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ESL Teachers' Perceptions of Intercultural Sensitivity Training in K-12 U.S. Classrooms

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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Walden University
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MPhil, Walden University, 2021

MUEd, Union University, 2012

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Recent studies have suggested that intercultural sensitivity can improve intercultural relationships and that training increases English as a second language (ESL) teachers' intercultural sensitivity. However, research investigating teachers' perceptions of their training in intercultural sensitivity is limited. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ESL teachers' perceptions of their experiences with training and professional development (PD) toward becoming more interculturally sensitive in K-12 U.S. classrooms. The conceptual framework was Chen and Starosta's concept of intercultural sensitivity, as a concept from their theory of intercultural communication competence. The research questions addressed the teachers' perceptions of their experiences with training and PD and what additional training and PD they would like to have in the future. The participants were 12 practicing ESL teachers with at least 2 years of classroom experience. Each participant was interviewed once using a semistructured, in-depth interview. The data were analyzed through open coding to allow themes to emerge, which led to three main findings: immersive training or experiences increased intercultural sensitivity, interactive training or experiences increased intercultural sensitivity, and available training or experiences are insufficient to increase intercultural sensitivity. Teachers also perceived additional immersive or interactive training would improve their intercultural sensitivity. Positive social change may occur as teacher educators improve opportunities for teachers to grow in intercultural sensitivity, encouraging stronger interpersonal relationships between teachers and students.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work first and foremost to my darling, patient husband, Marcus, who looked at me a little sideways when I first said: I think I am going to get a PhD. But from that first moment, and every day since, he has supported and encouraged me. He has dried a lot of tears and provided endless amounts of space for me to read, write, and repeat. I cannot ever thank him enough for his love and support, for always being my partner in everything and every way.

I also dedicate this work to my children. I started this work as a newlywed with no children. I end it having had six pregnancies, two adoptions, two miscarriages, and several foster children. I hope, through my perseverance, to inspire all my children to dream big and accomplish whatever they set their minds to do.

I also could never have done this work without the support of my mother and sisters who have listened tirelessly to my celebrations and setbacks and coached me along the way. I'm also grateful for my father and brothers who have asked about my work and research. I have completed this work with pride to be the first person in my family to receive a doctoral degree. I dedicate this work to my grandmother, Rose Marie, who loved to study and would be so proud of me, her namesake grandchild.

Finally, I am eternally grateful to my God for everything He has created me to be and surrounding me with His love. I am grateful for His constant reminders, both big and small, that He has a purpose for me and for this work. I cannot wait to see how He uses it to better the world in which I live.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank my chair, Dr. John Flohr, and my methodologist, Dr. Cheryl Keen, for their unwavering support throughout my doctoral career. I met them both during my first residency and they both continued to inspire and encourage me over the many, many years it took to complete this work. They both pushed me, comforted me, and answered my thousands of emails and questions. They kept me focused on the final goal until I made it and I am forever grateful for their help. I could not have done it without them.

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Melda Yildiz who inspired me to dig a little deeper into the world of ESL and encouraged me to ask more questions and read new authors.

I would also like to recognize the support of my friends and coworkers who asked me repeatedly: “When will you be Dr. Clark?” which motivated me even more to keep pushing forward, even when it felt impossible. I especially want to name Dr. C3, Liz, and Emmie who have been there for me in both the joys and sorrows of the journey. I’m grateful for them as they battled for me in prayer and listened to all my whining and self-doubt.

I am so grateful for the many times I was reminded: it is not about the length of the journey; it is about reaching the destination. My path took a lot of twists and turns and unexpected surprises, but I am grateful to have finally reached the finish line!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Diversity in the U.S. education system has increased over the past two decades (de Brey et al., 2019). In 2017, 54% of K-12 students were non-White, which is projected to grow to 56% by 2029 (Hussar et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the teaching profession is 80% White (Hussar et al., 2020; see also Kim & Connelly, 2019). Thus, teachers' intercultural sensitivity becomes a primary objective (Arcagok & Yilmaz, 2020; Civitillo et al., 2018), which refers to the desire to see, appreciate, and accept cultural or ethnic differences (Kim & Connelly, 2019; Rahimi et al., 2020). Intercultural sensitivity is one dimension of intercultural communication competence (ICC), which is the ability to respond appropriately in various cultural settings (Bagwe & Haskollar, 2020).

Further, in 2017, 10.1% of U.S. students—5 million—qualified for language assistance programs; these English language learners (ELLs) came from various cultures and language backgrounds (Hussar et al., 2020). English as a second language (ESL) teachers are responsible for providing the language assistance ELLs need to become proficient in academic English. However, only 39.3% of teachers in the United States have taken a course preparing them to work with ELLs (Taie & Westat, 2020). Additionally, teachers report feeling underwhelmed by their training in multicultural education and are often unprepared to serve ELLs (OECD, 2019; TESOL International Association, 2013). For example, the Teaching and Learning International Survey by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019) compared trends across 31 countries, reporting that 30% of teachers in those countries work in culturally or linguistically diverse schools, and 33% did not feel prepared to work in a

multicultural setting. Furthermore, in one of the highest areas of need, teachers in those countries reported that foci on communicating with people from other cultures and teaching in a multicultural setting were the least likely to occur in training sessions.

Understanding teachers' perceptions may aid teacher education programs in closing the gap between teachers' needs and their training (Eren & Kurt, 2019; Rahimi et al., 2020). Positive social change may come as ESL teachers feel more prepared to work in their multicultural classrooms. As teachers increase intercultural sensitivity, they may respond to their students and families with more understanding and grace, building a positive relationship among teachers, students, and parents. In Chapter 1, I share an overview of the study, including background information, the problem and purpose statements, and the research questions. Next, I provide definitions of key terms and concepts based on the conceptual framework. The nature of the study, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance conclude the chapter. The final section is a summary, which includes a transition to Chapter 2, the literature review.

Background

Diversity in U.S. schools has increased in this new millennium (de Brey et al., 2019). Between 2000 and 2017, the percentage of White students in K-12 decreased from 61% to 48% across the country (Hussar et al., 2020). Likewise, the percentage of Black students decreased (17% to 15%), but the Hispanic percentage increased (16% to 27%), and other minorities also increased (4% to 6%). If the current trends continue, minority students will potentially make up 56% of the population by 2029. Additionally, many minority students in the United States are ELLs. In a recent report based on 2017–2018

survey data from the National Center for Education Statistics, ELLs made up 10.1% of the U.S. K-12 population—about 5 million students (Hussar et al., 2020). The percentage of ELLs in public schools increased between 2000 and 2017 in 43 states, living mainly in urban and suburban areas. They come from various cultures and language backgrounds and qualify for additional language assistance programs through the federal government to access the classroom content such as the Every Student Succeeds Act, which included provisions and funding to ensure high-quality ELL education (Hussar et al., 2020; TESOL International Association, 2013).

While the diversity rate increases in the United States and among students, the demographic attributes of the teacher pool remain relatively stable. In the same study based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics, most teachers were White: 80% in public schools and 85% in private schools (Hussar et al., 2020). With only 24% of public-school teachers being men, White women dominate the field (Hussar et al., 2020; Kim & Connelly, 2019). Thus, most teachers move into education from the same cultural vantage point: monolingual and monocultural (Fonseca-Greber, 2010; Mellom et al., 2018; Pourdavood & Yan, 2020). Students, however, enter the classroom from a variety of cultural backgrounds. As teachers and students come together, they create a multicultural learning environment (Segura-Robles & Parra-González, 2019; Taylor et al., 2016), with a cultural imbalance between teachers and students that can limit multicultural learning (Jones et al., 2017; Pourdavood & Yan, 2020).

Because of the growing diversity in schools, multicultural education is necessary to contribute to better interpersonal relationships and positive social change (Banks,

2014). Moreover, when both teachers and students have the opportunities to be agents of their own reformation, positive change is likely to occur (see also Altan, 2018; Friere, 2016; Pourdavood & Yan, 2020). Multicultural education is not merely mixing different cultures and ethnic groups in a classroom; it requires intentionality and focus for success (Banks, 2014). Positive interactions are needed between members of different ethnic groups with common goals and intergroup cooperation (Banks, 2014; see also Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). However, leaving these interactions to chance has often been found to increase prejudices and intergroup tension (Allport, 1954; Banks, 2014; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Teachers are responsible for creating positive intergroup experiences but need help and focused training (Altan, 2018; Banks, 2014; Chen & Starosta, 2005; Parkhouse et al., 2019; Pourdavood & Yan, 2020). Teachers need support to reach students of other cultures such as training focused on culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000). Culturally responsive teaching, founded on multicultural educational theories, stems from and builds teachers' ICC and focuses on intercultural sensitivity (Kotluck & Kocakaya, 2018).

Though teachers need to be lifelong learners to provide their students with the best education with professional development (PD) throughout their careers (Eren & Kurt, 2019; OECD, 2019), teachers often receive inadequate training in multicultural education or working with ELLs (Altan, 2018; Mellom et al., 2018; OECD, 2019; Taylor et al., 2016). Fewer than half of the states require preservice learning in working with ELLs (TESOL International Association, 2013). Though there are about 5 million ELLs in the United States, only 39.3% of teachers have taken a course preparing them to work

with ELL students (Taie & Westat, 2020). Working with students of other cultures or languages is rarely included in teacher education programs (OECD, 2019). Many teachers desire to help all students succeed but are overwhelmingly unprepared to do so (Gay, 2000; see also Taylor et al., 2016). Teachers lack the tools and support necessary to reach all their students, specifically those with cultural and linguistic differences (Parkhouse et al., 2019).

In addition to a lack of training, though there are limited federal requirements for preparing core content teachers to reach minority students, ESL teachers have even fewer regulations. ESL teachers specialize in preparing ELLs to become linguistically ready for the classroom demands (TESOL International Association, 2013). Federal law provides for ELLs, but it does not include ESL teachers under the Highly Qualified Teachers definitions and regulations; these requirements are passed to states that may or may not have a method for defining a highly qualified ESL teacher (TESOL International Association, 2013). Although these teachers aim to raise their multicultural students' linguistic abilities, lack of clarity around their positions and inefficient support and training often hamper their efforts (Farrell, 2019; TESOL International Association, 2013; Tolosa et al., 2018).

ESL teachers face multicultural settings daily since they interact with students of various cultures and heritages (Mellom et al., 2018). Nevertheless, ESL teachers have complained of being unsatisfied with their training or feeling as if their training "failed" them (Farrell, 2019; Taylor et al., 2016; Yurtseven & Altun, 2015). One reason ESL teachers need ICC training (Irwandi et al., 2018; Kazykhankyzy & Alagözlü, 2019) is

because they feel unprepared to face these students (Farrell, 2019). This study addressed this gap by exploring ESL teachers' perceptions of their experiences with training and PD toward becoming more interculturally sensitive in K-12 U.S. classrooms. Positive social change may occur when teacher training programs find ways to bridge this gap.

Problem Statement

There is a gap in the research on ESL teachers' experiences with training and PD to support intercultural sensitivity in their K-12 U.S. classrooms (Alaei & Nosrati, 2018; Rahimi et al., 2020). Though many studies addressed intercultural sensitivity and ESL teachers (see Rahimi et al., 2020), few focused on training and even fewer based in the United States. Without a greater understanding of ESL teachers' experiences with training about intercultural sensitivity in their K-12 U.S. classrooms, particularly ELLs, students' achievement may be diminished, and teachers' frustrations may rise. Though research has shown teachers have a willingness for intercultural communication, they need training for to improve ICC (Lei, 2021). Based on meta-analyses and other research on teacher perceptions, training that includes self-reflection may be more beneficial to develop ICC (Bagwe & Haskollar, 2020; Bragg et al., 2021; Qadhi & Floyd, 2021). Teachers prefer PD with a strong focus on practical application and learning about culturally diverse students (Yücedağ & Şevik, 2021).

The current study built on the existing literature by looking at a new participant population and how teacher training relates to the research on intercultural sensitivity. Research in this area could provide teacher education programs with feedback on improving intercultural sensitivity for ESL teachers; the findings could extend to general

education teacher training. Additionally, findings from the current study could enable ESL teachers to increase their intercultural sensitivity and improve their ICC. Growing in this way could help their ability to teach effectively and engage students from other cultures.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ESL teachers' perceptions of their experiences with training and PD toward becoming more interculturally sensitive in K-12 U.S. classrooms. I explored and analyzed eight to 12 ESL teachers' experiences to understand their perceptions of how their preservice and in-service training has affected their sensitivity toward other cultures. The phenomenon of interest for this study was ESL teachers' intercultural sensitivity.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What perceptions do K-12 U.S. ESL teachers have of their experiences with training and PD that may have increased their intercultural sensitivity?

Research Question 2: What training and PD practices do K-12 U.S. ESL teachers perceive would support them in increasing their intercultural sensitivity?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that grounded this study is intercultural sensitivity, a dimension of ICC, by Chen and Starosta (2005). Intercultural sensitivity is a dimension of the larger umbrella framework, ICC. ICC involves communicating to fit specific environments (Chen & Starosta, 2005, p. 241). Intercultural sensitivity involves accommodating and appreciating cultural differences through communication (Chen &

Starosta, 2005, p. 231). Further, intercultural sensitivity is the movement from ethnocentrism toward ethnorelativism, which sees all cultures as different but equal (Bennett, 2017). Intercultural sensitivity reflects the desire to learn and appreciate the diverse cultures encountered in a multicultural setting. Chen and Starosta (2005) listed six components that contribute to the growth of intercultural sensitivity: ethnorelativism, respect for cultural differences, adaptability, perspective-taking, open-mindedness, and acknowledgment of others' needs. These components describe the interculturally sensitive teacher as understanding and accommodating the different cultural needs of students in their classroom. I used this framework to look at U.S. K-12 ESL teachers' perceptions of their experiences with training and PD that may have increased their intercultural sensitivity. I elaborate on this conceptual framework in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this research was a basic qualitative inquiry from the social constructivist position, which focuses on discovering the way others make meaning in the world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The phenomenon of interest was how ESL teachers make meaning of their experiences with training and PD that may have increased their intercultural sensitivity. A basic qualitative study enabled me to explore how the participants make meaning of their own experiences. Participants were eight to 12 K-12 ESL teachers with at least 2 years of teaching experience. Participants were recruited via social media, and I used a semistructured interview protocol with each participant as the primary data source for this study. These interviews were collected online via Zoom video or phone and recorded and transcribed for accuracy. Finally, I used open coding

and inductive comparative analysis to look for categories and themes in the participants' responses.

Definitions

English as a second language (ESL)/English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers: In a North American context, ESL refers to those learning English as immigrants who plan to remain in an English-speaking context. EFL is used abroad for those studying English in a more temporary setting (Nayar, 1997). For this study, I use the U.S. term *ESL* unless referring to a study where the authors used EFL. ESL teacher refers to anyone teaching non-native speakers of English in a classroom setting.

Intercultural communication competence (ICC): Bennett and Bennett (2004) described ICC as "the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts" (p. 149). For this study, ICC is understanding, speaking, and behaving in a manner that enables the speaker to be understood in a culturally different environment. ICC is the larger framework to which intercultural sensitivity belongs.

Intercultural sensitivity: Intercultural sensitivity is wanting to understand and appreciate cultural differences (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Dai & Chen, 2015). Another researcher described it as the "ability to recognize those who are culturally different … and to be respectful when interacting with them" (Kim & Connelly, 2019, p. 8). For this study, intercultural sensitivity is desiring to learn about cultural differences and valuing those differences.

Training and professional development: According to Eren and Kurt (2019), training prepares preservice teachers to enter the classroom to help them start as teachers. In contrast, PD is an ongoing process designed to help teachers continue to grow and improve their craft (Eren & Kurt, 2019; OECD, 2019). For this study, I refer to both training and PD to encompass all the learning teachers have done throughout their careers. Allowing teachers to reflect on both their pre-service and in-service learning is important because "teachers' development must be viewed in terms of lifelong learning, with initial teacher education acting as the foundation for ongoing learning" (OECD, 2019, p. 19).

Assumptions

This research study was based on several assumptions. One assumption was that participants openly shared their opinions and experiences throughout the interview. Their responses allowed me to understand their perceptions and how they make meaning of their experiences. Another assumption was that as ESL teachers, the participants who responded to the invitation recognized the need for intercultural interactions. As ESL teachers, I assumed they had a basic understanding of interculturality and had opportunities to interact with students of other cultural backgrounds.

Scope and Delimitations

The problem in this study was limited to in-service K-12 U.S. ESL teachers' experiences with any training and PD that may have increased their intercultural sensitivity. Recruitment occurred via social media, and ESL teachers from any state in the United States were eligible to participate. This study did not include other ESL

teachers outside of K-12, such as preschool or adult ESL teachers. In addition, I did not include teachers of other subjects or preservice teachers who have not yet entered the classroom.

Limitations

Although this study may benefit ESL teachers, ELLs, and their families, and the teacher education programs, there are limitations. One limitation was in the use of social media snowball sampling for recruiting. The participants in the study did not represent a random sample of teachers across the United States. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, another limitation was a lack of quantitative data demonstrating the level of intercultural sensitivity, according to an appropriate survey, of the participants. The information in the study relied on their self-reports given in their interview.

Another area of concern was researcher bias. One such area of potential bias was my familiarity with ESL teacher training. Having been an ESL teacher for many years, I brought my own experiences to the study. To ensure that I accounted for my role as the researcher, I kept a research journal and an audit trail which was helpful in the triangulation of data. I also asked my committee to review my analysis and interpretations. These steps helped lower researcher bias and enhanced the study's trustworthiness (Ruona, 2005). Another possible bias that could have influenced the outcomes was in asking different interview questions to the participants. I also utilized an interview guide to create effective questions and avoid bias (Turner, 2010).

Significance

Teachers may not become masters of multicultural education without skillful training and PD (Banks, 2014; Gay, 2000). Without adequate training and PD, multicultural education, and its foundation of intercultural sensitivity, students may not succeed (Taylor et al., 2016). The results of this study may benefit teacher training and PD programs, specifically those who work with ESL teachers. Training teachers to raise their intercultural sensitivity may benefit all stakeholders of multicultural education. These teacher training and PD programs may gain perspective on how teachers interpret their training and can make changes to increase intercultural sensitivity.

Findings from this study may further enable training to become more effective and efficient, producing stronger teachers who have stronger ICC and intercultural sensitivity. Increasing intercultural sensitivity may better equip the teachers to communicate with their multicultural students with competence. Additionally, improved intercultural sensitivity may improve relationships with parents and other stakeholders. Positive social change may occur if ESL teachers are better prepared to interact with their students with sensitivity, thereby connecting to the whole student. This social change will enable teachers to meet the students where they are and better prepare students to become global citizens.

Summary

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ESL teachers' perceptions of their experiences with training and PD toward becoming more interculturally sensitive in K-12 U.S. classrooms. Intercultural sensitivity is a dimension

of ICC and a prerequisite to engaging in culturally diverse situations. Previous research demonstrated that training ESL teachers could improve their intercultural sensitivity (Rahimi et al., 2020), but I could not uncover sufficient research on ESL teachers' perceptions of their training. The research questions for this study focused on the teachers' perceptions of their experiences with training and PD that may have increased their intercultural sensitivity and what supports they would like to have in intercultural sensitivity training and PD. This study was a basic qualitative study using 12 semistructured interviews. In Chapter 2, I present a more thorough description of the conceptual framework and a review of the literature on ICC, intercultural sensitivity, and teacher training and PD.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study addressed the lack of information on ESL teachers' experiences with training and PD about intercultural sensitivity in their K-12 U.S. classrooms. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ESL teachers' perceptions of their experiences with training and PD toward becoming more interculturally sensitive in K-12 U.S. classrooms. Previous research demonstrated that intercultural sensitivity and ICC improve intercultural relationships between teachers and students (Alaei & Nosrati, 2018; Cuartas Álvarez, 2020). Other studies have found that teacher training in intercultural sensitivity can improve their practice (Civitillo et al., 2018; Segura-Robles & Parra-González, 2019). However, there was a gap in the research about the connection between training and PD for intercultural sensitivity and ESL teachers. To my knowledge, there was limited research about ESL teachers' intercultural sensitivity in the United States. Therefore, this study focused on K-12 U.S. ESL teachers' experiences with training and PD in intercultural sensitivity.

In this chapter, I review the literature search strategy used to find literature sources. The conceptual framework is also described to provide the foundation of the study. In the literature review section, I analyzed the empirical literature related to ICC, intercultural sensitivity, teacher training and PD, and a review of methodologies. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary and conclusion.

Literature Search Strategy

I utilized several databases and search engines throughout the research process to find information on my topic, primarily published within the last 5 years. I searched

through ERIC, EBSCO Host, ProQuest, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, Sage, and Google Scholar. I used the following keywords and phrases both individually and in concert with each other: *intercultural sensitivity, ICC or intercultural communication competence, ESL or EFL teachers, U.S. ESL teachers, English language teaching, teachers for multicultural classrooms, intercultural competence formation, ESL teacher training, ESL teacher professional development, diversity engagement, multicultural education, and ESL teachers, training teachers, ESL teacher development, ESL teacher perceptions on teacher development,* and *teacher professional development.* I also used strategies for finding additional search terms, such as reading abstracts and dissertations and looking through the reference lists of articles I had already found.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was intercultural sensitivity, a dimension of ICC defined by Chen and Starosta (2005). The concept of intercultural sensitivity guided the methodology and interview questions. This section explores ICC with its definitions and components and delves into intercultural sensitivity as one of the four dimensions of ICC.

ICC

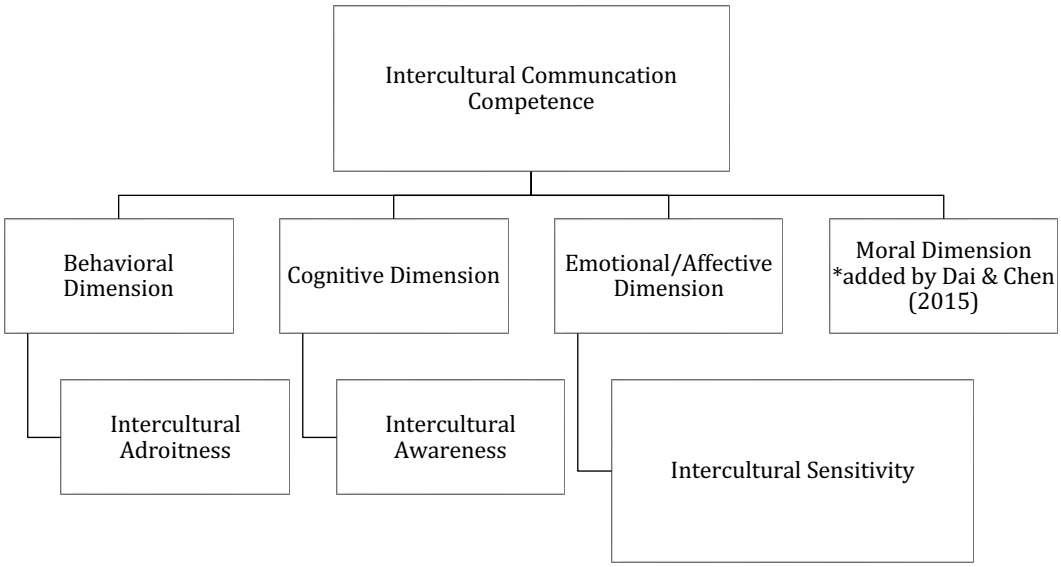
Defining ICC has been a challenge (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Dai & Chen, 2015; Deardorff, 2011; Zhou, 2011). Part of the problem is that *communication* and *culture* are complex concepts that span multiple fields and purposes (see Brislin, 2000; Chen & Starosta, 2005; Dai & Chen, 2015). Brislin (2000) called culture “an amorphous concept” (p. 4) that contains a plethora of aspects. Dai and Chen (2015) centered on the

perspective that ICC should focus on "reciprocal interactions and harmonious relationships" (p. 100) instead of knowledge acquisition. Alternatively, Byram (1997) considered ICC from the standpoint of language learning and its bearing on culture, though Byram cautioned against definitions that reduced ICC to one-way knowledge acquisition. However, Bennett's (2017) definition of ICC focused on linguistic competence with movement from cultural competence in one's own culture to intercultural competence. This definition is also broad and not focused on the dimensions that build ICC. Researchers have also broadly defined ICC as "*effective* and *appropriate* behavior and communication in intercultural situations" (Deardorff, 2011, p. 66) as well as "the ability to acknowledge, respect, tolerate, and integrate cultural differences" (Chen & Starosta, 1998, p. 28) and communicate appropriately in a specific environment (Chen & Starosta, 2005, p. 241).

In terms of developing a model for ICC, for Chen and Starosta (1998), ICC is a multidimensional concept consisting of knowledge, attitude, emotion, and behavior, with three dimensions: intercultural sensitivity, intercultural awareness, and intercultural adroitness (see Figure 1). Byram (1997) similarly defined ICC as a concept involving knowledge, attitudes, and skills, which can be divided into affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Later, Dai and Chen (2015) saw ICC as both a process and the outcome of that process; therefore, they included a fourth dimension, *moral*, in describing ICC to discuss the important of self-restraint and self-control against harmful factors like prejudice and intolerance (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Flowchart of Intercultural Communication Competence and Intercultural Sensitivity



Intercultural awareness is the cognitive dimension of ICC and consists of understanding how culture affects thinking and behavior (Chen & Starosta, 1998). Intercultural adroitness is the behavioral dimension, referring to the ability to reach a goal or accomplish a task (Chen & Starosta, 2000); it is ICC's practical side (Dai & Chen, 2015). Intercultural sensitivity is the affective dimension; it focuses on being ready and willing to understand and appreciate cultural differences (Chen & Starosta, 1998). Intercultural sensitivity is the emotional side of ICC, the drive to learn more about another culture and build intercultural relationships (Dai & Chen, 2015).

In this study, I used Chen's and Starosta's (2000) three-dimension definition of ICC, particularly the dimension of intercultural sensitivity. Because intercultural sensitivity focuses on the desire to interact with other cultures, it functions as a prerequisite for ICC. For the present study, ICC was defined as understanding, speaking,

and behaving in a manner that enables the speaker to be understood in a culturally different environment. Thus, ICC is the larger framework to which the dimension of intercultural sensitivity belongs.

Intercultural Sensitivity

Though ICC is the larger conceptual framework, intercultural sensitivity functions as a dimension within the framework. This section contains an explanation of Chen's and Starosta's (2000) views on intercultural sensitivity. I further support the understanding of intercultural sensitivity by comparing other approaches to intercultural sensitivity with that of Chen and Starosta.

As mentioned, Chen and Starosta's (2000) definition divides ICC into three dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The affective dimension, intercultural sensitivity, lies in the realm of emotion (Dai & Chen, 2015). It is the desire or motivation to understand and appreciate other cultures and their differences (Chen & Starosta, 2000, 2005), which helps individuals build relationships (Dai & Chen, 2015, p. 104). Intercultural sensitivity is a dynamic concept that is both a prerequisite and a dimension of ICC (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Dai & Chen, 2015; Hammer et al., 2003; Wolff & Borzikowsky, 2018). Intercultural sensitivity improves the ability to achieve ICC (Hammer et al., 2003). As people desire to interact more with other cultures, they modify their behavior to match the skills necessary to have positive interactions (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). As they have positive interactions, they are motivated to learn more, continuing the cycle (Bennett, 2017; Byram, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 2005; Dai & Chen, 2015).

In defining intercultural sensitivity, Chen and Starosta (2005) found six foundational components that build intercultural sensitivity:

- Ethnorelativism
- Respect for cultural differences
- Adaptability
- Perspective-taking
- Open-mindedness
- Acknowledgment of others' needs

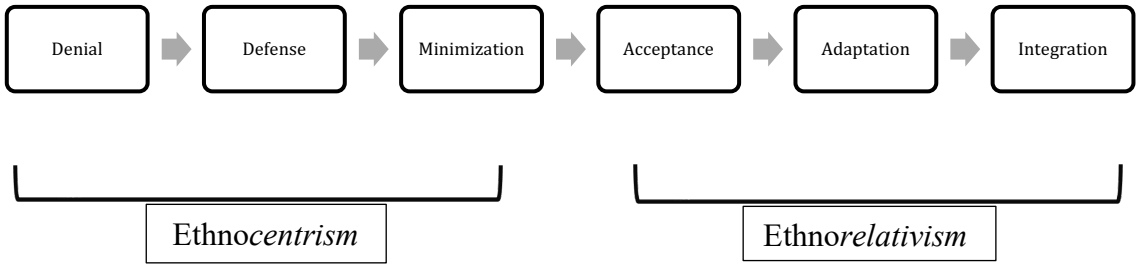
These six characteristics demonstrate a person who has an openness to others. This person avoids a myopic perspective and embraces intercultural interactions (Chen & Starosta, 2005). The following sections describe each of the six components that make up intercultural sensitivity based on Chen and Starosta's research.

Ethnorelativism

For the first component, ethnorelativism, Chen and Starosta (2005) drew on the work of Bennett (1986, 2017). Bennett (1986) created a theory of intercultural sensitivity and the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS; see also Bennett, 2017; Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Ethnocentrism, the opposite of ethnorelativism, reflects the first three of the six stages in the DMIS, as demonstrated in Figure 2. Ethnorelativism reflects the later three stages in the DMIS.

Figure 2

Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity



Note. Adapted from "The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity," by M. J. Bennett, 2014 (https://www.idrinstitute.org/dmis/)

The first three ethnocentric stages are denial, defense, and minimization. Those with an ethnocentric worldview believe their culture to be the center of reality and see all other cultures in light of their own. The three ethnocentric stages are followed by three ethnorelative stages: acceptance, adaptation, and integration. Those with a more ethnorelative viewpoint can place their culture in the context of other cultures. Ethnocentrism focuses on denying or avoiding cultural differences, whereas ethnorelativism embraces cultural differences (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Bennett (2017) saw the development of intercultural sensitivity as moving on a continuum from denial to integration, the goal being for individuals and organizations to move toward cultural integration.

For Chen and Starosta (2005), the narrowmindedness of ethnocentrism demonstrates three tendencies: a defensive stance toward one's own culture, stereotyping other cultures, and centering one's culture as the standard while negatively judging all others. They posited that ethnocentrism is related to egocentrism and racism. Prejudice

and ethnocentrism begin early in childhood and are fully formed by adolescence (Allport, 1954). Ethnocentrism is theorized as leading toward intolerance of outgroups or minority cultures (Dong et al., 2008). Ethnocentric members of the dominant culture tend to see multiculturalism as a threat to the status quo (Dong et al., 2008). Ethnocentric organizations and schools are not supportive environments for learning and growth for minority students.

In opposition to this stance, ethnorelativism sees all cultures as different but equal. Ethnorelative individuals see their culture as one of many, not the center against which to measure others (Chen & Starosta, 2005). Ethnorelative organizations seek out non-dominant cultures, are intentional about ICC training and PD, and promote intercultural practices and policies (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Ethnorelative organizations see culture for what it is: "all cultures in all their differences as on the same level, as equals." (Kendi, 2019, p. 91). Intercultural sensitivity is the opposite of ethnocentrism and encourages attentiveness toward cultural outgroups' needs (Chen, 2010).

Respect for Cultural Differences

According to Chen and Starosta (2005), ethnorelativism requires accepting cultural differences as a welcome part of everyday life. This level of respect means understanding that different cultures have different worldviews and interpret life differently. Learning to see and appreciate unfamiliar ways of interpreting the world is a culturally sensitive stance. As schools and teachers begin to interact with cultural outgroups more regularly, it is imperative to remember that people do not fall into

ethnorelativism unintentionally; it must be cultivated and taught (Bennett, 2017; Deardorff, 2011). Schools are responsible for preparing the next generation to enter society successfully and should reform to lower the prejudiced and ethnocentric viewpoints held by many teachers and administrators (Banks, 2014).

Adaptability

Adaptability or behavioral flexibility is an individual's ability to bend themselves to the needs of the situation. Interculturally sensitive people understand that because each culture is different, they must remain ready to adapt. These people remain willing to choose the most appropriate response to any given situation (Chen & Starosta, 2005).

Perspective-Taking

Though adaptability refers to changing behavior, perspective-taking is related to adapting to the mindset of another person (Chen & Starosta, 2005). Perspective-taking individuals can selflessly set aside their thoughts and take on another's feelings or reactions. In this way, interculturally sensitive people anticipate another's behavior and create rapport as an understanding person.

To train educators in ICC, they need intercultural sensitivity (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Dai & Chen, 2015). Teachers should be supported in their growth toward ethnorelativism and intercultural sensitivity through training and PD (Banks, 2014). This can lead to schools that are places of safety, growth, and learning for students of all cultures. Furthermore, as teachers grow in their intercultural sensitivity, students may benefit from the positive social change and gain a clearer multicultural perspective (Dong et al., 2008).

Open-Mindedness

For Chen and Starosta (2005), open-mindedness refers to one's ability to avoid rash judgments of culturally different others. They described the importance of training people to slow down and allow each interlocutor time to be heard and understood which builds positivity between groups. Avoiding judgment without sufficient evidence produces interculturally sensitive individuals who are trustworthy listeners.

Acknowledgment of Others' Needs

Finally, reflecting on the sixth of Chen's and Starosta's (2005) components of intercultural sensitivity, interculturally sensitive individuals can recognize the needs of culturally different others in an encounter. They are aware that cultural differences exist and consider those differences as a way of determining the action required. For these people, being interculturally sensitive leads from emotion to action, and they strive to validate the experience of the other person.

For the purposes of the present study, intercultural sensitivity is wanting to learn about cultural differences and valuing those differences. It consists of an ethnorelative mindset, respect for cultural differences, adaptability, perspective-taking, open-mindedness, and a willingness to acknowledge others' needs. Intercultural sensitivity is both a prerequisite for ICC and a dimension of ICC. These six components of intercultural sensitivity were used to guide the construction of the interview questions and probes and to interpret the results.

Empirical Literature Review of Key Constructs

The key constructs for this study were ICC, intercultural sensitivity, and teacher training and PD. These constructs are explored in-depth in this section. This section begins with research on ICC as it is the foundation for intercultural sensitivity.

ICC

ICC researchers have attempted to demonstrate its importance in practical settings where multiple cultures collide. At least three researchers have studied how ICC improves intercultural awareness or the ability to notice and reexamine personal biases. Using a qualitative narrative inquiry, Lin et al. (2020) interviewed an Australian English teacher living and working in Thailand. Lin et al. found that their participant re-examined his own cultural identity during the course of the interviews and became more interculturally competent through reflection. Cuartas Álvarez (2020) also found that teacher reflection advanced ICC by meeting in a study group with three in-service EFL teachers in Colombia over six weeks. The study group enabled the teachers to recognize their own biases and assumptions, to understand the importance of moving toward a more ethnorelative stance, and to look for ways to increase their own ICC to help improve their students' ICC.

In their meta-synthesis of 50 qualitative and quantitative studies, Yurtsever and Özel (2021) focused on the practical implications of intercultural awareness, a component of ICC, in the EFL classroom. Yurtsever and Özel found that although intercultural learning did not automatically equate to increased intercultural sensitivity, the studies suggested intercultural learning helped grow students' intercultural awareness and

prepare them to become more sensitive. However, another study suggests that more deliberate intervention may be necessary to increase ICC for both teachers and students. Tosuncuoglu (2019) surveyed the perceptions of ICC of 42 Turkish university ESL instructors and 183 of their students. Tosuncuoglu found that students lacked ICC perception but instructors had positive attitudes toward ICC. Based on the findings, Tosuncuoglu proposed incorporating ICC into teacher training programs and that further research be conducted to understand teachers' attitudes toward ICC development better.

Whereas the previous studies explored ways students' ICC might be improved via their teachers, Lei (2021) focused on the preservice teachers' ICC levels and the correlation between ICC and gender and ICC and family origin. Using Zhong's ICC self-rating scale to survey 186 university students in China who were studying to be ESL teachers, Lei found that the participants' ICC was satisfactory but not ideal; females scored higher than males, and urban students scored higher than rural students. Lei posited that the differences could be accounted for by the ratio of female-to-male participants and by economic and demographic differences between urban and rural schools.

Lei (2021) looked at different demographical factors on ICC but Sarwari et al. (2018) researched the effects of multicultural interactions on ICC. Their participants were 130 postgraduate students in a Malaysian public university from different Asian and African countries. Their mixed-methods survey study utilized the Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire addressing some of the ICC components and interviewing nine students. The researchers found that engaging with intercultural peers improved the

students' self-perception of their ICC but that students did not feel equipped to handle intercultural conflict.

In another study addressing intercultural interactions and its impact on ICC, Wolff and Borzikowsky (2018) studied the impact of educational stays abroad on ICC. Their research was a quasi-experimental longitudinal study with 273 participants in Europe, which supported the hypothesis that an educational stay abroad improved ICC in the participants. They posited that ICC training might have better results on specific components of ICC than studying abroad since training can be tailored to a specific need.

ICC and Intercultural Sensitivity

One of the dimensions of ICC is intercultural sensitivity (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Wolff & Borzikowsky, 2018). Though the previous section analyzed studies focused solely on ICC, other studies addressed both ICC and intercultural sensitivity and the benefit of intercultural engagement. For instance, in Iran, Alaei and Nosrati (2018) focused on 167 in-service EFL teachers' ICC and intercultural sensitivity to see if there was any correlation between the two. They used the ICC questionnaire by Zhou (2011) and the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) by Chen and Starosta (2000) and used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the results of the self-reported surveys. Although Alaei and Nosrati did find a correlation between ICC and intercultural sensitivity, they noted low interaction confidence and cultural knowledge, which could affect teachers' ability to communicate in an intercultural setting. Their study agreed with Chen and Starosta's (2000) hypothesis that ICC and intercultural sensitivity are related but distinct. They also noted that their results matched those of Saricoban and Oz (2014),

who promoted ICC training for both EFL teachers and students. Based on their findings, Alaei and Nosrati proposed additional teacher training in ICC and intercultural sensitivity as well as more opportunities to engage with intercultural peers.

Also, in Iran, Nameni and Dowlatabadi (2019) focused on ICC and intercultural sensitivity in Iranian medical students. Their study hypothesized that the levels of ICC and intercultural sensitivity would be different between four different ethnic groups of students; to study this, they sampled 400 students in three Iranian universities. Using the same instruments as Alaei and Nosrati (2018), Nameni and Dowlatabadi found that one group, the Lor, had significantly lower results than the other three. They surmised that this was because the Lor were from smaller towns and had limited interactions with other cultures. Although the participants were not ESL teachers, they were highly educated students, and Nameni and Dowlatabadi agreed with Alaei and Nosrati's (2018) research that engagement with other cultures could benefit ICC and intercultural sensitivity in these students.

In another qualitative study correlating ICC and intercultural sensitivity, Hapsari (2021) surveyed 73 EFL in-service teachers in Indonesia. As with Alaei and Nosrati's (2018) study, they used Zhou's (2011) ICC questionnaire instrument and Chen and Starosta's (2000) ISS. Hapsari found high levels of ICC and intercultural sensitivity in the EFL teachers and a significant relationship between ICC and intercultural sensitivity. Drawing on previous studies by Saricoban and Oz (2014), Alaei and Nosrati (2018), and Nameni and Dowlatabadi (2019), Hapsari supported the inclusion of ICC and

intercultural sensitivity in teacher training programs and exposure to other cultures via study abroad or teacher conferences.

Intercultural Sensitivity

Intercultural sensitivity is both a dimension of ICC and a prerequisite for ICC (Chen & Starosta, 2005). Although there is a substantive amount of research in education on intercultural sensitivity, a large amount is focused on pre-service teachers or university students outside of the United States, which I review here. The following studies demonstrated the importance of intercultural experiences and training to strengthen intercultural sensitivity.

Gordon and Mwavita (2018) completed a quantitative study to determine if taking an intercultural university course affected students' intercultural sensitivity. Their study focused on students taking an "I" or international course, which focused on cultural appreciation and comparing them to students who had not taken an I course. They surveyed 114 students using Chen and Starosta's (2000) ISS. Gordon and Mwavita found no significant difference between those who did and did not take the I course, but they did find that students who had attended multiple intercultural events or who had studied abroad had significantly higher intercultural sensitivity than those who did not. The researchers interpreted these findings to suggest that intercultural exposure is beneficial for raising intercultural sensitivity.

In another study on undergraduate students, Çiftçi and Gürbüz (2019) focused their descriptive qualitative case study on the intercultural sensitivity of four pre-service Turkish ESL teachers as they prepared to study abroad. The researchers used Bennett's

(2017) DMIS to determine the participants' intercultural sensitivity levels and a series of three interviews to determine their preparedness for reaping the benefits of a study abroad (Çiftçi & Gürbüz, 2019). They found that their participants were underprepared for their study abroad term in regard to intercultural sensitivity and reflexivity; they believed the participants equated language learning with intercultural sensitivity. Based on their findings, they suggested that training programs improve intercultural sensitivity by teaching students to reflect critically before and during intercultural interactions.

Altan (2018) also focused on pre-service EFL teachers in Turkey; the researcher surveyed 70 pre-service teachers using Chen and Starosta's (2000) ISS. Altan found that the participants scored high in intercultural sensitivity. Like Gordon and Mwavita (2018), all of the participants had completed a required intercultural course, and Altan considered that the course could have affected the findings of this study. Altan also interpreted the findings to demonstrate the importance of improving intercultural sensitivity to aid in lowering ethnocentrism and conflict between groups.

In one of few studies conducted in the United States, Kim and Connelly (2019) completed a quantitative study on pre-service teachers' intercultural sensitivity and multicultural attitudes and teaching efficacy. They surveyed 90 pre-service teachers using Chen and Starosta's (2000) ISS and multicultural instruments. Kim and Connelly found positive correlations between intercultural sensitivity, multicultural teaching efficacy, and multicultural attitudes. They stressed the importance of intercultural sensitivity in racially diverse classrooms in the United States. These results demonstrated the importance of

reflection and more substantial course content in intercultural sensitivity and multiculturalism.

Whereas most studies focused on pre-service teachers or university students, Segura-Robles and Parra-González (2019) studied in-service teachers in multicultural cities. Their quantitative study utilized Wang and Zhou's (2016) shortened form of the ISS by Chen and Starosta (2000). They contrasted survey responses from 174 teachers from monocultural cities in Spain with 190 teachers from multicultural cities in North Africa and found that the teachers in multicultural cities had higher levels of intercultural sensitivity. This finding led the researchers to posit that multicultural contexts could help raise teachers' intercultural sensitivity levels.

Teacher Training and Professional Development

Teacher education is often referred to as training in pre-service settings and as PD for in-service teachers (Eren & Kurt, 2019). Educating teachers should occur over the entirety of their careers, not just before they enter the classroom (Eren & Kurt, 2019; OECD, 2019). The following studies focused on teacher education both in pre-service and in-service settings.

Bragg et al. (2021) completed a systematic literature review focusing on online PD. Using their inclusion criteria, they limited their results to 11 studies in hopes of answering questions on the reported outcomes and design elements of online PD. This study included qualitative and quantitative studies, as well as several mixed-method studies, which added to the strength of the analysis. Upon completion of their study, Bragg et al. found that there are specific design elements to PD that can help, like

fostering the acquisition of content knowledge or self-reflection. They suggested that additional research focus on how to design teacher training and PD that encourages increased content knowledge and self-reflection for teachers.

In researching a reflective teacher PD course, Qadhi and Floyd (2021) addressed female ESL teachers' perceptions of PD in Qatar. Their qualitative study used a narrative approach and life histories to interview 16 participants. Qadhi and Floyd found that PD needed to be individualized and have an emphasis on personal reflection and shared practice. Based on their findings, they encouraged teacher educators to focus on training and PD that promotes teacher motivation, teacher experience, and that incorporates self-reflection.

In another meta-ethnographic, systematic review of 40 studies and one book, Parkhouse et al. (2019) studied the various forms of multicultural education PD and their impact on teachers and students. Their study analyzed the plethora of models used in PD research and the difficulty involved in synthesizing the research. Whereas many of the studies addressed problems of PD in general, Parkhouse et al. found that multicultural education PD had two additional difficulties: sometimes, when discussions became too challenging or personal, it resulted in stonewalls which did not improve teacher practice. Secondly, it was sometimes challenging to distinguish between helpful and specific information and unhelpful stereotypes. Based on their research, Parkhouse et al. proposed further research on teachers' perceptions on training and PD in diversity and equity education.

Understanding the difficulty of addressing complex topics and the stonewalls that such conversations can cause (as discussed by Parkhouse et al., 2019), Carabelli (2021) researched didactic discussions during ESL pre-service training. Carabelli used a mixed methods study with 15 ESL teachers in Uruguay to determine if they were able to have didactic conversations in which they analyzed their own thinking and reflected critically on the teaching practice of a video-recorded teacher. The researcher found that, by removing the personal element through using an unknown teachers' video, the participants were able to be introspective and frank without fear. Carabelli suggested that, based on the findings, didactic discussions be used in teacher education to encourage reflection and dialogue.

Civitillo et al. (2018) conducted a systematic literature review study to determine the components of and effects of training on teachers' beliefs about cultural diversity. They focused on pre-service teacher training and included 36 studies in their research. Based on their research, Civitillo et al. found that experiential learning and reflection/discussion were the two most beneficial factors in pre-service training. Civitillo et al. suggested further research into training to determine if integrated training, instead of standalone courses, could further benefit pre-service teachers; they did not demonstrate the effects of their research on in-service teachers.

Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021) conducted a methodological review of the literature to find the studies' underlying policies on teacher PD, which provided some contrasting findings to previous literature reviews. Sims and Fletcher-Wood wanted to know if research supported a policy consensus that teacher PD is effective if it is

sustained, collaborative, subject-specific, practice-based, and draws on external expertise (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Their analysis searched through meta-reviews, articles' literature reviews, and original research articles but did not include an exhaustive literature search. They found a lack of research on the effectiveness of collaboration and subject-specific PD and questioned the evidence on sustained PD as an effective strategy, arguing the sustained was not clearly defined across the studies. They did, however, find evidence for supporting practice-based training or repetitive practice during training and PD. Sims and Fletcher-Wood called for additional research to learn more about effective PD and to edit current U.S. education policies regarding teacher training and PD.

Eren and Kurt (2019) completed a systematic review of 32 studies on both pre-service and in-service teacher education. Their study used manifest content analysis, which revealed six themes: teacher training, reflective teaching, action research, teacher development for working in multicultural classrooms, team teaching, and community of practice. Eren and Kurt found that pre-service teachers needed assistance moving from theory to practice in teaching, and in-service PD should begin with a needs analysis. They posited that teachers would benefit from studying abroad, from reflective skills, such as teacher portfolios, and from exposure to and interaction with colleagues. These findings were in agreement with later research, like that of Qadhi and Floyd (2021).

Grant et al. (2021) presented a longitudinal quantitative study on U.S. teachers' perceptions of preparing to work with ELs using a pre-post-test control group design; the experimental group included 23 in-service teachers. The participants in the experimental group received coaching once per quarter for 2 years. Grant et al. found that the pre- and

post-test results did not show a significant difference in teacher beliefs about ELLs but that the program of study and coaching did increase teacher knowledge of language development and best practices. They suggested that further research could focus on student outcomes based on the teachers' learning.

Developing Teachers Through Intercultural Training

There are many studies that point to the importance of ICC or intercultural sensitivity for teachers and also many studies on the importance of teacher training and PD. Only a limited number of studies combined these two fields to determine the benefits of training teachers to improve their intercultural sensitivity. The following research demonstrated the effects of training and PD on ICC or intercultural sensitivity.

In 2020, Bagwe and Haskollar completed a systematic literature review of 48 studies to determine the variables affecting intercultural competence development. They included studies that used Hammer and Bennett's Intercultural Development Inventory which is based on Bennett's DMIS. Their systematic review of the literature produced two main themes and 11 variables. Bagwe and Haskollar found that intercultural training programs were essential if they included mentoring or reflection, peer support, and intercultural interactions. Although studying abroad was one of the strongest ways to grow, at-home training also proved beneficial, especially when combined with critical self-reflection. They suggested further research on developing ICC but encouraged teacher educators to utilize their findings to form more effective training and PD.

Rahimi et al. (2020) conducted a quantitative experimental study with a homogenous group of 35 Iranian EFL teachers using a pre-test and a post-test. At the

beginning of the study, the participants took Chen and Starosta's (2000) ISS. They then completed a semester-long training course on intercultural sensitivity before retaking the ISS. Rahimi et al. found that the participants increased in their intercultural sensitivity. They also found that "such training courses and ethnocentrism are dramatically interrelated and also this sort of training can contribute to the reduction of ethnocentrism" (Rahimi et al., 2020, p. 95). Based on their findings, they suggested that adding intercultural sensitivity training could result in improved development for EFL teachers and that further research could demonstrate similar growth in other countries.

Review of Methodology

Researchers have utilized many forms of research in studying ICC, intercultural sensitivity, and teacher training and PD. Some of these earlier studies produced the instruments that have been used subsequently. The following section provides an example of each of the methodologies used by researchers as they are related to the current study's key research constructs.

Mixed-Method Studies

Yurtseven and Altun (2015) completed a mixed methods study on Turkish pre-service teachers' perceptions of intercultural sensitivity. Their theoretical framework utilized Banks's (2014) multicultural education and Gay's (2000) culturally responsive teaching. The literature review demonstrated that "it is a prerequisite for pre-service teachers to gain a multicultural perspective, to interact with students from a broad range of different cultural backgrounds, and to function as an intercultural teacher…" (Yurtseven & Altun, 2015, p. 49). The authors listed the purpose of the study as an

"examin[ation] of pre-service teachers' perceptions of intercultural sensitivity and multicultural practices ideal for the classes" (Yurtseven & Altun, 2015, p. 50). A mixed-methods approach allowed the researchers a more nuanced look at the data presented by the 220 participants; the participants were selected using purposive sampling.

Yurtseven and Altun's (2015) study attempted to answer five research questions which started by finding the intercultural sensitivity levels of the pre-service teachers. They looked for significant differences between groups of teachers depending on factors such as: having foreign friends, gender, trips abroad, and nationality.

To ascertain the answers to the proposed questions, Yurtseven and Altun used the ISS by Chen and Starosta (2000), which is a Likert-type scale; this presented the quantitative data. The qualitative data was collected via a questionnaire using three open-ended questions; in this way, the researchers were able to receive data from all 220 participants for both parts of the study. For quantitative analysis, the researchers used *SPSS 16.0* to run a *t*-test; the significance level was $p<.05$. For the qualitative analysis, the researchers utilized content analysis to produce codes, categories, and themes. Yurtseven and Altun found that there were no significant differences in any of the research questions. The qualitative data revealed that the pre-service teachers were not satisfied with their level of training in multicultural education and intercultural sensitivity. Despite the study limitations of the accuracy of self-reported surveys, location, and the participants, Yurtseven and Altun encouraged future research to look into pre-service and in-service teacher training and PD and its effects on teachers.

In 2020, Arcagok and Yilmaz studied pre-service EFL teachers in Turkey. Their conceptual framework focused on Bennett's (2017) DMIS and Chen and Starosta's (2000) work on ICC and intercultural sensitivity and included other intercultural sensitivity researchers such as Deardorff, Bhawuk and Brislin, and Hammer et al. Arcagok's and Yilmaz's research questions focused on first the pre-service teachers' intercultural sensitivity levels and statistical differences related to gender, education level of their parents, and volunteerism. They also asked questions about the pre-service teachers' perceptions of intercultural sensitivity and changes in curriculum to raise intercultural sensitivity.

The study used a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. The quantitative portion of the study used Chen and Starosta's (2000) ISS, translated into Turkish, and surveyed 90 pre-service teachers; 60 were female, and 30 were male. The researchers used *SPSS 18.0* to run independent samples *t*-tests, one-way ANOVA tests, and a Tukey test during their data analysis. They used a Cronbach alpha, and the reliability coefficient was .85.

For the qualitative study, 16 of the participants (eight male and eight female) completed two semi structured, 30–35-minute interviews with the researchers; these data focused on the participants' views on intercultural sensitivity and its implementation into the curriculum. The questions were formed based on the theoretical framework and focused on the teachers' perceptions and the types of changes they hoped to see in the curriculum. The credibility focused on using the theoretical framework as a foundation,

including direct quotations from the study and using two data encoders. The codes and themes were structured using *Nvivo* software.

Arcagok and Yilmaz (2020) did find a correlation between intercultural sensitivity and volunteerism in non-governmental organizations; the other research questions demonstrated no significant differences. Participants who had volunteered had higher intercultural sensitivity than those who did not; the researchers surmised that pre-service teachers who volunteered had more interactions with other cultures and were thus more likely to increase their intercultural sensitivity. Using the qualitative data, the researchers suggested that workshops or seminars may help raise intercultural sensitivity, primarily if they were supported by non-governmental organizations. Arcagok and Yilmaz proposed further research with different sample groups to compare their findings.

Quantitative Studies

Tamam and Krauss (2017) completed a quantitative study on intercultural sensitivity and ethnic-related diversity engagement in a Malaysian university. They based the rationale for their study on the fact that research had addressed intercultural sensitivity and the importance of diversity engagement, but not the intersection of the two. Their conceptual framework for ethnic-related diversity engagement included work by Gurin (1999, as cited in Tamam & Krauss, 2017) on classroom diversity. Chen and Starosta (1998, 2000) and Bennett (2017) informed their framework for intercultural sensitivity. Contact hypothesis studies (i.e., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) informed the combination of intercultural sensitivity and ethnic-related diversity engagement.

Tamam and Krauss (2017) utilized an adaptation of Chen and Starosta's (2000) ISS, validated through an earlier study by Tamam (2010). The scale was adapted for work in a collectivistic society, such as Malaysia, and contained three interrelated factors: "interaction attentiveness and respect, interaction openness, and interaction confidence" (Tamam, 2010, p. 143). To measure ethnic-related diversity engagement, Tamam and Krauss created a six-question index. The authors used 447 survey questionnaire respondents as their participants; the students were from different ethnic groups (193 Malay, 165 Chinese, 72 Indian, and 17 other) and were selected via random sampling. The students were 68% female and 32% male and between 18-27 years old. All four years of students were represented in the sample.

The data were analyzed using MANOVA after preliminary assumption testing (Tamam & Krauss, 2017). After completing all of the tests, the researchers completed a follow-up posthoc analysis of comparison using a Bonferroni test; this enabled them to determine the significance between the different results. Tamam and Krauss found a significant association between ethnic-related diversity engagement and interaction confidence; those who were more highly engaged were more likely to have higher interaction confidence. Interaction engagement had to be relatively high to effect interaction attentiveness and respect. Finally, those with high and moderate engagement levels had better interaction openness than did the low engagement group. The researchers cautioned against using the research to demonstrate causality but did encourage additional research to determine why and how ethnic-related diversity engagement promotes intercultural sensitivity. They encouraged educators to promote

opportunities for intercultural engagement to increase intercultural sensitivity between groups.

In another quantitative study, Kazykhankyzy and Alagözlü (2019) developed an instrument for measuring ICC in Turkish and Kazakhstani EFL pre-service teachers. They used Deardorff, Chen and Starosta, and Byram as the sources of their framework on ICC, with a specific focus on Byram's language-focused model. Kazykhankyzy and Alagözlü rationalized the creation of another instrument because there were no instruments focused on measuring ICC in the classroom environment. The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between ICC, academic self-concept, and L2 motivational self-system (Kazykhankyzy & Alagözlü, 2019). They also hoped to determine if any of these factors could predict the participants' level of ICC.

Kazykhankyzy and Alagözlü (2019) developed a scaled instrument and completed both exploratory and confirmatory analyses. The participants were 624 undergraduate students from Turkish and Kazakh universities and were selected using convenience sampling. The instrument used a Likert scale based on Byram's (1997) ICC model. The researchers then had 12 experts review the items using a content validity ratio; they then made adjustments based on the review. For reliability, Cronbach's alpha indicated a high correlation and was calculated as .958. The final 52-item instrument contained four subgroups: ICC skills, ICC attitude, ICC awareness, and ICC knowledge. Kazykhankyzy and Alagözlü found their instrument reliable for use with ESL teachers but also suggested that it could be used with ESL students as well since there were no teacher-specific

questions. The study was limited by the countries being studied; future research could utilize the instrument with other cultures.

Qualitative Studies

Yücedağ and Şevik (2021) completed a comparative qualitative study to determine the perceptions of EFL teachers on their PD activities. The purpose of their study was to "explore PD perceptions and activities of EFL teachers working at public schools in the capital cities of three countries in order to answer the following research questions:

1. How do Turkish, German, and Spanish EFL teachers perceive PD?
2. What do Turkish, German, and Spanish EFL teachers think about the participation PD activities (obligatory, voluntary based, or criteria)?
3. What kind of PD activities have Turkish, German, and Spanish EFL teachers joined so far? And is there a difference in their involvement in PD activities they joined according to their countries?
4. How do Turkish, German, and Spanish EFL teachers describe the most effective PD activity they have participated in so far?" (Yücedağ & Şevik, 2021, p. 1390)

The researchers used purposeful sampling to recruit participants for the study; all participants taught in state schools in the capitals of Turkey, Germany, and Spain. Fifteen teachers from each city participated (five teachers from each level of primary, secondary, and high school) for a total of 45 participants. The researchers collected demographic

information from all the participants, including gender, age, academic degrees, and teaching experience.

For Yücedağ and Şevik's (2021) study, the structured interview form consisted of 15 questions. The first six were demographic; the second nine questions were open-ended to focus on their beliefs about PD and PD activities. All the interviews were conducted face-to-face and took about 30 minutes. Although the researchers had planned to audio record the interviews, the participants declined, so the researchers wrote their responses. Yücedağ and Şevik used conventional content analysis to organize the data, elicit meaning, and draw realistic conclusions. After inductive coding individually, the researchers compared results to draw conclusions which added to content validity. The authors used SPSS 22 and Microsoft Excel for cross-tabulation analysis and bar graphs of the finished analysis.

For their findings, Yücedağ and Şevik (2021) demonstrated that the participants found PD to be a life-long experience and that they preferred applicable PD that focused on practice. Among the challenges they faced were "students with different cultural backgrounds" and a "lack of time" for implementation (Yücedağ & Şevik, 2021, p. 1416). The researchers suggested that teachers be allowed to choose their PD experiences so that they are more likely to implement what they have learned. They also encouraged teacher educators to conduct needs analyses before beginning training and PD and to focus on the needs, beliefs, and characteristics of the teachers being trained.

Dogan Ger (2020) crafted a qualitative exploratory case study as a pilot for a more extensive study in Hungary. The study focused on the combination of ICC and

cultural diversity awareness, a similar concept to intercultural sensitivity. The purpose of the study was to investigate teachers' perceptions on culture and cultural learning as well as what practices they use (Dogan Ger, 2020, p. 26). In the literature review, the conceptual frameworks were cultural diversity awareness, as discussed by Liddicoat (2005; as cited in Dogan Ger, 2020), and ICC. For ICC, Dogan Ger utilized the works of Bennett and Bennett (2004) and Byram (1997) as well as cultural practices by Barrett et al. (2014; as cited in Dogan Ger, 2020).

The study design by Dogan Ger (2020) used an exploratory and descriptive qualitative approach to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the English language teachers' *attitudes* concerning the development of their students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and cultural diversity awareness at the international primary school observed?
2. What are the English language teachers' *practices* concerning the development of their students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and cultural diversity awareness at the international primary school observed?

The design was an interview study; the author planned a pre- and post-observation interview schedule between February and November of 2020, but only the pre-observation study could be completed due to school closures for COVID-19. Thus, the research presented was based on one semi-structured one-to-one interview was used.

The participants for the study were three teachers from an international school in Hungary; the school uses English as the medium for instruction (Dogan Ger, 2020). Non-probability purposive sampling was used in recruiting the participants, two of whom were

native speakers of English and all three had 10 or more years of teaching experience. All of the participants also had training and PD in intercultural or multicultural studies through a seminar or workshop either at the pre-service or in-service stage.

Dogan Ger (2020) presented the interview schedule for the study, which included six demographic questions and 20 interview questions. After creating the interview schedule, expert researchers reviewed the material to edit the questions. During the pilot study, several additional questions were edited for clarity and understanding, and probing questions were included.

The data were then analyzed using thematic analysis to create three themes: the concept of culture, teachers' attitudes, and teachers' practices. To create validity, Dogan Ger (2020) invited other researchers to review the interview schedule and made changes based on their feedback. The participants reviewed the transcriptions and added corrections, and the researcher used thick descriptions of the interviews and field notes recorded before and after. Dogan Ger also utilized an audit trail to generate confirmability.

The findings of the study demonstrated that teachers were excited to learn about other cultures and were culturally aware. However, they needed additional training and PD to learn best practices for incorporating ICC into their classrooms and teaching culture to their students. Dogan Ger (2020) proposed that teacher training and PD include more specific ways of teaching culture and of helping raise teachers' confidence levels.

Summary

Scholars have demonstrated that ICC and intercultural sensitivity are related concepts (Hapsari, 2021) and that these concepts improve teachers, students, and their intercultural relationships (Cuartas Álvarez, 2020). They have also demonstrated that teachers need training and PD in ICC and intercultural sensitivity (Alaei & Nosrati, 2018) and that training and PD in intercultural sensitivity improve teachers (Rahimi et al., 2020). Two elements of teacher training and PD that improve teacher intercultural sensitivity are engaging with intercultural peers (Eren & Kurt, 2019) and critical self-reflection (Qadhi & Floyd, 2021). The opportunity to explore the intersection of teacher training and PD on intercultural sensitivity and teachers' perception may encourage teacher education programs to incorporate intercultural activities into their PD. This research aimed to extend knowledge by contributing to the study of teacher training and PD as they prepare teachers for the work of reaching all students, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, providing positive social change. The research study was intended to fill the gap in the literature related to teacher training and PD and its influence on ESL teachers' intercultural sensitivity.

The review of the literature focused on the concepts of ICC, intercultural sensitivity, and teacher training and PD. Overall, the researchers had a consensus on the importance of ICC and intercultural sensitivity in education. However, there is still debate on the best methods for increasing teachers' intercultural sensitivity, though most scholars suggest some combination of reflection and experiential learning. Additionally, many of the researchers suggested conducting a needs analysis to find out from the

teachers what they think they need. By conducting a basic qualitative study, I was able to hear directly from the teachers. In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology of the study. I include information about the participant invitations, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis. I conclude with information about confidentiality, validity, and trustworthiness in this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ESL teachers' perceptions of their experiences with training and PD toward becoming more interculturally sensitive in K-12 U.S. classrooms. In Chapter 3, I address the research method, including the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, and methodology. In addition, I include information on participant selection, instrumentation, data collection, and the data analysis plan. I also include issues of trustworthiness and ethical implications.

Research Design and Rationale

This study addressed ESL teachers' experiences with training and PD that may have increased their intercultural sensitivity, bridging a gap in the research. The research questions were:

Research Question 1: What perceptions do K-12 U.S. ESL teachers have of their experiences with training and PD that may have increased their intercultural sensitivity?

Research Question 2: What training and PD practices do K-12 U.S. ESL teachers perceive would support them in increasing their intercultural sensitivity?

This study followed a basic qualitative research design from a social constructivist worldview (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Using a basic qualitative study, I explored the phenomenon and focused on how the participants described their experiences (Kahlke, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). Since social constructivism attempts to inductively interpret the way others make meaning in the world (Creswell, 2007;

Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), using this worldview aided in understanding how ESL teachers make meaning out of their intercultural sensitivity training and PD experiences. I completed one open-ended, semistructured interview with each participant and used inductive comparative analysis to discover categories and themes. These themes were then interpreted to add to the research on how ESL teachers understand their training and PD in intercultural sensitivity.

A basic qualitative study was best suited to this study because I aimed to understand how these teachers make meaning in their world in relation to their experiences with intercultural sensitivity training and PD. Before choosing a basic qualitative study, I considered a narrative study or an ethnography. A narrative study would have given a more in-depth look at the teachers' stories surrounding their experiences with intercultural sensitivity, and an ethnographic study could focus on the shared culture of the teachers and how it affects their understanding of intercultural sensitivity or repeated PD experiences within a group. Though both options would add to the existing research, to my knowledge, a study in this participant population had not yet been completed. Therefore, a basic qualitative inquiry provided a foundation for future research.

Role of the Researcher

My role as a researcher and an instrument in the study was to maintain a separation between my opinions and experiences and the participants' beliefs, opinions, and experiences. My own experiences from being an ESL teacher inform my thoughts on the topic. However, as a sociocultural researcher, I needed to remain outside of the study

group (Cobb & Yackel, 1995). To do this, I mitigated my possible biases and their effect on the research.

After review by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I recruited the participants, conducted interviews, and analyzed the data using verbatim transcriptions. I did not have any supervisory or professional relationships with the participants to ensure there were no power differentials or conflicts of interest. I used selection criteria to ensure that I selected participants without preferential treatment. I kept an audit trail and reflective journal throughout the process to help bracket any biases I encountered. I also provided the participants with a copy of the transcripts for member checking to ensure that I captured their words as they meant them to be shared.

Methodology

I obtained approval from Walden University IRB (approval no. 12-10-21-0426935) before collecting data using one-on-one, open-ended, semistructured interviews using Zoom for video interviews with a phone-only option available at the request of the participant. This methodology enabled me to understand the meaning ESL teachers make regarding their training and PD in intercultural sensitivity. I then completed an inductive comparative analysis of these data using open coding to look for categories and themes. I considered but did not use any computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software for assistance to organize my categories and themes. I did, however, organize my hand-coded data using tables and charts created using the software, coda.io.

Participant Selection

I selected participants who were (a) in-service teachers currently teaching or moved from the classroom within the previous 2 years, (b) in public or private K-12 ESL classrooms, (c) in the United States, (d) who had at least 2 years of classroom experience, (e) and who were fully licensed to teach—to ensure they had experienced teacher training and PD. For this study, preservice or unlicensed teachers were not included. Though beneficial to understand preschool or post-secondary ESL teachers' experiences, both populations were outside of the scope of this study.

I shared the research invitation with several teacher friends who were willing to share it with their ESL colleagues. I also posted the invitation on several teacher social media sites to find participants as well. The invitation included the criteria for participation. I then reached out to anyone interested via email or messenger—based on their preference—to send them the informed consent information. After they signed the informed consent, I contacted them via email to set up their interview time.

Data saturation is important for a qualitative study, but it can be challenging to know the exact number of participants needed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Previous researchers have suggested six to 12 participants for a basic qualitative study (Guest et al., 2006). I planned to begin analysis immediately upon finishing the first interview and continue simultaneously collecting data and analyzing it to know when I have reached saturation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). However, because all 12 participants responded and scheduled their interviews within 1 week of each other, I was unable to analyze them

simultaneously. Regardless, I felt I had reached saturation around the 10th interview. I continued through the 12th interview to ensure quality.

Instrumentation

This basic qualitative study used one-to-one Zoom video or phone interviews to explore ESL teachers' experiences with training and PD, which may have increased their intercultural sensitivity (see Appendix for the interview protocol). Since participants' words are the keys to understanding their meaning-making processes, interviews are a fundamental data collection method for qualitative research (Patton, 2015; Ruona, 2005). Based on the research questions, the interview questions focused on any training and PD teachers received, which may have increased their intercultural sensitivity and their perceived supports for additional training and PD. Patton (2015) suggested beginning with background questions to ease into the interview; from personal experience, I know people feel most at ease talking about themselves, so I began with a question about the participant's journey to becoming a teacher.

Following Rubin and Rubin's (2015) guidance, I reviewed the literature and based the interview questions on the common themes as well as the conceptual framework. I made sure to structure the questions to include the topics of engagement, reflection, and support in both pre-service and in-service training and PD. I presented my interview questions to my research committee for their feedback on the wording and to help avoid researcher bias.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I began recruiting participants once I receive approval from the Walden University IRB. I met with the IRB early during the research process and received guidance on recruiting participants from personal connections with teacher friends and via social media teacher groups. I used purposeful sampling to ensure information-rich cases to understand how the teachers experienced the phenomenon of intercultural sensitivity through training and PD (Creswell, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I shared my research invitation with several teacher friends who were willing to share it with their ESL colleagues. I also posted the invitation on several teacher social media sites. Using social media ensured that there were no gatekeepers from whom to get approval. I sent the invitation via email or social media messaging to any potential participants in which I requested their participation in an in-depth interview via Zoom. The invitation included the criteria for participation, the information on informed consent, and the purpose of the study. Those who responded and chose to participate received the informed consent document via email; this document explained the study's purpose again and ensured that participants were aware of the voluntary nature of the study. After they returned the email with "I consent," I set up an interview time. I communicated with the participants in their preferred method: text, email, or phone call. I set up a time that worked for them to conduct our Zoom interview; my interview window was planned to be four weeks from the start of recruitment. However, all participants responded and scheduled for a one-week window, during which I completed all 12 interviews. I scheduled the interviews for 60 minutes but kept closer to 45 minutes to

respect their time but still ensuring that everyone had sufficient time to provide their thoughts.

Before I began the interviews, I reviewed the informed consent with them once again and answered any questions; I also made sure they knew their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any point. Once I gained informed consent on the recording, I began the interview using the interview protocol (see Appendix). The interviews were conducted via Zoom and recorded as audio files. I also made an additional recording via my phone as a backup in case of technical difficulties. I then transcribed the audio files via Zoom's transcription service. Once I received the transcription, I reviewed it to make edits. Upon completing all edits, I sent the transcript to the participant for their review; this helped me verify their words and accurately portray their thoughts. I gave them 3 days to return the document with any modifications they wanted to see. I planned to contact them if I had any additional clarification or follow-up questions, but I did not find this necessary. I also made the final study available to them if they desired it. After they finished reviewing their responses, I removed all identifying information and assigned pseudonyms.

Data Analysis Plan

The data were analyzed to answer the two research questions:

Research Question 1: What perceptions do K-12 U.S. ESL teachers have of their experiences with training and PD that may have increased their intercultural sensitivity?

Research Question 2: What training and PD practices do K-12 U.S. ESL teachers perceive would support them in increasing their intercultural sensitivity?

In data analysis, I identified recurring patterns or themes using open codes and later, categories (Patton, 2015). The goal was to keep the data as focused as possible on the participants' meaning (Sutton & Austin, 2015); as a constructivist researcher, I concentrated on how my participants made meaning of their experiences. Thus, I used inductive coding, generated codes, categories, and eventually themes based on what I found in the data. I began by listening to the recorded interviews and reviewing the field notes. I then coded the first interview and continued by using the constant comparative method to code the second and subsequent interviews, as suggested by Ruona (2005; see also Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this way, I focused on gathering data until saturation.

After collecting the data, I utilized transcription software to transfer my interviews from audio to text. I removed any identifying information and organized my data (Ruona, 2005). I made notes during and after the interviews to collect my thoughts and reflect on the participants' answers. My notes helped as I analyzed the interviews for codes and built those into categories and themes. I then moved to code the interview, using the research questions to guide me (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Ruona, 2005). Finally, I categorized the codes and looked for themes that related to the purpose of the study and the research questions. As an organizational method, I used the software, coda.io, as a tool to help in my analysis.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Being a constructivist researcher, I needed to maintain the trustworthiness of my work by demonstrating the way my participants made meaning of their worlds (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). My aim was to increase the trustworthiness of my study, which, in turn,

increased credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). In this way, I strove to meet the rigorous demands of a high-quality qualitative study (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Patton, 2015).

Credibility

Credibility focuses on the relationship between what was intended to be measured and what was actually measured (Shenton, 2004). To ensure the credibility of my research, I focused on searching for my own biases throughout the study; I addressed these in a reflective research journal. I also used an interview guide to formulate my questions based on the literature and my prior knowledge; this helped ensure that I kept my thoughts and opinions out of the interviews. I used triangulation in my data collection with interviews, audit trail, debriefing of participants, and a reflective journal. I also noted any negative cases; this helped demonstrate credibility in my work as it provided space to reframe my initial thoughts or hypotheses about the work (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Shenton, 2004). I also had weekly debriefing conversations with my research committee to ensure that I maintained credibility.

Transferability

Transferability is limited in qualitative research (Toma, 2014), but a thick description in explaining a study's context can help (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Toma, 2014). This thick description enables other researchers to replicate the study in other situations or other populations (Shenton, 2004). I took careful notes over the entirety of my research and kept my committee informed throughout the process through our weekly discussions. I kept track of my work in my audit trail and my reflective journal. I detailed

the study process, including the criteria for and recruitment of the participants, the data collection, and the data analysis.

Dependability

Dependability, as Patton (2015) described, is following the systematic process of qualitative writing; it is doing the work in such a way that if repeated identically, the findings would be the same (Shenton, 2004). I aimed for dependability by ensuring the alignment of all the parts of my research. I used the data alignment table to ensure that my research problem and questions remain aligned with the methodology of a basic qualitative study. I continued to research the social constructivist worldview to make sure that I used it appropriately to the best of my knowledge. I focused on the conceptual framework's appropriateness and the adequacy of the data collected (Toma, 2014). I provided a thorough description of the research design and any missteps that occurred during the process.

Confirmability

Confirmability describes the objectivity of the findings; it avoids bias in interpreting the data (Toma, 2014). Lincoln and Guba (1986) suggested using an audit trail and an external audit to avoid research bias. I kept an audit trail and ensured that my notes were as thorough as possible. I also used a reflective research journal and note-taking. My journal enabled me to keep track of my assumptions, biases, and behaviors.

Ethical Procedures

My dissertation study required approval from Walden University's IRB. To obtain this approval, I followed the steps outlined by the IRB to ensure the protection of

my participants. Because I did not use a partner organization for my study, I did not need the permission of a partner organization. The IRB ensured that I thought through and removed any unnecessary risk to my participants.

After I received that approval, I began recruiting participants by sharing the invitation to my study. I ensured that every participant received an explanation of the study, risk factors, and informed consent. I confirmed their agreement to be recorded, their choice to participate, and their right to privacy which I kept by using pseudonyms for all participants. I have kept copies of the emails in which the participants responded with "I consent" and asked for verbal confirmation when I began the recording. These have been stored in the password-protected computer along with the rest of the data collected during the study.

Possible risks to participants were minimal. One of the potential risks was that participants' answers were misinterpreted or that their words did not truly reflect their thoughts. I lowered this risk by providing the participants the opportunity to review the transcripts. This review enabled them to clarify any miscommunications. I also explained to them that I would keep my files with pseudonyms only for 5 years until it is time for me to destroy them; all files would be placed on a USB drive at the end of the study and kept until the end of the 5 years. After that, I will destroy the USB and all notes from throughout the study. I removed all personal ties to the information so it cannot be traced back to them. Thus, I ensured that I have maintained the confidentiality of the participants and the integrity of my study.

Summary

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ESL teachers' perceptions of their experiences with training and PD toward becoming more interculturally sensitive in K-12 U.S. classrooms. In this chapter, I addressed the research design, which was one-on-one video or phone interviews, and provided details about the role of the researcher and the methodology. Chapter 3 also included the method of participant selection, data collection, and the analysis plan. The chapter concluded with methods for ensuring trustworthiness in the study and the ethical procedures, including information about IRB approval. In Chapter 4, I describe the study, which includes information about the participants, setting, and procedures. I provide details on the data collection and analysis, concluding with the results of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ESL teachers' perceptions of their experiences with training and PD toward becoming more interculturally sensitive in K-12 U.S. classrooms. I interviewed 12 ESL teachers in K-12 education, answering research questions on their perceptions on PD that may have increased their intercultural sensitivity and what training would continue to support them in their intercultural sensitivity. In this chapter, I explain the study setting, participants, and the procedures. I then describe the data collection method and the data analysis process. I further discuss the evidence of trustworthiness and the results of the data analysis.

Setting

I conducted all the interviews virtually using Zoom from a closed room to avoid being overheard. I encouraged participants to make sure they were in a space where they felt comfortable sharing their honest thoughts and opinions. All the interviewees completed their interviews from their home or their classrooms; they ensured me they were comfortable and ready to proceed before I began. To my knowledge, there were no personal or organizational conditions that influenced the participants or their experiences at the time of the study; no participant disclosed any negative life or work experiences (such as personal trauma, furloughs or layoffs, or school budget cuts) that may have affected their perceptions of their work or the interpretation of the study results.

Demographics

The participants were all current or recent ESL teachers from elementary through 12th grade. The participants' locations ranged from the northeastern to the western United States; one of the participants had also worked for years on the west coast and described that experience as well. Of the 12 participants, two identified as men and 10 as women; nine were Caucasian, the other three described themselves as Hispanic American, Asian American, and Native American. One participant had moved within the last 2 years from teaching to a district administrative role and the other 11 were classroom teachers. The participants had a range of experience from 3 to 30 years in the classroom. Each participant was given a pseudonym: Amma, Camille, Ethan, Imani, Izara, Josef, Kaya, Marli, Nia, Scarlett, Zola, and Zuri. To ensure confidentiality, not all demographic information is included here (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

Participants' pseudonyms	Years of service: 3 to 30 years
Amma	10-20 years
Camille	10-20 years
Ethan	10-20 years
Imani	10-20 years
Izara	20+ years
Josef	Less than 10 years
Kaya	20+ years
Marli	10-20 years
Nia	10-20 years
Scarlett	20+ years
Zola	10-20 years
Zuri	Less than 10 years

Data Collection

After gaining approval from the Walden University IRB, I posted my invitation on several Facebook educational groups focused on K-12 ESL teachers in the United States. Additionally, I shared my invitation with three educator friends, none of whom are ESL teachers. They shared the invitation with ESL teachers whom they knew. Within 3 days of posting, I had received more than 20 emails, texts, or messages from interested participants. I had planned to send out additional follow-up invitations but did not need to do so to reach saturation; however, I did send out one additional request to ask if there were any interested teachers in the Midwest or West Coast of the United States as most of my participants were from the East Coast or Central states. From this final request, I received interest from an additional prospective participant from the Western United States.

After prospective participants emailed or messaged me their interest, I sent them the informed consent documents and asked them to reply with "I consent" and a preferred time and date for the interview. All the participants emailed me a consenting email and I scheduled the interviews. I sent the participants a Zoom link or phone number, based on their preferences, and each interview lasted between 45–60 minutes. All the interviews were recorded as a Zoom audio file and transcribed using the Zoom transcription software. I also used my phone as a secondary recorder to avoid any technical issues. Due to an unforeseen circumstance, I did have to reschedule one interview, but the participant was willing to postpone for 1 hour until I was able to meet with them. The other 11 were

held as originally scheduled. The process of recruiting and interviewing took 1 week from start to finish.

Before beginning the recording, I reviewed the selection criteria with each participant to avoid interviewing someone outside the parameters of the study. After starting the recording, I again read through the informed consent information and reminded them that the study was recorded. I asked for their gender and ethnic identities and how long they had been teaching and allowed them to ask any questions before beginning. I then moved through the interview questions (see Appendix) and the additional probing questions. Before concluding the interview, participants were asked to share anything else they wanted or ask any additional questions; 10 participants shared additional thoughts about their feelings and experiences, one declined, and one asked several questions about how I became interested in my research. I did not make any changes to the study procedures outlined in Chapter 3.

Data Analysis

All recordings were transcribed using Zoom's transcription software and then uploaded to coda.io for analysis. I created a page for each participant and used different colored markers to note the codes as I read and listened through each interview. After reading and listening through each interview twice, I created a matrix comparing the codes across all 12 interviews and the frequencies of the codes. I viewed the mean, median, and mode of each code as well as the exact count per interview. In this way, I was able to discover codes that appeared across all interviews or those that only appeared in one or two. I combined some codes until I had a total of 57 codes. Using the matrix, I

began to discover categories that emerged; I ended with 14 categories. I aligned the new categories to the research questions and then went back through the interviews again to determine how the codes emerged into categories and then themes (see Table 2 for examples of codes and themes and research question alignment). During the interviews, I did not recognize any contradictory response from the participants. I reviewed the data during the analysis but did not uncover any discrepant findings that conflicted with the major themes presented here.

Table 2

Example of Codes and Themes in Relationship to the Research Questions

Research Question	Theme	Examples of codes
Research Question 1	Immersive training or experiences increased intercultural sensitivity	Hands on experience, immersion experience, study/trip abroad, teaching abroad, sharing life together, new learning, adapting/changing self, appreciating/valuing cultural differences, empathy, inspiration, being a cultural outsider, cultural comparisons, self-reflection, reflection for growth
Research Question 1	Interactions that increased intercultural sensitivity	Hearing their stories, making students/families comfortable, appreciating/valuing cultural differences, building student/family/teacher relationships, volunteerism, working with a cultural other, sharing life together, book study, mentorship, partner reflection, Gen Ed relationships, wanting to learn/improve, learning from students, home visits, self-reflection, surface vs. deep culture, ESL community/partner learning,
Research Question 1	Available training or experiences are insufficient to increase intercultural sensitivity	Lack of training/training has been insufficient, forgotten training, lapse in training, academics/test-only training or reflection, hinderances to adequate training, waste of time/inefficiency, lack of diversity, thrown into ESL, U.S. ed system problems/solutions, teacher led-PD
Research Question 2	Immersive or interactive training or experiences would increase teachers' intercultural sensitivity	Suggestions for PD, tailored learning to match student population, cultural ambassador PD, book study, ESL community/partner learning

Using a second matrix, I was able to discern three themes and subthemes from the categories that related to the first research question. A fourth theme aligned to the second research question:

- Theme 1: Immersive training or experiences increased intercultural sensitivity
  - Subtheme 1: Catalyst to be an ESL teacher
  - Subtheme 2: New ways of thinking about themselves and the world
  - Subtheme 3: Increased their empathy for students
- Theme 2: Interactions that increased intercultural sensitivity
  - Subtheme 1: Intercultural interactions with students and children
  - Subtheme 2: Intercultural interactions with teachers and colleagues
- Theme 3: Available training or experiences are insufficient to increase intercultural sensitivity
- Theme 4: Immersive or interactive training or experiences would increase teachers' intercultural sensitivity

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To increase the credibility of the data collected for this basic qualitative study, I interviewed 12 participants who had been K-12 ESL teachers for at least 2 years and who were either currently in the classroom or had left the classroom within the last 2 years. To further increase trustworthiness, I shared the completed transcription with each participant for member checking. I probed for the participants' meaning by restating what I heard or asking for confirmation instead of making assumptions about their meaning

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To build trustworthiness in my research, I focused on ways to increase credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Member checking is essential for establishing credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). After completing each interview, I sent each participant a copy of their completed transcript and asked them if there were any changes they would like. Participants were given 3 business days in which to respond or decline to comment; 10 responded that the transcripts were accurate and required no changes, and one made no reply. The remaining participant responded that the transcript was accurate, but she wanted to add one more experience she recalled after reading back through her interview.

To further build credibility, I kept three methods of data analysis: transcripts, a reflective journal that contained field notes and an audit trail, and audio files of the recordings that I listened to repeatedly. This allowed me to triangulate the data and limit researcher bias or misinterpretation (Creswell, 2007). To address researcher bias, I kept an audit trail describing my thoughts and feelings as I completed the interviews. I disclosed my personal experiences as an ESL teacher to further clarify any potential biases. Furthermore, I used the constant-comparative coding method, which is a method of strengthening credibility (Patton, 2015).

Transferability

I addressed transferability by focusing on a detailed description of my analysis; this enables the readers to recreate my study (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Shenton, 2004). I ensured a thick description of the setting, recruiting procedures, and included the

interview guide with the questions and probes I used. I further described how I completed my analysis moving from code to theme to enable future researchers to determine the replicability of my study (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

Dependability

Using the constant-coding method also helped me to strengthen the dependability of the research; this ensured that my codes were similar throughout the various interviews (Creswell, 2007). I reviewed the procedures I had described in Chapter 3 to keep the analysis focused on the research question and purpose of the study. I eliminated all interesting but irrelevant codes that did not align with the research questions. I reviewed each section of the data analysis explanations to ensure that the study was duplicable (Patton, 2015; Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability

To ensure confirmability, I created a reflective journal containing an audit trail to reflect on my own biases (see Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Since I have spent several years as an ESL teacher in a K-12 setting and have experienced training and PD of my own, I was careful to include notes on what I expected and what I heard. To reduce bias, I used an interview guide to make sure that I asked questions and focused on responses that gleaned their experiences, not my own. I also asked the participants to review their responses to avoid any missteps on my part. I addressed my thoughts with my committee in weekly sessions to avoid additional biases.

Results

In the following section I discuss the results of the study using themes that emerged from the data analysis. I describe each theme using excerpts from the interviews to show the participants' perceptions of their experiences. The first three themes (immersive training or experiences increased intercultural sensitivity, interactions that increased intercultural sensitivity, and available training or experiences are insufficient to increase intercultural sensitivity) address Research Question 1: What perceptions do K-12 U.S. ESL teachers have of their experiences with training and PD that may have increased their intercultural sensitivity? The last theme (immersive or interactive training or experiences would increase teachers' intercultural sensitivity) addresses Research Question 2: What training and PD practices do K-12 U.S. ESL teachers perceive would support them in increasing their intercultural sensitivity?

Theme 1: Immersive Training or Experiences Increased Intercultural Sensitivity

When discussing what experiences with training or PD that may have increased their intercultural sensitivity, the most discussed theme revolved around immersive training or experiences. Reflections on the value of such experiences appeared in every interview in some form. Some of these experiences were long stays abroad, like teaching in another country for years, and others were PD lessons where the class was taught in a different language. All but one of the participants described some form of immersive training or experience; the one who did not spoke of their desire to have that experience and how they believed it would benefit them. Ten of the 12 participants spoke of time spent abroad ranging from a week to several years, whereas two had never traveled to a

different country. Their reasons for going abroad included week-long church mission trips, family or friend trips, partial and full semester study abroad trips during college, and living abroad to teach. Some of the countries mentioned were Mexico, Taiwan, China, France, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Sudan. The ways these immersive experiences influenced the intercultural sensitivity of at least 90% of the participants included three subthemes: it was the catalyst to be an ESL teacher, it changed the way they thought about themselves and the world, and it increased their empathy for their students.

Catalyst to be an ESL Teacher

Several participants felt spending time abroad was their catalyst or inspiration to become ESL teachers. For example, Josef described how volunteering with a Chinese-speaking student led him to complete a study abroad in China. The time spent in China enabled him to return and communicate with the student; upon his return he started applying to graduate schools to get a degree in ESL He said about his improved ability to communicate: “that’s when I started applying to master’s programs in ESL. I think that [the study abroad experience] definitely had something to do with it.” Izara, while studying in in Southern Asia, taught some English as a side job; working with the ELL students in there encouraged her to change her major to ESL. Another teacher, Imani, spoke of how being a second language learner inspired her to help other language learners.

> So, I got my bachelor’s in education and childhood special ed with a minor in Spanish, so I had an opportunity to study abroad and be a second language learner

> myself when I was in Mexico. As soon as I went to Mexico … I knew what I wanted to get my master's in, which was awesome.

New Ways of Thinking about Themselves and the World

The immersive experience also adjusted their way of thinking about the world. Several participants described a shift in their own understanding of themselves and their place in the world. Amma explained how, as a teacher, she traveled to leave the comfort of her own culture, to better understand and connect with culturally different students. Kaya expressed: "A lot of [growth from living abroad] was just gaining, developing a stronger sense of modesty about who I am and what I really know and how it's valuable in this context, but not as much in that one." Kaya's declaration demonstrates a shift in her understanding of self, of her own importance in the cultural world, and the relativity of culture. Camille shared a similar shift:

> The whole reason I went overseas was "I'm going to save the world!" you know? "I'm going to help all these people who need help!" And then I realized when I got over there, I can't help anybody over here. I'm the one that needs help when I'm over here, you know? ... I had people who kind of took me under their wing and, you know, "let me show you where to go shopping" and "let me show you, let me help you". So, I appreciated those people.

Teachers also demonstrated that spending time abroad impacted their ability to change themselves, to adapt to the needs of those from other cultures. This adaptability represented a way in which the teachers grew and increased their intercultural sensitivity.

Izara discussed how teaching in China after completing her master's in English education caused her to rethink and adapt to the culture:

> When I got out of grad school, we were taught: first of all, *only English!* You'll only use English and group work or work in pairs. I went to China right afterward. When I started, it would not work—did not work! —because they were not used to that. I had to start where they were. Like grammar … they were used to writing and reading. No speaking and listening. So, I had to start there, and then, little by little, bring in the idea of "Oh! We can talk to each other! We can do this activity in pairs! It doesn't have to be the whole class … doesn't have to be choral."

Josef, himself an Asian American, said that he had never learned Mandarin, the standard Chinese dialect. But he chose to complete his study abroad in China in hopes of being able to communicate with a student. The time he spent there enabled him to learn enough of the language to communicate a little with the student and he described wanting to learn even more. "Before I started teaching, I would have never wanted to learn like Spanish or Arabic, but now I'm thinking about how I could start learning those languages".

Increased Their Empathy for Students

Other teachers described their time abroad as increasing their ability to empathize with their students. They discussed how spending time immersed in another culture enabled them to place themselves in the perspective of their students and see the world differently. Amma explained how visiting the Caribbean enabled her to connect with her

students from there and truly feel for them. Kaya described how studying abroad in a foreign language as well as living life in a foreign country shifted her from being a "good student" to experiencing the feelings that she was incompetent or incorrect: "Yeah, there was a lot of humiliation involved. It's a learning process". Izara expressed how long those feelings of humiliation can last; although she had not been abroad in years, she recollected:

> Having lived and been involved in different cultures, I think I have more empathy for what [the students] are going through. I try to. With other stuff in their lives, I really try and pay attention to that; I think that's probably one of my strengths because I've lived it. Because even though it was a long time ago that I lived abroad, it's still here … those feelings are still there. So, when I see a student going through culture shock or whatever it is … homesickness … I try, I think I empathize with them.

Camille described what helped her own growth toward empathy after her time abroad:

> I understand what it's like to not understand what's going on around me. I know what it's like to not understand, not just the language of what's going on around me, but the life of what's going around me, and it'd be completely foreign to me. To look different from the people that are around me, to dress differently from the people around me … I understand what it's like to miss home or to have someone call me a racial slur. I understand what that's like so I think that's what helps me the most.

In addition to experiencing immersion abroad, several teachers described situations in which they felt immersed in a different culture. Zuri, Zola, and Amma talked about experiences within the United States in a culturally different setting. Zuri expressed learning comfort as a White woman in a predominately Black school. Amma discussed going to a diverse college from a small White hometown and then moving to a large Black and Hispanic urban city:

> I walked into a culture shock. Yes, that's what I wanted, but it was very overwhelming … I remember I was very overwhelmed because it was like everyone in the world was at this college, but I adapted, and I did fine with it and enjoyed the experience. Then I decided to do my student teaching in [a large urban, non-White city] because I wanted that urban experience. I wanted to put myself out there. I wanted to change the world … So, when I got there, that was a whole new ballgame for me … I got so overwhelmed by the situation … because the dialect [changed] … that was different! Nobody's sounding like me anymore! And this is literally just 2 and a half hours from my house!

Zola described how she had lived in many states, but experienced being a cultural outsider one day in a predominately Spanish-speaking urban city. She expressed empathy for her students in recounting the story:

> … [I was] just going to the mall one day and I walked in, I was like: "I am the only White person here!" And it was disconcerting; everybody was staring at me. Everybody was Hispanic and I was like, this is what my students feel like in other places. And I've never … felt White privilege—being a White woman from a

> suburban background and upbringing—I've never had that feeling, where I feel uncomfortable where I am because of the way I look. So, I try and think about that with my kids because they're oftentimes, I feel … put in those situations, especially in our district.

Four teachers had experienced an immersive PD experience, where the PD session was held in a different language and participants had to struggle to keep up. Josef described his experience:

> They put us into sort of an immersion environment where the teacher spoke to us only in … I forgot the language; I think it was Bulgarian … All the slides were in Bulgarian … it's supposed to simulate what an ESL beginner would experience in English. So, it was really difficult. I remember not understanding most of what he was saying, and then maybe there would be a picture and I would understand something on the slide. Yeah, it was a very difficult experience. And because of that, they're like, "all right, so now you know what it's like to be in a classroom as a beginner in a language you're not familiar with". I feel like because of that PD … I try to include a lot of pictures on my slides. I try to speak slower, use fewer words. I don't use difficult words when I'm teaching beginners … and I'm more accepting if a student says they don't understand. I can say, "okay I understand what you're feeling right now".

Marli expressed described an immersive PD experience as "really eye-opening" and explained some of the changes she has made in her teaching because of it:

> They just hear us, and we have to keep talking but it literally makes no sense. So, hearing that, you realize, okay, I need to add a lot more into what I'm doing: a lot more gestures, a lot more background knowledge, and pictures, and all that kind of stuff. Just to help them. I think [the PD] did a lot because … of all the professional developments I've been to, that one has stuck with me. And that placed in my brain: if they are low in English, what are they getting? What can they access? And so, I think that's played a huge role in how I try to present stuff to my students and interact with them.

However, not all the experiences with the immersive PD were as positively described. Scarlett described her experience with an Arabic presentation that "none of us could read or understand". For her, the PD was positive but didn't stick well in her memory. She fretted: "It was really [a good memory] and I'm just sitting here thinking 'gosh' I wish I remembered more of what she was saying. It was really interesting, but it didn't stick as well as I wish". Camille shared two different examples of immersive PD. The first one happened early in her career and she both enjoyed it and learned from it. The second was not instructive for her, perhaps because it was a poor fit for her level of experience, or the leader seemed manipulative.

> You know, I thought [that first experience] was great. But then fast forward like 15 years later, when I've been teaching for a long time, and somebody did that same kind of training to me. Like (*in an affected grouchy voice)* "I want you to feel what it's like to be immersed", and I know what this is like! I found it really

offensive … I mean, I already didn't like [the presenter]. So, I just found it offensive.

Theme 2: Interactions that Increased Intercultural Sensitivity

During the interview, participants discussed their experiences with training and PD that increased their intercultural sensitivity. Eleven of the 12 participants discussed how interacting with other cultures transformed them, whether with students, families, colleagues, or during stays abroad. These interactions spanned physical contact, online conversations, small groups and one-on-one discussions, book studies, and even childhood memories. These experiences are grouped into two subthemes: intercultural interactions with students and children, and intercultural interactions with other teachers and colleagues.

Intercultural Interactions with Students and Children

Several participants described interactions throughout their lives which broadened their understanding and appreciation of other cultures. Scarlett explained: "I've just tried to learn about my students and their cultures as much as a I can" and described how one of her students from Mexico took her to his Day of the Dead festival where he and his family performed a traditional dance. For her, this moment motivated her to learn more about other cultures. She said: "I had to learn about the Day of the Dead … it was like the first time I'd met his family, and so I learned a lot [about] their traditions and cultures."

Josef, early in his teaching career, discovered that being from a Latin American country did not necessarily mean that a student was a native Spanish speaker.

> I didn't know how, in a lot of Latin American countries, the students speak an indigenous language as their first language, and then they learn Spanish in school … just through teaching those students, I learned about them and then I learned more about the kinds of students I have.

Josef also shared another example of how he became more aware of other cultures by interacting with students:

> So, in [my city] we have a huge Uzbek population ... and I hadn't really heard of that country. When I was in high school and college, I had no idea about it! And then I got students and I thought, "okay, you're all from Uzbekistan, so you all speak Uzbek". And I remember one day I was like, "What is this word in Uzbek?" And he was like, "I'm not Uzbek, I'm Tajik". And I'm like, "What? I thought you're from Uzbekistan!" Apparently, there's a huge Tajik minority within Uzbekistan. That was a learning experience for me.

Camille described how, as a young teacher, she spent some time teaching English to Saudi fathers. For her, this experience gave her a chance to reflect on her place as a woman and teacher in her own culture versus their culture.

> I remember them leaving some trash on the table and me [saying] "Hey, you got to pick that up!" "Oh no [teacher], you can pick that up!" "What? I'm not picking that up!" But … it was more like I was their hired person … the relationship between a teacher and a student was different to them. And so, I couldn't take it personally. It wasn't a respect thing. It wasn't based on anything I did or didn't do. It was just that was a different kind of relationship to them.

For Ethan and Amma, transformative interactions with other cultures occurred long before they became teachers. Both participants described early childhood experiences that motivated them to learn more about other cultures' perspectives. Ethan described his childhood as "growing up in three languages"; one parent was Hispanic, another was Caucasian, and his best friend was deaf and spoke American Sign Language. He described the early experiences of spending time specifically with his Spanish-speaking relatives and with his American Sign Language friend as foundational in his work as an ESL teacher. He further discussed how an early introduction to rap music opened his world made him even more aware of other cultures:

> I kept listening [to rap music] and I realized that their type of poetry has messages about the social barriers that Black people, and that people of lower socioeconomic statuses have to overcome. And that just added another level of awareness.

Amma shared a childhood experience with an African American girl that opened her eyes to other cultures and gave her a desire to understand other perspectives. She told the story of playing with the little girl on the playground:

> I was like four or five and [there was] another little girl, she was a Black little girl, but I never saw her color; it never dawned on me … She came up to me and rubbed [her hand] against mine and said to me … "We'll always be the same". And I think now as an adult, was she meaning our color? Did she see my color and I just did not see her color? Was she [having] that fear put into her, knowing that you got to be very mindful of your surroundings being a young Black child?

> ... I think that's really honestly where [I learned to be] very aware … it's what set the tone for me … I mean, I thought we were the same?! But I never saw that color; no one taught me about it. She was a White girl to me. But she came with a whole different perspective.

Growing up in a culturally blended city, like Amma and Ethan, Kaya felt she understood cultural differences from an early age. However, she explained how she became aware of nuances in cultural differences when she experienced colorism as a veteran teacher. She described a light-skinned Black teacher who spoke poorly of the dark-skinned students in their school.

> I guess I was always looking through the paradigm of White versus Black and all of a sudden, it was like: "oh, this light-skinned woman is throwing shade at all these dark-skinned, lower class [children]". It was kids! And I was just like: "wow, I thought you were on their team! You work here!"

Other teachers addressed how spending time and building relationships with students, or their families strengthened their intercultural sensitivity. Amma reflected on the importance of making cultural connections:

> I'm trying to connect [with the students] educationally, but I'm trying to connect with them culturally as well. And if I don't know how to work with them, understand them, know where they're coming from, or why they're doing certain things, then how am I showing up for them to educate them?

Scarlett shared her own desire to engage deeper with her students by getting to know them better:

> I tried to learn as much as I could about our student and their cultures … when I found out I was going to have students who were Zomi, I knew nothing about that! So, I did some research to find out where are they from, what's brought these families here, and things like that. So, I think that has helped me, I mean that definitely has helped me to be a better ESL teacher, because I tried to be sensitive to things.

Ethan described the positive emotions behind connecting with his students and the importance of building strong relationships:

> I'm certainly willing to make an ass of myself trying to communicate in their languages. I just feel like that's what we should be doing … for me, it always felt like a type of calling, a type of community service ... it's nice that it's part of my job … and that makes me feel good as a person, as an educator."

Camille talked about how the joy volunteering with international students led her to become an ESL teacher. She wanted to continue working with other students, learning their cultures and languages:

> I just loved it … I was volunteering with the ESL students and their cultures and different languages and the grammar … it was just all the things I enjoyed rolled into one … and I was like: "Oh, I can do this as a job?" I didn't know I could do that.

Josef reflected on his own culture and how that might affect his ability to build relationships with students. He mused that some of his students may look more like him and feel more secure, thinking "Oh, he looks like me so he must support me". Reflecting

on that led him to be intentional and "show that I'm a fair teacher to all my students and [that] I want all of them to succeed … or think about … what more could I be doing to welcome those students and to help them succeed?"

Intercultural Interactions with Other Teachers and Colleagues

Nine of the participants described how interactions with other teachers or colleagues impacted their intercultural sensitivity. Camille, Zuri, and Scarlett specifically described situations in which the other person was from a different culture and how that shaped their perspectives or caused them to reflect on their own culture. Zuri described how working with a Chinese colleague has enabled her to reflect on her own culture and what she does in her classroom. She and the Chinese teacher spend time together and talk about shared students and how "everybody has their own deep culture; everybody has their own shallow … surface level [culture]". This reflection time has helped her learn more about her own deep culture.

Camille discussed how she tries to "be culturally sensitive … not calling people out" during class because she remembered how humiliating it can be. She mused about how it's a "tricky balance" to learn what is best for each culture. She spoke about two similar situations that caused her to "feel so American"; these interactions helped her to understand how her own feelings were tied to her culture.

> [When teaching overseas] my boss would say to me directly, "yeah, you're doing a good job!" but she would say to [my American supervisor] things she didn't think were good. And to me that was so devastating because she said to me it's good … I didn't understand why she wouldn't just tell me she thought it wasn't

> good! And it was this Arabic culture of saving face. She didn't want to embarrass me by telling me to my face … but that embarrasses me more! And my [American] boss was like, "but that's American that that embarrasses you more. She's trying to protect you." … And then I had another boss [later], he was Brazilian. He would call us in and have made a PowerPoint about everything we all did wrong. I was like: "Can you not call us in, tell us one-on-one? ... I want you to tell me privately what I did wrong and what you want me to do to fix it. I don't want you to address me in front of everyone, and I don't want you to tell someone behind my back.

Scarlett also reflected on learning through intercultural interaction. She talked about a friend who shared the culture of most of her students. That friend spent time teaching Scarlett about the different cultural events and practices of the students. She helped build a foundation from which Scarlett grew in appreciation of her students and became more interested in talking to her students about their heritage. Talking with this friend "helped a lot because she had that background and knowledge and then I would just [talk] to my kids: "tell me when did you start doing these dances? what do they mean? why do you wear these tortoise shells? what are they for?" The relationship with the friend encouraged her to dig deeper and learn more about the community so much that she eventually invited a parent into the classroom to demonstrate some of the cultural practices. "It was really just, again, interacting with the kids and interacting with the community to learn things."

Nine of the 12 participants talked about interactions with other ESL teachers in their school or through PD conferences. These shared times built their desire to learn more about their students' cultures and increased their intercultural sensitivity. Marli explained that she has the privilege of sharing a classroom with another ESL teacher and how they worked together to modify the district curriculum: "We decided we're just going to slow way down … and focus on what are the actual real needs of our students … We've chosen what we think is appropriate for the needs of our students." This togetherness enabled Marli to adapt to her students' cultural needs in a thoughtful and intentional manner.

Zola, Scarlett, Imani, and Izara have enjoyed attending PD conferences or other online methods of communicating with other ESL teachers. Izara explained that online workshops enable teachers to gather in groups that would not have otherwise happened. "I think more have been involved in the online [conferences]. So, we're not feeling, well, we're still feeling alone maybe in our schools, but we know that there are people out there we can reach out to." She called the best PDs the ones that included: "just interacting with other teachers because you know they always have ideas that you hadn't thought of, or you hadn't done … I think that's the best."

Imani echoed the feelings of loneliness in being the only ESL teacher in her building. She reflected on how meeting with other teachers gave her a chance to discuss her challenges with students who had gaps in their education and how to reach them in a sensitive manner. Finding a group to work with encouraged her and gave her new solutions.

> Having collaboration with others, I think that's so important. Just knowing that I'm not alone and going through the same kind of experiences … it was nice to see other people's thought and practices of how to incorporate different ways of teaching."

Zola has taken every online PD course offered in her area and has even taken some more than once. She has learned to reflect more deeply from the time she has spent in these courses with other teachers. She said one of the best parts of attending these courses is "making connections with other ESL teachers … building rapport with them". Like Imani and others, she is the only ESL teacher in her building; she felt that not having the support of other teachers was difficult: "You have to be self-motivated, or your kids aren't going to have a super effective teacher". She builds her motivation through staying connected with other teachers in any way she can.

Scarlett described how she tries to stay connected to other ESL teachers via Facebook groups and other social media communities. Reading posts from other teachers has opened her awareness of other cultures and how to interact with them. "I think I've learned a lot just from hearing perspectives from teachers who work with so many different cultures … I think that's really helped me to be more aware of some things."

Scarlett and others described how reflecting with other adults enabled them to think more deeply about their understanding of culture. Zola described how she has reflected with her now adult, childhood best friend on their shared experiences from different perspectives. As children, Zola assumed that they had experienced everything in the same way; now she realizes that as a Black girl in a White community her friend may

have seen things differently. “I never stopped to think about what she was going through, and I’ve had conversations with her since then and I was … oblivious! ... [But] you have to see color to see the experiences people go through.” Zola felt that having had time to reflect together has helped her to move broaden her understanding of culture.

Josef described how reflecting on his “teacher voice” with a teacher from another culture enabled him to think about how he presents himself to his students. For him, speaking loudly equaled “yelling” but to the other teacher and students, using his full voice demonstrated his authority as the teacher. Despite being a small shift, it impacted Josef and his thoughts about communicating between cultures. Because of that, “I definitely speak a lot louder now than I ever did before”; through the help of the other teacher, he was able to move through his own cultural concerns and better reach his students.

Another space that enabled teachers to reflect on their own culture in light of other cultures was through book study. Five teachers expressed how they use self-guided or personal small group reading to improve their cultural knowledge or practice. For example, Camille dove into a book when she was not sure how to respond to her Saudi fathers to try to connect with them better. Ethan read all he could find about students with interrupted education. He said he read “all I could read about the best practices, to really see where they’re coming from”. Josef picked up a book on how not to be the White teacher in the hood to help himself be more culturally sensitive. He also remembered an article on the importance of using students’ names and spends time every year perfecting pronunciation of each student’s name.

Zola described the reflective power of reading as a good time for "soul searching … even though it's difficult, it had been really good and eye opening." She mentioned reading *White Fragility* and *Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man* and learning from those "how the things I do or say could be perceived in a totally different way by somebody of color … or how families might perceive something I do, that I think is helpful, to being like the White savior." She then discusses her reading with a multicultural peer group to get other perspectives because it is "interesting to talk about and see people's experiences again and how they related or didn't relate to the book". She wished she had the opportunity to do something like that with her coworkers: "Doing book studies like that, with a peer group that you work with … [would be] really impactful because things might come up that you can all find in your classrooms then."

Several teachers have had the opportunity to do book studies with their school. Zuri, Kaya, and Marli have all had a book study hosted by the school. Marli's group read through *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain,* "really trying to look at how the brain works and trying to create environments that cater to the needs of trauma-based teaching". She felt that the study on which the book was based was uncovering the hesitancy of teachers to become more culturally sensitive: "A lot of our teachers don't understand … they don't make those connections with students … I've learned a lot of teachers are kind of hesitant or reluctant to pay attention to [students' cultural needs]". Exposure this through the book study has provided her space to help provide ideas and suggestions to other teachers.

Zuri's school read and discussed a few chapters of a book every faculty meeting and then together, they reflected on "how it applies to our students and the student populations we have. I mean, it's very intense this year". When asked to describe what she meant by intense, Zuri explained how the book has encouraged deeper conversations that would not have otherwise happened:

> I think it's creating opportunities for us to discuss some things that we normally want to put to the side, like the use of the N-word or … how do you respond to [when a student says] "oh, that's racist!"? That came out of nowhere; a teacher said, "Hey, I have a question" and we spent an hour talking about it … [It provides space] to not feel ashamed to ask a question like that and then also to have supportive colleagues give you tips and tricks or explain things to you. In that situation, the teacher was White, and she felt kind of uncomfortable and then that gave the opportunity for some of the other teachers … we had a few Black teachers respond, we had a Hispanic [teacher] respond, saying "this is how I have grown up and how students probably perceive things, and this is how we can work together to … work on that issue".

Kaya's school read a book on anti-racism for educators and discussed it in a study group. "We're encouraged to be real, talk about our failings, our hopes, or things that make us uncomfortable, things that had us reflecting on our identity." Kaya felt, like Zuri, that the book study encouraged teachers to reflect on their own practice and share with each other more often.

> One of the teachers I work with, who is a person of color, revealed that she was thinking about how in Black culture there's a lot of joking around: "that kid's a mess; that boy's crazy". People just jokingly disparage. And she said she realized she was possibly iterating tradition that went back to the slave trade when people would disparage someone in order to devalue them or something. And she said, "you know what, I'm never going to do that again. It just seemed like something I had grown up with and it seemed natural to me to talk about kids like that." But she didn't realize she's part of a centuries-old tradition of disparaging [Black kids].

Sharing a more personal reflection, Kaya described another book conversation. Discussing looking for and taking opportunities to discuss racism with students led Kaya to reflect on her own experience with some of her students. She felt she had missed a moment when several students made a race-based assumption about another student and she did not intervene: "I mean, was that a missed opportunity? That's not what I wanted to happen; I didn't want [the students] to be aligning on a team like the other kids. I didn't mean that to happen, but it did."

Theme 3: Available Training or Experiences are Insufficient to Increase Intercultural Sensitivity

All the interview questions I asked were focused on the training or PD the teachers had experienced which may have helped improve their intercultural sensitivity. Despite all 12 teachers sharing ways in which they had grown over their tenure, all also admitted dissatisfaction with the current training and PD offered to them. Teachers'

dissatisfactions ranged from not having had any training about certain topics, being thrown into ESL without adequate training, or the available training being inadequate, hard to access, or a waste of time.

When asked directly about any PD or training that focused on working with students of diverse cultures, only four teachers had an experience of any sort to share. Two discussed training they had had before entering the classroom but could not share any details or lasting memories from those experiences. The other eight had various ways of saying "no". Josef started with: "Yeah, I don't think I've had any PD like that"; Scarlett similarly replied: "I have not had any". Camille tried to think about it a little longer. "When I emailed you and told you I would do this [interview], I started thinking about it like, wait- have I had a training ever about this?" She mused for a moment but was unable to give me an example.

Marli pondered her own experience talking about how she had been interested in ESL teaching but had not had any formal training, even while obtaining her degree.

> I didn't really have anything in college. It wasn't really a thing. We didn't get much training on [working with culturally diverse students]. It was kind of like: these are just the students and you taught them. So, there wasn't a lot of focus on teaching them where they were.

Ethan started and stopped during the interview, but never found a specific example either: "Training … not training specifically. Other than … (paused in thought …) no, I would say no". Kaya lamented over the lack of training available for teachers in her school and district: "Most teachers have barely even completed what would even be

typical … requirements for the state. I'm not sure that folks here have even done that". Zola declared: "I could probably be doing a terrible job and [the school leaders] wouldn't know". Scarlett concurred: "we're all floundering, we're probably all doing it wrong." Izara put it plainly:

> PD on [working with culturally diverse students]? The answer is no. Not in schools, no. Has not happened in any of the districts that I've been in … Programs and PD? No. That's the truth. There really isn't … to be very honest, I don't know of any districts that do that.

In answering other questions about their experiences that required teachers to share specific examples of training or PD experiences they had attended, many participants again struggled to respond with any examples. Seven teachers described training and PD experiences that only addressed academic topics, not cultural elements. Scarlett shared that the closest training she had was on sheltered instruction, a method for teaching ELLs:

> The only training that I have had has been for sheltered instruction … observer protocols, [sheltered instruction] models … different things to help prepare for my certification tests. There was a little bit as far as preparing for the tests that talked about different cultures … I mean, the districts I've been in are good districts, but they're always more focused on what is this curriculum initiative or what is this program that we're teaching.

Ethan discussed how training sessions for ESL teachers tend to focus on how to get the ELLs prepared for academics, not on the cultural needs of the students

themselves. “A lot of it comes to … how we need to … equalize our classrooms so that the students can be successful in a tier-one, gen ed setting.” Josef described his own school experience: “I feel like most of the PDs at my school are focused on academics and it’s just assumed that all ESL teachers know how to be culturally responsive”. Amma lamented that although she had attended training on linguistics and understanding language, what she craved was assistance in learning how to connect with her culturally diverse students. “How can I relate to these kids so that they’re comfortable to learn with me? But I just have to figure it out by myself.” Kaya surmised: “Nobody would come out of their teacher prep with [training on cultural sensitivity] unless they specifically sought it out.”

In asking more specifically about their preservice training or PD to enter the classroom, nine teachers admitted to feeling “thrown” into ESL. Camille described it as “I didn’t have any [formal training], a lot of my teaching I just figured out as I went”. Marli started in a setting where she did not have much support. “We didn’t really have a curriculum, so I really made up my own thing”. Scarlett did have district-level ESL coaches, but “they were spread very, very thin. [Their presence] did help a little bit, but … I was really just kind of thrown in there … [I had to] learn and just kind of have the passion to figure it out … it was really like learning by fire.”

Ethan shared about moving from being a general education teacher into ESL. He had been teaching for many years and decided to start working on an ESL endorsement because he noticed the influx of ELLs in the district. He was not, however, prepared to enter the ESL classroom in the way he did:

> I remember sitting in [my principal's] office … he was asking me about [teaching ESL] and I said "sure, I'll be happy to". And he was like: "great, you're going to start on Monday". So, it wasn't like next school year or next quarter, it was literally in 2 days you're going to move to a new position. So, it was a big change.

Amma talked about her first experience in the classroom: "I had no ESL background, this is the first time I'm being immersed [in a bilingual environment], so I just kind of went with the vibe". Imani described herself as having had "no official training … I guess I was more of just thrown in". Similarly, Zuri shared: "I just kind of fell into [ESL teaching]. The opportunity presented itself; I was like, oh well, this could be really cool … so let's do it."

Other teachers had attended some training or PD experiences but found what was offered to be lacking. Zola expressed how she attended every PD on ESL she could find. But she disclosed: "My overall thought is there's never enough offered. I took so many last year that now I'm struggling a little bit to find different ones to take because I took most of them". The offerings are repetitive, but she continued to take classes anyway to keep learning.

Other training and PDs were considered a waste of time or easily forgotten. In trying to recall any PD, Nia said:

> I can't specifically name a training. I feel like I've gone to a lot of PD and walked away and gone, 'I don't know [if that PD] was a good use of my time. I don't think I really learned anything from that.

Kaya shared similar feelings: “I don’t always feel like [some of the PDs are] 100% relevant”. Amma was far more expressive:

> Yeah, [the PDs] aren’t helping us. No. Nope, wasn’t helpful. And meaningful, not like “drown me now!”? No. Those PDs, those trainings that they offer, are not helping me. They’re boring and a snooze fest … I’m being 100% [honest], I’ve had to be in the classroom to learn how to reach these kids. It’s had nothing to do with any trainings. No, none.

Camille agreed with Amma’s feelings. She did not express favorable perceptions of her experiences with training from her school or district:

> Honestly, a lot of the [training and PD] I’ve had in public schools has just been like a waste of my time. It’s been like, come here, sit here, sit in the chair, and check a box … I gotta sit here until this is over … I mean, I hate to say that, but I’m just being honest.

Some teachers felt they had had some training but could not remember much about it. In probing to see if Amma could recall any positive experience with training on cultural appreciation, she responded: “the last time I really did one, I think, was in college. It wasn’t even a PD, it had to do with a course. Could I tell you what happened in it? Not really.” Izara mentioned a PD that she had attended, but sighed as she shared, “I don’t know how much we use [any of the information]”. She could not recall any details about the training itself. Josef shared a vague memory from graduate school:

> There might have been a requirement that to get certified to be a teacher, you needed to attend a training about, I think, racial justice? But I don't really remember … it was probably like a 3-hour PD for one day.

Nine participants addressed a lack of access to adequate training. Ethan mentioned how he would like to attend an immersive PD experience, especially something that would allow him to visit another country, but that such experiences were too expensive. "Man, I would love to do … a week-long experience somewhere, and I don't see that happening. Just because it's pretty expensive." Josef explained the hassle of attending a PD that appealed to him. After thinking through the steps required, he determined it was not worth the difficulty.

> For me to sign up for that PD I would have to clear it with my administration, my principal, and say: "I'm going to be out like 3 days for this PD, is that okay? Can you find me a substitute for those 3 days? Are you okay with me going out?" And then it's this whole process and then I'd have to leave lesson plans for the sub to do with my students and leave my students for 3 days … and you know some principals rarely let staff leave. Especially for 3 days.

Scarlett could not get training within her district and was unsure if anything was offered by the state. "I love [my district], but they're a little behind when it comes to ELL education and awareness." Amma and Zola expressed frustration with the scheduling of training events. For Amma, training often occurred while she was teaching; for Zola, fitting PD into her free time can be challenging. Her current district requires all teachers with less than 12 years of teaching experience to attend PD on their own time.

> I think we get reimbursed something nominal … like $70 every 15 hours or something, but we need it to keep our licenses … and it's on your own time after school … [but] most of the teachers I work with don't have to go to PD ever. If they've been at it for maybe 15-20 years … they don't even have to go. [But] I feel like it should be mandatory; like all teachers have to take PD.

As an alternative to professionally offered training and development, several teachers described creating their own training or experiences or attending a small event by a coworker. Camille described how a few coworkers each "gave a little presentation about each one of their … countries. But I think that's the only thing culture-wise we've had this year or last year." But mostly, she had to step up and do it herself. "I do a little presentation at the beginning of the year, and every once in a while, at faculty meetings I do a little thing … [for example], I sent out a little thing about Ramadan to my teachers last year."

In a previous district, Zola had been part of a committee focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion. In that district, she had helped put on a PD for the district about culturally responsive teaching. She was surprised that her current district "had never heard of [equity, diversity, and inclusion] groups. So, my goal after being in [a culturally focused] PD last year was to start an EDI [equity, diversity, and inclusion] committee." Scarlett felt she learned information through conversing in small groups, like a committee. "I wouldn't call it training, but maybe just conversations [about diversity] and things like that. [But] it's always something I've had to search out."

Ethan found himself asked to lead PDs because he had a master's in education leadership and increased equity in schooling. Although he had not been able to attend any training, he started talking about what he had learned. Ethan explained that he:

> got really good at [talking about equity and diversity] and then I was just kind of roped into doing some more broader training and it tied in with my master's research that I did as well. So, it's not like I was trained in that, but …"

Marli described attempting to learn to use self-reflection as a means for growth. Her school had "taken on an initiative of doing social-emotional learning … and restorative justice" but she did not feel that she had yet learned much about either topic:

> While I haven't necessarily had training or classes on teaching [social emotional learning or restorative justice] … the lessons that were given have been interesting. And reflecting on where I am and how I react and behave … I know my roommate was talking about one of the breathing techniques that they mentioned … and so she's been using that … it's just been things like that. Nothing else really.

Izara described a training she and the other ESL teachers produced for the gen ed teachers. They were required to provide 15 hours of sheltered instruction training, so the team decided to use interviews as a means of sharing the students' culture with the gen ed teachers.

> We asked them certain questions about life here, life in their countries. What's easiest? What's hardest? What do you need from teachers? And [we videoed the responses and] showed that to the teachers. And that made a huge difference …

> [the teachers] started to come around a little bit about understanding what our students go through, what their lives are like … Having these kids answer those questions and having teachers listen to [the recording]. Yeah, it was really an eye-opener for them and [they] started … to have some empathy for our kids.

Izara also described how she tries to learn more about the students by creating a profile of each incoming student and something about their culture. She includes information she gleans from the students to try to get to know them better: "their interests, where they came from, what language they speak because sometimes they speak more than one …" She felt like this practice enabled her to learn more about the individual cultures and needs of each student. Imani also made a practice of doing self-guided research about each child. "As soon as I get my roster … I like to do my own little research on their country and look it up and see … what each country is in need of and what their population is like … demographics … all that stuff." Being a religious person, Imani shared that she used these profiles to "devote my time to praying for each of them". In doing so, she felt she was better able to connect with the students and appreciate them and their cultures. When asked if she had had any training that encouraged this practice, she replied: "No, that's all directed [by] my own self".

Theme 4: Immersive or Interactive Training or Experiences Would Increase Teachers' Intercultural Sensitivity

In addressing interview questions related to Research Question 2, each participant was asked about what types of training or PD might increase their intercultural sensitivity. Participants were encouraged to respond with anything they felt could help

them to become better ESL teachers. Some teachers mentioned specific aspects of working in the classroom they wanted to address, such as help in identifying ELLs with learning disabilities or co-teaching in a general education classroom. But in identifying areas that would improve their cultural understanding and appreciation of their students, many teachers focused on two types of training: immersive experiences and interactive experiences.

Eight of the 12 participants discussed the desire for immersive informal PD experiences. The teachers expressed their dreams of going abroad, through a teacher exchange type program, and of finding a chance to place themselves in their students' home countries. Josef stated it plainly: "I think the best experience [for all teachers] would be the study abroad experience, where you get to experience another culture". Imani had not been able to go anywhere due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but she looked forward to being able to travel again: "I'd just love to go and experience the culture and immerse myself. You know, learn from the people themselves." Ethan talked of going to some of the African countries that his students came from. He felt that he would grow in his ability to value his students and their cultures.

> I feel like, at this point, that would be something I would value … just being able to go there and experience where they're coming from … I would love to visit a refugee camp, just to see exactly the conditions that they're coming from. I don't know how safe that would be, but I think in order for educators to fully understand where [the students] are coming from, you have to see it. If I have my ultimate PD, that's what I would do.

Camille reflected again on her own time abroad and how much it had helped her grow as an educator. She felt that providing that opportunity to other teachers would similarly inspire them. “I think some of that … cultural sensitivity [training] would help. Some sort of immersion experience and feeling lost.” Zuri personally wanted to find an opportunity to teach abroad. She felt that spending that time in another culture would give her a window into her students’ experiences.

> I think [teaching abroad] would help me immerse myself in a new culture, to understand maybe what it feels like for students when they come over to America., what it feels like to just be surrounded by it and not be home right with everything that you’ve grown up with. I think being in that other culture, probably something that diverse from the U.S. would be, I mean, culture shock, yes, but also a huge learning opportunity.

Amma described her ideal PD as being hands-on: “whatever you’re teaching me, I’m sure there’s something we can *do*, hands-on.” She felt that unless she was actively engaged in the learning topic, it was not going to stick. She wanted to understand her students and their educational backgrounds better. “I think our teachers need to understand where these kids are coming from … I see why they do [trips] abroad, but not for students, but for the teachers … put yourself in that situation.” Like Imari, she lamented the pandemic-related travel ban which kept her from being able to travel to several Central American countries. “I wouldn’t mind taking a summer and just stepping into their education system, just so I can … apply it somewhere or explain it to someone else.”

Although Kaya had described her own time abroad as transformative, she did not feel that other teachers would be as appreciative. “I don’t think people are interested … like some people are into traveling … [but] it’s not just everybody who’s into … putting themselves out there like that.” Instead, she suggested providing an immersive PD experience at her school. “I always think the best PD would be me just talking to [the general education teachers] in French for an hour, then giving them a test, then yelling at them at the end: ‘I told you three times!’” For her, providing a linguistic challenge in this way would bring the same feelings of being lost that Camille had suggested. Those feelings, she felt, would encourage empathy and appreciation in teachers.

Nia had several suggestions but also doubted other teachers’ willingness to “leave their bubble”. She felt that the best PDs would find a way to increase diversity and expose teachers to other cultures, skin tones, religions, and economic statuses. That exposure could provide an awareness “of misconceptions they might have about other cultures … I think it’s looking for opportunities like that”. She wanted to design “PD or training for [teachers] to think about the color of their skin or languages or holidays they may celebrate … And how that might impact their views and thinking, their interactions when they leave their little bubble.”

Another main characteristic of suggested training and PD was interaction with others. One of the simple suggestions was for more time. Five participants simply wanted to have more time with other teachers to reflect, learn, and grow. Josef shared: “I think reflection [for growth] is often skipped because teachers don’t have a lot of time to do things”. He further shared: “To increase positive experiences … interacting with people

of that culture … maybe [providing] structured opportunities to interact". Amma wanted to help the teachers around her learn more about her ELLs, but she also felt the lack of time: "my teachers struggle, and I just don't have the time right now to sit there and [help them]". Nia agreed that teachers needed more time, not more structured PD.

> I think just time to collaborate. A lot of times it seems like schools feel you need to go online and enroll in a class … when really just having time to talk to teachers, to work with the staff that your students share [would be beneficial].

Izara and Zuri both agreed with the need for more collaboration time. Izara said: "The best PD is just talking to other teachers, just interacting with other teachers". Zuri wanted to have more space to share openly with her colleagues and to provide that same space for them. After revisiting her own experiences in the book study group at her school, she described how providing similar time and space would benefit all teachers.

> Just having more opportunity to discuss certain things … I feel like native English speakers sometimes are afraid of interacting with someone who speaks a different language … Being able to talk about those things or ways to address someone or get past some of those preconceived notions we have … I think that will really continue to open up other cultures.

Six participants suggested finding ways to tailor PD to the student population in their schools and communities. Kaya reflected on her school and coworkers: "I feel like a lot of [teachers] are still unfamiliar [with] …where the kids are coming from. I don't really do that for my staff … I should talk about what's different about [the students'] country." She felt that specifically focusing on the students' countries of origin would

improve the staff's cultural sensitivity. Zola concurred as she thought about the various cultures represented even among her Spanish-speaking students. "I think, honestly, making it more personal … I think knowing [my students'] cultures and traditions and backgrounds … would be really beneficial."

Scarlett also agreed with the importance of having tailored knowledge. She reflected on how she could better understand her own culture and its relationship to other cultures. She wanted to know more about her students' cultures to make comparisons to her own experiences. "I think that would be relevant … if we could look at the cultures that make up our community … having that knowledge would allow me to make those comparisons and have that awareness."

Josef worked in a school "with huge Asian populations" but he still did not feel adequately prepared to work with the students he encountered. For him, having a tailored PD would better equip him: "Just from my own experience, I haven't been to any PDs that talk about Asian students or Asian culture, so that's something I guess I would like to see more of". Amma agreed with the need for tailored training on her students' home cultures and education background: "[I'd like PD] focused on where they're actually coming from. So, if we have kids coming from the Dominican Republic, let's do a little background on where they're coming from, on their education system."

Several teachers thought having a cultural ambassador would further strengthen tailored learning. Marli described it as "having speakers … from those cultures come in and talk about … what's going on, where we're from. These are the kinds of things your students may or may not have seen." In "making it more relatable to our actual current

students" she felt that teachers would "open their view of their students" and grow in their appreciation of other cultures. Josef also figured this would be the best option if a study abroad were not possible.

> I think the presenter of the PD should be whatever culture they're talking about. I think that's important because they might have experienced racism or discrimination that a person that is not of that culture would not have experienced ... If they have experienced being in the classroom as a student, they would know what teachers were more effective for them … what teachers could do better.

Nia agreed with Josef in that teachers would benefit from hearing from a native speaker. "I would like for the teachers, like the math or science teachers to listen to the parents of one of my students." Amma felt that, even though she could talk with the other teachers about her experiences with her students, it would be more effective to hear from someone directly from the target culture:

> That would be a good thing, too, because you can understand from their perspective because they're the native. I really, really think [the other teachers] need to hear from another person in this area. So, I'm googling Hispanic mentors in my area … [to bring] them in just to sit them all in a meeting all in my room right now and just talk.

Izara described a way in which her school would benefit from having a cultural ambassador. With so many students from a culture she did not know much about, she felt having a cultural representative would enable them to connect with the students.

> Now we are getting many indigenous students from Central America. Having the chance to talk with someone from there, who maybe has been here a long time, who can speak to us, explain things and help us understand because there's so many things from being of an indigenous culture that we don't know.

Even more than just hearing from anyone within the culture, Zola, Izara, and Imani discussed the benefits of hearing from the students themselves. Zola mused about how, in one school where she worked, the high school ELLs helped present their stories during a PD.

> Our students of color [came to the PD] talking about 'yeah, I felt discriminated against in my own classroom by my own teacher', [sharing] their experiences … hearing those firsthand stories when we go to PD is super powerful. We're all crying at the end. It's just … I don't have those experiences as a White woman. I don't. I have privilege.

Izara had discussed her work with the ESL student interviews and how powerful that was to the staff and students. She felt that providing something like that again would continue to increase intercultural sensitivity among the staff.

> I mean, that would be dream world [PD] … having our students doing intercultural programs for the teachers. Maybe we need to do it during school … you know, a lunch with … foods from other countries with the teachers coming in at least eating and talking to the kids about it.

Imani shared that she had spent time sharing with her colleagues about the students' cultures, but she felt a student ambassador would better benefit both the

students and the staff. Hearing directly from the students would provide the students with a sense of their own strength and the teachers would get a firsthand address. She called it "hearing directly from the mouths of babes … not just me yapping at [the teachers]".

> I think it would be more powerful from the kids, to be honest … It helps with [the students'] speaking skills, helps with their own advocacy … so they know that maybe other people do care about them, even though they don't think they do. I mean, some [teachers] are more receptive when the kids talk. Because then they hear it straight from them to know what they are able to do and what they can't do.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I shared the results of the data analysis. The study results showed the participants perceived an increase in intercultural sensitivity through training and PD experiences that included an immersion component. Participants also shared that interacting with others in intercultural settings improved their intercultural sensitivity. At the same time, all participants felt they needed more access to quality PD that focused on their student population. To improve teachers' intercultural sensitivity through training and PD, participants suggested increasing immersive PD and intercultural interactions for teachers. In Chapter 5, I interpret the findings of this study and discuss the limitations of the study. I then present the recommendations for further study and implications for positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ESL teachers' perceptions of their experiences with training and PD toward becoming more interculturally sensitive in K-12 U.S. classrooms. I used semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to discover the perceptions of 12 ESL teachers who had 2 to 30 years of experience in K-12 education from the Northeast to the Western United States. The data analysis provided three main findings related to Research Question 1 about teachers' perceptions of their past experiences: (a) immersive training or experiences increased intercultural sensitivity, (b) interactive training or experiences increased intercultural sensitivity, and (c) available training or experiences are insufficient to increase intercultural sensitivity. In response to the second research question, teachers perceived additional immersive or interactive training would improve their intercultural sensitivity. In this chapter, I present the interpretation of the findings in light of the conceptual framework and literature review. I then provide the limitations of the study, recommendations for future study, implications for positive social change, and a conclusion.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this section, I summarize each of the four themes that emerged from the data analysis and then interpret each one in light of the conceptual framework and the current research in intercultural sensitivity and ICC, especially as they relate to ESL teachers.

Theme 1: Immersive Training or Experiences Increased Intercultural Sensitivity

The first theme reflects teachers' perceptions on training or experiences they had that contained an immersive component. The participants shared that immersion through time spent in a different culture was often the catalyst for them to enter the field, provided new ways of thinking about themselves and the world, and increased their empathy for students. For example, both Josef and Izara had other career plans before they studied abroad; the exposure to other cultures inspired them to change paths and become ESL teachers. Camille shared how her perspective on her place in their world changed after realizing what other cultures had to offer her; after she returned from her time abroad, she felt more empathy toward students and their families here.

Theme 1 in Light of the Conceptual Framework

Intercultural sensitivity is the drive to learn more about and build relationships with people of other cultures (Dai & Chen, 2015). Most participants in this study demonstrated that spending time immersed in other cultures fostered that desire in them. After spending time abroad or in other immersive environments, several participants reported stronger desires to interact with other cultures, new ways of thinking of themselves and their place in the world, and empathy for other cultures. One of the benefits of improved intercultural sensitivity is a move toward ethnorelativism, which allows those participating to view themselves and their culture as a part of the larger society and encourage attentiveness to others' needs (Bennett, 2017; Chen & Starosta, 2005). Another component of intercultural sensitivity is the ability to acknowledge the needs of others and take on their perspective (Chen & Starosta, 2005). In spending time

immersed in other cultures, participants reported they grew in their empathy, which led toward action. Participants shared examples of how they adapted themselves to better meet the needs of students and families based on what they had learned in their immersive experiences.

Theme 1 in Light of the Literature Review

Studies have demonstrated that immersion can help improve intercultural sensitivity and ICC and that these can benefit intercultural relationships. Teacher exchange programs or teaching abroad experiences can improve intercultural sensitivity, teacher self-efficacy, and multicultural preparedness (Çiftçi & Gürbüz, 2019; Gong et al., 2022; Kazazoğlu & Ece, 2021). Participants in this study found that immersion through time abroad was one of the strongest ways to increase their intercultural sensitivity, though immersive, formal PD experiences also worked. This finding supported the work done by Bagwe and Haskollar (2020); in their literature review, they found that studying abroad was one of the strongest methods of improving teachers' intercultural sensitivity, but at-home training with a strong focus on critical reflection could also suffice. Reflection was a key component in strengthening teachers' ICC and intercultural sensitivity (Cuartas Álvarez, 2020; Lin et al., 2020) and as participants in this study reflected on their experiences, they demonstrated how they had become more adaptable, more empathetic, and more open-minded. Similarly, Gordon and Mwavita (2018) found that providing cross-cultural exposure, as in time abroad, improved intercultural sensitivity.

Theme 2: Interactive Training or Experiences Increased Intercultural Sensitivity

The second theme reflects participants' descriptions of their perceptions of their experiences with training and PD that included interactions with others. Participants shared that spending time with students, children, other teachers, and colleagues improved their intercultural sensitivity. Stories were shared of childhood experiences that participants still remembered, of transformative moments with students and their families, and positive experiences with teachers of other cultures or in open dialogue about cultural issues. In a specific example, Imani shared how visiting her students' homes helped her learn about the students' lives and cultures and inspired her to learn more. Scarlett spoke of a time when a colleague explained her culture and why she wore her hijab and demonstrated her language; Scarlett found this conversation strengthened her desire to learn more about Afghan refugees in the United States. All of these pointed to the participants' perceptions that engaging with other cultures improved their intercultural sensitivity.

Theme 2 in Light of the Conceptual Framework

In his seminal work on prejudice, Allport (1954) described the importance of positive, intentional interaction between culturally distinct groups; for Allport, the only way to lower prejudice and racism was to encourage positive group interaction (see also Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Bennett (2017) described intercultural sensitivity as the movement from ethnocentrism—a self-centered view of culture—toward ethnorelativism, the understanding that all cultures are unique but equal. As participants in this study described their interactions with other cultures, they compared what they knew of their

own culture with their new learning. This exposure increased their desire to learn more about other cultures and their respect for cultural differences, a key component of intercultural sensitivity (Chen & Starosta, 2005). Intercultural sensitivity, which is the motivation and desire to form intercultural relationships, requires interacting with other cultures (Dai & Chen, 2015). Participants expressed improved appreciation for other cultures and stronger motivation to learn more about other cultures based on their intercultural engagement.

Theme 2 in Light of the Literature Review

Research has shown that intercultural interactions can improve ICC and intercultural sensitivity (Tamam & Krauss, 2017) and training that includes intercultural interaction tasks can improve intercultural sensitivity (Kuhi & Behroozizad, 2022). For example, Sarwari et al. (2018) found that participants who engaged with intercultural peers improved their ICC. Gordon and Mwavita (2018) similarly found that students with a higher number of multicultural engagement opportunities had higher scores on Chen and Starosta's (2000) Intercultural Sensitivity Scale. In the current study, participants described interacting with other cultures as a method of improving their intercultural motivation and value. Being in multicultural environments can help raise teachers' intercultural sensitivity (Segura-Robles & Parra-González, 2019). Participants, like Amma and Zola, shared how spending time in large urban areas with multiple cultures encouraged them to seek out more intercultural opportunities. Training and PD that include intercultural interactions, mentoring, or peer support can improve intercultural sensitivity (Bagwe & Haskollar, 2020).

Theme 3: Available Training or Experiences are Insufficient to Increase Intercultural Sensitivity

The third theme expresses what teachers addressed related to a lack of adequate training and PD experiences to increase their intercultural sensitivity. Participants disclosed feelings of frustration with lack of access to training, academic training that did not address cultural concerns, or training that was a waste of time or nonexistent. Eight of the 12 participants could not describe a training focused on culturally diverse students. In discussing the problems with current training offerings, Amma stated, "I could be [in this interview] all day explaining my frustrations". Teachers longed for training or PD experiences that would increase their understanding of cultural differences and would support their work with their students. In facing the lack of available PD, teachers tried to create opportunities for themselves and their colleagues but often felt ill-equipped to provide anything meaningful. Many participants described feeling thrown into ESL without sufficient support.

Theme 3 in Light of the Conceptual Framework

Banks (2014) maintained that schools needed to be intentional about the training they provided to decrease prejudice and ethnocentrism. As multicultural organizations, schools need to embrace ethnorelativism and prepare their faculty to move toward intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 2017). However, as Allport (1954) cautioned, intercultural interactions must be intentional for them to be successful. Without intentionality, participants often grow in knowledge but cannot to put it into practice (Chen & Starosta, 2005). Chen and Starosta (2005) reviewed six models of intercultural

training and the disadvantages or problems of improper implementation. These included increasing ethnocentrism, distorting cultural views, failure to adapt to another culture's needs, and lowered motivation to experience other cultures. In other words, poor quality in training can lower intercultural sensitivity instead of increasing it. Participants in this study described many of their PDs as unhelpful, a waste of time, frustrating, and boring. Chen and Starosta's work demonstrates that, without a change in implementation, participants could lose motivation for working with other cultures.

Theme 3 in Light of the Literature Review

Several studies found that teachers lack adequate training or were unsatisfied with their current level of training (Eren & Kurt, 2019; Farrell, 2019; Yücedağ & Şevik, 2021). Teachers lacked training in critical reflection, a necessary component for strengthening intercultural sensitivity (Çiftçi & Gürbüz, 2019). There are many barriers to PD including structural problems and one-size-fits-all options that can leave teachers dissatisfied or bored (McChesney & Aldridge, 2021). Too often, teacher training focuses only on preparing teachers to work in the dominant culture and PD focuses on theory, not practice (Akcaoğlu & Kayiş, 2021). ESL teachers often feel invisible and under-supported in teacher professional learning communities (Wong & Turkan, 2022); the participants in this study expressed similar sentiments. Tosuncuoglu (2019) agreed with Banks (2014) that deliberate intervention is necessary for teachers to improve. Whereas most of the participants in this study had attended some training and PD, they felt the lack of experiences with culturally focused training and PD needed to be addressed. Although Kim and Connelly (2019) suggested more training and reflection on

multiculturalism and intercultural sensitivity, Gordon and Mwavita (2018) cautioned that taking a course alone is insufficient to improve intercultural sensitivity. Quality training and PD should motivate teachers, build from their personal experiences, and incorporate reflection to build intercultural sensitivity (Qadhi & Floyd, 2021). Most participants felt they lacked such quality training specifically directed toward working with culturally diverse students.

Theme 4: Immersive or Interactive Training or Experiences Would Increase Teachers' Intercultural Sensitivity

In my analysis of the final theme on Research Question 2, teachers expounded on their ideas for future training and PD related to intercultural sensitivity. Participants shared their dreams of having more immersive experiences for themselves and their colleagues. Imani described it as wanting to hear directly from the people themselves. Camille expressed the need for her coworkers to gain empathy through feeling lost in another culture. Participants also wanted more intentional interaction with other cultures and with their coworkers. Suggestions included additional time to collaborate and hear from other teachers, tailoring PD to match student populations, and inviting cultural ambassadors to present to the faculty. Josef explained that the only way to truly understand the students' perspectives was to hear from them directly; Zola and Izara shared stories of the power of teachers hearing students' stories firsthand.

Theme 4 in Light of the Conceptual Framework

Moving people from ethnocentrism toward ethnorelativism is not easy and requires careful cultivation and training (Banks, 2014; Bennett, 2017; Deardorff, 2011).

The participants in this study desired to grow in their intercultural sensitivity and wanted more opportunities and assistance to get there. Quality training and PD can empower and support teachers in this journey (Banks, 2014; Chen & Starosta, 2005). Enabling teachers to spend more time together creates space for them to give and take in the knowledge acquisition process (Byram, 1997) and can modify behavior in a positive way (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). Participants wanted more opportunities to immerse themselves and their colleagues in other cultures and to experience other cultures. Chen and Starosta (2005) agreed that interaction with other cultures removes cultural isolation and creates space to form the six components of intercultural sensitivity they outlined. Dong et al. (2008) believed that as teachers increase in their intercultural sensitivity, students benefit and gain a stronger multicultural perspective. Participants wanted to give their students more opportunities to experience the intercultural world but felt they needed additional support to do so with fidelity.

Theme 4 in Light of the Literature Review

Participants wanted additional training that was tailored to their needs and focused on interaction and immersion. Both Eren and Kurt (2019) and Yücedağ and Şevik (2021) suggested that training should begin with a needs assessment to determine applicability to teachers. Eren and Kurt supported the idea that teachers would benefit from studying abroad and interaction with other cultures, as well as instruction in critical self-reflection (see also Bragg et al., 2021). Hands-on or experiential learning, as suggested by several participants in this study, can be one of the most beneficial factors in training (Civitillo et al., 2018; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021). Akcaoğlu and Kayiş

(2021) suggested that training should be redesigned to include multicultural interaction to improve intercultural sensitivity. Wolff and Borzikowsky (2018) also advocated for foreign exchange time for teachers but commented that PD tailored to teachers' needs may be even more beneficial. Participants in this study requested training and PD that provided more time to engage with peers and learn from them; Alaei and Nosrati (2018) concurred and suggested that increasing ICC and intercultural sensitivity requires time spent in quality engagement with peers. This finding related to the work by Howlett and Penner-Williams (2020) who recommended ongoing PD with collaboration and inclusion to limit the isolation of ESL teachers.

Limitations of the Study

This study had several limitations. This basic qualitative study focused on the perceptions of 12 K-12 ESL teachers from different schools across three regions of the United States, which limits the transferability to other settings. Other limitations are the unique demographics of the self-selected participants, researcher bias, and the data collection method. Because I have been a K-12 ESL teacher, the study risks my personal experiences biasing the research. To reduce researcher bias, I kept copious notes about my processes, which I detailed in Chapter 3. I also avoided any personal connections or conversations about the topic during the study.

The participants for this study may or may not represent the general population of U.S. teachers; participants chose to participate in this study; thus, it was not a purposeful selection. Teachers may have chosen to participate in the study because they were already more interested in intercultural sensitivity; a purposeful sampling of teachers may

provide different results. This study was also limited to participants in K-12 ESL education; changing the participants or widening the parameters may have affected the results.

Using social media as a method of contact and Zoom as the platform for interviews may have also affected the results. Although using video interviews did allow me to expand my research beyond my city, it may have deterred participants who were not as comfortable with a video conference. Additionally, my role as a Black female researcher may have changed participants' comfort levels in addressing racially and interculturally sensitive topics.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on my reflections of the findings of the basic qualitative, I believe further research is needed to understand K-12 ESL teachers' experiences with training and PD that may increase their intercultural sensitivity. A gap in research remains in understanding the specific types of training and PD experiences that may increase teachers' intercultural sensitivity. I recommend seven areas for future exploration and study:

- Exploring teachers' intercultural sensitivity before and after an immersive experience
- Exploring teachers' intercultural sensitivity before and after intercultural engagement opportunities
- Evaluating various states' training and PD requirements for ESL teachers to increase opportunities for learning

- A case study following the experiences of teachers in long-term immersion regarding their self-reflection
- Evaluating school, district, and state-level support for intercultural sensitivity training
- Action research to implement and evaluate the use of cultural ambassadors for tailoring PD to meet the unique needs of individual schools
- A case study on the influence of intercultural sensitivity from immersive PD experiences such as a teacher exchange program or trips to students' cultures.

The findings from this study support the need for further research into immersion and interaction among teachers, colleagues, students, and families of all cultures. Future researchers should continue to explore ESL teachers' experiences with training and how to improve training and PD experiences to further increase their intercultural sensitivity.

Implications for Social Change

The findings from this basic qualitative study could have implications for positive social change for individual teachers, students and their families, school districts, and stakeholders at the policy level. This study focused on the importance of increasing intercultural sensitivity in ESL teachers through training and PD experiences. Based on the findings from this study, it is implied that providing additional time to connect with other cultures may improve teachers' intercultural sensitivity, which in turn, may provide more confidence in working with students of other cultures.

The implications of the findings from this study confirm the recommendations from Cuartas Álvarez (2020) that improving teachers' intercultural sensitivity enables

them to better connect with their students and to desire deeper relationships. Participants in this study shared that as their relationships with their students and families grew, they were more willing to reach out to more students and families. The participants went out of their way to provide for the needs of their students, specifically focusing on their cultural needs.

Schools, districts, and even state education systems can benefit from the findings of this study. As teachers shared their perceptions of their experiences with training and PD, they addressed positive experiences they had and proffered suggestions for improving future trainings. Schools and districts can focus on tailoring PD to meet the needs of the communities in which they serve and provide teachers with practice in critical self-reflection (Bagwe & Haskollar, 2020; Qadhi & Floyd, 2021). State education departments can provide opportunities for teachers to join exchange programs or experience other teaching abroad opportunities which can improve their self-efficacy, multicultural understanding, and ICC (Gong et al., 2022). Providing stronger training could strengthen not only the experiences of the ESL teachers and their students, but also those of the general education teachers and the communities in which the schools reside.

At the policy level, this study demonstrates some of the challenges teachers have faced in accessing quality training and PD to improve their intercultural sensitivity. Policy makers and teacher educations programs should address teachers concerns when implementing new methods of training or requirements for ESL teachers. Taking teachers' needs into account (Eren & Kurt, 2019) will better tailor the learning to meet those needs and improve teacher performance.

Conclusion

Intercultural sensitivity is a critical component for working in a multicultural setting. ESL teachers face such a space daily as they enter a classroom full of culturally diverse students; these teachers need to have ICC in order to reach the students. Research has demonstrated that training and PD can help strengthen teachers' intercultural sensitivity and improve ESL teacher and student relationships (Bagwe & Haskollar, 2020; Cuartas Álvarez, 2020; Rahimi et al., 2020). There is a gap in the research concerning K-12 ESL teachers in the United States and their training and PD experiences focused on improving intercultural sensitivity. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ESL teachers' perceptions of their experiences with training and PD toward becoming more interculturally sensitive in K-12 U.S. classrooms. Although there has been research on ESL teachers, intercultural sensitivity, and training in other countries (Akcaoğlu & Kayiş, 2021; Kazazoğlu & Ece, 2021; Yurtsever & Özel, 2021) there are a relative few in the United States (Grant et al., 2021; Kim & Connelly, 2019; Pourdavood & Yan, 2020). This study added to the research on the needs of ESL teachers in the United States. The findings confirmed that participants felt that training and PD experiences that included immersive and interactive components increased their intercultural sensitivity. However, participants shared that training and PD focused on cultural sensitivity was lacking. Participants believed that intentional training and PD on intercultural sensitivity that contained an immersive or interactive component would further improve their practice. The study's findings largely align with available research

in the field and contribute additional ways in which training and PD providers can improve ESL teachers' intercultural sensitivity.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you so much for agreeing to this interview. The goal of this study is to understand better the experiences ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers, like yourself, have had with training in intercultural sensitivity. Intercultural sensitivity is being aware of cultural differences and wanting to learn more about those differences. As an ESL teacher in a multicultural classroom, understanding how you perceive your experiences with training and PD may help better train other educators. It may also help improve intercultural communication between other educators, students, and parents.

During this interview, after I ask a question, please take your time to give me as thorough a response as you can. I may take limited notes as you speak, but please feel free to speak candidly. The interview will be recorded, and I will later transcribe it and remove any personal information. All your information will remain confidential, and I will erase anything that can be used to trace you. I will also refer to you as a pseudonym; you may choose your pseudonym if you would like. Do you have a name you would like me to use? Do you have any questions about how I will maintain your confidentiality? Is there anything else you'd like to know before we begin?

Interview Questions

Warm-up/Introduction

1. Tell me about what led you to ESL teaching?

   Possible probes:

   a. How long have you been teaching?

b. Is ESL teaching one of your certification areas?

c. Did you have another area of endorsement?

2. Tell me about the kinds of diversity you have worked with in your ESL classroom?

   Possible probes:

   a. Describe the racial/ethnic culture of your students in your classroom.

   b. Has this cultural makeup been the same throughout your career?

   c. Would you consider yourself culturally similar or dissimilar to your students?

Research Question 1: Past Experiences: What perceptions do K-12 U.S. ESL teachers have of their experiences with training and PD that may have increased their intercultural sensitivity?

3. What experiences have helped you become an effective teacher given the cultural diversity of the ESL classroom?

   Possible probes:

   a. Is there an experience you can recall that made you more aware of the cultural diversity in your classroom?

   b. What are some ways in which you have changed or adjusted to better meet the needs of your students?

4. Tell me about any training or PD you have had that focused on relating to students of other cultures?

   Possible probes:

a. Tell me about any training or PD on…?
    a. Multicultural education?
    b. Culturally responsive teaching?
    c. Appreciating cultural differences?
    d. Understanding cultural bias?
b. In what way has this training or PD affected your appreciation of other cultures?
c. In what way has this training or PD affected your motivation to learn more about other cultures?

5. Tell me about any ESL training or PD that promoted self-reflection as a method of growth?

   Possible probes:
    a. What assistance, if any, have you had in practicing self-reflection?
    b. How have you grown as an ESL teacher because of your self-reflection?
    c. How has that reflection affected your appreciation of other cultures?
    d. How has that reflection affected your motivation to learn more about other cultures?
6. Tell me about any training or PD that required you to interact with other cultures? (Examples: Student teaching experiences? Study abroad? Equity or diversity training?)

   Possible probes:

a. In what way might these experiences have affected your growth as an ESL teacher?
b. Did you have any support in reflecting on those experiences?
c. Did those experiences have any effect on your appreciation of other cultures?
d. What did those experiences do for your motivation to learn about other cultures?

Research Question 2: Future Ideas: What training and PD practices do K-12 U.S. ESL teachers perceive would support them in increasing their intercultural sensitivity?

7. What would help you continue to grow as an ESL teacher?

   Possible probes:

   a. In particular, can you talk about any training or PD you would like to have?
   b. What training or PD might help improve your interactions with your culturally diverse students?

8. What types of training or PD do you think might help you better value other cultures?

   Possible probes:

   a. What might help you learn more about your own culture and its relationship to other cultures?
   b. What could increase your positive experiences with other cultures?

c. What might help you improve your reflection on multicultural interactions?

d. What would you do if you could create training or PD to build ESL teachers' learning about and valuing of other cultures?

9. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your experiences with training and PD related to cultural diversity as an ESL teacher?

Closing Remarks

Thank you so much for speaking with me today and sharing your experiences. I cannot thank you enough for taking the time to help me understand more about your experiences as an ESL teacher. I will take what you've said here and transcribe it all down; once I do that, I will send the transcription to you for your approval. I may also have a question or two to make sure I represent everything you said as clearly as possible. If I have any questions, may I contact you via email/phone to clarify? I will also send you access to the completed study once it is available. If you have questions for me about the study or your participation at any point, please feel free to contact me. Again, thank you for your participation!