close communication and collaboration between the U.S. school of education faculty and the

host school administration and cooperating teachers abroad prior to the trip and during the trip are paramount **in order to achieve beneficial outcomes** for the program participants of an international field program.

The items that were evidently lacking led to a review of the literature to see how other international field programs handle similar programmatic challenges and how they overcome them so that the participants can focus on the experience of teaching itself in another country and not focus on the lack of organization. What happened to us in Costa Rica is not that unusual and supports literature (Lu & Soares, 2014; Yang, 2011) which notes similar findings of inadequate communication between partnership universities and placement host schools abroad.

This finding of a need for closer collaboration efforts between the U.S. university and the host school cooperating teachers and administration reflects literature (Mahon, 2007) which describes three overarching frameworks for collaboration and implementation of an international field program in order to decrease the level of disorganization and frustration we felt in Costa Rica: (a) a consortium of universities that pool together to combine resources; (b) a university-led effort centralized through its main international study office; and (c) a program housed within a school of education itself that does its own placement with a host country K-12 school system. In the case of the Costa Rica program, it was led by one U.S. faculty member partnering with one K-12 teacher in Costa Rica. The complications and frustrations program participants and I both felt due to this being the chosen framework for collaboration of the Costa Rica program reflects literature (e.g., Dunn et al., 2014; Jiang et al., 2011; Landerholm & Chacko, 2013; Malewski et al., 2012; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008) which notes that a program housed within a school of education generally offers the most flexibility and autonomy but may have the potential for communication or collaboration issues. A future study could compare

international field programs that use various frameworks of collaboration and determine how various frameworks allow for or hinder program participants' experience and goals.

Findings of complications due to the chosen framework also point to literature that warns against a sole U.S. faculty member being totally responsible for coordinating, collaborating and implementing an international field experience. Mahon (2007) found that as all programmatic responsibilities may fall on one or two people (who generally have other responsibilities as well), resources and staffing are a concern with this framework of choice. This option may also “interfere with tenure and promotion responsibilities” (p. 137). In addition, faculty members usually do not have the management background or administrative expertise required to put these programs together, and unlike permanent, on-site staff members who coordinate other study abroad programs, they typically arrange the trips from afar, juggling them with other teaching and research responsibilities (Fischer, 2007). A future study could compare international field programs which all use the framework of one U.S. faculty member coordinating the details with the host school abroad to determine if this framework is, indeed, ever successful and if so, how as well as the specific challenges the faculty member encounters during both the planning and implementation stages.

Findings from this study on the issue of program disorganization leading to participants being distracted from the teaching experience itself—supports literature (Dunn et al., 2014) which notes that, in the absence of a well-organized program “participants begin to then discuss [programmatic] challenges in their writing and interviews which then illustrates the difficulty of attempting transformative learning [when lacking a well-organized program]” (pp. 296–297). This was illustrated in data from my study, as several program participants, such as Samantha below, concentrated their pre-survey answers on not knowing what to expect from the trip:

At first when we got to the schools, I was quite worried. Not much was getting done and it was poorly organized. However, it got better and I am so thankful for everything that happened. Both good and bad.

Out of the three types of collaborative frameworks noted above, an argument can be made that the strongest framework of collaboration would be a partnership between a university in the home country and a university in the host country. This is due to the fact that the host university abroad could have one person who works full-time to manage these international partnerships and may be able to be more deeply knowledgeable about the local K-12 system. The argument for this type of collaboration is supported in literature which shows that a partnership between two universities provides placement opportunities and strong host country ties that one university in the U.S. cannot do alone so easily (e.g., Baker, 2000; Batey & Lupi, 2012; Lu & Soares, 2014; Stachowski & Sparks, 2007; Yang, 2011).

If this type of collaboration is not readily available to a U.S. university, I would argue for using a second type of collaborative framework. That is for the U.S. university to collaborate with a strong and reliable U.S.-based partner (i.e., a U.S. or global-based nonprofit or foundation which works heavily with international K-12 schools) to assist them in developing an international field experience. The argument for using this second type of collaboration is reflected in literature. Stachowski and Sparks (2007) describe the well-known and popular Overseas Student Teaching Program (OSTP), which has served more than 2,000 pre-service teachers over the course of 30 years at Indiana University Bloomington in conjunction with the Foundation for International Education. The authors note that OSTP is a proven model of success for overseas student teaching that “can be replicated at any college campus, and includes a support network of an international education foundation, collaborating U.S. colleges and

universities, and school placement consultants the world over” (p. 118). Based in Wisconsin, the Foundation secures the actual overseas school placements and provides this service for a number of colleges and universities around the United States.

However, if a school of education wants or needs an international field program, and neither of the earlier noted frameworks of collaboration are available for use, they may ultimately decide to have one school of education faculty member coordinate the program itself directly with a K-12 school overseas. If this is the case, findings from my study on the challenges our one U.S. faculty coordinator faced in collaboration with the local K-12 host school does support literature and implies several suggestions on how to make this challenging framework a bit less difficult on all parties involved:

- Schools of education could establish guidelines for faculty from the U.S. university to maintain positive working relationships among the pre-service teachers and hosts in the foreign country (Baker, 2000).
- U.S. faculty could be more deeply involved in the process (Batey & Lupi, 2012; Landerholm & Chacko, 2013). They could arrive early [in the host classrooms] to observe, talk with teachers and administrators, and make final placements as well as troubleshoot in the classroom for the first day or two (Pence & Macgillivray, 2008).
- In the total absence of a U.S. faculty member present on-site, in-country with the participants, the participants could then develop their own “peer community” to help solve issues together (Dunn et al., 2014).
- Schools of education could establish clear roles and expectations of each member of this collaboration and ensure each party agrees prior to the field experience taking place—including setting expectations with participants.

- A “Chart of Responsibilities” could be designed for both parties to review in advance to understand and buy-into their expected roles and responsibilities (Baker, 2000).
- U.S. faculty could coordinate with the designated individual at the host school regarding the host schools’ minimum expectations for home faculty presence on their campus (and vice versa) and observing the participants (Pence & Macgillivray, 2008).
- Schools of education should understand that coordinating and implementing an international field program is a process and requires heavy involvement from the U.S. faculty (Mahon, 2007) as “it cannot be assumed that students will be able to negotiate these challenges on their own” (Dunn et al., 2014, p. 301).
- U.S. faculty could observe participants teach and provide continuous and supported feedback for them to critically reflect on together in face-to-face meetings at the end of each teaching day, in journals, or in online forums (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Dunn et al., 2014; Malewski et al., 2012; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Stachowski & Sparks, 2007; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Yang, 2011).

6.2.1 A future study

The finding of faculty’s role being paramount in negotiating program participants’ experiences in the field in a program that relies on this third type of collaborative framework is supported in the literature. Dunn et al. (2014) argue for schools of education administrators to explore granting course release time for faculty to travel abroad with pre-service teachers for longer than one initial week, support them at various periods during the semester, and potentially research their experiences while abroad. Realizing that this may not be an option for many U.S. universities,

due to budget and faculty time constrictions, it is something to consider strongly when developing an international field experience.

Findings from this study imply that a great deal of preparation is involved on the part of the U.S. faculty to ensure not only that the host country is prepared to receive their program participants and understand the program expectations, but also that the program participants themselves are fully prepared. This is supported in the literature, which notes the importance of pre-departure meetings and orientations for program participants (Batey & Lupi, 2012; Lu & Soares, 2014; Malewski et al., 2012) require their participants to meet for five trip preparation meetings prior to the trip.

The need to better prepare program participants prior to departure and clearly setting expectations of the journey abroad itself and most importantly of what the classroom experience will be like each day while abroad is reflected in literature. Baker (2000) had pre-service teachers develop strategies, prior to departure, to link their international experience with their local field experience. In addition, a conference at the end of each day of the experience abroad provided time for the pre-service teacher and cooperating teacher to outline the expectations for the rest of the field experience. In this way, program participants can become more attuned to what to look for and what to focus on as they are in their classroom abroad.

It was made clear from the survey results of this study that the program participants were not guided to set any goals nor given any expectations of daily classroom life prior to departure or during the trip. This finding implies that pre-departure meetings, in addition to continually setting daily expectations while abroad, can give program participants an opportunity to define and meet their own goals and expectations while abroad. By clearly defining goals prior to departure participants are then able to focus more on relationship building with the students they

encounter abroad and less time worrying about everyday tasks in the classroom. It was clear from the survey results that the participants did not know what to expect.

This finding of the consequences which may occur when participants' own expectations and goals are not clearly defined prior to the trip and then not being met during the trip (due to a lack of planning and organization on the part of the faculty) are supported in literature. Beyond simply visiting local schools, participants in other studies on international field experiences strongly valued opportunities to teach lessons to international students. Dunn et al. (2014) note that, "the highlight [of the program participants' experiences in Sweden] was the ability to practice their craft in an international setting" (p. 299). While some studies touted the benefits of observations solely or in addition to teaching (Malewski et al., 2012; Yang, 2011), other studies described teaching as the main goal of the international experience. In addition to observing and teaching classes abroad, Batey and Lupi (2012) note the importance of a variety of teaching experiences offered, such as those with special needs students. A future study could concentrate on a comparison of international field programs in which the pre-service teacher is placed in international classrooms in their studied field (e.g., music, special needs, early education) to programs which place participants in classrooms outside of their studied field (as was the case in Costa Rica).

6.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY

The findings and analysis of this study suggest future research may use the conceptual framework of cultural responsiveness (Ladson- Billings, 1994b) as a broader tool with which to study educators' ability to build relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse students

on an international field experience. This study has implications for the future use of the concept of cultural responsiveness as it is usually used by authors as a way to describe an educator's pedagogy, actions, and/or attitudes toward marginalized African, Latino, Native, Asian American students (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1994b, 1995; Gay, 2010; Milner 2006). I found very little literature (Keel, 2014) that used the concept of cultural responsiveness to frame a study around pre-service teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and actions toward culturally and linguistically diverse children.

This research fills a gap in literature as it expands the use of the concept of cultural responsiveness to include a broader conversation about how teachers build relationships with refugee children, foreign-born children, and children who speak a language other than English in the home through their pedagogy, actions, and/or attitudes. The concept of cultural responsiveness becomes important in practice as it lends toward a discussion of how educators can best initiate contact with culturally and linguistically diverse students—a population of students with which they have little or no experience serving. However, accounting for the unique attitudes, beliefs and actions educators have toward refugee and immigrant children (which may be different than other children of color who were born and raised in the U.S.) future research in theory building is needed in order to include in the framework how educators can relate better to refugee and immigrant children. Theory building research may study how the actions and activities educators use to build relationships with refugee and immigrant children may look differently than what would be considered as culturally responsive teaching (Gay 2000; Ladson-Billings 1994; Sleeter, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) toward African American children. Future research may also want to explore the attitudes and beliefs pre-service teachers

hold toward refugee and immigrant children—and how these attitudes and beliefs may be different than what they hold toward African American students.

6.4 LIMITATIONS

Several limitations of this study are worth noting: (a) small sample size, (b) short duration of trip, and (c) little literature using the concept of cultural responsiveness as a framework by which to study an international field experience (Keel, 2014). The small sample size worked for a qualitative case study as the goal was to focus on a selected case (i.e., the pre-service teachers) and to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon (i.e., the participants' experience while abroad) (Fitzpatrick et al., 2012). This study only explored one international field program in depth at one school of education with one small group of students. Therefore, the results from this study would be most transferable to international field program of similar scope and size with also a similar framework of collaboration between one U.S. faculty member and a K-12 school abroad. This study may assist schools of education, which have an international field program of similar scope, size, and collaborative framework, when developing or enhancing a new or existing international field program.

The short duration of the trip made it difficult to ascertain if the some of the results could have been richer and less shallow, had the participants stayed longer. A longer stay could have led to greater immersion and more opportunities by which to observe the participants interacting with students while developing stronger relationships over a period of time. This could have led to a stronger argument for taking pre-service teachers' abroad to help them build the capacity of relationship building. It is difficult to argue that program participants learned how to build

relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse learners, which they taught for just four days. However, this study lays foundational data for a future study, which could look at how pre-service teachers learn how to develop relationships with diverse learners over a longer period of time. Even though the program participants in this study were only in Costa Rica for a short time, this study explores how an international field experience provided them with unique opportunities to develop their confidence and willingness in building relationships with and serving culturally and linguistically diverse students.

The final limitation was very little literature being available with which to study this topic—international field programs as a tool to help pre-service teachers build relationships with diverse learners through the conceptual framework of cultural responsiveness. The main study out there that aligns with mine is Keel’s 2014 study. This study uses the frameworks of both cultural responsiveness and critical race theory by which to describe one pre-service teacher’s experience teaching in Ecuador for 25 days and then interning in the U.S. The findings from Keel’s 2014 study and my study are both transferrable to the same audience—as we both want our studies to assist U.S. schools of education who are looking for ways to develop their pre-service teachers’ capacity to become more culturally responsive toward diverse learners.

6.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study explores the experiences of six pre-service teachers in Costa Rica. It examines their attitudes and beliefs about serving culturally and linguistically diverse learners—before and after their time spent in Costa Rica. It describes their actions and activities toward the Costa Rican students—and the Costa Rican population at large. Findings show that program participants

were able to push outside of their comfort zone and engage in relationship building with Costa Rican students inside the classroom setting—but that it was difficult for them to initiate and engage with the general Costa Rican population-at-large. Findings also demonstrate program participants increased willingness to and confidence in serving culturally and linguistically diverse students after participating in an international field experience.

This study expands current literature on international field programs as well as literature on the concept of cultural responsiveness. It fills a gap in literature by examining the activity of pre-service teachers developing their capacity to develop relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse students—through the conceptual framework of cultural responsiveness. Using the framework of cultural responsiveness by which to examine the attitudes, beliefs, actions and activities of pre-service teachers during their experience abroad has not been done heavily in prior literature and rarely is the notion of cultural responsiveness used when researching the idea of developing relationships with refugee and immigrant youth.

This study was not able to draw a direct link between participating in an international field experience and being able to develop a relationship with a refugee and immigrant youth in the U.S. classroom. However, it does assist in providing a deeper understanding of how an international field experience may lead to developing or modifying pre-existing attitudes and beliefs of pre-service teachers toward serving refugee and immigrant youth. It also provides insight into the opportunities an international field experience provides for pre-service teachers to practice the use of certain actions and activities with diverse learners, which may lead to engaging them more deeply in learning.

Through this study, it can be concluded that there is still much work to be done by U.S. schools of education to better prepare their pre-service teachers for an ever-growing diverse K-

12 classroom in the U.S. A deep cultural gap between students and teachers, an academic achievement gap between learners, as well as the push by accrediting bodies of school of education to increase their effectiveness in building culturally responsive teachers, all lead to a more urgent demand for schools of education to initialize or enhance an international field experience in order to build their pre-service teachers' capacity to serve and develop authentic relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The key findings from this study allow U.S. schools of education to examine how they are currently developing their pre-service teachers' capacity to build relationships with diverse learners and what next steps they need to take in order to ensure that the next generation of educators are equipped to willingly and confidently build relationships with and serve our ever-growing diverse learners.

APPENDIX A

K-12 STUDENT AND TEACHER DEMOGRAPHICS

Chart 1: Total Population Shift of Whites in U.S. (1980-2014)

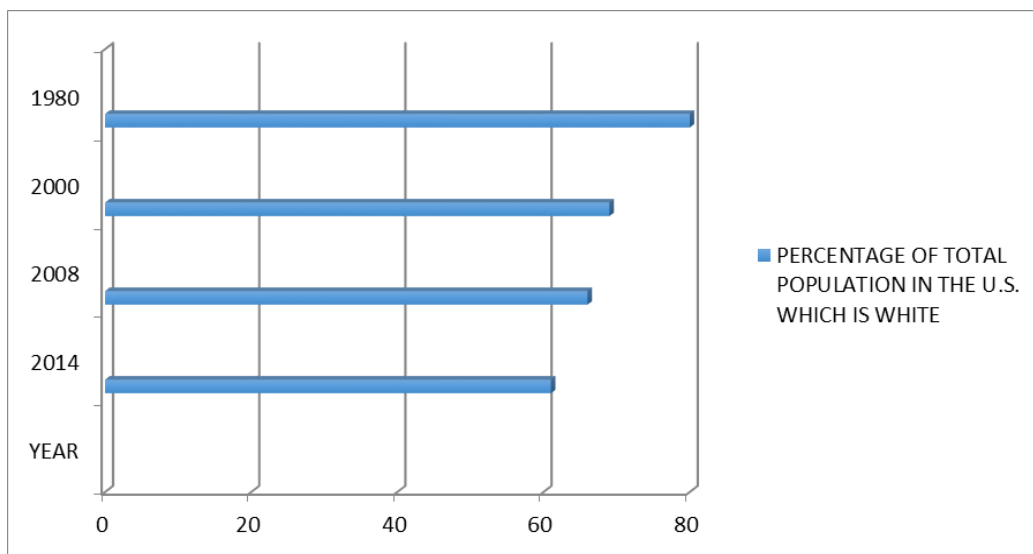


Chart 2: Population Shift (%) of Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asian/Pacific Islanders in U.S.
Schools (1992-2012)

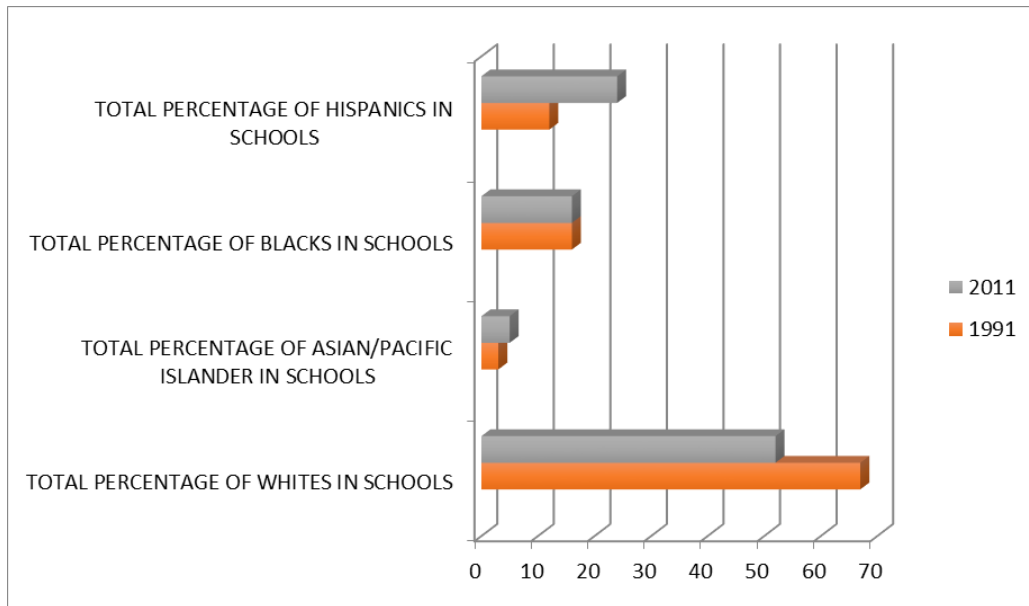


Chart 3: Projected Continued Increase in Diverse Students (2011-2022)

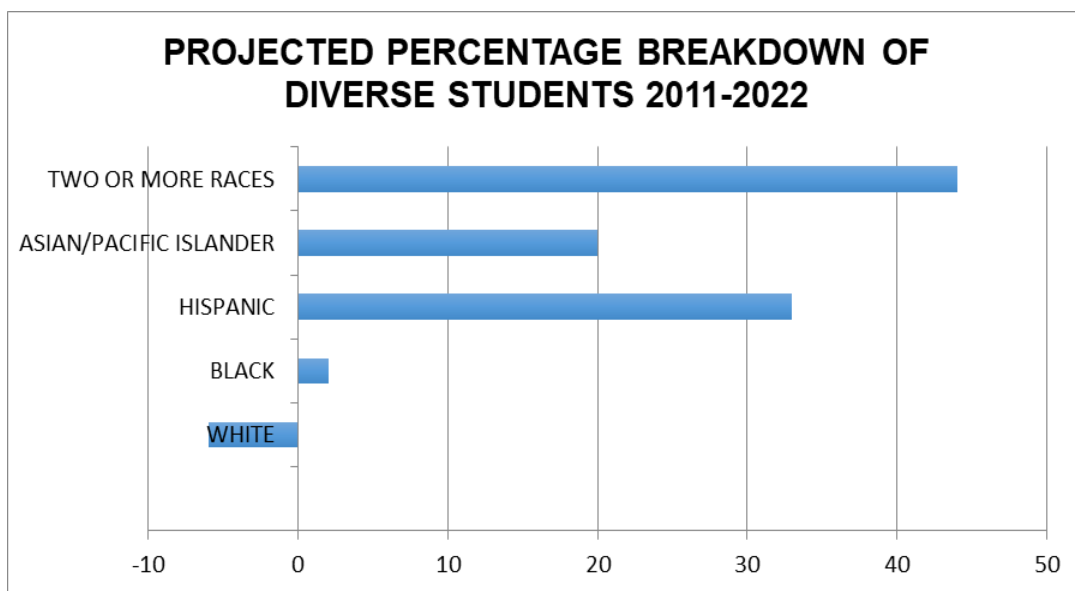


Chart 4: Number of Students Aged 5-17 Speaking a Language Other than English at Home
(2009-2014)

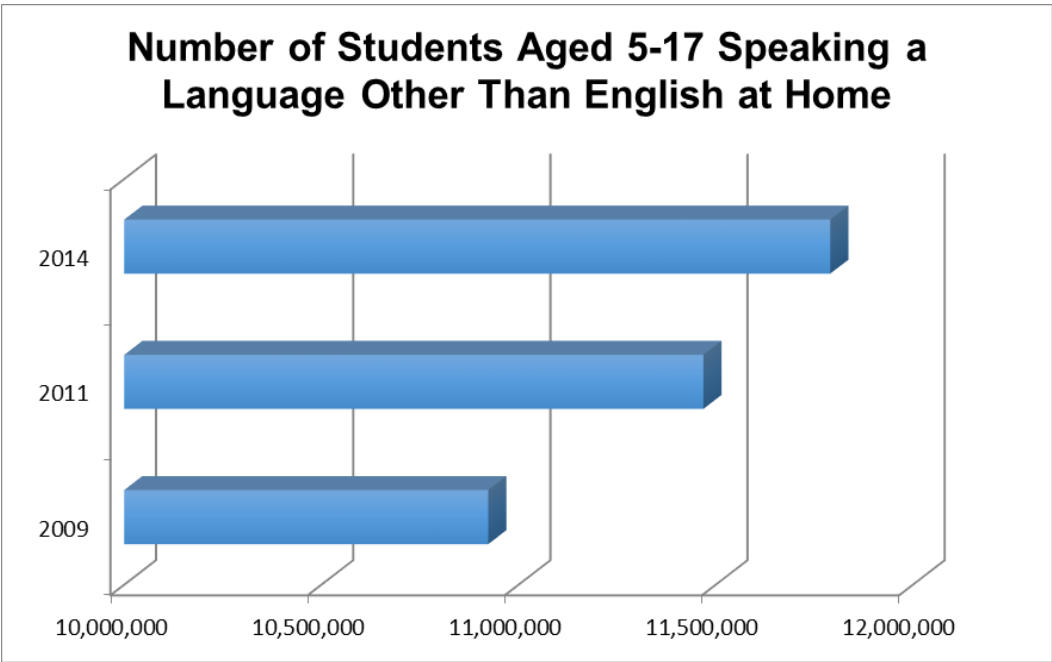
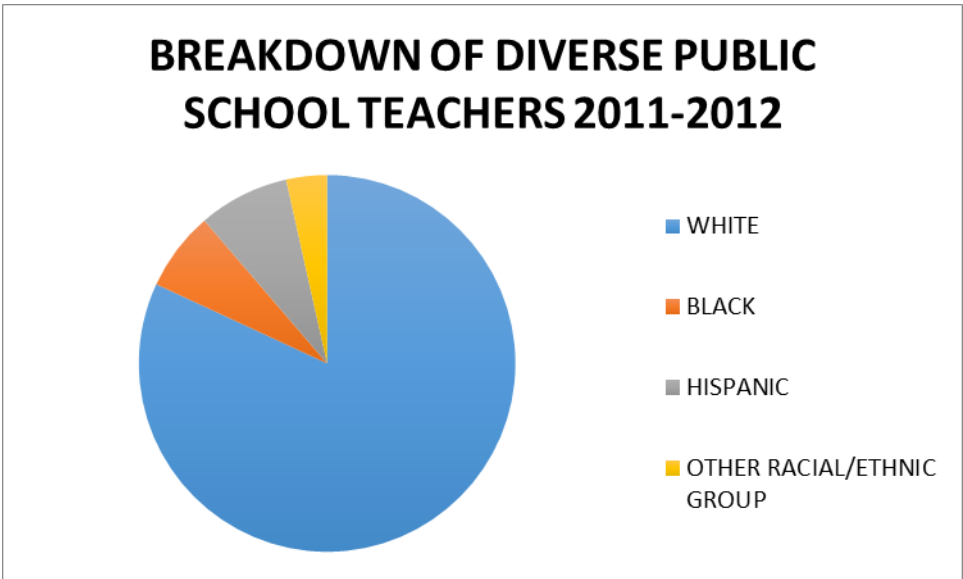


Chart 5: Percentage of Diverse Public School Teachers Elementary and Secondary (2011-2012)



APPENDIX B

PRE-SURVEY

Please answer the questions below as much as you are able to.

Year at Seton Hill:

Gender:

Age:

Have you ever traveled outside of the United States prior to the trip to Costa Rica? (Y/N):

- If yes, where and when:

What do you expect to see in Costa Rica?

What do you expect to do in Costa Rica?

Why did you decide to participate in the Costa Rica field experience?

How do you expect the academic levels of the Costa Rican students to be like?

How do you expect the teachers and teaching to be like in Costa Rica?

What do you think your teaching experience will be like in Costa Rica?

What kinds of challenges, if any, do you think you will face in Costa Rica?

What do you hope to gain by completing an international field experience? What is your goal from this program?

Please define who a “diverse student” is:

Please define who a “culturally and linguistically diverse student” is:

Have you taught culturally and linguistically diverse students in the US prior to traveling to Costa Rica?

- If yes, please briefly describe your experience:

Have you taught diverse students, in general, in the US prior to traveling to Costa Rica?

- If yes, please briefly describe your experience:

Do you think that by participating in this trip to Costa Rica you will be more prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students in the U.S.?

- If yes, please describe some of the elements of this trip which could best prepare you to be able to do that:

Do you think that by participating in this trip to Costa Rica you will be more prepared to teach diverse students, in general, in the U.S.?

- If yes, please describe some of the elements of this trip which could best prepare you to be able to do that:

Please describe any additional feelings and/or beliefs you have towards the idea of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students:

Please describe any additional feelings and/or beliefs you have towards the idea of teaching diverse students, in general:

What, if anything, makes you anxious when you think about teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students?

What, if anything, makes you anxious when you think about teaching diverse students, in general?

How do you think it feels for a culturally and linguistically diverse student when they first come to the U.S. and begin schooling?

What can teachers and administrators do to ease in a culturally and linguistically diverse student into their school/the U.S. system of education?

On a scale of 1-5, please rate the following:

(1 = Not at all; 2 = somewhat; 3 = no feelings either way at this time; 4= willing/confident; 5 = very willing/confident)

How willing are you to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students?

How willing are you to teach diverse students, in general?

How confident do you feel in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students?

How confident do you feel in teaching diverse students, in general?

How confident do you feel in working with the family of a culturally and linguistically diverse student?

APPENDIX C

POST-SURVEY

Please answer the questions below as much as you are able to.

PLEASE USE A DIFFERENT FONT OR DIFFERENT COLOR OF TYPE
WHEN YOU ARE ANSWERING QUESTIONS. PLEASE AND THANK YOU
EVERYONE!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT!! ☺

BACKGROUND AND COMFORT LEVEL WITH LANGUAGE/INTERACTION

Year at Seton Hill:

Gender:

Age:

Have you ever traveled outside of the United States prior to the trip to Costa Rica? (Y/N):

- If yes, where and when:

Did you speak Spanish prior to going to Costa Rica?

- If yes, how did it help (or hinder) you on this trip?
- If no, how did it help (or hinder) you on this trip?

Did you attempt to speak any Spanish to Costa Ricans while on this trip?

How frequently did you attempt to speak to/interact with Costa Ricans (students and host families are not included) while on trips outside of the school (on a scale of 1-5; 1 = not at all, 5 = very frequently)?

How uncomfortable did you feel, if any, around Costa Ricans who spoke little to no English? (on a scale of 1-5; 1 = not at all, 5 = very uncomfortable)?

EXPECTATIONS, GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM

Please describe one defining moment of this trip for you either in daily life and/or in the classroom while in Costa Rica:

How did the trip meet and/or exceed what you thought you would see in Costa Rica?

How did the trip meet and/or exceed what you thought you would do in Costa Rica?

What was your original goal by completing this international field experience? Did you reach this goal? How?

Name 2-3 things you gained from this international field experience:

Were the academic levels of the Costa Rican students what you expected them to be? How so?

Were your expectations of the teachers and teaching in Costa Rica what you expected them to be? How so?

Was your teaching experience in Costa Rica what you expected it to be? How so?

CHALLENGES FACED WHILE IN COSTA RICA AND SOLUTIONS/ATTEMPTED SOLUTIONS

What kinds of challenges did you face in daily life in Costa Rica? How were they solved/attempted to be solved?

What kinds of challenges did you face in the classroom in Costa Rica? How were they solved/attempted to be solved?

DEFINITIONS OF DIVERSITY

Please define who a “diverse student” is:

Please define who a “culturally and linguistically diverse student” is:

CONNECTING THE INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM TO THE U.S. CLASSROOM

Do you think that by participating in this trip to Costa Rica you are now more prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students in the U.S.?

- If yes, please describe some of the elements of this trip which best prepared you to be able to do that:
- If no, please describe why:

Do you think that by participating in this trip to Costa Rica you are now more prepared to teach diverse students, in general, in the U.S.?

- If yes, please describe some of the elements of this trip which best prepared you to be able to do that:
- If no, please describe why:

Do you think this international practicum has helped to prepare you to be able to adapt to challenging situations in the U.S. classroom?

- If yes, please describe how:
- If no, please describe why not:

Do you think this international practicum has helped to prepare you to be able to adapt to challenging situations in the U.S. classroom?

- If yes, please describe how:
- If no, please describe why not:

Please describe any additional feelings and/or beliefs you have now, post-trip, towards the idea of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students:

Please describe any additional feelings and/or beliefs you have now, post-trip, towards the idea of teaching diverse students, in general:

What, if anything, makes you anxious when you think about teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students, post-trip?

What, if anything, makes you anxious when you think about teaching diverse students, in general, post-trip?

How do you think it feels for a culturally and linguistically diverse student when they first come to the U.S. and begin schooling?

What can teachers and administrators do to ease in a culturally and linguistically diverse student into their school/the U.S. system of education?

ADAPTATION, DISORIENTATION, RAPPORT BUILDING

Describe how you feel that you built rapport, if at all, with the students you worked with in Costa Rica? (Please note whether you worked exclusively with Pre-K/K students OR the Middle/High School students OR both—IF both, please identify how you feel that you built rapport with each group):

How did you adapt to the culture and to the international practicum itself?

Did you feel disoriented at all during the trip (Y/N)?

- If yes, when/why?

How disoriented did you feel most days while on the trip? On a scale of 1-5, (5= MOST disoriented; 1 = not at all):

Did you ever feel like “the other” or “the outsider” during the trip? (Y/N):

- If Yes, please list an example:
- If Yes, please list with what frequency you felt this way, on a scale of 1-5 (5 = very frequently, 1 = not at all):

Did you have a cultural translator during this trip? (Y/N):

- If yes, who was that person and how did they help in translating the culture?

WILLINGNESS AND CONFIDENCE POST-TRIP

On a scale of 1-5, please rate each of the following, POST-TRIP:

(1 = Not at all; 2 = somewhat; 3 = no feelings either way at this time; 4= willing/confident; 5 = very willing/confident)

How willing are you to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students?

How willing are you to teach diverse students, in general?

How confident do you feel in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students?

How confident do you feel in teaching diverse students, in general?

How confident do you feel in working with the family of a culturally and linguistically diverse student?

How willing are you now to tackle challenging situations, in general, in the U.S. classroom?

APPENDIX D

FINDINGS AND CODING CATEGORIES

FINDINGS	CATEGORIES
1. Program participants did not capitalize on opportunities to initiate relationships with Costa Rican students outside of the classroom nor with the general Costa Rican population.	Demonstrating engagement, leadership, taking initiative, and building relationships outside of the classroom.
2. Program participants became empathetic toward the students they were serving and this developed into their increased willingness to serve these students. Empathy and willingness combined to help build their disposition to become change agents and demonstrate for other educators and administrators how to care for, welcome, and serve culturally and linguistically diverse students.	Building relationships through empathy, making students feel comfortable/welcome and becoming change agents.
3. Program participants who were able to access students' funds of knowledge were also able to engage students in learning and relationship building at various ages and at various English language levels.	Engaging students in learning by accessing students' funds of knowledge through using a variety of instructional methods (e.g., group work, hands-on learning, bi-lingual classroom), seeing that all students bring experiences to the table and are capable of learning, using students' prior knowledge to scaffold their learning, communicating with students at a variety of ages and English language levels.
4. Program participants were able to push themselves out of their comfort zone and adapt to challenging situations both in the classroom and with the international field program itself. This led to their increased confidence in their teaching abilities overall and with serving culturally and linguistically diverse learners. This finding also demonstrates how increased confidence led to program participants' deciding that teaching is the right profession for them.	Confidence, willingness, pushing outside comfort zone, working with/supporting peers, becoming more confident with change/challenges, facing challenges, being willing to welcome diverse students to their school and showing others how to as well.

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