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# Teaching Abroad and Implementing Culturally Appropriate Instructional Practices

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Denise Mason

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Walden University

2017

Abstract

Teaching Abroad and Implementing Culturally Appropriate Instructional Practices

by

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MA, Christian Brothers University, 2003

BS, Ohio University, 1984

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

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August 2017

## Abstract

The increasingly diverse population of the United States is reflected in classrooms across the country. Teachers often struggle with understanding students' cultural differences in the classroom and therefore also struggle with implementing culturally appropriate instructional strategies. The results of this study provide educational leaders with a viable option to enhance intercultural competence for implementing culturally appropriate instructional practices through the experiences gained in teaching abroad programs like Apufram International. This exploratory case study investigated how teaching experiences abroad contributed to implementing culturally diverse instruction in multicultural classroom settings. The multicultural educational theory of Banks was the theoretical framework used for this study. The research question addressed how a travel abroad experience contributed to the participants' insights into the cultural differences of students and strategies for implementing culturally diverse instruction in the multicultural classroom. The analytic process included a series of semi structured interviews and classroom observations, and a two-step process (thematic followed by open) to identify common themes. Eight teachers who participated in a teaching abroad experience with the Apufram International within the last 5 years provided the data that addressed the research question. The results of this study found that participating in a teaching abroad program increased cultural awareness and understanding of the need for implementation of culturally diverse instructional practices. Providing teachers with a creative means of improving student academic success helps develop students into global leaders for positive social change.

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## Dedication

To my husband, Bill Mason for his unconditional support and editing. To my children William, Andrew, and Patrick for their understanding of my commitment to life-long learning. To my college professor who recognized my potential despite my learning disability.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **Introduction**

Immigrant students often struggle as they undergo a cultural transformation after moving to the United States. They leave behind family, native languages, customs, and traditions that are woven into their family structure, language, values, practices, and school experiences (Souza, 2013). As students enter the classroom, the struggles continue; however, teachers' awareness of these cultural differences can bridge the transition through the implementation of culturally appropriate instruction strategies (Souza, 2013). For nonnative English speakers, simultaneously acclimating to both a new country and a new language can be challenging at best. However, U.S. born citizens and second-generational citizens from diverse cultural backgrounds (e.g., Latino, Asian, Somali, Middle Eastern) have also shown to have needs and limitations that may limit academic growth (Alsubaie, 2015; Hong & You, 2012).

With increasing culturally diverse classrooms and the concerns expressed by new teachers regarding being prepared to teach in a multicultural classroom, culturally rich experiences such as teaching abroad, provide a viable solution to help teachers develop their competence in multicultural awareness and implement culturally engaging instructional strategies (R. Anderson, personal communication, 2015; Souza, 2013, Tennessee Department of Education, 2013). APUFRAM is the Asociación Pueblo Franciscano de Muchachos y Muchachas, which translates as Association of Franciscan Boys Towns and Girls Towns. APUFRAM International (AI) is a nonprofit organization that provides teachers with one such teaching abroad experience. AI provides volunteer

U.S. teachers with the opportunity to engage in daily classroom instruction within Central America to observe culturally diverse classroom instruction that participating teachers may not be exposed to elsewhere. This type of experience may promote intercultural competence and implementation of culturally diverse instructional strategies. In this exploratory case study, I focused on teachers who have participated in one teaching abroad experience (i.e., AI) and their perceptions of the experience.

### **The Local Problem**

The local problem is that with an increasing culturally diverse student population and limited exposure to other cultures, teachers often struggle with understanding students' cultural differences in the classroom and therefore also struggle with implementing culturally appropriate instructional strategies. In this study, the local region was a western portion of a southeastern state that encompasses multiple school districts in which identified potential participants were currently working in a multicultural classroom and have participated in the AI teaching abroad program. Current policies within several of the local districts prohibited studies to be conducted by outside university students. AI provided the names and contact information for teachers currently teaching in the identified local region for this study. This allowed me to overcome the obstacle of the current policies, as suggested by Walden University (Edison, personal communication, August 2016).

Without adequate cultural awareness training or experiences, teachers often struggle to understand how cultural differences may effect instructional practices (intercultural competence) and overall student academic success (Banks, 2013; Lupi &

Turner, 2013; Schneider & Parker, 2013; Souza, 2013). Enrollment of culturally diverse students is continually increasing (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013). There are small percentages of diversity among teachers (National Center of Education Statistics [NCES], 2017). Culturally diverse students, both locally and across the United States, may not be receiving the culturally appropriate instructional strategies necessary to promote academic success (Alsubaie, 2015; Batey & Lupi, 2012; Doppen & An, 2014).

Underperforming students often flourish in a culturally responsive classroom that reflects a feeling of respect and embraces teaching strategies that promote diversity (Banks, 2013). Within the local region (western portion of a southeastern state), 58% of all students represent those of culturally diverse backgrounds, both immigrants and U.S. citizens of foreign descent (NCES, 2017; Tennessee Department of Education, 2013). While this percentage has continued to increase, and will continue to do so, the number of local teachers of culturally diverse backgrounds has remained steadily low at 9% (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013). With an increase in culturally diverse students, limited diversity among teachers, and limited exposure and understanding to how cultural diversity impacts student learning, I focused on ways in which teachers can increase their cultural understanding that results in the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices.

Supporting the limited diversity among classroom teachers, Jun (2016) found that due to this demographic divide, whether it is local or in any city across the United States that is experiencing an increase in culturally diverse student population, there is a need for teachers to receive multicultural training to understand and create a culturally

responsive learning community that is relevant to the students' life experiences. In a recent report on the preparedness and qualifications of public school teachers, the findings suggest that professional training and preservice training may not adequately prepare teachers to meet complex needs and challenges in the classroom (NCES, 2017). With many teachers in this local region and across the country having limited experiences of cultures outside of their upbringing, teachers often fail to understand the customs and traditions of other cultures and therefore are unable to embrace those differences within their instructional practices (Batey & Lupi, 2012). The culture within the multicultural educational setting is defined by multicultural competencies:

- The need to increase knowledge and understanding
- The need to adapt pedagogical skills and practices including cultural knowledge and lived experiences
- The need to use learning styles that make learning relevant and effective (Gay, 2013).

It is crucial that classroom teachers have the experience and knowledge to promote culturally appropriate instructional strategies for the academic success of diverse learners (Lee, 2012).

### **Rationale**

The need to provide teachers with increased culturally diverse experiences for better understanding has been shown in numerous research (Bodur, 2012; Campbell & Binder, 2014; North & Shelton, 2014). They recommended that the local schools initiate a mean to conduct teacher training that addresses diversity within the classroom with

effective instructional practices (as cited in Campbell & Binder, 2014). In a personal conversation with a local school principal, it was stated that it is important to understand where students are coming from and the experiences they have had because it influences the way students adapt and learn in the local community. If educators know their students, they can then implement effective and appropriate instructional practices to enhance student academic growth. Their lived experiences, both in their personal lives and in their home country school, can create challenges in the classroom as the student struggles to adapt to his or her new surroundings. As such, culturally appropriate instructional strategies should be implemented into daily instruction to engage all students (C. Smith, personal communication, April 2015).

Further discussion with another local educational leader who has lived abroad prompted this comment as it pertains to the lack of diverse exposure to multiple cultures: It is important that individuals experience life outside of their local community; teachers need to leave the city to experience other situations, communities, and cultures. Those experiences will create open-mindedness that allows one to embrace the creativeness of different cultures and through culturally appropriate instructional practices, including life experiences within the curriculum, making learning relevant to achieve academic equity among all students (R. Matthew, personal communications, 2016). In a local region, where many of the new teachers hired graduated from a single local university and ongoing concerns expressed by the graduates related to the lack of preparedness to handle the needs of the diverse learners in the classrooms (NCES, 2017; R. Anderson, personal communication, 2015). Teachers locally and across the United States looking for



opportunities to engage in a culturally diverse teaching abroad experience find little or no evidence that substantiates the experiences as beneficial, helpful, or meeting the expectations of teachers who have participated in the AI nonprofit volunteer opportunities.

AI provides volunteers with the opportunity to share their teaching experiences within the local school setting, either in Honduras or the Dominican Republic. The nonprofit organization believes that through education, children of poverty are provided the necessary skills to break that cycle of poverty (Apufra, 2015). However, without specific outcomes of the teaching experience, the lack of evidence of the effectiveness of the teaching abroad program provides the need for this exploratory case study. Volunteers who have participated in a teaching abroad experience with AI as an opportunity to gain exposure through observations and classroom teaching experiences were asked to join this study to understand the factors that could increase their intercultural competence and possible implementation of appropriate instructional strategies in the local multicultural classroom.

Bodur (2012), DeVillar and Jiang (2012), and Nadelson et al. (2012) established a link between increased knowledge through multicultural coursework and quality teaching abroad opportunities. They suggested that increased knowledge and understanding through teaching abroad experiences provided educators with increased confidence and effectiveness in the multicultural classroom (Bodur, 2012; DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Nadelson et al., 2012; North & Shelton, 2014). Designing and implementing instructional activities built upon cultural knowledge helps to form a relationship of respect and

understanding that creates opportunities for students to feel included and accepted (Souza, 2013). Research has shown that preservice teachers' implementation of culturally relevant instructional practices enhances learning in the multicultural classroom (Biraimah & Jotia, 2012; Doppin & An, 2014; DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Lupi & Turner, 2013).

Teaching abroad opportunities are available across the country with universities, colleges, nonprofit organizations, and professional organizations that expand around the globe. They are offered in both urban and rural settings, lasting from as few as 5 days to 2 years (Apufam, 2015; U.S. Department of State, 2017). Some programs, like the Peace Corps or the Fulbright Program, are well known in colleges and universities, offering the opportunity for educators to earn credit for teaching the English language overseas to increase intercultural understanding. It is also possible to earn a certificate for teaching English as a foreign language or teaching English to speakers of other languages.

Other programs are smaller and less known, but equally fulfilling, and offer many of the same opportunities as larger organizations (APUFRAM, 2015; U.S. Department of State, 2017). Regardless of the organization, all programs stress the importance of providing culturally diverse experiences that promote an appreciation for diversity (Batey & Lupi, 2012; Cushner, 2012; DeVillar, & Jiang, 2012; North & Shelton, 2014; Yazdanpanah, 2015). Teachers who have lived abroad often encounter events that would be difficult to obtain within the United States, and that can be challenging, given the language and socioeconomic differences (Menard-Warwick & Palmer, 2012; Tuleja, 2014). Teachers so exposed tend to embrace those experiences with an increased

awareness and promote change in developing a culturally responsive classroom in the United States (Jabbar & Hardaker, 2013; Jiang & DeVillar, 2011; Lupi & Turner, 2013; Patterson, 2014; Sun, 2013).

The low percentage of diversity found among local teachers and limited cultural awareness exposure identified in the recent study of Campbell and Binder (2014) supports concerns by local educational leaders. Those concerns addressed that without increasing opportunities to enhance teacher understanding through experiences, and implementation of culturally effective instructional practice, the local multicultural classroom teacher may continue to miss opportunities to engage all students and embrace lived experiences of the culturally diverse students (Campbell & Binder, 2014; R. Matthew, personal communications, 2016; C. Smith, personal communication, 2015).

Teaching abroad experiences provide student teachers with a deeper understanding of multicultural complexities that when not addressed in the classroom can impact student learning (Batey & Lupi, 2012; Kumar & Hamer, 2012). Examples of those complexities might include language barriers, culturally appropriate instructional practices, cultural interactions with adults, classroom expectations that may differ from home country educational structure, or life experiences that present themselves as relevant learning in the form of culturally diverse pedagogy (Batey & Lupi, 2012; Kumar & Hamer, 2012).

The purpose of this study was to provide insight into how a culturally rich experience, such as a travel abroad teaching experience, contributes to the

implementation of culturally appropriate instructional strategies in a multicultural classroom.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Culturally appropriate instruction:* Instructional practices that both empathize and acknowledge differing values and beliefs through applied learned practices gained through diverse cultural experiences (Doppen & An, 2014; Gross & Maloney, 2012).

*Culturally diverse students:* For this project, this includes African Americans, Alaska/Native Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and students of two or more races, both immigrant and U.S. born students of foreign descent (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2015).

*Culturally responsive environment:* An environment that promotes sharing lived experiences within the curriculum, respect for all cultural differences, and the increased awareness of unjust equity in educational practices, with intentions to promote change (Cushner, 2012; Souza, 2013).

*Diverse classroom population:* A classroom within the local district of at least 15% of the students representing a minority group (Campbell & Binder, 2014).

*Intercultural competence:* One's ability to effectively and appropriately interact with others who are linguistically and culturally different, to be able to respond effectively to individuals and organizations of different backgrounds or cultures, and to have an internal shift in flexibility and adaptability regarding other cultures (Paik et al., 2015).

*Intercultural perspective:* The teachers' ability to value and engage with diverse populations and support and embrace globally diverse perspectives as a means of global education (Paik et al., 2015).

*Multicultural classroom:* A class that represents multiple ethnic backgrounds with students who practice and participate in a variety of languages, religions, and cultural traditions with instructional practices that are designed to meet the needs of all students (Alsubaie, 2015; Jimenez, Guzman, & Maxwell, 2014).

*Multicultural education:* Defined by multicultural competencies: the need to increase knowledge and understanding and adapt pedagogical skills and practices, including cultural knowledge and lived experiences with learning styles that make learning relevant and effective (Gay, 2013).

*Service learning:* For this study, defined as purposeful volunteer experiences that are meaningful and enrich the learning experience of teaching and learning strategies through participation and reflection, allowing one to broaden skill sets for the future (Gross & Maloney, 2012).

### **Significance of the Study**

This study provided insight into how a travel abroad teaching experience contributed to participating teachers implementing culturally appropriate instructional practices in a local multicultural classroom. The culturally rich experiences such as travel abroad provided an opportunity to address the local problem of an increased culturally diverse student population that requires culturally appropriate instruction. The results of this study can be used by preservice teacher training programs as a means of

demonstrating the need for such teaching abroad experiences to its students. School administrators could consider partnering with or supporting these types of experiences for teachers that provide insight into how a travel abroad teaching experience increased intercultural competence and the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional strategies in a multicultural classroom.

The results of this study provide the documentation necessary to encourage preservice and current teachers to consider participating in these (or similar) types of experiences to further their development of intercultural competence. Increasing intercultural competence leads to improved student success in a positive learning environment (Paik et al., 2015). Creating a culturally responsive classroom allows students to share their experiences and embrace diversity through equitable educational opportunities. Through observations and instructional opportunities to engage in culturally responsive instructional practices abroad, teachers gain insight into how cultural differences influence student learning, thus increasing understanding and implementation of culturally appropriate instruction in the classroom (DeVillar & Jiang, 2012).

Breaking down the barriers that prevent culturally minded thinking, as teachers prepare students to address global issues by facilitating intercultural understanding and awareness of teachers, may be the first step in changing attitudes and behaviors that lead to positive social change (Cushner, 2012). With a projected increase of minorities in the classroom and the small percentage of diversity among teachers (NCES, 2017) that represent and understand how cultural differences effect student growth, the need for

expanding culturally rich experiences, such as teaching abroad opportunities, presents a viable solution to increasing teachers' implementation of culturally appropriate instructional strategies in a multicultural classroom. This will support teachers as they strive to enhance culturally appropriate instructional practices as a creative means for developing respect of cultural differences and advancing student learning as they prepare students to become future global leaders for positive social change.

### **Research Question**

An exploratory case study was used to investigate the experiences of teachers who have engaged in a teaching abroad opportunity (i.e., AI) and explore how these experiences contribute to the teacher participants' insights into the cultural differences of students and strategies for implementing culturally diverse instruction in the multicultural classroom settings.

RQ1: How does a travel abroad experience contribute to the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices in the multicultural classroom?

### **Review of the Literature**

The following literature review provides foundational and current research examining teaching abroad opportunities that embrace experiences with knowledge for the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices that promote a better understanding of the multicultural dynamics of the classroom and student growth within the multicultural educational theory. I used Walden's Library Education Source, ERIC, SAGE Premier, and Taylor & Francis Online database to conduct my review using the following words: *adult learning theory*, *culturally appropriate instruction*, *culturally*

*diverse instruction, culturally responsive instruction, diversity, effective professional development strategies, effective teaching strategies, global learning, multicultural education, multicultural education theory, pedagogy equity, professional development abroad, and teaching abroad experiences.*

### **Theoretical Framework**

The multicultural educational theory of Banks (1993) was used as the theoretical framework for this study. Bank's theory of multicultural education (1981, 1993, 1995, 2006) is defined as the need to provide equitable educational opportunities that include instructional accommodations and practices to ensure that all students advance in learning, achieve respect for cultural beliefs and practices, and share lived experiences that include those of a diverse background. Banks first addressed the need for multicultural education in the early 1960s with a focus on ethnic and multicultural content (Banks, 1981). Banks (2013) continued to advance and expand the focus to include the five dimensions that provide the scaffold for understanding that each dimension is part of an ongoing and ever-changing process for all educators. The process begins with awareness of cultural differences and evolves into the adaptation of pedagogical skills and practices that embrace diversity and allows for sharing of multicultural experiences and the implementation of activities that engage all learners.

*Race, culture, and education: The selected works of James A. Banks* (2006) is a compilation of over 30 years of research and publications that describe the necessity of multicultural education through a variety of practices and programs within the schools that assist culturally diverse student populations to experience educational equity and



academic success. The progression of the theories and integration of ethnic and multicultural content has evolved. A major goal of multicultural education is to restructure schools to ensure that children acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to function in an ethnically and racially diverse nation and world (Banks, 2006). Multicultural education focuses on promoting pedagogical equity among the marginalized and underrepresented students of diverse cultures while simultaneously providing educators with the tools to design opportunities that can improve student learning (Banks, 2006, 2013).

Each of Bank's (1993) five dimensions addresses specific aspects of the educational structure that enables teachers to implement instructional practices that promote equitable education for all students. Beginning with content integration, the first identified dimension, Banks theorized about the importance of inclusion of culturally diverse content within their instruction. Providing a variety of cultures represented within the textbooks, language arts, reading selections, and throughout the curriculum helps to increase understanding through the shared experiences of others.

The second dimension is knowledge construction, providing educational leaders, teachers, and textbook companies with the understanding of how biases and perspectives influence the construction of knowledge. Teachers can, through the development and implementation of culturally appropriate instructional activities, teach their children how to deconstruct any content, instructional practice, or resource materials to identify the inherent biases within. Thus, it is necessary to provide students with opportunities to

think critically about how perceptions and misrepresentation or limited exposure to diverse cultures could hinder one's ability to process new information (Banks, 1995).

Equity pedagogy, the third dimension, addresses the need to implement instructional practices that facilitate learning for all students, based on lived experiences, cultural differences or beliefs, and language (Banks, 1993). The implementation of instructional practices allows students from diverse backgrounds to attain knowledge and skills necessary to become active citizens who promote equity and social change (Banks, 1995). Within the classroom, teachers implement culturally appropriate instructional strategies that provide students with opportunities through real and meaningful lived experiences that promote respect, generate new knowledge, and create relevant learning applicable to one's culture (Banks, 1995). A classroom setting that focuses on the rich cultural strengths of diverse students and embraces teaching strategies consistent with cultural characteristics of equity pedagogy provides an environment for student growth and the development of positive racial attitudes (Banks, 2013). Within the classroom, teachers implement the lived experiences of the students to increase cultural awareness of other perspectives to reduce misunderstandings or biases of other cultures.

Expanding on content integration, knowledge construction, and the implementation of equitable pedagogy provides for the multicultural climate that allows for the fourth dimension, prejudice reduction, to occur. Lessons and activities are designed to engage in the sharing of diverse cultural customs and traditions to increase understanding and promote a community of common goals that help to reduce prejudices (Jun, 2016). Within continual research on multicultural education theory, the identified

core constraints that when applied within the classroom instructional practices enhance both cultural awareness of teachers and promote student growth (Banks, 1995).

This leads to the fifth dimension of empowering school culture where teachers, staff, students, and families embrace a school culture of acceptance and empowerment of all students through understanding and shared experiences (Banks, 1993). These instructional practices, knowledge, and understanding expand beyond the classroom and include the school and social structures for positive social change. Multicultural education can be an effective means to share and teach students while promoting appreciation and respect for cultural diversity (Jiménez, Guzman, & Maxwell, 2014).

Banks' multicultural education theory (1993) was appropriate as the theoretical framework for this study because the theory focuses on culturally appropriate instructional strategies implemented by teachers in the classroom. Although not all dimensions were visible in this study, it is important to identify each dimension, as they build on each other. The instructional aspects of the multicultural theory of content integration, knowledge construction, and equity pedagogy establish the basis for the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices within the classroom (Banks, 1993). This provided a logical scaffolding between the exposure of a teaching abroad experience and increased insight into the multicultural differences of students and strategies for implementing culturally diverse instruction in the multicultural classroom settings that promote student academic success (Banks, 1993).

Each dimension of the multicultural education theory illustrates a different aspect of education, and all five are necessary to be implemented in the classroom to increase

understanding and embrace the culture of all students by providing the opportunity to learn from each other and embrace cultural differences through appropriate instructional practices that lead to positive social change. In this study, I investigated the experiences of teachers who had engaged in teaching abroad opportunities (i.e., AI) and provided opportunities for teachers to observe and engage in culturally appropriate instructional strategies and explored how those experiences contributed to teacher participants' implementation of culturally diverse instruction in the multicultural classroom settings.

### **Multicultural Competencies**

Gay (2013) continued to build and expand upon the theoretical foundations of multicultural education to include multicultural competencies: the need to increase knowledge and understanding and adapt pedagogical skills and practices and the need to define culturally responsive teaching that includes cultural knowledge and lived experiences with learning styles that make learning relevant and effective. The competencies continued to expand to include cultural elements in instruction that provide a connection between school expectations and student lived cultural experiences (Herrera, Holmes, & Kavimandan, 2012). Similarly, Ladson-Billings (1995), addressed culturally relevant teaching that is based on three propositions of academic success that include (a) maintaining contact and cultural heritages, (b) learning how to challenge current instructional practices, and (c) transforming inequities and injustices.

Bennett (2001, 2011) identified similar constraints that support multicultural education, divided into four clusters that address all aspects of education. Bennett (2011) defined Genre 5 as Student Achievement, which includes equity and pedagogy and

focuses on the role of the teacher and the implementation of culturally diverse instructional practices. Implementing individual student cultures into the curriculum and instruction created a vehicle for promoting respect and values for the diversity found in the classroom and established a connection between lived experiences and curriculum (Bennett, 2011). This helps bridge the gap with shared knowledge and respect, allowing for a changed mindset in education and instruction that promotes cultural diversity as an opportunity for growth for all students and creates a positive learning environment for all.

Multiple researchers have addressed the lack of understanding of cultural differences and its effect on student learning (Banks & Banks, 1995; Gay, 2013, Gay & Howard, 2000; Sleeter, 2012) and focused on students of multigenerational diverse cultures. Gay (2013) identified six characteristics of culturally responsive teaching: validating student cultural heritage, focusing on the whole child, encompassing curriculum, learning, relationships, assessments, and with instructional practices with the empowerment of students, and transforming understanding through active participation in the classroom. Ladson-Billings (1995) explained that when teachers implement culturally relevant teaching within the classroom, they empower students, establish mutual respect that embraces cultural differences or traditions, and relates the classroom knowledge to lived experiences.

Within the complex research on multicultural education theory, researchers have identified core constraints that when applied within the classroom instructional practices enhance both cultural awareness of teachers and promote student growth (Bennett, 2001; Gay, 2013; Sleeter, 2012). These researchers addressed similar yet different aspects of

education to include curriculum and instructional practices. They share a common goal of providing all students with equity and inclusion in curriculum and instruction for culturally diverse students who might have been marginalized in the past (Bennett, 2001). Culturally responsive instructional practices refer to the teacher's ongoing understanding of attitudes and beliefs, with knowledge and resources necessary for the implementation of complex learning along with expectations based on respect, lived experiences, and culturally developed knowledge that when implemented on a regular basis promotes success for all students (Bennett, 2011).

### **Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Perspectives**

Addressing the cultural diversity among the students in the classroom, Paik et al. (2015) explained the importance of increasing teacher understanding of cultural differences as it impacts student learning with the terms *intercultural competence* and *intercultural perspectives*. Researchers have suggested the importance of intercultural perspectives that values the teachers' ability to interact with diverse populations through appropriate instructional practices and embrace global education (Cushner & Chang, 2015; Moeller & Osborn, 2014; Paik et al., 2015). Stressing the importance of intercultural perspectives, the researchers found that a mindset of acceptance of international views enabled teachers to develop better communication and a willingness to learn from and about their students (Cushner & Chang, 2015; Moeller & Osborn, 2014). The increased understanding and an openness to embrace cultural differences created a heightened awareness among teachers that included increased intercultural

sensitivity, knowledge of other countries, and the skills necessary for the implementation of a culturally appropriate instruction define the specific competencies (Paik et al., 2015).

Interculturally competent educators possess both the language and skills that include a positive open-minded attitude, values cultural differences, and has obtained knowledge about different cultures, gaining insight of others while deepening one's cultural understanding. This is a process that allows students to explore other cultures and develop as global communicators (Deardorff, 2006; Moeller & Osborn, 2014). Specific examples could include reflecting on one's culture and beliefs, respectful discussions that engage in shared cultural experiences, or small group problem-solving activities that include diverse cultural practices. Deardorff (2006) identified a model of intercultural competence and explained that this is a process unique to an individual's perspective and experiences, and the more components of intercultural competence that are acquired, the more likely the teacher is to experience change. Deardorff stated that intercultural competence requires the movement from a monocultural perspective to a mindset that embraces many cultures (i.e., intercultural) and impacts all aspects of human life.

Root and Ngampornchai (2013) found that the concept of gaining understanding through experience based on culture-specific information and language could lead to intercultural competence and could lead educators to immersion programs and international education. Root and Ngampornchai (2013) suggested that travel abroad programs failed to address a key element to ensure the success of the experience by failing to provide cultural awareness training before traveling abroad. Immersion without an understanding of cultural differences limits one's experience and opportunity for

intercultural competence (Root & Ngampornchai, 2013). The implementation of quality programs that promote predeparture training, formative assessment strategies, and immersion all assist in the growth of intercultural competence and a successful experience (Root & Ngampornchai, 2013). Intercultural competence scholars agreed on three core assumptions: competence is based on cognitive and affective approaches, communication (both verbal and nonverbal) should be effective and appropriate, and intercultural competencies are culture-general, meaning not specific to any one culture (Root & Ngampornchai, 2013). This supports the overall goal of this study and its research questions.

### **Diversity Within the Schools**

An important aspect addressed in this study is the ever-changing demographics in the classroom. Cushner (2012) explained cultural norms as a guide for one's behavior and to interpret the behavior of others. An essential function of schools is to socialize children based on the local cultural norms found within their communities (Cushner, 2012). These values are found throughout the educational structure to include textbooks, instructional strategies, and classroom expectations (Nelson & Guerra, 2014).

For this study, immigrant students are defined as those who have moved to the United States as a child. U.S.-born students of foreign descent are defined as a child born in the United States to parents who were born in another country and moved to the United States. Together, both immigrant and U.S.-born students of foreign descent often struggle academically to reach their fullest potential (Paik et al., 2015). Examples of some academic struggles include difficulty expressing themselves (for non-English speakers),



relevance in applying lived experiences to the current curriculum, and limited academic support at home due to language barriers or parent education (Hong & You, 2012; Souza, 2013). Culturally diverse students (both immigrants and U.S. citizens of foreign descent) often struggle to pass grade level standardized tests, receive failing classroom grades, and continue to represent high percentages of dropout rates compared to U.S.-born, Caucasian peers (Hong & You, 2012; Souza, 2013).

For students who are considered immigrants or whose parents are immigrants, may find these cultural norms to be conflicting. Addressing the national and state accountability for schools, founded in the report: *A Nation at Risk*, focuses on school-wide improvement for all students that includes culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse backgrounds (Nelson & Guerra, 2014). The report addressed the need to increase teacher awareness of diversity and the implementation of culturally effective instructional strategies (Nelson & Guerra, 2014). Research has shown that teachers lacking in the understanding of cultural norms and its relationship to student learning, increasingly lead to new challenges within the classroom (Alsubaie, 2015; Lupi & Turner, 2013; Nelson & Guerra, 2014; Schneider & Parker, 2013; Souza, 2013).

With increased enrollment of culturally diverse students throughout the identified region of this study (NCES, 2017), it is crucial that teachers have a cultural awareness and understanding of how to deliver culturally appropriate instruction to students (Alsubaie, 2015; Celinska, & Swazo, 2015; Sleeter, 2012). Locally, the culturally diverse student population has risen from 4.3% in 2003 to 34% in 2012 and is projected to increase to 73% by the year 2025 (NCES, 2015). Corresponding with those figures,

culturally diverse teachers employed locally were found to be at 14.8% in 2003, and decreased to 9% in 2012 (NCES, 2015).

Doppen, An, and Diki (2016) addressed the need to provide preservice and classroom teachers with experiences that increased personal and professional growth while enhancing global awareness through teaching abroad experiences. Doppen et al. found that offering educators with cross-cultural experiences and interacting with people from different countries provided the opportunities to escape the social boundaries within the United States and explore different cultures, learn more about different pedagogical approaches in education, and engage in experiences that increased their global mindedness. By participating in abroad programs, educators can interact with global communities and become agents of change through the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices that promote globally-minded thinkers and value cultural differences (Doppen et al., 2016).

### **Teachers Limited Diverse Backgrounds**

With the increasing diversity of students represented in the classroom across the identified region of this study, the disproportionate representation of diverse student enrollment and primarily White, middle class, female teachers continue to exist (NCES, 2015). Oh and Nussli (2014) found that when identifying the diversity gap between teachers and students, it is disproportionately represented, with the majority-of teachers identified as White, middle class females, compared to the increasing numbers of students currently enrolled being culturally diverse. There is a need to explore a more diverse population of teachers and to provide teachers with increased experiences outside

of one's culture, to build trust and create a greater global sense of community for all students (Oh & Nussli, 2014; Shiveley & Misco, 2012). Nadelson et al. (2012) reported on the limited experiences white preservice teachers bring to the multicultural classroom because of their limited cross-cultural experience or knowledge.

Kumar and Hamer (2012) researched preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs about student diversity and instructional practices and found the need for White, preservice teachers to expand their experiences, particularly regarding ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Concluding those historically White teachers have minimal cross-cultural experiences, limited view of multicultural education, and a lack of preparedness before entering the classroom (Gonzalez & Ariza, 2014; Kumar & Hamer, 2012; Shiveley & Misco, 2012). Savva (2013) studied the intercultural development of North American teachers and found that the lack of cultural experiences and geographic proximity to diverse cultures for full immersion of other cultures is limited due to the geographical location, presenting an artificial understanding of the world outside of the North American borders. A globalization of US teacher education programs and high-quality international professional development opportunities will provide exposure and experiences to increase cultural awareness and understanding (McGaha & Linder, 2012; Savva, 2013).

In addition to the complexity of increased cultural diversity within the classroom, teachers and schools are often unprepared to promote multicultural education and to effectively implement culturally appropriate instructional strategies (DeVillar & Jiang, 2012). Reflecting on personal beliefs and cultural understandings, that encourage a

changing mindset in education, teachers must embrace diversity within the classroom and acknowledge the positive influence diversity provides as it enriches the culture and exposes students to ideas that prepare them for a global society (Oliver & Oliver, 2013).

### **Lack of Culturally Diverse Instruction**

In order to address a lack of diversity, it is necessary to establish a link between the culturally diverse classrooms with the need to implement culturally appropriate instruction, along with the understanding of cultural diversity's effect on student growth (Gay, 2013; Sleeter, 2012). Understanding the cultural differences of students and embracing diversity is important, bringing to the educational setting an understanding of global perspectives that enhance creative thinking and cultural and global awareness that are as unique as the dynamics of the classroom and the experiences of the teacher (Batey & Lupi, 2012). Additional researchers supported the need to implement culturally effective instruction and understanding of diversity in the classroom (Basbay, 2014; Herrera, Holmes, & Kavimandan, 2012).

Jun (2016) found that before the implementation of culturally appropriate instruction, teachers must recognize their personal prejudices towards people of other cultures and adopt positive attitudes of respect for diversity. Through quality experiences, like teaching abroad, teachers better understand the cultural struggles many students face and the need for the implementation of culturally appropriate instruction (Jun, 2016). The results of additional studies supported the belief that teachers' implementation of culturally relevant instructional practices enhances learning in the multicultural classroom (Biraimah & Jotia, 2012; DeVillar & Jiang, 2011; Doppen & An, 2013; Lupi

& Turner, 2013). For example, language arts short stories are culturally diverse to provide a better understanding of cultural differences found within the readings, small group discussions that include lived experiences of students from other countries – immigrants from the Middle East living through war, violence and ongoing destruction of their homeland, sharing their experiences. In social studies or geography courses, teachers can create projects that expand on the cultural differences of the students and their homelands, sharing traditions and experiences. Presenting course materials that support the connection between home life and relevance in the classroom – shared cultures and language (Biraimah & Jotia, 2012; Butvilofsky et al., 2012; Herrera, Holmes, & Kavimandan, 2012; Menard-Warwick & Palmer, 2012).

Providing educators with teaching abroad experiences create an opportunity that could increase knowledge and understanding of cultural differences and the implementation of instructional practices when replicated locally within the multicultural classroom might promote a climate for positive social change (Sun, 2013).

Turkan and Buzick (2014) established the ownership of all teachers to enhance and address the culturally diverse needs of all students in the classroom, creating opportunities to better understand students through increased awareness of cultural differences, and better understanding and implementation of quality instructional strategies and curriculum. Creating a culturally responsive environment allows students to share their experiences, which can enhance cultural understanding and encourage students to embrace diversity through equitable educational opportunities that promote positive outcomes. Allowing students to share experiences could be the first step in

changing attitudes and behaviors that result in better understanding and acceptance of cultural differences with increased student academic growth, leading to positive social change (Bennett, 2011; Cushner, 2012; Souza, 2013; Tuleja, 2014).

### **Lack of Cultural Awareness**

Classroom teachers often lack sufficient cultural understanding to assist diverse students with the acclimation to new school norms, without abandoning their culture, adding to the already wide achievement gap (Souza, 2013). Adding to the complexity of increased cultural diversity within the classroom is teachers' and schools' frequent lack of preparation to promote multicultural education and to effectively implement culturally appropriate instructional strategies (DeVillar & Jiang, 2012). Most current US teachers lack the understanding and experiences to embrace a culturally receptive attitude within the classroom (Gay & Howard, 2000; Hong & You, 2012; Kumar & Hamer, 2012; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Nadelson et al., 2012; Oh & Nussli, 2014). Collectively, these researchers have suggested that when addressing diversity in classrooms, a shared understanding of cultural awareness must be adopted by classroom teachers (Cross & Dunn, 2016; Cushner, 2012; Sun, 2013). Possible causes of the lack of cultural understandings from teachers include a lack of personal experiences with cultures outside of upbringing, failure to understand cultural customs and traditions, and the inability to embrace those differences (Batey & Lupi, 2012; Doppen & An, 2013; Matsko & Hammerness, 2014).

Alsubaie (2015) addressed the current issues in multicultural education and how cultural differences impact the educational process in the classroom (i.e. language

barriers, food, clothing, beliefs, etc.), presenting the need for equitable opportunities, and academic achievement of all students. Alsubaie stressed the lack of diversity among preservice teachers and the need for increased understanding and knowledge of cultural differences. The findings indicated the need to provide preservice and classroom teachers with diverse experiences that allow for better understanding, increasing the trust that builds relationships through acceptance and learning and sharing ideas and experiences. With increased knowledge and understanding, preservice teachers become more confident and capable as educators who implement culturally appropriate instructional practices (Alsubaie, 2015).

Teaching abroad experiences provide teachers with a deeper understanding of multicultural complexities (e.g., culturally diverse instructional strategies), that if not addressed in the classroom, can negatively influence student learning (Batey & Lupi, 2012; Kumar & Hamer, 2012; Smith & Moreno-Lopez, 2012). Teachers exposed to culturally rich experiences, such as teaching abroad, have been shown to increase their multicultural awareness and tend to implement culturally appropriate instructional strategies in their classroom (Jabbar & Hardaker, 2013; Menard-Warwick et al., 2012). Further, researchers suggested that teaching abroad allows individuals to gain an understanding of vastly different cultures that, when processed through journal reflections, change one's perspective and beliefs of cultural diversity (Lupi & Turner, 2013; Menard-Warwick & Palmer, 2012; Nadelson et al., 2012). Teachers so exposed to these types of teaching abroad opportunities tend to embrace those experiences with an increased intercultural awareness and promote change in developing a culturally

responsive classroom in the United States (Jabbar & Hardaker, 2013; Smith & Moreno-Lopez, 2012; Sun, 2013). These include understanding the differences in the structure and methods of teaching, student expectations, and levels of engagement of students of the educational process outside of the United States and the understanding that teachers working in a multicultural classroom, may need to modify instructional practices (Albusaie, 2015).

Specifically addressing Latino students, Hong and You (2012) studied the effect of language as an essential element that contributed to lower scores and with limited proficiency inhibiting student learning. The findings supported that in the process of determining appropriate educational programs for culturally diverse students, educators need to reflect on the complexity and underlying influences that could influence student learning and develop strategies that lead to increased awareness and appropriate culturally appropriate instructional strategies (Hong & You, 2012). Saint-Hilaire (2014) continued this issue addressing the concern of the number of students who were failing or had failed in school because of acts or decisions made by the school, based on the misunderstanding of cultural practices of the student. Specifically, because teachers lacked understanding of student cultural differences they were unable to access students' prior knowledge, interests, or engage them in the learning process (Saint-Hilaire, 2014). With increased understanding and exposure to diverse culture, many of these misunderstandings could have been avoided or with implementation, assisted students in engaging and appropriate culturally diverse instruction (Saint Hilaire, 2014).



Federal mandates require that teachers provide all students with a quality education that adheres to high standards, which links student academic growth with effective teacher cultural responsive instruction in the classroom (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Focusing on low academic performance reflects on educators who are held responsible for that growth and yet, often not provided with effective cultural responsiveness or diversity training or experiences, are concerns expressed in the research of Fitchett, Straker, and Salyers (2012), and Turkan and Buzick (2014). Alsubaie (2015), Celinska and Swazo (2015), and Jimenez, Guzman, and Maxwell (2014) all proposed changes within the multicultural classroom that suggested that with shared experiences abroad, coupled with new and appropriate instructional practices, teachers and schools could promote multicultural awareness that reflects an opportunity to increase student academic growth. Zoch (2015) supported the need to provide quality education to all students including culturally diverse students present in today's classroom, making appropriate instructional adaptations to instructional practices that accounts for students' backgrounds, lived experiences, and cultural differences. That will address the need to sustain students' cultural competence by respecting and embracing language and cultural practices while at the same time, preparing culturally diverse students for success in schools across the United States (Zoch, 2015).

Multicultural courses have been designed to increase cultural awareness of teachers that include how white, middle-class females recognize their privileges and how structural inequalities impact others daily lives, Jun (2016) found that one course was not sufficient to alter one's beliefs and attitudes before entering the classroom. Bodur (2012)

found that taking an independent multicultural course may not be sufficient to enhance broader understanding of cultural beliefs and attitudes as preservice teachers prepare for the multicultural classroom. A balance of both instruction and experience is necessary for promoting and preparing culturally responsive educators (Bodur, 2012).

The National Center for Education Statistics (2017) found that regardless of the ethnic or cultural background of the teacher, many teachers struggled with the comprehension and implementation of culturally responsive instruction. Within the local school system, the expectation is that all students receive a quality education with high expectations (Campbell & Binder, 2014). In supporting that objective, researchers suggested that teaching abroad experiences could provide teachers with a deeper understanding of multicultural complexities and instructional practices that, when implemented, might improve student learning in the classroom (Alsubaie, 2015; Batey & Lupi, 2012; Kumar & Hamer, 2012; Sun, 2013).

Providing teachers with multicultural experiences by connecting with families through community events and teaching abroad experiences, become powerful venues that promote cultural awareness and allow self-reflection of personal beliefs that can reduce prejudices among teachers (Jun, 2016). Aragon, Culpepper, McKee, and Perkins (2014), along with Batey and Lupi (2012), identified the need for increased multicultural awareness among teachers through culturally rich experiences. They shared the idea that international experiences can provide opportunities for personal growth and change mindsets that embrace a responsive multicultural environment.

Parkerhouse, Tichnor-Wagner, Cain, and Glazier (2016) disagreed asserting that to obtain culturally diverse experiences, one does not necessarily need to travel abroad. The findings suggested that some teachers, through their diverse teaching experiences, could compile and implement global perspectives, lessons, and develop skills throughout their career. Sharing the belief that global competency was not an end goal but rather an ongoing process that was the responsibility of the teacher and developed via an array of accumulating experiences (Parkerhouse et al., 2016).

### **Implementation of Instructional Practices**

The role of the classroom teacher is complex and ever changing to include creatively implementing instructional practices that meet the constructs of the students within the classroom. Teaching abroad experiences provide innovative experiences to enhance teachers' repertoire, implementing those strategies more often when they find support within their schools, are provided with necessary resources and have opportunities for professional dialog and collaboration (Bradshaw, 2015). Increasing the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices within the classroom through the teaching abroad experience, educators can reflect on personal beliefs and understanding of cultural differences and either change or expand those ideas to embrace the diversity and effectiveness of their teaching strategies within the multicultural classroom (Bradshaw, 2015).

Through ongoing professional development and teaching abroad experiences those learned strategies expand from implementation to standard practices within the classroom (Ateskan, 2016; Kisa & Corenti, 2015). Woolley, Rose, Mercado, and Orthner

(2013) found that educational leaders must value teacher input, support change through resources and collaboration, and value the experiences of teachers to increase the fidelity of implementing change in the classroom that impacts student growth. Woolley et al. stated that there must be a direct correlation between the professional development topic, in this case, the teaching abroad experience and the specific needs of the students, the culturally diverse student population to impact change.

Lupi and Turner (2013) and Gaia (2015) found that teaching abroad experiences provided teachers with exposure to a variety of culturally appropriate instructional practices that upon reflection add value and can change one's personal belief about diversity in the classroom and their current pedagogy and practices. It also provided teachers with an intercultural perspective lens through which to view instructional practices for implementation in the classroom. However, DeVillar and Jiang (2012) found that although the teaching abroad experiences increased one's pedagogy of culturally diverse instructional practices, the implementation of those strategies could be inhibited by local school requirements and policies.

### **Implications**

The findings of this exploratory study of the AI teaching abroad program found that given opportunities to embrace diversity through a living abroad experience provide a viable option as educators look to find creative ways to implement appropriate instructional strategies within the daily routine and required curriculum of a multicultural classroom. Addressing the potential link between increased enrollment of culturally diverse students throughout the region (NCES, 2017), it was found that teachers' lack of

understanding of how cultural differences influence student learning reduced their effectiveness in their classrooms. A possible solution to increase understanding of cultural differences is to implement cultural appropriate instructional practices in the multicultural classroom. The information gathered from this study, when shared with administrators and teachers, provides the evidence to support teaching abroad experiences, like AI, as an effective means to implement culturally appropriate instructional strategies within the pedagogy for the local multicultural classroom.

### **Summary**

The typical US classroom currently reflects the ever-broadening diverse population as travel and communication continue to shape a global society. With this paradigm shift, educational leaders need to empower teachers with the tools to meet all guidelines of a quality education. Through quality experiences like AI, teachers embrace diversity through a multicultural appreciation of shared ideas and respect for a pedagogical application (Alsubaie, 2015).

To address the local problem of increased cultural diversity among students, and the limited exposure to cultures outside of one's own culture, teachers often struggle with understanding students' cultural differences in the classroom and therefore also struggle with implementing culturally appropriate instructional strategies. This exploratory case study studied how a teaching abroad experience, similar to AI, provided opportunities for teachers to increase understanding and observe and engage in culturally effective instructional strategies (DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; NCES, 2015; Tennessee Department of Education, 2013).

With the ongoing professional development and those learned strategies from teaching abroad, teachers, through increased exposure and culturally rich opportunities, develop observed experiences into the implementation of ongoing culturally appropriate instructional practices within the classroom. Increasing one's pedagogy of culturally diverse instructional practices is facilitated with the support and encouragement of administration. When implemented in the local multicultural classroom, these strategies promote student growth based on the respect of cultural differences, engaged instructional practices, and the inclusion of lived experiences with the implementation of culturally effective instructional practices. Experiences abroad challenge teachers to reflect on their cultural experiences and expand their teaching methodologies by applying newly learned pedagogical approaches within the multicultural classroom where they serve (Biraimah & Jotia, 2012; DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Kumar & Hamer, 2012).

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Qualitative Research Design and Approach**

I explored factors that influence the instructional practices of teachers and the effectiveness of the AI teaching abroad opportunities for increasing exposure to cultural differences. Through multicultural education, teachers have implemented culturally appropriate instructional practices within the local multicultural classroom. Having explored the AI experiences of teachers and the data gathered from personal interviews, I yielded a detailed understanding that retells the experiences of the participants (see Creswell, 2012). To provide additional data to increase the validity of this study, two observations were conducted and provided evidence of the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices that are accurate, unbiased, and provide highly detailed information (Lodico et al., 2010).

With an increase in culturally diverse students, limited diversity among teachers, and limited exposure with understanding to how cultural diversity influences student learning, I focused on ways in which teachers can increase their cultural understanding, resulting in the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices based on respect that provides equitable educational opportunities for all students. The purpose of this study was to provide insight into how a culturally rich experience, such as a travel abroad teaching experience, contributes to the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional strategies in a multicultural classroom. The research question for this qualitative exploratory case study was as follows: How does a travel abroad experience

contribute to the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices in the multicultural classroom?

The overall goal of this research exploratory case study was to gather data that supported an increased understanding of culturally rich opportunities, such as a travel abroad teaching experience, and how they influenced cultural diversity and enhanced the implementation of culturally diverse instructional practices for the local multicultural classroom.

### **Methodology and Design**

The exploratory case study design allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of teachers who have engaged in a teaching abroad opportunity (i.e., AI). Additionally, I was able to explore how these experiences contributed to the teacher participants' insights into the cultural differences of students and strategies for implementing culturally diverse instruction in the local multicultural classroom. The data obtained in this case study provided insight into the experiences of a particular phenomenon (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2013). For this exploratory case study, the phenomenon studied was the teaching abroad experience, and I included observations, exposure, and implementation of culturally appropriate instructional strategies.

Implementing a case study methodology provided the flexibility to capture a variety of elements unique to the AI teaching abroad experience. Given the unique setting and participants of this study, it was important to provide detailed information through individual interviews using semi structured questions to capture an in-depth



understanding of the experience as related to the research questions and purpose of this study, ensuring accuracy when retelling the experience (Yin, 2013).

As part of the exploratory case study design, consideration was given to the availability of possible participants, the availability of supporting documentary evidence, and the participating organization's willingness to share annual data necessary for analysis that could cause significant delays, stressing the importance of practical consideration of case studies (Yin, 2013). I addressed how a culturally rich travel abroad experience contributed to the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices in the multicultural classroom (IRB approval # 03-17-17-0485878). An exploratory case study was selected because it best fit the needs of this study.

A quantitative study would not have been appropriate because it is designed to compare statistical data (typically in numeric form) that includes sizable numbers of participants with the results either rejecting or failing to reject the hypothesis (Creswell, 2012). A qualitative study is used as the design to gather information for a better understanding of the phenomenon. Other designs considered for this study included a phenomenological and ethnography (Lodico et al., 2010). Although a phenomenological model would allow a researcher to investigate the experiences of the participant, the designs focus would be on the people and not on the application of the AI program for culturally effective instructional practices (see Lodico et al., 2010). Ethnography design is focused on the culture and again not on the AI program and its implementation to address instructional practices as explained within the research question (see Merriam, 2009). Neither was accepted, as the case study design allowed for an intensive

investigation through individual interviews and analysis of the data for a deeper understanding of the teaching abroad experience.

A program evaluation is conducted to determine the worth or value based on the data or evidence collected (Merriam, 2009). Programs evaluated in this manner are typically reviewed for the extent to which the objectives of the program are being met. Because AI does not have established outcomes, this was not possible. This applied research method was considered for this study; however, without adequate evidence of an established program within the AI organization, a program evaluation would not have been possible. The exploratory case study was the most appropriate design for this study.

Exploring the AI experiences of teachers through interviews yielded a detailed understanding that allowed me to retell the experiences of the participants (see Creswell, 2012). The interviews included semi structured questions (Appendix A), enabling participants to share their experiences and providing indepth insight and meaning of their teaching abroad experience (Yin, 2013). I observed two participants in the classroom to gather data using with field notes for ongoing analysis (see Merriam, 2009). The observations were necessary to understand how participants within the study had implemented culturally appropriate instructional strategies within the multicultural classroom as a means of embracing diversity in the classroom and increasing student engagement.

### **Participants**

Within the last 5 years, approximately 17 U.S. teachers have traveled to volunteer in the classrooms of AI, sharing their time and skills teaching English as they

experienced the cultural and educational differences within a third-world country. A purposeful sampling of eight teachers who had participated in the AI teaching abroad program and who are currently teaching in the local region were invited to participate in this study (see Creswell, 2012). The purposeful sampling of eight participants was selected based on qualifiers (listed above) and their willingness to participate in this study (see Creswell, 2012).

Several potential participants who had traveled abroad with AI in the past did not meet with the qualifiers of this study. Three were not teaching locally, five have not participated with AI in the last 5 years, four were no longer teaching, and one did not respond to email contact. To ensure participants' willingness to participate and to reduce any form of perceived coercion, I sent emails to all who qualified to invite them to participate in the study, explaining the purpose, local problem, possible questions, and timeline with the requirements of participation in the study with the intent of gaining eight agreeable participants. Participants signed a letter of consent that explained the research study, its purpose, and additional responsibilities of each participant. Once consent was received from the teachers, a letter requesting permission to observe participants in their classrooms was sent to the participants' schools along with a letter of cooperation to be signed and returned.

Of the nine teachers who were qualified to participate in the study and received an invitational e-mail, eight teachers agreed to participate in the study and signed and returned consent forms. Of those qualified participants, seven were Caucasian, and one was African American, all were females, and all had 3 or fewer years teaching

experience. There were five school districts represented; of those participating, two were high school level, five were elementary school level, and one taught at a preschool level. Two taught in private schools, five taught in a public school, and one taught in a charter school. All eight teachers taught in a different school, and there were no teachers in the same building. Three teachers were in the same district while the rest taught in independent districts. Of the eight participating teachers, I observed in two classrooms. Of those teachers participating in the study, four were unable to be observed in the classroom due to district protocol, and one did not respond to my letter of cooperation to the principal.

Once I received confirmation of those who agreed to participate, I sent an e-mail to schedule an interview and observation time with the purpose of the study, a timeline for the study, possible questions, time commitment to the study, and the option to opt out of the study at any time. I took time before beginning the interview to assure them that their participation was voluntary, appreciated, confidential, and that the interview would be recorded to ensure the accuracy of information all the while being attentive to the participants' behavior and adhering to the specified time limit (Lodico et al., 2010). All measures were taken to establish a researcher-participant working relationship by adhering to interview and observational protocol (Creswell, 2012). All participants had the opportunity to opt out of the study at any time by providing written notification via email.

Three of the teacher participants were unable to observe the Honduran teachers in the classroom while volunteering with AI and thus were unable to provide examples of

teaching culturally appropriate instructional strategies. However, they did witness the Honduran teachers interacting with the students either during break, lunch, or after the school day.

### **Ethical Practices**

When conducting this research, possible biases could influence the interpretation of data based on personal experiences (Merriam, 2009) of teaching abroad and functioning as the facilitator of the teaching abroad program. I have taken a leave of absence as a volunteer from the AI nonprofit program until the completion of this study. Participants were invited to engage in the member checking process to reduce any potential bias as part of the validation process and to review the interview notes to ensure that the responses and feelings expressed accurately reflected their experience (see Creswell, 2012). All observation protocol was followed with an observation recording sheet for recording field notes that included date, time, place, and the RQ with space to record additional information (Lodico et al., 2010). To ensure the confidentiality of participants in the study, all participants have been given pseudonyms. Transcripts of the study, its results, and its outcomes are kept in a file folder on a secure computer that requires a password and was uploaded to a secure cloud on a weekly basis.

I received Walden IRB approval to ensure the protection of the participants, Walden University, and myself. All reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure the safety and confidentiality of the participants with minimal or no risks to those who participated in the study. All those participating the study signed a letter of consent that explained the goal and objectives of the study along with any possible associated risks.

AI also signed a letter of cooperation and provided a list of names of those who participated in the volunteer program and taught within the AI schools.

### **Data Collection Process**

This exploratory case study was used to gain in-depth understanding of factors that influence the instructional practices of teachers and the effectiveness of the AI teaching abroad opportunities. Exploring the teaching abroad experiences through observing culturally appropriate instructional practices abroad increased understanding of cultural differences and the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices within the local multicultural classroom. Exploring the AI experiences of teachers and the data gathered from personal interviews and observations provided a detailed understanding that allowed me to retell the experiences of the participants (see Creswell, 2012).

Focusing on the instructional aspects (content integration, knowledge construction, and equity pedagogy) of Bank's (2013) five dimensions of multicultural education increased participants' intercultural competences, understanding of cultural differences, and implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices (CAIP). An additional interest was to explore the teaching abroad experiences with AI and if the program met the expectations of the participants. Data gathering tools included individual interviews with semi structured questions (Appendix B) and observation field notes that provided data to support the research question of how a travel abroad experience contributed to the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices in the multicultural classroom.

One-on-one recorded interviews lasting between 20 and 32 minutes were conducted to establish a comfortable setting in which to share the participants' experiences and provided answers about their experiences with AI (see Creswell, 2012). When asked a series of nine semi structured questions, participants provided detailed information about their experiences. Some of the participants answered additional follow-on questions as part of the semi structured interview structure as needed for clarity or further explanations. After interviewing the second participant, I realized that the participants were not providing specific examples of cultural differences that were experienced abroad. By adding some additional questions (e.g., if you participated in cultural outings outside of the classroom, can you share some of those experiences?) the participants were able to provide specific examples of cultural differences between the United States and Honduras.

Interviews were conducted at a mutually agreed upon location (e.g., a local coffee shop or library) that was comfortable and conducive to the professionalism of the study and respect to participant's privacy. The interviews were recorded using Dragon Dictation (Nuance Communications Inc., 2010) to ensure the accuracy of responses and to provide documentation when transcribed electronically (Appendix C). The recorded interviews were then e-mailed to my Walden account where the interviews were transcribed into a Word document and entered in the program NVivo for analysis of common themes.

By implementing a protocol recommended by Creswell (2012) ensuring confidentiality, the following procedures were taken: Greeting the participants and

welcoming them increased their comfort level and the trustworthiness of myself, and implementing semi structured questions allowed for the participants to share their extraordinary experiences that they believed to be relevant to the study, providing examples for the retelling of the experience through a written narrative of the research findings.

With each interview, the teacher participants provided multiple examples of differences between schools in the United States and Honduras. The participants also provided numerous examples of culturally effective instructional practices that had been implemented in the local classroom. Teacher participants were also asked to provide member checking, to read the summaries of the individual interviews, and to provide additional information or to clarify any misrepresentation that ensured the accuracy of the results of this finding.

Additional data were obtained through two, 30-minute classroom observations of participating teachers with field notes taken. The focus of the observations was the teacher and the instructional strategies implemented within the class, thus ensuring the confidentiality of the students. Once permission from the two principals/districts was received along with verification by Walden's IRB, I contacted the individual teachers and observations were scheduled and conducted (see Creswell, 2012). Local principals and districts understood that, and one district has asked that I share the findings of this study with their district. Once the interviews were conducted, I reviewed the written field notes and placed the notes in a locked filing cabinet, located in my home office. The study also includes a narrative of rich detail recreating that virtual experience for the reader that



supports the exploratory study (see Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). Through the reflection process, teachers identified components of a culturally responsive classroom that promotes global thinking while embracing diversity (Biraimah & Jotia, 2012; DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Kumar & Hamer, 2012; Li & Guo, 2015).

My role as the researcher for this study was that of an in-depth participant who shared in the teaching abroad experience as the facilitator of the team. Although I had active daily involvement with the team members, I was the facilitator and kept at a professional distance to maintain objectivity. As a facilitator, my responsibilities included the logistical coordination of the trip, liaison between the teacher volunteers and AI, and coordinator of daily teaching schedules. Although I was the facilitator of the team and a relationship of trust was established, interaction and communications were minimized once returning from the trip. I am no longer the facilitator and my responsibilities ended once we returned to the US. The IRB Walden University was contacted to determine if either a conflict of interest or coercion could present an issue with this study and it was determined that, as I was no longer the facilitator for the potential participants, neither would affect the research study.

As the researcher, my role was to conduct in-depth interviews with observations that allowed for analysis of data and creating a narrative of rich detail to re-tell the participant's experiences (Lodico et al., 2010). As the researcher, I was aware of potential bias as a facilitator and long-term volunteer with AI. All data findings were analyzed and kept on a secure computer in my home office for further reflection and analysis. Interview questions and summary of responses included as part of the member checks,

and a peer debriefer was used to increase credibility and reduce researcher bias (Lodico et al., 2010).

### **Data Analysis Results**

To address the identified gap in local practice as it affects student learning, and the increased culturally diverse student population in the classroom with the limited culturally diverse experiences of teachers, I conducted interviews and observed local classrooms of teachers who meet the criteria for this study. Through the interviews, I identified how the teaching abroad experience with AI contributed to increased awareness and understanding of cultural differences and to gain insights of culturally appropriate instructional practices implemented in the classroom.

The responses were coded to identify recurring themes found within the transcripts from the personal interviews (Merriam, 2009). The coding process provided a descriptive account, developing a mental picture of the events that retell the story of the participants' experiences, and following a logical thought process that addressed the research question (Miles & Huberman, 2014; Merriam, 2009). The qualitative analysis software NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2016), was then used to identify common themes based on the transcribed interview results from each participant. This multistep analysis began with the open coding process of breaking down the data for categorization of common phrases that assists in formulating additional questions that provide follow-up interviews for deeper understanding (Merriam, 2009). Axial coding was conducted that created a connection between common phrases allowing the data to emerge into themes that follow a logical pattern and saturation of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Thematic

coding was conducted to identify themes within the constructs of Bank's (2013) five dimensions of multicultural education as it addressed the research question of how the teaching abroad experiences contributed the possible implementation of CAIP. I repeated open and axial numerous times until saturation occurred. Saturation, as defined by Creswell (2012), ensured that all information is identified and categorized within the current research study.

With the coding process completed and additional themes identified, the comparison of all interviews for patterns allowed for the retelling of the story as presented by each participant, and through member checking ensured accuracy and transparency for clarity of the results (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2013). Observations and field notes were then analyzed to provide documentation of implemented CAIP. Responses and observation field notes provided the insight, clarification, or additional individual experiences that add a deeper understanding of experiences of the study (Merriam, 2009). With the identified themes, which included observational findings, a clear picture presented itself through the participant's experiences, and I compiled a narrative of rich detail thus recreating that virtual experience for the reader (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2008; Yin, 2013).

District demographics would be used to define the local multicultural classroom that supported the need for the study. The data collection method for this study included individual interviews and observations that support the exploratory design as defined by Merriam (2009). Member checking and a peer debriefer were implemented to ensure the study findings accurately reflected the responses of the participants and to ensure that

interview questions were written clearly for understanding (Creswell, 2012). As the data were analyzed, any discrepant cases were identified and acknowledged in the findings section of the study (Merriam, 2009).

### **Trustworthy and Credibility**

Comparing all interviews for patterns retells the story accurately as presented by each participant and member checking was provided to ensure transparency and clarity of the results (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). To increase the trustworthiness and credibility of this study, I identified any ethical concerns or conflicts of interest, provided interview questions and transcripts of interviews, with the implementation of appropriate methods that included member checking and peer reviewed data.

### **Justification**

By conducting an exploratory case study, based on a conceptual framework of the multicultural education theory of Banks (1993), I investigated how a teaching abroad experience contributed to their expanded understanding of multicultural awareness, identifying specific elements of the experiences that provided insight into ways in which teachers have implemented culturally diverse instructional strategies into the local multicultural classroom.

Doppen and An (2014) supported that when exposed to teaching abroad programs, such experiences enhance global awareness of teachers. Global awareness is defined as a worldview that includes multiple perspectives of traditions, cultures, and languages from different perspectives. Batey and Lupi (2012) and Gross and Maloney (2012) asserted that when preservice teachers participate in teaching abroad

opportunities, those experiences promote a greater understanding of cultural values and beliefs around the world that then reduce negative stereotypes and through gained knowledge, increase tolerance of diversity. Linking experiences in host countries and discovering cultural values and beliefs will create a better understanding (Gross & Maloney, 2012).

### **Data Analysis Results**

Based on the research that supports the purpose of this study, Gay (2013) and Lee (2012) shared the need to increase knowledge and understanding of cultural differences with pedagogical skills and practices to promote the academic success of diverse student learners with increased multicultural practices. Providing teachers with increased culturally diverse experiences for better understanding was addressed in the recent study conducted by CRPE with a recommendation to initiate teacher training for diversity and effective instructional practices (Campbell & Binder, 2014). The result of this study supports the importance of teaching abroad experiences, like AI, as an appropriate and effective means to enhance cultural awareness and to observe and implement culturally appropriate instructional practices within the local classroom.

Conducting the analysis and identifying themes was done through a coding process, starting with the constructs of Bank's (1993) multicultural education theory (i.e., content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, reduced prejudice, and empowering school culture) responses were coded for description (Miles & Huberman, 2014). These constructs aligned with the research question to determine how a travel

abroad experience, such as AI, contributed to teachers' implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices and provided the answer to that question.

Once returning from Honduras, teachers had personal time to reflect on their teaching abroad experiences (before returning to their classroom), and through that reflection of the experience, increased their understanding of cultural differences that they stated, resulted in increased their intercultural competence in their teaching strategies.

Understanding that each of the participants in this study has traveled abroad to volunteer with AI within the last 3 years. The reflection process is defined as an active procedure of critical self-analysis that occurs when adults acquire new knowledge or experiences and gain insight into personal growth through increased awareness (Swazo & Celinska, 2014).

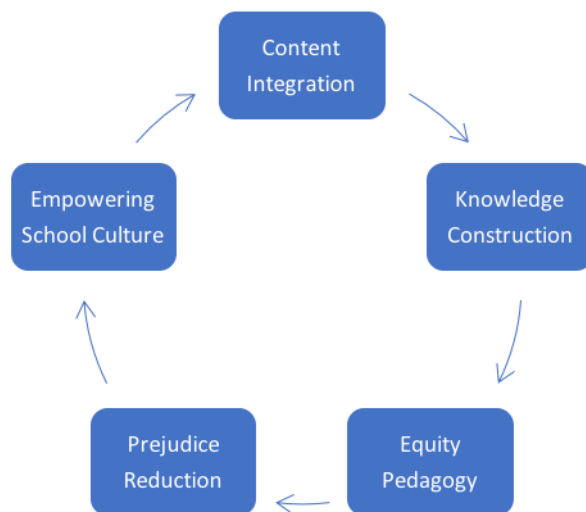
The participants in this study shared how, through their personal reflection, they transferred their experiences to understanding and integrated those experiences into culturally appropriate instructional strategies. During interviews, several teachers identified that they witnessed examples and teaching behaviors that were culturally different than that of United States during the AI experience that provided opportunities for increasing their own cultural awareness. Through the interview process, teachers identified factors that increased their intercultural competence that contributed to the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices. A sampling of the interview responses and questions are available for review (see appendix C).

Banks (1993) defined multicultural education with five specific dimensions, and throughout this study, teacher participants provided examples of each of those

dimensions. Recognizing the need to increase awareness of cultural diversity and then expanding beyond the classroom to create a school culture of respect and acceptance, into a community empowering the individual with tools that promote positive social change.

### **Five Dimensions of Multicultural Theory of Education**

The five dimensions of Bank's (1993) multicultural theory of education provided the coding to identify themes for this study. Those dimensions are defined as content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and empowering school culture. With each interview, I identified specific themes that became consistent with each proceeding interview. The data revealed that seven of the eight teacher participants had implemented content integration, and equity pedagogy that, in their opinion, reduced prejudices within their classroom as defined by Banks. Knowledge construction and empowering school culture was not well mentioned by the participants. As shown in Figure 1, the theory of multicultural education is an ever-changing and evolving process of understanding and implementation of each dimension blending into the next, sharing examples and experiences of the participants. With each dimension comes increased understanding and influences even more individuals. Causing a continuous cycle that impacts the classroom, the school, and the community, all working towards global acceptance.



*Figure 1.* Banks’s theory of multicultural education. Illustrates the continuous cycle of newly gained knowledge and insight that promotes acceptance and global understanding. Adapted from “Multicultural Education: Historical Development, Dimensions, and Practice,” by J. A. Banks, 1993, *Review of Research in Education*, 19, p. 5.

These dimensions were implemented within the instructional practices, and lesson plans to increase awareness of cultural differences among the students in the classroom through culturally diverse content, shared student experiences, to increase student understanding.

**Content integration.** Content integration is a multilevel process to include the recognition of cultural differences, the integration of a variety of multifaceted perspectives that increase understanding through the exposure to the perspectives of other experiences (Banks, 1993). With the implementation of others’ perspectives of the same events, students (and teachers) are provided the opportunity to expand one’s limited exposure that offers the opportunity to gain insight into other perspectives. The findings of this study suggest that as a result of the participants teaching abroad experience,



several of the teachers shared that they now have a clearer idea of the limited perspectives or misconceptions they may bring to the classroom and as a result could base their instruction within the overall curriculum in their schools. With this increased understanding of how personal bias could impact their instructional practices, several teachers shared how their increased understanding and experiences abroad provided the foundation for implementing instructional change.

Utilizing this newly acquired information, the teachers became cognizant of the need to implement individual students lived experiences within the curriculum for increased understanding of other perspectives. Several teachers mentioned the importance of knowing the students and their lived experiences that include educational opportunities. For many children living outside of the United States, a quality education is not always a viable option. Several teachers shared how their teaching abroad experience with AI, allowed them to increase their understanding of the cultural differences in their students (in the US).

Additional information shared in the interviews was that as a result of their teaching abroad experience, they could appreciate the added value of shared perspectives within the instructional practices for increased understanding and insight into the complexities of the multicultural classroom. A second finding reflected on the implementation of the culturally appropriate instructional practices in the classroom. Teachers shared that through their teaching abroad experience, specifically the observations of teachers and personal instructional time in the classroom, provided the understanding of the implementation process. This finding was supported by the

classroom observation, where I witnessed the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices and the value diverse perspectives bring to enhance understanding of others that would include content integration within the current curriculum design.

Two of the participants, Iris and Ellen, explained that with the support of their principal, they were able to implement additional culturally diverse content within the grade level curriculum. Both shared that as part of the observation of classrooms with AI and peer collaboration with AI teachers, the understanding of different perspectives based on the life experiences of the students, the lessons became applicable and relevant. Iris shared that because of her teaching abroad experience; she has identified several gaps in the curriculum and has implemented a variety of culturally diverse and appropriate stories into her language arts curriculum to provide exposure and increase of cultural awareness within the class. Specifically, the lack of African American authors found within the curriculum. Therefore, she implemented several additional historical pieces to include authors like, Fredrick Douglas, Langston Hughes, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Phillis Wheatley. Iris also shared that she included, “The Pearl,” a Mexican folk tale into the required reading and celebrated both the Day of the Dead and Three Kings to increase awareness and share cultural diverse perspectives. Iris explained that “it is important for the students to understand why we are reading and studying different cultures, not if they like the story, but to understand others’ perspectives.

The fact that the students did not understand the cultural aspects of the story and were asking questions illustrates insight into a new understanding of other perspectives. Iris explained that many of the language arts stories presented different cultures from one

perspective and may not be accurate. One lesson she implemented this year was the student's assignment was to create an abolitionist poster based on their readings of Frederick Douglas. The student designed poster was to encourage people to join the movement. Expanding on the lesson, the students then had to share in a discussion the different perspectives of that time and the current situation in the United States. She stated that in the past, the only assignment was to read the story and write a summary of the story. By creating a culturally appropriate activity and designing a discussion that prompted students to use higher order thinking that through analysis and examination, students gained insight into other perspectives, cultures, and beliefs.

Susan also shared that although it is important to implement diversity within the curriculum to increase understanding, content integration is not just about "providing cultural meals and piñatas." The understanding of culture goes deeper to include customs and beliefs. Susan shared her experience abroad and the student's beliefs about the value of education; through an education, a student's lifestyle and status can change. An education provides students with a vision, a dream, and a purpose and a way out of poverty for themselves and their families, she explained. A second example she shared was that through the enhanced understanding of others' perspective, she has a new perspective on student absenteeism.

Susan explained that now when students miss school, she can better understand why. Often the students are needed to assist their parents with translations when dealing with daily struggles that might include the electric company, the bank, car maintenance, all real struggles that when not addressed can become a crisis in their family. By

providing a curriculum that embraces diversified perspectives, can also enhance teacher and students understanding and their acceptance of others.

A sub theme identified in this construct addressed how further diversity education in the classroom has increased the student's acceptance of other students in the classroom. Robin explained that one instructional strategy implemented after the trip was to qualify the importance of an education and that through the diversity of others, with the implementation of creative problem-solving strategies increased student acceptance of others that allowed for global solutions based on respect. Robin shared that throughout the year, she implemented small group activities where students would collaborate, creating solutions to the questions or scenarios presented by the teacher that allowed the students to share their lived experiences to create a solution. Specifically, at the school Robin teaches, located in a farming community, the students were studying weather patterns and the impact on farming and increased production. Within the group, the students were asked to identify ways in which the local farmers could increase their field production as it was being affected by local water restrictions and changing weather patterns. Several students shared their lived experiences, and as a result, the students presented alternative watering practices to address the local restrictions. Diane shared that although children all around the world live in poverty, their daily struggles in Honduras were not deterrents for gaining an education, and she felt that it was an excellent example for other students in her classroom. Sharing her experiences abroad, she explains that

The students I worked with every day [in Honduras] came to class happy and eager to learn, despite their poverty, that for many included homes with dirt floors

and no electricity or running water, one meal a day of beans and rice. Given the opportunity to receive an education provided them with the opportunity to change the future of themselves and their families. Students in my classroom, often won't show up for class if their parents can't take them to school. Some of the kids [in Honduras] take the public bus by themselves and might ride for as long as an hour each way.

She explained that receiving an education was a privilege and after seeing photos of the schools in Honduras, students began to understand how fortunate they were to attend school in a new building with a multitude of resources.

**Knowledge construction.** Building on content integration, the second dimension, knowledge construction, addresses the importance of understanding how teacher and student' biases and their perspectives can influence the construction of knowledge based on limited exposure (Banks, 1993). Within the construct of knowledge construction, individuals can deconstruct and identify biases within textbooks, curriculum, and other authors. By implementing culturally appropriate instructional practices that expose writers of textbooks, curriculum, and even movies biases that allows insight into biases and through awareness, students are better able to see other perspectives and embrace new or different perspectives of other cultures. This multilayered construct is a complex process that can increase awareness and lead to prejudice reduction, as teachers promote opportunities to increase awareness of alternative perspectives. However, within the results of this study, no evidence was found indicating that knowledge construction strategies had been implemented in the classroom. When questioned about this

dimension, several teachers mentioned that they did not have a clear understanding of this construct.

**Equity pedagogy.** Equity pedagogy, according to Banks (1993), identifies the importance of implementing instructional practices that promote learning for all students that include lived experiences, cultural, belief or language differences. Every teacher shared what they believed to be the most important aspects of their experience and applying the newly acquired knowledge with implication within the classroom. Those strategies identified within this study focus on culturally appropriate instructional strategies that create equal opportunities for student learning (Todor, 2015). Seven out of eight teachers, as result of their experiences in the AI classroom and with an increased understanding of culturally appropriate instructional practices, have implemented teaching strategies that provide directions in multiple forms to ensure understanding. Examples of those provided include, visual aids, pictures of activities, photos of the classroom (where to place homework, find extra supplies, placement of lunchboxes, etc.), directions are given verbally, written on the white boards and smartboard, and reviewed in small groups.

Ellen explained that one example of implementation of cultural appropriate instructional practices in the classroom she observed in the AI classroom, was the implementation of visual aids to help with communication and understanding, particularly with her limited English speaking students. She shared that as part of the daily review, she implements a variety of visual aids to clarify meaning for her students with limited comprehension of English and that students will now draw pictures in the

dirt during recess to explain how a game is played. Those examples witnessed during the classroom observation included a word wall with both English and Spanish vocabulary, pictures that illustrate actions, photos that provide a visual understanding of vocabulary (e.g., car – pencil – photo of a pencil, scissors – photo of a pair of scissors, etc.).

Ellen and Nancy both shared their increased understanding because of the language barrier while traveling abroad and are now better able to relate to the students in the classroom who speak limited English. Ellen shared that after returning to the US, she could better understand the struggles of her students with language barriers, separation of families, and educational experiences different than the local school system that created a bond with her students and as a result, implement instructional strategies to increase student engagement within the classroom. Ellen explained that as the outsider visiting a country with different customs, traditions, and language, she was at times frustrated, missing family and friends, and struggled with the many cultural differences she experienced while living abroad. Because of the experience, Ellen has implemented classroom practices to assist students with limited English. When I observed her classroom, I witnessed her implementation of a variety of culturally appropriate strategies to include, providing a buddy to assist with translation of directions, provide visuals clues to provide alternative means for comprehending the directions, and on two different occasions, she provided the directions in both English and Spanish. She tells of an increased understanding and a level of empathy as she can now better relate to her students and their personal struggles as they adapt to living in a new and different country.

Modeling the respect of a free and appropriate education, Nancy discovered that the students learn better if she implemented a variety of instructional strategies with extended teaching timeline, present information in some different or multiple formats, and provided a peer support for language translation. Presenting a variety of culturally appropriate instructional practices that when implemented assist in meeting her student's needs and that students are happier when they feel comfortable and secure in the multicultural classroom setting. Specific examples would include providing students with a reciprocated respectful attitude that reduced behavioral issues that resulted in fewer classroom disruptions that increased teaching time. She implemented a variety of teaching and learning styles with peer support and small group activities to enhance learning through higher order thinking and understanding.

Susan shared her implementation of accommodating student needs with more diverse instructional activities within the classroom to accommodate individual student needs. Some examples were allowing the students to move around in the classroom while still focused on the instruction, allowing the student to provide support through peer to peer tutoring, small groups that create a secure environment to explore new vocabulary, language comprehension, and problem-solving skills. Each of these examples addresses a specific need of a student within her classroom. Susan explained that while observing AI classrooms, she witnessed a teacher who allowed a student who was struggling with English work with a peer tutor for additional practice. Susan also observed the practice of allowing students who became agitated to walk around the classroom rather than disrupt the classroom with a verbal outburst in a different AI classroom. The final example Susan



explained was a strategy of placing the students in small groups to practice the vocabulary taught that day. Although small group activities are popular within the United States, Susan felt that as a teacher, she had failed to understand the effectiveness of the activity.

Diane stated that with the humbling experience of teaching abroad and AI, “I understand the students on a deeper level and that no two students share the same background, lived experiences.” Sharing that a teacher may not know what the students are dealing with daily and that those struggles can affect the student’s learning. Explaining that as a teacher, she felt that it was her responsibility to meet her students where they are academically and help them grow based on their individual needs.

Iris mentioned the importance of a solid academic foundation that builds on newly acquired skills and the importance of identifying any gaps in learning. She and Ellen both provide classroom reinforcement and review activities within the daily schedule to assist students who may have gaps in instruction or academic skills. Yolanda spoke of the importance of working with her students to ensure all students have the skills necessary for advancement and not to socially promote students, as it does not help the student but rather sets the child up for failure. Diane also addressed the importance of a solid academic foundation and the importance of meeting children at their level of performance and together, working to fill those gaps that result from cultural misunderstanding or limited academic opportunities within their lives. Susan and Eleanor both mentioned the importance of equity pedagogy with respect to appropriate instruction and meeting the

individual needs of students through the implementation of culturally designed lessons and activities.

At times, Ellen and Robin provide instruction in Spanish for the students with very limited English. Teachers are allowing students and ELL teachers to shadow students for translation when needed. Given the uncertainty of educational experiences and opportunities available to students living in countries outside of the United States, as a result of the teaching abroad experience, six teachers have implemented strategies to meet students at their current level of academic performance and fill in the gaps. Making the connection between the experience abroad and the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices within the multicultural classroom that supports a shared vision of enhanced awareness with effective instructional practices that promote student growth.

*Teaching for mastery.* A subtheme of equity pedagogy would be teaching to mastery for comprehension. Teaching for mastery (ensuring there is mastery of learning) was a common theme throughout the interview responses and represents the newly acquired knowledge that teachers found to be relevant for student academic gain. All eight participants shared that when observing in the AI classroom, the teacher's focus was on mastery of the skill and not on meeting the progress standards that align with the local curriculum and pacing standards. Nancy stressed the need to adapt her teaching strategies to include a change of mindset that focused on what do the students know and what do they need to know to ensure mastery, as opposed to the district level pacing guides that may not meet the needs of individual students, she explained. Although mastery of

learning could fall under content integration, the focus for the teachers was on pacing lessons based on student comprehension and not on the curriculum timelines defined by the district.

While Iris shared Nancy's thought, she expanded to include more school freedoms to teach and develop appropriate curriculum based on individual student needs. Although it could also be considered a sub-theme to knowledge construction on flexibility, as the dimensions of Banks's theory overlap, so do the examples of the teachers. For this construct, the focus of Iris and Nancy's comments was on teaching skills towards mastery for comprehension before the introduction of new skills or materials. Both shared the desire to adapt teaching strategies that when implemented within the classroom, have the flexibility to reteach skills as needed, to ensure mastery of skills. Eleanor shared her thoughts that included the relaxed and flexible scheduling that provided the opportunity for classroom teachers to teach towards mastery of understanding and not annual assessments. Yolanda addressed her observation of the teaching as "instruction for mastery and not assessment driven." Explaining that as a result of her experience with AI, she is now able to implement culturally appropriate instruction that is focused on individual student needs and not as directed by the daily curriculum guide distributed by the district. By knowing her students, she has been able to design lessons that address weaknesses in a student's learning and provide additional or diverse instructional activities to enhance understanding and increase mastery. Nancy supported that with her comment, "moving away from TCAP's (annual assessments used in the state), I now have the freedom and flexibility to address some of those skills that

students need extra practice or review.” Explaining that because of her observations in the AI classrooms, she has implemented “instructional activities that identify what her students know and what they need to know, before moving on in the curriculum.”

Yolanda stated that because of her experience with AI, that instruction should not be assessment driven but designed to meet the students where they are and once mastery is obtained, then move forward. Diane stated that what she observed in the AI classroom was that teachers had the freedom and flexibility to “teach a mile deep and an inch wide versus teaching an inch deep and a mile wide like we are required to do in our local schools.” Explaining that with mastery of a concept, a student can apply newly acquired skills with prior knowledge to increase academic performance.

*Adaptability.* A subtheme of prejudice reduction would be adaptability of instruction, an effective teaching strategy that allows teachers the flexibility to adapt to the needs of the individual students in the classroom. The adaptability of both teachers and their daily routines was commented on by all teachers. Referring to the adaptability within the classroom, like schedule changes, the lesson plans of instruction that needs to be modified or adapted, the ability to implement differentiated instruction throughout the day as it applied to the individual student needs. Adaptability also provided additional insight into the structured school schedules in the local schools identified in the study. All eight participants commented on the half day program of the AI schools. Students attending AI schools attend classes from 7:30 until noon and receive a similar curriculum as those students in the US that included English as a foreign language. Classes last approximately 40 minutes with brain breaks or recess three times each day. These breaks

occur typically between classes and last for approximately eight minutes. Giving students the opportunity to use the restroom, chat with friends, ask questions of the teachers, or prepare for other classes. Many of the students use the time to visit with friends and burn off some extra energy. Yolanda, Robin, and Eleanor commented on the advantages of the frequent brain breaks as a positive culturally appropriate instructional practice for all students, as it reduced disruptive behavior, increased student's attention and resulted in increased teaching time throughout the morning. The freedom to reteach a lesson to ensures students are mastering a skill without the fear of alignment of pacing guides identified within the curriculum was a positive adaptability example shared by Iris.

By implementing a strategy known as "brain breaks" within the school day, teachers found, a decrease in student behavioral issues increased their ability to focus on new academic skills that resulted in increased teaching time. With increased teaching time and with the application of culturally appropriate instructional practices, increases student engagement for student growth. Thus, creating a positive learning environment that embraces diversity and shared ideas.

**Prejudice reduction.** This fourth dimension is to provide a multicultural climate designed to share cultural customs and traditions and increase understanding to promote community and acceptance to include teacher and students within the classroom (Banks, 1993). Because of the experience, several teachers expressed an increase of empathy for the students' struggles as a result of the AI experience. All participants agreed that through the implementation of flexible instructional practices (e.g., re-teaching differently, small groups, peer to peer tutoring, visual clues, etc.) observed while abroad

with meeting the current level of academic performance of each student, enabled the teacher and other students to increase understanding and embrace differences while meeting the curriculum requirements found in each district. Six out of the eight interviewees shared the importance of sharing lived experiences (e.g., living without electricity, eating local food – beans and rice multiple times a day, limited availability of schools, parents limited education) to increase understanding of cultural differences and acceptance. Others shared the insight of limited educational opportunities outside of the US, understanding that a large number of adults living in Honduras and other poverty ridden countries may only receive an education through the third or fourth grade. Six of the teachers shared an experience they had while teaching abroad that provided that “aha” moment and was better able to relate to the personal and academic struggles of the children within their classroom. Some examples include the value of diverse instructional strategies, implementing lived experiences within the course curriculum,

Iris shared her implementation of sharing lived experiences as a means of increasing student culture awareness by implementing creative activities that can promote problem solving and respect for others, a strategy that was witnessed while teaching abroad. Susan shared that several of her students had dietary needs that restricted their meals provided at the school cafeteria. She explained that one way to address this cultural difference within the school was to implement an understanding of cultural differences with food and provided an alternative meal. With a Muslim student enrolled in her classroom, often the student was not able to eat the cafeteria meal provided. To ensure that the student did not go hungry, the teacher provided an alternative meal for the

student or allowed the student to bring a meal from home for lunch. Just as students with food allergies are provided with special dietary meals, so should students who have religious conflicts with dietary restrictions. Building on the other constructs of Banks's (1993) multicultural theory, all eight teachers have implemented a new attitude of patience and understanding with their US students. With this newly acquired insight obtained from their teaching abroad experience, participants experienced an increased cultural awareness, which supports the fourth and fifth dimension of Banks multicultural theory of education.

Eleanor shared her personal experiences within her lesson on idioms, which provided an example to the students about the importance of understanding the need for shared experiences and understanding cultural differences (equity pedagogy) and prejudice reduction. She explained that while idioms in English can be funny and present themselves with a double meaning. She used the example of raining cats and dogs, which when translated literally, make no sense. Iris explained the need to understand the bigger picture and the need to increase student awareness of cultural differences in her classroom by relating to the global corporations within the local community and the importance of embracing differences when problem-solving at a global level. Susan, again shared her implementation with an increased understanding of cultural awareness when explaining to her classroom the dietary differences of several of the students in her classroom.

**Empowering school culture.** The last construct presents the opportunity for teachers, staff, administration, students, and families to embrace cultural differences with

acceptance and empowerment through understanding and shared experiences (Banks, 1993). Although participants of this study explained that due to the teaching abroad experience, they returned to their respective schools and shared their newly gained insight with others was a means to the increased understanding throughout the school community. Although they shared examples of how their teaching abroad experience has impacted their personal and professional life, to change the culture of a school is an ongoing gradual process that will not occur within the time line of this study. By developing relationships with their students based on respect, and sharing lived experiences with others afforded the opportunity to develop a positive learning environment that empowers students and supports positive social change for global change.

Yolanda stated, “our society is in such a hurry to do things, we don’t have time for people. We forget the importance of valuing relationships.” Because of this trip, “I’m implementing changes in my classroom and my personal life to make time for the people in my life and building those relationships.” The teachers in the United States typically eat lunch with their students, but not because it is something they elect to do; in Honduras, the teachers choose to eat with the students spending time with them to build relationships and value them as individuals. She went on to explain that by knowing student’s, a teacher can better meet their individual needs. Ellen shared that because of her experiences with AI, she has come to understand the importance of building relationships with the students. That by building relationships and knowing students, she is better able to relate to their situation and has a new level of empathy for her students



based on her struggles with language, culture, transportation, and the like, while traveling abroad, providing new insight into her personal and professional life.

### **Emerging Themes**

**Technology.** Technology emerged as a theme as the AI experience often showed the lack of technology in the classrooms, with some days including not having electricity. Every teacher mentioned the limited technology within the school and found that although technology is valuable, that a vast amount of teaching time can be lost when every instructional practice is either based on technology or stored on technology. Sharing that it might be beneficial to include technology within the curriculum and daily instruction, teachers need to be prepared for glitches and provide backup lessons that contain other CAIP strategies. Elanor, Robin, and Ellen all mentioned the hidden advantages of creating instructional practices within the lessons each day that was not dependent on technology. Diane, Nancy, and Yolanda also mentioned the need to allow kids to be kids and by providing small group or interactive activities that do not include technology, allowed students to develop problem-solving skills and establish relationships within the classroom. Ellen went on to share that because of the teaching abroad experience; she found herself implementing culturally appropriate instructional strategies that were designed to meet the individual needs of her students and not to specifically align with the curriculum standards, meaning she would reteach as necessary until all the students understood the particular skill.

Across U.S., many classrooms are filled with updated technology and teachers are expected to implement technology within their weekly and daily lessons to prepare

students for the virtual world of today. Because of the AI experience, teachers responded to the loss of teaching time in the classroom when technology fails. Because of the experience, several of the teachers mentioned the need to provide backup instructional practices for those who may have limited technology available at home. Creating insight to the diverse backgrounds and home lives of the students within the classroom.

**Establishing relationships.** Throughout the interviews, the participants provided examples of how their intercultural competences had increased and of implemented culturally appropriate instructional practices within their classroom as a mean to engage all students and provided documentation to support the research question of this study. Several themes resulted after an additional review of coding that includes teaching strategies, teacher observation and behaviors, perspectives and teaching methods. Each has been addressed within the constructs of the five dimensions above but deserves recognition as independent themes that impact student academic growth. Several reviews of coding and the identification of themes were conducted, and saturation was determined when no additional themes emerged.

Each participant participated in the review process, member checking, to ensure I had transcribed their responses accurately and to enhance the quality and validity of this study. The observations that were conducted provided the visual confirmation of those culturally appropriate instructional strategies had been implemented and proven to apply to the classroom situation. I observed two different classrooms as part of this study. In Robin's classroom, I observed the implementation of multiple modes of directions for the small group activity, implementing the smart board, providing verbal directions, and

using pictures to provide the step by step directions. Within the same class, I observed the teachers calling on the prearranged “buddies” to assist with translation within the small groups. As mentioned earlier, like Susan, Robin expressed that although small group activities are often implemented within the classrooms across the United States, often underestimate the effectiveness of the activity.

During Ellen’s classroom observation, I witnessed her providing visual clues and encouragement one of the culturally diverse students in the classroom. The student had only been living in the United States for about 8 days. Providing a reassuring pat on the back, a nod of the head, and pointing in the classroom, provided the support needed to promote a safe and engaging classroom environment. Addressing the local problem, offering support to the advantages to participating in teaching abroad programs like AI, and answering the research question with multiple examples of the five dimensions of Banks theory of multicultural education and affirmation of the experience.

### **Summary**

The results indicated that the teaching abroad experience with AI increases cultural awareness and understanding and provides teachers with opportunities to observe and implement culturally appropriate instructional practices. When adapted to the multicultural classroom within the local district, this exploratory case study gathered data that supported an increased understanding of culturally rich opportunities, such as a travel abroad teaching experience and how they influenced cultural diversity and enhanced the implementation of culturally diverse instructional practices for the local multicultural classroom. Providing insight into how a culturally rich experience, such as travel abroad

teaching experience contributes to the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional strategies in a multicultural classroom. Through open coding, the data indicated that every teacher stated that the teaching abroad experiences with AI increased my understanding and cultural awareness and made me a more effective teacher. That within the constructs of this study, a multitude of culturally appropriate instructional practices had been implemented into the local classroom and a shared enthusiasm of embracing diversity with a focus on academic student growth. The findings of this study will become the pillars of a professional development program designed to support teaching abroad experiences and increasing understanding of cultural awareness and the need and implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices.

### Section 3: The Project

#### **Introduction**

With an increase in culturally diverse students, limited diversity among teachers, and limited exposure and understanding to how cultural diversity impacts student learning, I designed this study to identify ways in which teachers can increase their cultural understanding (intercultural competence) and implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices that provides documentation for the teaching abroad program with AI. Previous researchers suggested that teaching abroad experiences, like AI, provided teachers with the opportunities that increased teacher understanding of the multicultural complexities that when not addressed may negatively influence student learning (Batey & Lupi, 2012; Kumar & Hamer, 2012; Smith & Moreno-Lopez, 2012). These researchers suggested that when teachers are exposed to culturally rich experiences like AI, they tended to implement culturally appropriate instructional practices to assist in increased cultural awareness and effective teaching for student academic growth (Jabbar & Hardaker, 2013; Menard-Warwick & Palmer, 2012). The purpose of this study was to provide insight into how a culturally rich experience such as travel abroad teaching experience contributed to an increased intercultural competence and understanding of the need for implementation of culturally appropriate instructional strategies in a multicultural classroom.

The data were gathered through interviews with the recent participants of a teaching abroad experience (Appendix B). The peer review process was implemented to ensure the accuracy of the narrative presented in the findings of this study. The findings

indicated that through the teaching abroad experience, teachers increased their understanding of cultural differences within the classroom and with that increased awareness had implemented a variety of culturally appropriate instructional practices within the daily routines of the classroom. Many of the participants shared that the experience was life changing and inspired them to make changes in both their personal and professional life. For many education professionals, travel abroad may not be a viable option. The design of a professional development program to provide increased awareness of diversity as it impacts student learning and the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices that may positively influence student growth addresses the local problem and prepares students for the global society of tomorrow.

A professional development program has been designed to deliver the findings of this study, share one's personal experiences while teaching abroad (Appendix A), and provide the findings that support distinct cultural differences to increase teacher awareness. This 36-hour program has been designed to present teachers with a variety of opportunities to witness diversity within the classroom, witness diversity within other classrooms, and collaborate with peers to develop and implement culturally appropriate instructional practices within the local multicultural classrooms identified within this study. Supporting this program design and its alignment with the conceptual framework of this study, researchers have found that when professional development aims to address local concerns and the opportunity for peer collaboration with its focus on student outcome, effective implementation and enhanced student learning ensues (Burns, Pierson, & Reddy, 2014; Garcés & Granada, 2016; Gutierrez, 2015; Smith & Bahr, 2014).

Providing opportunities for peer collaboration, professional dialog, reflection, and implementation with administrative support increases application strategies and insight (Camburn & Han, 2015; Kennedy, 2016).

### **Rationale**

An essential piece of this study is the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices within the locally identified multicultural classrooms. Sharing the results of this study with the participants, school leadership and AI will provide valuable information that will assist in addressing the local problem of limited exposure to diverse cultures by many of the local teachers. Addressing the local concern, a series of on-going professional development opportunities were designed, where teachers will have the opportunity to increase their intercultural competence through knowledge and understanding. The results can be presented to administrators and the local university, which may provide evidence to implement teaching abroad program opportunities to preservice and current classroom teachers. Although the teaching abroad program is the optimal goal, there may be barriers that prevent educators from traveling abroad. A professional development program has been designed to increase their cultural awareness and to observe classroom practices that promote culturally appropriate instructional practices within the classroom to increase awareness and effective teaching with the end goal of improved student engagement and increased academic growth with positive social change within the local region.

## **Review of the Literature**

Supporting the findings of this study, researchers have found that although a teaching abroad experience is optimal for increasing the understanding and implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices, it may not be applicable in every school (Cai & Sankaran, 2015; DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Swazo & Celinska, 2014). Designing a professional development program promotes cultural awareness, identifying and implementing instructional practices based on adult learning styles and effective instructional practices. The components and activities implemented are based on the support of the research and findings of this study.

The keywords used in this literature review are as follows: *professional development, teaching abroad experiences, culturally appropriate instruction, culturally appropriate instructional practices, travel abroad experiences for professional development, teaching abroad, teacher buy-in, teacher changes, adult learning, effective professional development, and increasing cultural awareness.*

### **Multicultural Competencies**

Within the complex research on multicultural education theory, many researchers have identified core constraints that when applied within the classroom instructional practices enhance both cultural awareness of teachers and promote student growth (Banks, 1981, 1993, 1995, Bennett, 2001; Gay, 2013; Sleeter, 2012). These researchers share a common goal of providing all students with equity and inclusion in curriculum and instruction for culturally diverse students who might have been marginalized in the past (Bennett, 2001). Culturally responsive instructional practices refer to the teacher's



understanding of attitudes and beliefs, with knowledge and resources necessary for the implementation of complex learning along with expectations based on respect, lived experiences, and culturally developed knowledge that when implemented on a regular basis promote success for all students (Bennett, 2001).

Ladson-Billings (1995) explained that when teachers implement culturally relevant teaching within the classroom, they empower students, establish mutual respect that embraces cultural differences or traditions, and relate the classroom knowledge to lived experiences. Gay (2010) indicated the necessity for implementing cultural knowledge and prior experiences and that a frame of reference and learning styles of all students enhances the engagement helping to ensure that learning is relevant and effective.

### **Adult Learning**

Understanding how adult learning occurs and its application to this study are important as it mirrors many of the same stages of the process defined within this study and Bank's (1993) theory of multicultural education. The core principles of the adult learning theory are identified through a process that begins with newly and relevant acquired information, a shift in knowledge and understanding, and through reflection, the need to make appropriate changes (Chen, 2014). Chen (2014), Gilstrap (2013), Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2014), and Zepeda, Parylo, and Bengtson (2014) supported this, expressing that learning is optimized when the experience is recognized and used in the learning process, and outcomes are relevant and outcome oriented to address a current problem. The adult learning theory provides the conduit between the teaching abroad

experiences and the application of CAIP as it addresses the local problem of this study. The identified stages found in the adult learning theory include newly acquired knowledge through experiences (the teaching abroad experience) and the shift in knowledge and understanding (the reflection process) that result making appropriate changes (relevance of a local problem and the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices for student growth). Smith and Bahr (2014) found the need to provide teachers with professional development opportunities, either locally or abroad, to discover personal perspectives on cultural diversity based on exposure and life experiences that influence their current instructional practices. An important element of this process is the reflection of newly gained knowledge that provides insight through understanding. The reflection process is defined as an active procedure of critical self-analysis for processing knowledge and experiences to gain insight of one's beliefs, values, and biases that allow for personal growth through increased awareness (Cai & Sankaran, 2015; Smith & Bahr, 2014; Swazo & Celinska, 2014). Creating the alignment of professional development opportunities with the adult learning theory promotes both personal and professional growth of teachers.

Merriam (2001) addressed the importance of a shift from the gatekeeper of knowledge to facilitator and collaborator of knowledge, guiding the adult into an environment of learning and application. Through their personal reflective process, differing with each person to understand lived experiences, teachers contemplated their teaching abroad experiences to increase their understanding of cultural differences that increased their intercultural competence. Through this process, teacher participants could

transfer experiences to understanding and integrating those experiences into practical lessons. The process, as defined by Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007), is how adults process newly acquired information through experiences that are recognized as relevant and how engaged participants of the experience reflect and embrace a new understanding of raised insight, thereby addressing the local problem with a shift in knowledge for application.

Preskill and Brookfield (2009) defined adult learning as a process where adults are motivated to learn as their experiences and meet an interest or need, which prompts the learner to consider alternative perceptions on his or her beliefs. Challenging learners to examine previously held values and beliefs in a nonthreatening manner and through increased insight of reflection can apply newly formed ideas with identified needs. Each step is addressing the natural process of the experience, reflection, and understanding that results in the application as found within this study of teaching abroad experiences with increased multicultural awareness to the application of culturally appropriate instructional practices within the multicultural classroom.

### **Professional Development**

As the data present themselves to address the local problem identified within this study, the purpose and goal are to provide insight that support the understanding of culturally appropriate instructional practices, factors that contribute to the implementation, and how they can enhance instructional practices that promote student growth. As motivated lifelong learners, Zepeda et al. (2014) found that it was important to understand the adult learning theory when designing professional development (PD)

opportunities for educators. To increase the application of professional development objectives, the program needs to be relevant, and participants need to be held accountable to increase the likelihood of application.

Tonbuloglu, Aslan, and Aydin (2016) found that it was important that adult education incorporates the multicultural principals that ensure all students acquire behaviors of respect, empathy, and tolerance of others. To increase the application of appropriate instructional practices, multicultural principles must be presented in the professional development sessions. The study continued with teachers' concerns of understanding and appropriate application of new skills, finding that when the training includes the tools for application, it increased implementation of different teaching methods and techniques for application within the multicultural classroom. Tonbuloglu et al., along with Sherry and de Hann (2012) and Smith and Moreno-Lopez (2012), supported the need for professional development to increase understanding of cultural diversity and the implementation of CAIP within the classroom. Fostering an environment of empathy, respect, and a mind shift that embraces cultural diversity as an opportunity to expand knowledge where students grow as effective citizens in a global society with increased problem-solving skills for creative solutions results in positive social change.

Brant (2013) and Smith and Bahr (2014) found that to create culturally responsive teaching within schools and the implementation of Bank's (1993) theory of multicultural education, teachers can go beyond the sharing of experiences to reducing prejudices and discrimination when multicultural pedagogies are infused. Hoover and Erikson (2015)

found that in professional development, it is necessary to ensure implementation of culturally responsive strategies, and they should be reflective of the unique school demographics learners need and instructional needs. Smith and Bahr found increasing self-awareness and cultural background with experience influenced attitudes and beliefs, increasing cultural competence. The results of the study showed the need for in-depth training on specific skills and techniques and providing tools for implementation (Hoover & Erickson, 2015; Smith & Bahr, 2014).

Sharing experiences provided to be beneficial in this study, with the most useful activities being small group activities, large group discussions, and reflections with open-ended questions. Hoover and Erickson found that through interviews with open-ended questions, teachers shared in-depth insights into their understanding of cultural differences and culturally appropriate instructional practices. Smith and Bahr (2014) found that through the implementation of small group discussions, participants felt comfortable in the exploration of self-awareness as part of the PD experience. Both Hoover and Erickson's and Smith and Bahr's study results paralleled with the adult learning theory with the process of gaining knowledge and through reflection, experiencing personal growth through the insight of increased understanding.

Sherry and de Haan (2012) found that through reflection and peer collaboration, newly gained knowledge and understanding allowed for professional growth to occur. Although the overall focus of the research is on reflection through blogging, the process of reflection is identified as an effective means to uncover newly obtained knowledge as the result of an experience. The process of sharing positive experiences and classroom

frustrations through reflection and collaboration creates professional dialog and peer support. The researchers found that throughout the process, allowing individuals to share ideas and experiences increased the implementation of newly learned or observed practices in the classroom. Sherry and de Haan shared the importance of reflection and peer collaboration as a means for professional growth within the educational community of shared experiences.

Smith and Moreno-Lopez (2012) and Kennedy (2016) found that teaching abroad experiences yielded personal growth with a desire to implement culturally diverse strategies in the classroom. Sharing those experiences with faculty members through professional development opportunities allows participants to take ownership of the experiences and increases awareness to others. The study of Smith and Moreno-Lopez and Kennedy found three key elements for implementation that include service learning (the experience), reflection, and relevance to the situation. Each of the elements aligns with the adult learning theory and the conceptual framework of this study that supports new knowledge and understanding with an outcome-based focus. The studies found that understanding cultural and individual learning differences needs to be included as part of the professional development to address student needs to allow students to reach maximum potential (Kennedy, 2016; Smith & Moreno-Lopez, 2012). Brant (2013) aligned professional development with Bank's theory of multicultural education as does Smith and Moreno-Lopez, stating that through experiences come understanding and the need for the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices.

Kennedy (2016) in her research found that professional development was widely accepted to foster improvements in education. Explaining the importance intellectually engaging teachers with information presented that improved their skills. Kennedy supported the research of Sherry and de Haan (2012) both stressed the importance of reflection and peer collaboration. The research went on to find that when PD is designed to address local concerns, it improved teacher effectiveness of the students through peer collaboration, professional dialog, and allowed for increased implementation of strategies and insight (Camburn & Han, 2015; Kennedy, 2016). Together, the research supported that with the implementation of strategies in the professional development program construction with the adult learning theory, schools found an increased relevance of purpose and thus, implementation (Camburn & Han, 2015; Kennedy, 2016; Sherry & de Haan, 2012).

Cheng (2016) and Zepeda et al. (2014) found that to increase competence and personal growth, professional development needed to include new knowledge and practical skills that related to immediate need and implementation. Cheng stressed the importance of school support for the implementation of newly acquired information to continue. Peer interaction was found to be as important as feedback to improve quality and impact of teacher reflection on teaching, transferring training to application, aligning with the adult learning theory and quality professional development.

Camburn and Han (2015) suggested that without sufficient infrastructures, the implementation of teaching reforms fail, and stressed the need for administrative support and ongoing quality professional development. Camburn and Han suggested that teachers

were more likely to engage in reflective practices and implement instructional practices when professional development was focused on classroom teaching. Providing teachers with support and opportunities for additional training and practice increased integration of new practices. Additionally, the study found that through active reflection, teachers could develop solutions for classroom challenges and uncertainties with implementation (Camburn & Han, 2015; Garcés & Granada, 2016; Sherry & de Haan, 2012). The research study supported that of others that suggested that increasing implementation was directly associated with the relevance of knowledge, skill and classroom practices.

Garcés and Granada (2016) indicated the need for reflection and collaboration as essential components of PD to address localized problems within the classroom. PD provided sharing experiences reflecting and working together to continue learning to better prepare one's self for the ever-changing challenges in the classroom. With PD and the implementation of pedagogical practices to make changes to self, students, and schools. Collaboration and sharing, analyze and put into practice increase understanding and plan lessons with shared ideas growing in professionally (Camburn & Han, 2015; Garcés & Granada, 2016). Learning from each other, sharing and reflecting on growing both, personally and professionally.

Considine, Mihalick, Mogi-Hein, Penick-Parks, and Auken (2014) found that the focus of PD should be to increase understanding and improve student performance through culturally responsive teaching. With peer collaboration, as an effective way to share new information and oversee its implementation and classroom challenges, the researchers found that there was a greater likelihood for fostering change in practice,



when engaging teachers work with peers (Camburn & Han, 2015; Considine et al., 2014; Gutierrez, 2015; Sherry & de Haan, 2012). Three important strategies addressed in the study suggested that to ensure implementation of PD skills, PD needs to be ongoing over a period rather than one day, provide feedback with evaluations and accountability, provide support and peer collaboration that will change faculty conception of students and self. Providing educators with opportunities for the transformation of teaching. The study found that when implementing peer collaboration and professional dialog to discuss experiences and normalize challenges they encounter and supporting victories that link PD and teacher development (Considine et al., 2014).

Sobel and Taylor (2015) and Burns, Pierson, and Reddy (2014) found that through carefully designed professional development programs, teachers can examine beliefs and recommended practices with opportunities to assimilate cultural strategies. Professional development provides teachers the opportunity for critical examination of practices that promote student growth with opportunities for observations and assessing practices that meet all student needs (Hoover & Erikson, 2015; Gutierrez, 2015; Smith & Bahr, 2014; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). Taking ownership of appropriate instructional strategies that make a difference in the lives of culturally diverse students. Through diversity and collaboration, teachers share instructional decisions to enhance student learning.

Casciola (2014) found that when making changes in instructional practices, it required that teachers reflect on personal values and beliefs and through practice, implement lessons that promote sociocultural consciousness was possible. Developing a

commitment to change and affirming student's diversity through culturally responsive teaching. Becoming a catalyst for change occurs when teachers grow and become focused on student outcomes. Supporting the adult learning theory and the research of Chen (2014), Glistrap (2013), Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2014), and Zepeda (2014) and to a broader extent, Bank's (1993) five dimensions of multicultural education theory. The aim of intercultural education and training to foster the understanding of culture, professional development provides insight into the importance of designing and implementing dialectical lesson for equality and diversity (Ogay & Edelmann, 2016). The researchers also indicated the importance of teachers understanding of how to integrate and shape pedagogical activities, and through increased awareness, develop skills, with opportunities for the students to enhance acceptance of others (Camburn & Han, 2015; Garcés & Granada, 2016; Sherry & de Haan, 2012). Acknowledging the role of district leaders in supporting change, the understanding and practices factor in the implementation of quality professional development include empathy, leadership engagement, teacher motivation and accountability (desire), modeling, school culture and working conditions (support), focusing on educational goals and student growth (Burns, Pierson, & Reddy, 2014; Casciola, 2014).

Gutierrez (2015) supported previous studies suggesting professional development increases the quality of instruction that translated into enhanced student learning. PD with a focus on practical lessons provides a platform to develop a culture of critical self-analysis to improve instructional practices, with a focus on the learning process for

professional growth (Casciola, 2014; Cheng, 2016; Gutierrez, 2015; Ogay & Edelmann, 2016; Sobel & Taylor, 2015; Zepeda et al., 2014).

Batey and Lupi (2012) and DeVillar and Jiang (2012) found that by participating in teaching abroad experiences, teachers increased cross-culture knowledge and developed a global perspective that enhanced instructional strategies and student engagements. All supported that teaching broad experiences enhanced personal and professional growth and should be included as valuable professional development opportunities for educators (Batey & Lupi, 2012; DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Schuh, 2014). Schuh (2014) and Harrison (2014) supported that the richness of experiences and knowledge gained through teaching aboard has value. The experiences should be considered a positive investment in faculty development. Teaching abroad experiences empower teachers to develop global knowledge, and when shared with others, can change local school climate.

Patterson (2015) countered the research findings, indicating that teaching abroad experiences were not life changes but rather meet the participant's expectations. However, Patterson did express the importance of self-reflection as an essential piece to understanding the impact of the experience. Patterson found that the implications of international travel could have been explored through discussing the experiences of others. This research did support the idea of professional development that although may be held locally, did allow for the sharing of testimonies of those who had participated in teaching abroad experiences.

Santoro and Major (2012) found that when teachers were not adequately prepared for international trips the participant's experiences reflect a negative response and teachers were unable to process the experience without reflection, support and adequate preparation. That assertion was the impetus for this study and sharing the results through a professional development program to increase awareness and understanding with ongoing quality teacher training programs both here and abroad.

This program design will address the results of this study and when aligned with the five dimensions of Bank's (1993) theory of multicultural education, provide opportunities for teachers to increase awareness and improve teacher effectiveness within the classroom. That supported the local problem and purpose of this study. Empowering teachers, students, and staff with exposure to diversity with insight into new ideas and knowledge, that when shared with others, allows for creative solutions for positive social change.

### **Project Description**

The findings of this study were used to enhance the design and implementation of ongoing professional development opportunities for educators that address the local problem and promote insight into effective and appropriate teaching strategies, to support student growth within the classroom. Supported by the research of Considine et al. (2014) and Gutierrez (2015), this project has been designed as an engaging and applicable opportunity to gain knowledge and insight into the teaching abroad experience and provide opportunities through observation, collaboration, and support, that improve instructional practices (Appendix D).

The 36-hour program was designed as multiple sessions for implementation within the local region defined within this study. Each component addresses specific areas identified within this study to include:

- Session 1: Increasing cultural awareness through understanding (7 hours) - providing teachers with a PowerPoint of material that identifies specific cultural differences that could support for student learning, and when identified provides teachers with new insight for reflection. This section of the professional development also provides the opportunity to share study participants experiences that provide the personal reflection with the local problem within the classroom (Sherry & de Haan, 2012). Each section allows time for reflection, share comments and answer questions. The program also presents an opportunity for self-reflection and exchange through a series of small and large group activities. These activities provide educators with the opportunity to reflect on personal values and beliefs and how limited exposure to diversity impacts those views.
- Session 2: Observations (Appendix A)- although not a teaching abroad experience, through observations (1.5 hrs.) of offsite culturally diverse classrooms, teachers will have the opportunity to witness the effectiveness of culturally diverse instructional practices in other classrooms. These observations will be coordinated through the school principal or designated personnel with approved school sites. A reflection process (3.5 hrs.) is included with the observations and teachers are asked to evaluate

their experience, and identify specific skills and cultural differences identified during the observation and share with the principal.

- Session 3: Identifying and designing culturally appropriate instructional practices (Appendix A) – this session (7.5 hrs.) will provide teachers with a PowerPoint of material for defining and identifying culturally appropriate instructional practices both locally and abroad and the key elements of those practices. Supported by the research, the session will include both small and large group instruction, time for reflection and engaging activities, that is both outcomes focused with practical skills for immediate application (Cheng, 2016; Zepeda et al., 2014).
- Session 4: Peer Collaboration (Appendix A) – ongoing peer collaboration (15 hrs.) will be promoted by school administrators for the professional dialog to increase understanding and the design and application of culturally appropriate instructional practices. Provide teachers with a venue that allows for shared experiences and reflection necessary for the support of teacher buy-in and change of pedagogical application (Camburn & Han, 2015; Garcés & Granada, 2016). The teachers will meet on a regular basis as defined by the team/grade level teachers to provide collaboration on the design and implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices that enhance student learning. Sessions will allow for professional dialog, sharing ideas and creating and implementing the instructional practices.

- Session 5: Assessment and evaluation (Appendix A) – this section (3 hrs.) permits feedback to teachers and administrators to the effectiveness of the implementation and analysis of improved teacher practices. The assessments provide the documentation of application and analysis of the goals and objectives defined within the professional development program.

Each identified portion of the professional development design supports the findings and implementation of strategies addressed in the research question, local problem and the conceptual theory of this study.

### **Limitations, Barriers, and Possible Solutions**

A timeline for implementation (Appendix A) will be identified by the local school principals and followed as applicable to the academic calendar and needs of the schools. Recommendations of an appropriate timeline suggested are listed below. However, the exact implementation should be the responsibility of the school principal. Possible barriers include the availability of teachers and staff, academic calendar, the administrative support and school mission, and educational philosophy of the principal. To address these possible barriers, I present the possible solutions here.

Availability of teachers and staff- the academic calendar and individual contracts determine the availability of teachers and staff. Included is the start date of contracts, required number of professional development hours, and the goals and objectives of the school as defined by the school improvement plan, hiring of teachers for the school year. Suggested solutions include the individual needs of the school and principal.

Implementation of the program beginning in June allows for teachers to participate in travel abroad programs, reflect on the initial section of increasing cultural awareness through understanding. The follow-up sections can be implemented as part of the August professional development sessions before the beginning of the school year, with observations and collaboration continuing throughout the school year.

A possible barrier for this implementation plan includes teacher burn-out at the end of a school year, and limited teachers, if the staff for the following academic year has yet to be hired. Implementation of the program beginning in August provides the opportunity for all teachers and staff to participate, with follow-up sessions implemented throughout the school year. Possible barriers for this implementation plan limited the time for teacher reflection and possible travel abroad opportunities for teachers.

Administrative support, school mission, and educational philosophy of principal can impact the implementation and effectiveness of this program if not valued as an identified need or part of the philosophy of school leadership. Based on the local problem, the research supported this as an identified need and thus, the purpose of the study. Given that understanding, school principals have the autonomy within the districts to identify needs and implementation of professional development programs that address the needs of their schools. Provide teachers with the support that includes the implementation of the professional development sessions, the time for peer collaboration and school observations, with the additional support, provided through additional resources and observations with feedback for professional growth (Burns, Pierson, & Reddy, 2014; Casciola, 2014). A possible barrier to effective implementation of strategies



because of the professional development provided could be addressed through the assessment and observation process and program evaluations.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Providing the professional development program that includes PowerPoints, small group discussion questions, observation forms, sample instructional strategies and lessons, and testimonies of participants is the responsibility of myself. The timeline and implementation of the program are the responsibility of the school principal. In addition to the program, the results of this study and the PD program design will be presented to the interested local administration of participating study participants. All findings will be shared with participants and AI if requested.

### **Project Evaluation Plan**

The evaluation plan designed for this program supports the research of effective professional development opportunities for adults based on the local problem of this study and the individual needs of the participating schools (Casciola, 2014; Cheng, 2016; Gutierrez, 2015; Ogay & Edelman, 2016; Sobel & Taylor, 2015; Zepeda et al., 2014). The goals of this program were identified based on the findings of this study as it addressed the local problem. The goal is to increase teacher understanding through culturally rich experiences and the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices that promote an environment of respect and acceptance of all students. A project evaluation has been designed to provide the documentation of the implementation of the goal of this program. It includes both a summative evaluation that provides feedback on the goals and objectives of the professional development program and a formative

assessment with feedback to the teachers understanding and implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices.

The summative evaluation (Appendix A) is designed as a survey and is presented to participants. One survey will be presented after the first section of the professional development on increasing cultural awareness through understanding, the second will be a reflection submission after the off-site observation, and the third survey will be completed at the end of the school year to provide feedback to the peer collaboration experience. Each will provide the documentation necessary for meeting the goals and objectives of the program.

The formative evaluation (Appendix A) will be the teacher observations conducted within the classroom by the principal to address the design and application and effectiveness of the strategies within the classroom. This portion of the program is implemented at the discretion of the principal but is highly recommended as it provides the relevance, accountability, and outcome orientation of the local problem and goals of the professional development program.

The evaluations, both summative and formative, provide the documentation for stakeholders as they address the local problem identified within this study. To address the local problem, goals, and objectives have been identified and support the purpose of this study, providing the opportunity for growth as individuals, professionals. It also contributes to a change of mindset that allows for positive social change within the community of stakeholders that include teachers, staff, administration, families, and community members.

### **Project Implications**

The introduction of the local problem identified the struggles of culturally diverse students in the local classroom as they adapt to the cultural differences and structural changes within their educational experiences in the classroom. Addressing the local problem of the limited experiences of teachers outside of their own culture can add to the frustration and limited growth of students. By providing teachers with rich culturally diverse experiences increase that understanding as it relates to one's beliefs and values brought into the classroom and shared through instructional practices. Recognizing that not all teachers can participate in teaching abroad experiences, this program was designed to assist in that understanding and the design and implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices that through the five dimensions identified in Bank's (1993) theory of education. This project provides new information and insight that enhances understanding of intercultural competence and embracing a mindset of change of respect and acceptance leading to the empowerment of students and the school culture, the local community, and positive social change.

The local problem was identified in this study was the need for the local schools initiate teacher training that addresses diversity within the classroom with effective instructional practices (Campbell & Binder, 2014), limited exposure to diverse cultures, and the increasing culturally diverse student population (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013). I found that through increased awareness and understanding, teachers create a culturally responsive classroom and the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices that align with Bank's (1993) theory of multicultural education,

establishing an environment of diverse learning that promotes acceptance through respect and the sharing of ideas, preparing students for a global society and positive social change.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Project Strengths and Limitations**

If conducting this study over, I would include teachers from around the country, not just in the western portion of the southeastern state as defined by this study. That could expand the teaching abroad program throughout the country as well as increase opportunities for the teachers within the local community. A limitation of this study is the limited number of participants and their culturally diverse backgrounds and experiences teaching. By extending the study to all teachers who had traveled abroad and taught with AI and expanding the years since travel from 5 to 8, the study might have had a different outcome. If the study had not been limited to teaching locally, I could have included four additional teachers. If the study had expanded from 5 years to 8 years, the diversity of the study could have been broadened to include more ethnically diverse teachers. The current participants within the study accurately represent the underrepresented diversity among local teachers within the metro area of this particular study.

The limitations found in the study prevented me from including teachers who had participated in the teaching abroad program with increased teaching experience. Had the study been expanded to 8 years, I could have extended an invitation to participate to include one teacher who had 3 years teaching experience, one teacher with 5 years teaching experience, two teachers with 10 or more years' experience, and one teacher with 5 or more years teaching experience. I believe that with an increased diversity within the study based on the results of those in this study that the teaching abroad experiences in Honduras were extremely beneficial. Increasing cultural awareness

provided teachers with the resources through the examples and experiences in the abroad program to increase cultural awareness and implement culturally appropriate instructional practices within the constructs of Bank's (1993) multicultural education theory.

Supporting the research within the literature review of this study to the relevant effect of teaching abroad program, and in this case, typically operates within Honduras or the Dominican Republic.

The strengths of the study would be the depth of the volunteer's experiences that were shared in the interviews that provided the information for understanding of the experiences. Additional strengths would include the feedback provided and then witnessed within the classroom. Being able to observe in the classroom provided the documentation to support the information obtained in the interviews allowing the opportunity to observe the implementation of culturally appropriate instruction practices and the application within the classroom.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

Future studies could include additional information obtained by asking teachers upon returning from their AI teaching abroad experience to write a reflection of their experiences in vivid detail. After returning to the United States, these experiences can be adapted and implemented into culturally effective instructional practices within the local multicultural classroom (Lupi & Turner, 2013; Lupi et al., 2012; Patterson, 2014).

Through those experiences, AI can address the identified gap in practice, providing teachers with culturally appropriate instructional tools that enhance student growth and positive social change.

Acknowledging that not all teachers have the desire or ability to teach abroad, the PD program was designed as an alternative to the actual experience. However, a limitation of the research was the accessibility and affordability of participating in teaching abroad programs. Many of the teaching abroad programs mentioned in this study help in registering participating in overseas teaching experiences. With programs like AI, the cost is much more affordable than educators perceive. Program costs include airfare, housing, meals, and transportation for 28 days, costing about the same as a conference with hotel, meals, and transportation for a 4-day event. The experiences and knowledge gained far exceed any additional expenses incurred with the trip.

Providing teachers with rich culturally diverse experiences like those found in teaching abroad experiences is the preferred option. However, without an overseas experience, this PD program can provide an alternative to the actual abroad experience that addresses the local problem and provides quality experiences for teachers.

### **Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change**

The process of conducting this study, collecting research data and studies to support the purpose and proposal, gaining approval, and conducting the actual research has been a learning experience that cannot be duplicated. The process provided an opportunity for self-reflection and inner strength. Allowing for the analysis to gain its own identity and not that of my expectations was a newly acquired skill. The outcome was similar to my expectation, but the rising themes and experiences of the participants were extremely enlightening and provided evidence that when shared with AI can empower the organization to make the necessary changes within the program to present

itself as a quality program for educators wanting to experience teaching in another country.

The findings of this study will provide the documentation and data for AI as if it had conducted a program evaluation and presents the qualifying guidelines for an effective and meaningful program for teachers. As an adjunct professor, the experience with AI and this research project provide valuable insight into the experiences and effectiveness of resources needed to improve teacher engagement and relevance of activities that are outcome oriented. Many of the responses found in this study will provide the data for implementing effective teaching within the university classroom.

### **Reflection on Importance of the Work**

As the world continues to shrink with the advances in technology, transportation, and communication innovations, it is important that students can think creatively and with an open mind. The data obtained from the participants of the teaching abroad experience support an increased understanding of multicultural awareness. The examples provided within the construct of content integration demonstrate a catalyst of change within the classroom as teachers strive to provide opportunities throughout the curriculum that increase student exposure to diverse cultures.

The findings of this study provide administrators with the data necessary to provide effective and engaging professional development for their teachers and staff, either through an actual teaching abroad experience for some or the PD program designed to increase the understanding of the students served in the classroom. At a minimum, the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices and peer collaboration



provides the foundational structure for creating a learning community of respect and acceptance of all students. It is necessary to prepare not only teachers with new knowledge that leads to reflection and insight but also for the students, staff, and local community, leading to positive social change.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

Recommendations received from the participant study to improve the teaching abroad program with AI include the following:

1. Provide additional opportunities for teachers to observe Honduran teachers in the classroom for a better understanding of the cultural of appropriate teaching strategies implemented.
2. Increase classroom time for teaching to include free time to engage and play with the children.
3. Reduce the travel time on the bus – importance of cultural experiences outside of the classroom and the local village is important, but time spent traveling and the multiple stops are excessive.
4. Continue with cultural side trips that provide opportunities to increase understanding of cultural differences to include a trip into town to the village living with a local family member and extend days visiting with local families of fellow local teachers.
5. Provide opportunities to observe a public or another school, other than a private school, within the country of Honduras.

6. Extend the length of the trip to 6 weeks. Although that is difficult given family situation United States jobs it would certainly be beneficial.
7. Continue to conduct the cultural difference professional development session while in Honduras.
8. For a continued reflection process once returning to the United States, ease the readjustment period and provide additional support.
9. Contact local community schools and provide local professional development that addresses cultural awareness and implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices as experienced while in Honduras.
10. Include the Dominican Republic in the teaching abroad program opportunities with AI.
11. Expand the awareness of the teaching abroad program with AI to other teaching resources community universities through marketing and public relations.

Through each of these limitations, a unique experience provided all eight teachers a chance to increase their cultural awareness, thereby increasing their understanding compassion for children of diversity in their classroom. It also provided them with an understanding of what the students and families might be going through, not only changing environments for those who recently moved the United States, but for an understanding of what may be going on in their home life.

One finding indicated that all participants agreed to an increased cultural awareness understanding, an appreciation for the resources available to education. Further studies would include the professional development opportunities for teachers who have taught abroad, sharing that knowledge with their peers at their local school. Additional research on teacher support from administration and implementing culturally effective instructional practices as it impacts student performance. The findings of the study indicated that teaching abroad experiences, particularly within AI, increased the understanding of cultural awareness and provided an opportunity to observe culturally appropriate instructional practices with the opportunity for implementation once returning to the United States.

### **Conclusion**

The results of the observations and interviews suggest that a teaching abroad experience like AI is beneficial in raising cultural awareness among teachers in the identified local region of this study. It also supports that the experience provided teachers with the exposure to observe and then implement culturally appropriate instructional practices within their local classroom. Based on those experiences, I found that it was beneficial for them as individuals and as teachers; it enhanced their understanding of the student from a culturally diverse background in their classroom. The findings also indicated that as a result of the experience, teachers have a reduced level of stress when meeting the local standard guidelines while increasing those in the classroom with diverse students to teach to mastery. They must find creative ways in which to do that while still meeting the guidelines of their school and district. It provides teachers with the

opportunity to creatively think of alternative strategies in the classroom that make them less dependent on the teacher manual and technology.

One district has asked that I share the results with them. I found it fascinating that they would share their experiences to increase student peer cultural awareness, which promotes problem-solving and increasing understanding to support global awareness. All eight teachers who participated in the research study reported that it was an effective program and would recommend other teachers to travel with AI and participate in the teaching abroad program as a professional development opportunity to increase cultural awareness understanding and implement culturally effective instructional practices.

The results of this study indicated that with increased exposure to cultural differences, whether it be teaching abroad or sharing one's experience with others, an increased understanding of cultural differences based on Bank's (1993) theory of multicultural education is beneficial to student learning. The culturally diverse instructional strategies implemented into the daily classroom routines and lessons both observed in the classroom and shared in the interviews may not be unique to teachers. However, the teaching abroad experience provides teachers with the opportunity to witness the profound influence the instructional strategies have on student engagement and growth. The response from Robin when asked about the experience was, "I never experienced anything like that. Nothing in the classroom can provide this type of an experience to understand the kids in our classroom better. I had an amazing experience."

Even though a teaching abroad experience may not be a viable option for every teacher, the experience of traveling abroad encompassing the language, food, smells, and

landscape is not able to be duplicated when living in the United States. Providing teachers with this valuable experience creates the backdrop for increasing understanding, provides insight into cultural differences, and allows participants to grow as individuals.

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### Appendix A: Professional Development Program

After careful analysis of this research study, I determined the need to design a professional development program to increase the cultural awareness and intercultural competence of teachers that through understanding provided the tools for implementation of culturally appropriate instructional strategies. The following documents include the multi-session program and supporting documents.

The attachments include:

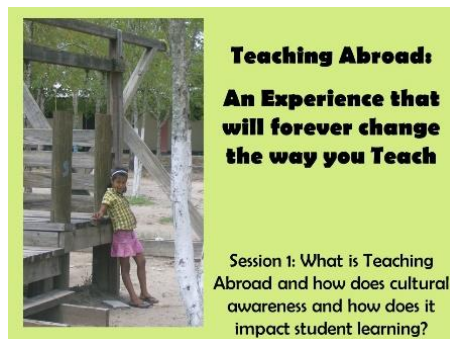
- Session 1: Increasing cultural awareness through understanding, a 7-hour session that includes a PowerPoint presentation that contains an overview of the teaching abroad experience with components to enhance cultural awareness and intercultural competence of local teachers, large and small group interactive sessions, and suggested strategies for implementation in the classroom;
- Session2: Identifying and designing culturally appropriate instructional practices, a 7.5-hour session that includes a PowerPoint for defining and identifying culturally appropriate instructional practices both locally and abroad with key elements for design and implementation. Including both small and large group activities, reflection, and lesson plans for implementation;
- Supplement 1.docx: instructional plan for PD program;



- Supplement 2.docx: small group reflection questions;
- Supplement 3.docx: classroom scenario for small group activity
- Supplement 4.docx: Sample observation form of culturally diverse instructional practices (offsite);
- Supplement 5.docx: Sample formative observation form (principal form);
- Supplement 6.docx: Program summative evaluation
- Supplement 7.docx: Sample lesson plan format

### Power point Sessions

#### Slide 1



This presentation is based on the local concern identified in the study and the findings are presented in this five session professional development series. Today, we will focus on the first session and hear about a few of the teaching abroad experiences of those participants who traveled to Honduras to teach in the schools and work with Apufram International. The results of the study show the need for in-depth training on specific skills, techniques and providing tools for implementation (Hoover & Erikson, 2015; Smith & Bahr, 2014). Sharing

experiences provided to be beneficial in this study, with the most useful activities including small group activities, large group discussions, and reflections with open-ended questions. The results of Hoover and Erickson (2015) found that through interviews with open-ended questions, teachers shared in-depth insight into their understanding of cultural differences and culturally appropriate instructional practices. Smith and Bahr (2014) found that through the implementation of small group discussions, participants felt comfortable in the exploration of self-awareness as part of the PD experience.

## Slide 2

**Agenda**

- Overview
- Increasing Cultural Awareness Through Understanding
- Break
- Continuing PowerPoint
- Q & A session
- Small Group Activity (working lunch)
- Large Group Activity – sharing results
- Questions, Reflection, and Evaluation

Agenda for today's professional development. The power point is divided into a couple of different sections. The first section is an overview of the AI teaching abroad trip and the experiences of its participants. Although not everyone is able to participate in a month long teaching abroad experience, part of this study was to identify how a teaching abroad experience, similar to AI,

could increase cultural awareness through understanding and the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices. The findings show that the TAE was instrumental in the increased understanding and implementation. Additionally, cultural differences are identified and presented here. Notice the cultural differences expand to include, societal and educational differences. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Note to presenter – this power point will take approximately 45 minutes, with a 15-minute break. Followed by the second half of this power point that will last about 45 minutes. Be sure to spend about 10 minutes on the next slide to ensure understanding of the day's events and location of the restrooms.

## Slide 3

## Overview

Quick overview:

Timeline – 9:00 – 4:00

Lunch – working lunch with meals provided

Restrooms – located out the door to the left and immediately on the right

Drinks are available throughout the day – please feel free to get up and stretch your legs, refill your coffee, or use the restroom

Please silence your cell phones

Feel free to ask questions throughout the presentation

Timeline – 9:00 – 4:00

Lunch – working lunch with meals provided.

9:00 – 9:15 –

Introductions

9:15-10:00 - The first PowerPoint is about the teaching abroad experience and cultural differences as it increases awareness. Providing testimonies of participants and examples of cultural differences. Both in Honduras and those within the local classroom. Presenter shares clips of teaching abroad experiences and examples of cultural differences with culturally appropriate instructional practices (found in the research data).

\*Presenters note – the first portion of the PowerPoint provides an overview of the teaching abroad experience with AI. Includes some examples from the research findings. Spend between 30 seconds and one minute on each slide, the amount of time will vary depending on the material on each slide's note.

10:00- 10:30 - Reflection/ Questions – Take this opportunity to ask questions about the PowerPoint, the teaching abroad experience or

cultural difference within the classroom. This section should take about 30 minutes or less. The amount of time will vary depending on the questions asked.

10:30-10:45 – Break

10:45-11:30 - Large Group PowerPoint Define Cultural awareness and its impact on student learning, provide research data to address ways to increase students' academic performance through the study

“Teaching Abroad and Implementing Culturally Appropriate Instructional Strategies.” This session should take about 45 minutes, with the facilitator spending approximately 2-3 minutes. Answering questions as they arise.

11:30-12:00 - Reflection/ Questions opportunity to ask questions about the PowerPoint, or cultural difference within the classroom.

12:00 – 2:00 - Small group activity / Lunch Provide handouts of the power point session 1, part 2 with cultural awareness information, a classroom scenario of a culturally diverse classroom, identify factors within the scenario that might

impact student learning based on the information presented. Additionally, identify factors within your own classroom that might impact student learning. Teachers will work in small groups to complete the activity described at the end of the power point (2 hours).

Lunch - Within the small group activity, teachers will participate in a working lunch with meals provided from a local restaurant.

2:00 – 2:15 – Break - Prior to returning as a large group, participants will be encouraged to take a quick restroom break (15 minutes).

2:15 – 3:45 - Large Group Activity  
Share findings and experiences that could have impacted student learning. Short question session as needed. Each group will present their findings (10-15 minutes each)

3:45-4:00 - Exit Surveys. Teachers will be asked to complete a short survey on the day's presentation. Once complete, teachers place evaluation survey in the manila envelope on the back table and sign out for the session to receive credit (about 15

minutes).

Restrooms – located out the door to the left and immediately on the right

Drinks are available throughout the day – please feel free to get up and stretch your legs, refill your coffee, or use the restroom

Please silence your cell phones

Feel free to ask questions throughout the presentation

Lunch – working lunch with meals provided

Restrooms – located out the door to the left and immediately on the right

- Drinks are available throughout the day – please feel free to get up and stretch your legs, refill your coffee, or use the restroom
- Please silence your cell phones
- Feel free to ask questions throughout the presentation

Presenter's note: Spend about 10 minutes on this slide to ensure the participants understand the overview of the day and the location of restrooms.

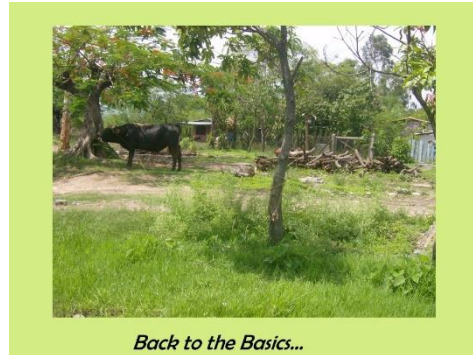
## Slide 4



High School with AI. The participants are welcomed warmly and are eager to begin their journey after much preparation and planning. As part of the preparations, participants meet regularly to understand the expectations of the trip and plan lessons for implementation upon arrival. Lupi and Turner (2013), along with Gaia (2015), found that teaching abroad experiences provided teachers with exposure to a variety of culturally appropriate instructional practices that upon reflection add value and can change one's personal belief about diversity in the classroom and their current pedagogy and practices. It also provided teachers with an intercultural perspective lens through which to view instructional practices for implementation in the classroom.



## Slide 5



With increasing culturally diverse classrooms and the concerns expressed by new teachers regarding being prepared to teach in a multicultural classroom, culturally rich experiences such as teaching abroad provide a viable solution to help teachers develop their competence in multicultural awareness and implement culturally engaging instructional strategies (R. Anderson, personal communication, 2015; Souza, 2013, Tennessee Department of Education, 2013). Within the local school system, the expectation is that all students receive a quality education with high expectations (Campbell & Binder, 2014). In supporting that objective, the research suggested that teaching abroad experiences could provide teachers with a deeper understanding of multicultural complexities and instructional practices that, when implemented, might improve student learning in the classroom (Alsubaie, 2015; Batey & Lupi, 2012; Kumar & Hamer, 2012; Sun, 2013). Lupi and Turner (2013), along with Gaia (2015), found that teaching abroad experiences

provided teachers with exposure to a variety of culturally appropriate instructional practices that upon reflection add value and can change one's personal belief about diversity in the classroom and their current pedagogy and practices. It also provided teachers with an intercultural perspective lens through which to view instructional practices for implementation in the classroom.

## Slide 6



Participants of this teaching abroad program travel to Honduras and work with AI, the trip is 28 days, with multiple teaching days at a variety of the AI schools, mini cultural opportunities are available to increase cultural awareness. Sharing some photos and testimonies from participants who participated in the TAE with AI. Permission has been obtained to share all photos and information, testimonies seen in this presentation. For the last 10 years, local teachers have traveled to Honduras and the Dominican Republic to teach in the


AI schools, volunteering their time to enhance their cultural awareness and explore ways to implement culturally appropriate instructional practices. Research suggests that through quality experiences like AI, teachers embrace diversity through a multicultural appreciation of shared ideas and respect for pedagogical application (Alsubaie, 2015).

Additionally, teachers have several opportunities to observe Honduran teachers in several different schools (both AI and public schools) that include elementary and high school. Teacher participants live in the guesthouse and are provided three meals a day, housing, and transportation to all cultural outings and events. Smith and Bahr (2014), found in their research the need to provide teachers with professional development opportunities, either locally or abroad, to discover personal perspectives on cultural diversity based on exposure and life experiences that influence their current instructional practices.

## Slide 7

**Facts about Honduras:**

- Honduras is the second poorest country in this hemisphere.
- The average Honduran earns about \$3.00 a day to provide for his family.
- Beans and rice are a common meal.
- Typically meat is only served once a week.
- Poverty impacts the way you think. It limits your future and prevents a child from dreaming.
- Most Hondurans only receive an education through the 3rd grade.
- There are no tuition fees to attend college in Honduras.



1. Honduras is the second poorest country in this hemisphere. It is very common for houses in Honduras to have dirt floors, no or limited electricity and no indoor plumbing.
2. The average Honduran earns about \$3.00 a day to provide for his family.
3. Beans and rice are a common meal.
4. Typically, meat is only served once a week.
5. Poverty impacts the way you think. It limits your future and prevents a child from dreaming.
6. Most Hondurans only receive an education through the 3rd grade.

7. There are no tuition fees to attend college in Honduras.
8. Not all Hondurans live in poverty, but the majority do. (Apufram International, 2015)

## Slide 8

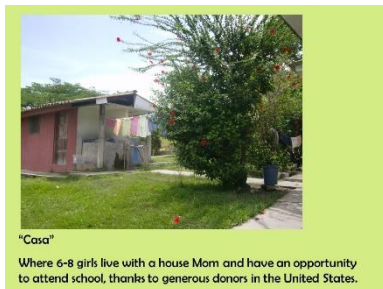


APUFRAM was established in 1973 by Father Emil Cook and continues today as the most respected non-profit organization in the country of Honduras.

APUFRAM operates two elementary schools, three high schools, five university houses, six boarding facilities, and the abandoned mothers project.

APUFRAM has over 40,000 graduates living and working throughout the country. (Apufram International, 2015)

## Slide 9



## "Casa"

Where 6-8 girls or boys live with a house Mom/Dad and have an opportunity to attend school, thanks to generous donors in the United States (Apuftram International, 2015).

## Slide 10



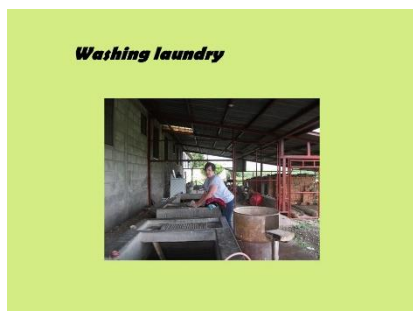
Students living at the mission are required to attend school, study, and complete daily chores. Children and volunteers attend a daily prayer service. Building on the motto of APUFRAM International of "God, Work, Study," teaching children within a family setting with love, respect, and high expectations (Apuftram International, 2015).

## Slide 11



Participants live at the guesthouse. Each room is either a single or a double (depending on availability) with a shared bathroom (two rooms share one bathroom). In addition to the bedrooms, kitchen, dining hall, the building also has a library, chapel, office, and lounge area (Apufam International, 2015). However, a favorite is spending time in the hammocks.

## Slide 12



Embracing the culture is an important aspect of the trip. So, that means we share in Honduran responsibilities of laundry, washing dishes, and tacking out the trash. Meals are provided and reflective of a traditional Honduran meal cooked by U.S. standards. Volunteers only drink bottled water. Remember you are in a third world country, so there is limited electricity, no air conditioning and no hot water for showers. However, as several of the participants shared in the study, I didn't miss the air conditioning or hot water. The showers were very refreshing!

## Slide 13

The children and teachers opened their school, welcomed us with loving hearts, shared with us their culture.



Apufam International provides teachers with an opportunity to travel abroad and teach English within the multiple schools operated by their organization. As with most schools around the world, the schools have received accreditation and lesson plans are required as documentation of the curriculum. Teachers design lesson plans based on guidelines received from AI.

## Slide 14

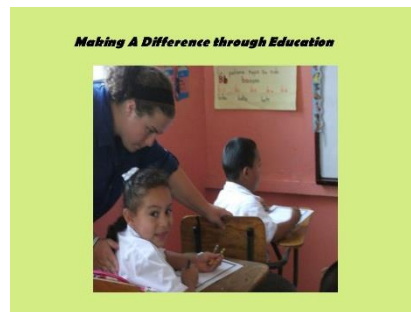


Allowing us to increase our cultural awareness, identify personal biases, increase understanding through lived experiences.

Sharing the simplicity of their life allows participants to reflect and engage in the experience. Slowing down is difficult at first, but participants really enjoy the experience. Six out of the eight interviewees shared the importance of sharing lived experiences (e.g., living without electricity, eating local food – beans and rice multiple times a day, limited availability of schools, parents limited education) to increase understanding of cultural differences and acceptance.



## Slide 15



With an education, children of Honduras have options. As with the United States, an education can open doors and provide young adults with options for their future. They may not choose to receive a four-year degree. But with an education, they have that option. Both shared that as part of the observation of classrooms with AI and peer collaboration with AI teachers, the understanding of different perspectives based on the life experiences of the students, the lessons became applicable and relevant.

## Slide 16



In Honduras, children appreciate and value education. Thus, there are very few behavior problems or complaining about assignments. The children (and teachers) are eager to learn. Provide experiences from the study. Every teacher shared what they believed to be the most important aspects of their experience and applying the newly acquired knowledge with implication within the classroom (Mason, 2017). Those strategies identified within this study focus on culturally appropriate

instructional strategies that creating equal opportunities in student learning (Todor, 2015).

Slide 17



The experience allows teachers to observe local teachers in the classroom and share their experiences. Additional peer collaboration allows participants to design engaging and appropriate lessons (Considine et al., 2014). The result of this study supports the importance of teaching abroad experiences, like AI, as an appropriate and effective means to enhance cultural awareness and to observe and implement culturally appropriate instructional practices within the local classroom. Throughout the teaching abroad experience, teachers have the opportunity to visit schools throughout the country and observe Honduran teachers of all grade levels and in both public and private schools.

## Slide 18



Reflection is an important part of the teaching abroad experience, allowing volunteers to process newly obtained knowledge into increased understanding of cultural differences (Mason, 2017).

As part of the teaching abroad experience, it is important that individuals take time to reflect on their experiences. Participants are encouraged to keep a daily journal of their experiences. It allows for participants to record their daily routine and events, reflect on the experience, and understand what they are experiencing. Research shows the advantages to participating in critical reflection of the experience to provide insight and increased understanding Garcés and Granada (2016). The results of this study show that teachers may have been introduced to a variety of teaching strategies, but as a result of the teaching abroad experience now comprehend the value of implementing culturally appropriate instructional strategies into their daily lessons.

## Slide 19



Everything operates on a different schedule in Honduras. We call it Honduran time! Embrace the difference and enjoy the experience. Learn to be flexible. Provide examples from the study. Honduran education focuses on mastery of a skill and not on completing the lesson in a timely manner. Adaptable teaching that allows teachers to adapt lessons based on student comprehension. Presenter's note: in all three pictures, notice the examples of culturally diverse instructional practices that have been implemented into the daily curriculum.

- Twister – an interactive activity that reinforces colors, body parts, and right and left.
- Clothing – in this activity, students practiced their vocabulary words for clothing (Find the pants and hat that you might wear to work...). Dressing in the articles as directed by the flashcards and/or explained by the students (I'm wearing...).
- One-on-one assistance to provide

understanding for comprehension. Students were transcribing vocabulary words in both Spanish and English with a definition in their personal dictionaries.

## Slide 20

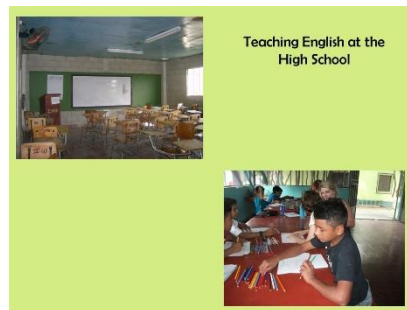


Remember that Honduras does not have social promotion. Many of the high school students may be older than you expect, but their life experiences provide richness to the lessons. Allowing students to share experiences could be the first step in changing attitudes and behaviors that result in better understanding and acceptance of cultural differences with increased student academic growth, leading to positive social change (Bennett, 2011; Cushner, 2012; Souza, 2013; Tuleja, 2014).

Hondurans love to learn about the volunteers and their lives in the United States. Exhibiting mutual respect through conversation promotes relationships and

increases understanding of the students in the multicultural classroom. Students without families, educational opportunities, and resources have limited the opportunities for breaking out of poverty.

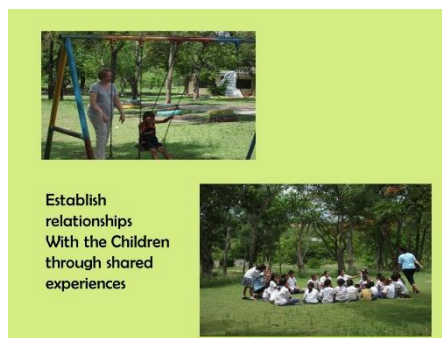
## Slide 21



The children want to spend time with you and share their country and their culture. Yolanda stated, “Our society is in such a hurry to do things, we don’t have time for people. We forget the importance of valuing relationships,” explains one participant. Because of this trip, “I’m implementing changes in my classroom and my personal life to make time for the people in my life and building those relationships.” Ellen shared that because of her experiences with AI, she has come to understand the importance of building relationships with the students. That by building relationships and knowing your students, she is better able to relate to their situation and has a new level of empathy for

her students based on her struggles with language, culture, transportation, etc. while traveling abroad, providing new insight into her personal and professional life.

## Slide 22



Be a kid again and through your activities, build relationships! It will become your favorite part of the day. Yolanda stated, “Our society is in such a hurry to do things, we don’t have time for people. We forget the importance of valuing relationships.” Because of this trip, “I’m implementing changes in my classroom and my personal life to make time for the people in my life and building those relationships.” The teachers in the United States typically eat lunch with their students, but not because it is something we elected to do, in Honduras, the teachers choose to eat with the students spending time with them to build relationships and value them as individuals. She went on to explain that by knowing our student’s teacher can

better meet their individual needs. Ellen shared that her experiences with AI, allowed her to better understand the importance of building relationships with the students. That by building relationships and knowing your students, she is better able to relate to their situation and has a new level of empathy for her students based on her struggles with language, culture, transportation, etc. while traveling abroad, providing new insight into her personal and professional life.

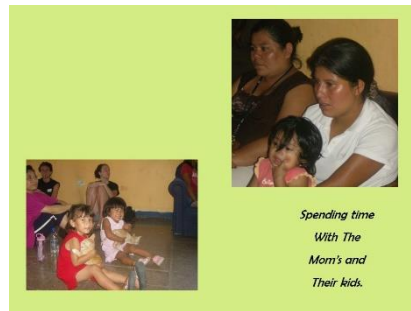
### Slide 23



Spending time with the children is always a favorite with the volunteers. Knowing your students is so important! Another participant shared that she now understands the value of sharing her experiences abroad in her classroom as an effective way to increase student cultural awareness and understanding other perspectives. Allowing one to increase cultural awareness through understanding of shared experiences (Mason, 2017).



## Slide 24



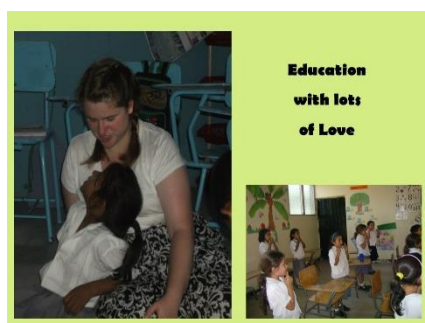
The dormitories provide the students with a family environment where they are loved and feel part of a family. Some of their favorite afternoon activities include soccer, bingo, bubbles and of course “duck, duck, goose.” One participant shares her experience and the importance of knowing her students. As a result of the teaching abroad experience, she shared that the teachers in the United States typically eat lunch with their students, but not because it is something we elected to do, in Honduras, the teachers choose to eat with the students spending time with them to build relationships and value them as individuals. Going on to explain that by knowing our student’s teacher can better meet their individual needs.

## Slide 25



Although corporal punishment is allowed in the schools, establishing relationships and providing positive role models for the students is even more important. Spending time with the students both inside and outside of the classroom allowed me to gain a new perspective to the importance of implementing lived experiences of my students into the curriculum, share one participant. She went on to explain that because of the teaching abroad experience, a major focus of the class this year was for students to understand different perspectives.

## Slide 26



As participants in the TAE, teachers, engage in three PD sessions on cultural awareness, culturally appropriate instructional practices and designing lessons that include those practices. Teachers also participate in weekly reflections of their lessons, instruction, and application. Those small group sessions also provide a venue for asking questions, sharing concerns or experiences. Bottom right photo includes two Honduran teachers who assisted

with translation and suggested additional instructional strategies (peer reviewed instruction). An excellent opportunity for peer collaboration and sharing cultural differences.

### Slide 27



Embracing the opportunity to grow as professionals, the participants share experiences with local teachers and increase their understanding of diverse cultures. While in Honduras, participants could observe in three different AI schools and one public school. Sherry and de Haan (2012) shared the importance of reflection and peer collaboration as a means for professional growth within the educational community of shared experiences. Participants found that it was important to share knowledge and experiences through observations and peer collaboration. Stating that, since the United States is a melting pot of cultures, it is important to

understand the educational experiences, customs, and traditions of our students to better meet their educational needs.

### Slide 28



Reflect and process the experience! Participants shared the importance of reflecting on their experiences while abroad and ways to implement new knowledge of culturally diverse instructional strategies and the value that those strategies contribute to student learning.

### Slide 29



Explore the community an embrace the experience. These photos show the local trip to the town square, market, and Cathedral and a local lunch. One thing that really surprised me was the market, shared one participant. The meat was just hang on a hook out in the open, I'm sure it was ok, but it was just different then when I go to Kroger's to select my hamburger or pork chops. One opportunity is to visit local sights in the city and one cultural difference

was that when we visited the local church, we all needed to wear a skirt or dress. That's different then my church in the United States, where I can wear jeans and a t shirt, shared one participant.

### Slide 30



Soaking in the local community. It is important to be open minded with all experiences, allowing yourself to better understand where your students come from and embrace their life experiences when possible into the curriculum to enhance the perspectives of others. Traveling through the country provides the participants with the opportunity to gain insight of the poverty and beauty of Honduras. Building on the other constructs of Banks' multicultural theory (1993), all eight teachers have implemented a new attitude of patience and understanding with their US students. Based on the experience, reflection of their trip, and newly gained insight, the participants shared that an

important element of the trip was traveling to various locations to witness a level of poverty that is not present in the United States. One participant shared that because of the trip, she now understands true poverty and an appreciation for a free public education system we have in the United States. Another explained that the students in Honduras are eager and willing to learn, understanding that their education will change their future.

### Slide 31



Exploring the country provides an overall experience of the culture and the people of Honduras. Again, enhancing the cultural differences to increase awareness. Soccer is the national sport and taken very seriously in Honduras, in fact, their civil war began as the result of a soccer game. Outings such as a weekend trip into town, shopping at the market, or visiting a local park, provides opportunities for increasing cultural awareness and understanding through

lived experiences. When educators understanding their students lived experiences, they are better able to implement culturally appropriate instructional practices within the classroom to promote student growth (Mason, 2017). Exploring the Mayan Ruins. Teaching about the early Americans is one thing, climbing on the ruins of those very individuals brings it to life!

## Slide 32



Traveling through the country provides the participants with the opportunity to gain insight of the poverty and beauty of Honduras. Building on the other constructs of Banks' multicultural theory, all eight teachers have implemented a new attitude of patience and understanding with their US students. Based on the experience, reflection of their trip, and newly gained insight, the participants shared that an important element of the trip was traveling to various locations to witness a level of poverty that is not present in the United States. One

participant shared that because of the trip, she now understands true poverty and an appreciation for a free public education system we have in the United States. Another explained that the students in Honduras are eager and willing to learn, understanding that their education will change their future.

Two photos show poverty seen throughout the country. The third photo is one of the boarding facilities supported by Apufram International.

### Slide 33

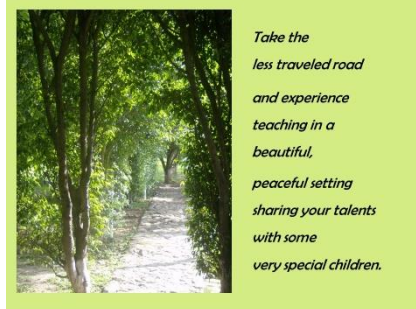


Many of the teachers became cognizant of the need to implement individual students lived experiences within the curriculum for increased understanding of other perspectives. Several teachers mentioned the importance of knowing your students and their lived experiences that include educational opportunities. For many children living outside of the United States, a quality education is not always a viable option. Several teachers shared how their teaching abroad



experience with AI, allowed them to increase their understanding of the cultural differences in their own students (in the US).

Slide 34



The experience is life changing as noted by several of the recent participants to AI. Additionally, after returning to the United States, several participants shared that they had a new level of empathy for their students. Reflecting on the experience, now understand the frustration their students experience with language barriers, food differences, and transportation. The lived experiences that they now implement into the instruction helps to increase student awareness and the opportunity for embracing other's perspectives.

## Slide 35

We can never give them as much as we received.  
But we can share our experiences with our students and our peers.



Now, we will answer any questions about the teaching abroad experience, or about any of the pictures you saw in the PowerPoint. We will take a short 15-minute break and come back together for session 2 on understanding cultural differences.

## Slide 36

**Reflection / Questions**

Take a few minutes to reflect on this power point and ask questions about anything you saw or heard.

## Slide 37

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## Slide 39

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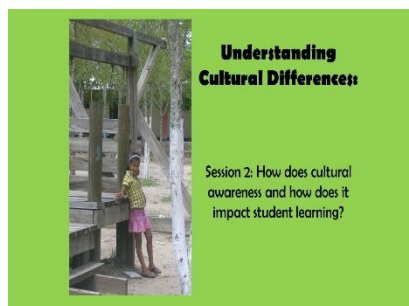
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## Slide 40

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Session 2  
Slide 1



This presentation is based on the local concern identified in the study and the findings are presented in this five session professional development series. Today, we will focus on the first session and hear about a few of the teaching abroad experiences of those participants who traveled to Honduras to teach in the schools and work with Apufam International.

Slide 2



Agenda for today's professional development. The power point is divided into a couple of different sections. The first section is an overview of the AI teaching abroad trip and the experiences of its participants. Although not everyone is able to participate in a month long teaching abroad experience, part of this study was to identify how a teaching abroad experience, similar to AI, could increase cultural awareness through understanding and the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices. The findings show that the TAE was instrumental in the increased understanding and implementation. Additionally, cultural differences are identified and presented here. Notice the cultural differences expand to include, societal and educational differences. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Not to presenter – this power point will take approximately 50 minutes, with a 15-minute break. Followed by the second half of this power point that will last about 35 minutes.

## Slide 3

Overview

Quick overview:

- Timeline – 10:55 – 4:00
- Lunch – working lunch with meals provided
- Restrooms – located out the door to the left and immediately on the right
- Drinks are available throughout the day – please feel free to get up and stretch your legs, refill your coffee, or use the restroom
- Please silence your cell phones
- Feel free to ask questions throughout the presentation

Timeline – 10:55-4:00

Lunch – working lunch with meals provided

10:55-11:30 Power point presentation  
Large Group -

Power point presentation about the cultural differences within Honduras and implementing culturally appropriate instructional practices. Presenter's note: Spend about 2-5 minutes on each slide as needed for reading and comprehension.

11:30- 12:00 - Question and Answer Session - Opportunity to ask questions about the PowerPoint, the teaching abroad experience or cultural difference within the classroom. Spend the appropriate amount of time to address questions and comments.

12:00-2:00- Small Group Activity with a working lunch. Lunch is provided by a local restaurant. Within the small group activity, teachers will participate in a working lunch with meals provided from a local restaurant. session 1, part 2 with cultural awareness information, a classroom scenario of a culturally diverse classroom, identify factors within the scenario that might impact student learning based on the information presented. Additionally, identify factors within your own classroom that might impact student learning.

2:00 – 2:15 – Break - Prior to returning as a large group, participants will be encouraged to take a quick restroom break.

2:15 – 3:45 – Large Group Activity - Share findings and experiences that

could have impacted student learning. Short question session as needed.

3:45 – 4:00 – Evaluation / Surveys - Teachers will be asked to complete a short survey on the day's presentation

Restrooms – located out the door to the left and immediately on the right  
Drinks are available throughout the day – please feel free to get up and stretch your legs, refill your coffee, or use the restroom


Please silence your cell phones

Feel free to ask questions throughout the presentation

#### Slide 4

**Cultural Differences that you will notice in Honduras**

- Americans also have differences – tattoos, piercings, long hair, dress – appearance is associated with affiliation – gangs, drugs, money, etc.
- American customs – Tooth Fairy, Easter Bunny, St. Patrick's Day – even holidays like Mother's Day are celebrated differently.
- Hondurans are smart and change isn't always good.
- Hondurans have what they need – and appreciate what they have.



Many of the differences between the U.S. and Honduras can go unnoticed. Be aware of these differences as it can impact your experience.

Americans also have differences – tattoos, piercings, long hair, dress – appearance is associated with affiliation – gangs, drugs, money, etc.

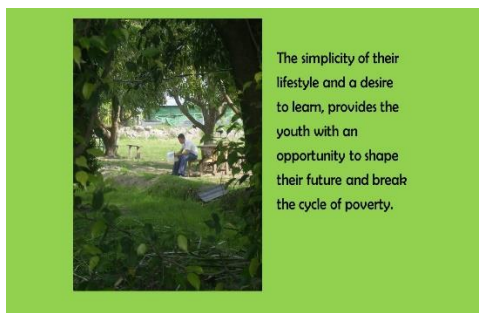
American customs – Tooth Fairy, Easter Bunny, St. Patrick's Day – even holidays like Mother's Day are celebrated differently.

Examples from the study include - the flexibility to adapt to frequent changes in the daily routine for assemblies, traveling to soccer tournaments, religious ceremonies, or special local celebrations.

However, lack of electricity does not impact the school day. The school day continues as normal, just without lights. Often difficult in the United States in newer school buildings that may not have windows.

Again, remember that the participants are encouraged to be open minded about the cultural differences that can provide insight and alter our perceptions. Another example would be that the girls living at the high school, make, by hand, over 500 tortillas a day. It takes them about three hours make the tortillas. An example of the different expectations of female vs. male roles in society (Apufram, 2015).

Slide 5



Slide 6

Understanding the cultural differences in the schools

- The teaching professional is very respected in Honduras
- Students take pride in their school and have responsibilities within the school day
- Technology is limited due to sporadic availability of electricity
- The school day goes from 7:30-12:00
- Students value their education are willing and eager to learn
- They wear a uniform

1. The teaching professional is highly respected in Honduras. Teachers in Honduras are placed on the same level as doctors. Their pay, although less than the United States, is proportionately higher than teachers in the United States.
2. Students take pride in their school and have responsibilities within the school day, as mentioned in the findings section of the study, the students are expected to sweep the classroom, wash boards, etc. to keep the school clean.

3. Technology is limited due to sporadic availability of electricity. The school has a computer lab with computers but run on a much older and slower system. Due to sporadic electricity, internet is limited.
4. The school day begins at 7:30 and ends at 12:00.
5. In Honduras, students value their education, are willing and eager to learn. Understanding that an education will make a difference in their future. No one complains about assignments, homework, etc.
6. Every student wears a uniform, like those in private schools in the United States.

## Slide 7

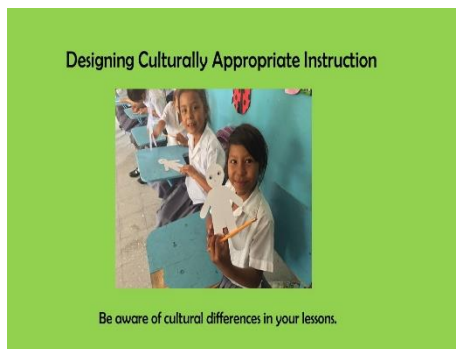
#### Understanding the cultural differences in the schools

- No social promotion – students are placed in the grade according to their education NOT age.
- Most children go to school now, but not all continue.
- Corporal punishment is allowed in schools, but so is love.
- Most teachers belong to the teacher's union, and they go on strike often.

Within the educational system in Honduras, teachers have the opportunity to observe many cultural differences. Some of these differences are shared here but certainly does not represent all of the differences (Mason, 2017). No social promotion – students are placed in the grade according to their education NOT age. Most children go to school now, but not all continue, most only receive a third-grade education. Corporal punishment is allowed in schools, but so is love. Most teachers belong to the teacher's union, and they go on strike often.

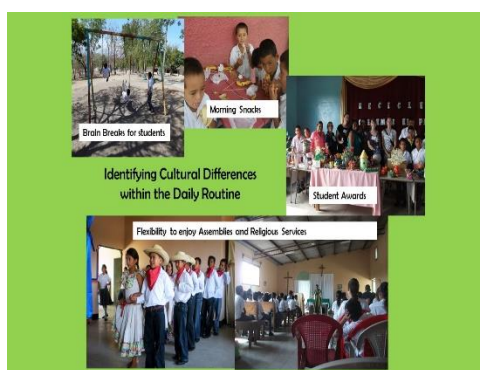


## Slide 8



Many lessons, topics or themes taught in the United States is not applicable in Honduras. Living in poverty, many children are orphans, and some experiences may not apply to their lessons. Some examples include: transportation – few people in Honduras own cars, airplanes – most Honduras will never fly on an airplane. Literature – many of the folk tales and stories found in literature does not translate well and should be considered when designing lessons. Examples could include – The Little Engine that Could, Three Billy Goats Gruff, etc. Explore ways to implement Honduran culture into the lesson design. One participant found it difficult to teach a lesson on idioms, as the phrases do not translate well. Be aware of these types of difficulties when you design your lessons.

## Slide 9



Examples for differences between the classroom in Honduras and the United States. Implementing culturally appropriate instructional practices. By implementing a strategy known as “brain breaks” within the school day, teachers found, a decrease in student behavioral issues increased their ability to focus on new academic skills that resulted in increased teaching time. With increased teaching time and with the application of culturally appropriate instructional practices, increases student engagement for student growth. Thus, creating a positive learning environment that embraces

diversity and shared ideas (Mason, 2017).

Cultural events that include recycling day, student appreciation day, etc.

Although we celebrate many of the same holidays, the educational system in Honduras, has the freedom to implement activities like cultural dance and religious celebrations as a culturally appropriate instructional practice.

During the brain break sessions, often, students will use this break from class to spend time with their siblings. If the students are living in different locations, they can visit with each other every morning.

Slide 10



Thinking creatively allows participants to design culturally appropriate lessons that embrace diversity and understanding. With an increased number of culturally diverse instructional practices, teachers provide a variety of opportunities for all students to grow. The results of the study by Biraimah and Jotia (2012), and of Doppen and An (2014), along with those of Lupi and Turner (2013) and DeVillar and Jiang (2012), supported the belief that preservice teachers' implementation of culturally relevant instructional practices enhances learning in the multicultural classroom. Additional research suggested that teaching abroad experiences provide student teachers with a deeper understanding of multicultural complexities, that when not addressed in the classroom, can impact student learning (Batey & Lupi, 2012; Kumar & Hamer, 2012).

Be aware of cultural differences when designing lessons and activities. In Honduras, nothing is wasted, in the activity above, students saved the paper plates to reuse at home. In the upper left photo, notice the Honduran teacher has joined in the lesson on directions, illustrating the eagerness to learn and the value of professional growth.

The students love to engage in activities with the volunteers. With bingo – everyone learns, both Spanish and English!

Another example of culturally appropriate Instructional practices. Embracing the multicultural educational theory of James Banks (1993), enables teachers to implement instructional practices that promote equitable education for all students. Thank you for your time and attention, if you have any questions or comments, please feel to share them now! Presenter's note: Q & A session 30 minutes.

## Slide 11

### Small Group Activity

In small groups:

- Collaborate with small group members to identify cultural differences found in the sample classroom scenario and ways those differences could impact student learning.
- Identify any cultural differences in your present classroom that could impact student learning.
- This is a working lunch. Meals have been provided and are available on the back table.
- You have two hours for lunch and to complete this activity.
- Be sure to ask if you have any questions.

In small groups:

Collaborate with small group members to identify cultural differences found in the sample classroom scenario and ways those differences could impact student learning. Identify any cultural differences in your present classroom that could impact student learning. This is a working lunch. Meals have been provided and are available on the back table. You have two hours for lunch and to complete this activity. Once you complete the

activity, be prepared to share with the large group.

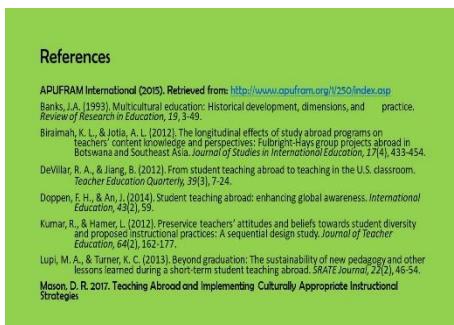
Be sure to ask if you have any questions.

Large Group Activity - Share findings and experiences that could have impacted student learning.

Short question session as needed.

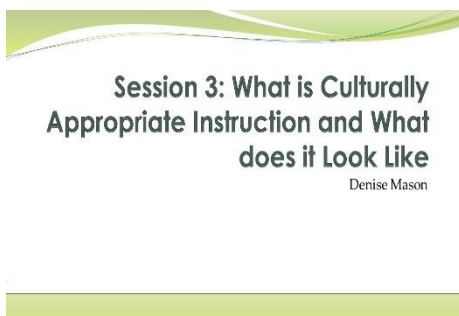
Once completed, teachers will be asked to complete a short survey on the day's presentation. Turn completed evaluation forms to the manila envelope on the table in the back of the room and sign out to receive credit for today's professional development session.

## Slide 12



## Session 3

### Slide 1



Session 3 will address the need for culturally appropriate instructional practices (CAIP) and how to implement effective instruction.

Sharing the results of the study and the impact teaching abroad experiences have on culturally appropriate instructional practices. Research suggests that to increase cultural awareness and student academic support, teachers need to adapt culturally appropriate

instructional practices into the classroom.


## Slide 2



### Agenda

- Overview
- Defining Culturally Appropriate Instructional Strategies
- Break
- Small Group Activity – professional dialog defining culturally appropriate strategies, what they are and who they serve (working lunch)
- Large Group – sharing results
- Designing Culturally Appropriate Instructional Strategies
- Small Group Activity – designing lessons
- Large Group – sharing results
- Questions, Reflection, and Evaluation

## Slide 3



### Overview

Quick overview:

- Timeline – 8:30 – 5:15
- Lunch – 12:30-1:45- lunch is on your own, several local restaurants are within a 5 minute drive
- Restrooms – located out the door to the left and immediately on the right
- Drinks are available throughout the day – please feel free to get up and stretch our legs, refill your coffee, or use the restroom
- Please silence your cell phones
- Feel free to ask questions throughout the presentation

Timeline – 8:30 – 5:15

Session 3: What is Culturally Appropriate Instruction and What does it Look Like

8:30 – 9:45 - Introduce participants, the day's agenda/timeline, and goals and objects (shown on PPT).

9:45 – 10:30 - PowerPoint that provides definition, examples, and key elements for designing culturally appropriate instruction

10:30 – 10:45 - Short 10-minute break before small group activity

10:45 – 11:50 - Collaboration with others to address questions provided to each group and possible implementations

11:50 – 12:30 - Teachers share results

12:30 – 1:45 - Teachers break for lunch. Lunch is on your own, several local restaurants are within a few minutes of this location. Presenter's note: Provide participants with a list of local affordable restaurants.

1:45 – 2:30 - Presentation with sharing of ideas and how to create a culturally appropriate instructional activity or lesson plan design

2:30 – 2:45 - Short restroom break and opportunity to break into small groups

2:45 – 4:15 - Small groups design culturally appropriate instructional practices for implementation within the classroom, possible ideas for future lessons

4:15 – 5:00 - Small groups share newly designs culturally appropriate instructional practices within lesson plans

5:00 – 5:15 - Provide participants with an exit survey to evaluate the professional development

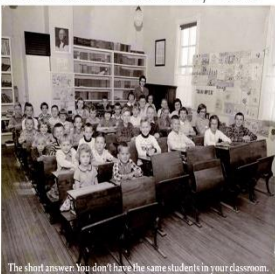
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Drinks are available throughout the day – please feel free to get up and stretch our legs, refill your coffee, or use the restroom

Please silence your cell phones  
Feel free to ask questions throughout the presentation.

Presenter's note: Prepare to be flexible with slides, some may require more time than others. On average spend 3-5 minutes on each slide.

#### Slide 4

Why can't I continue to teach the same way I have been teaching?



The short answer: You don't have the same students in your classroom.

The short answer is, because you are not teaching the same students. A break down in the barriers that prevent culturally minded thinking as teachers prepare students to address global issues and facilitation of intercultural understanding and awareness of teachers, may be the first step in changing attitudes and behaviors that lead to positive social

change (Cushner, 2012). With a continually increasing enrollment of culturally diverse students (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013) and small percentages of diversity among teachers (National Center of Education Statistics [NCES], 2017), culturally diverse students, both locally and across the United States, may not be receiving the culturally appropriate instructional strategies necessary to promote academic success (Alsubaie, 2015; Batey & Lupi, 2012; Doppen & An, 2014).

#### Slide 5



It is important that as educators,  
we take the time to understand our students.

As educators, it is important that we know our students. Who they are, where they come from, what are their lived experiences, and how can I serve them? Turkan and Buzick (2014) established through their research the ownership of all teachers to enhance and address the culturally diverse needs of all students in the classroom, thus creating opportunities to better understand students through increased awareness of cultural differences, and better understanding and implementation of quality instructional strategies and curriculum. Creating a culturally responsive environment allows students to share their experiences, which can enhance cultural understanding and encourage students to embrace diversity through equitable educational opportunities that promote positive outcomes. Allowing students to share experiences could be the first step in changing attitudes and

behaviors that result in better understanding and acceptance of cultural differences with increased student academic growth, leading to positive social change (Bennett, 2011; Cushner, 2012; Souza, 2013; Tuleja, 2014).

## Slide 6



Together, both immigrant and US-born students of foreign descent often struggle academically to reach their fullest potential (Paik et al., 2015). Examples of some academic struggles include difficulty expressing themselves (for non-English speakers), relevance in applying lived experiences to the current curriculum, limited academic support at home due to language barriers or parent education.

Together, both immigrant and US-born students of foreign descent often struggle academically to reach their fullest potential (Paik et al., 2015). Examples of some academic struggles include difficulty expressing themselves (for non-English speakers), relevance in applying lived experiences to the current curriculum, limited academic support at home due to language barriers or parent education. Culturally diverse students (both immigrants and U.S. citizens of foreign descent) often struggle with passing grade level standardized tests, receive failing classroom grades and continue to represent high percentages of dropout rates compared to US-born, Caucasian peers (Hong & You, 2012; Souza, 2013). Immigrant students are defined as those who have moved to the United States as a child. US-born students of foreign descent are defined as a child born in the United States to parents who were born in another country and moved to the U.S. (Mason, 2017).



## Slide 7



With increased enrollment of culturally diverse students throughout the local community (NCEES, 2017), it is crucial that teachers have a cultural awareness and understanding of how to deliver culturally appropriate instruction to students (Alsubaie, 2015; Celinska, & Swazo, 2015; Sleeter, 2012).

Addressing the local concern of increased enrollment of cultural diverse student population and limited diversity among teacher's and limited experiences outside of their own culture, prompted this study and the results indicate the need to increase cultural differences and awareness through understanding. To support those results and the local problem addressed in the study, we have designed this PD program to assist in the understanding of CAIP and implementing those strategies within lesson plans. To begin, one must understand the definition of a few terms seen throughout this presentation. Teachers who have lived abroad often encounter events that would be difficult to obtain within the United States, and that can be challenging, given the language and socioeconomic differences (Menard-Warwick & Palmer, 2012; Tuleja, 2014). Teachers so exposed tend to embrace those experiences with an increased awareness and promote change in developing a culturally responsive classroom in the United States (Jabbar & Hardaker, 2013; Jiang & DeVillar, 2011; Patterson, 2014; Sun, 2013).

## Slide 8



Research suggests that without adequate cultural awareness training or experiences, teachers often struggle to understand how cultural differences may impact instructional practices (intercultural competence) and overall student academic success (Beals, 2013; Lipji & Turner, 2013; Schoender & Parker, 2013; Souza, 2013).

The need to include CAIP within our daily lessons and routines is supported by research and strategies and practical application will be presented in the session. The later research of Gay (2013) continued to build and expand upon the theoretical foundations of

multicultural education to include multicultural competencies: the need to increase knowledge and understanding and adapt pedagogical skills and practices, defining culturally responsive teaching that includes cultural knowledge and lived experiences with learning styles that make learning relevant and effective. Expanding the competencies to include cultural elements in instruction that provide a connection between school expectations and student lived cultural experiences (Herrera, Holmes, Kavimandan, 2012). Similar is the research of Ladson- Billings (1995) which discusses culturally relevant teaching that is based on three propositions of academic success that include a) maintaining contact and cultural heritages, b) learning how to challenge current instructional practices, and c) transform inequities, injustices.

## Slide 9

## Culturally Diverse Students



Culturally diverse students: for this project includes African Americans, Alaska/Native Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and students of two or more races, both immigrant and U.S. born students of foreign descent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017).

With the increasing diversity of students represented in the classroom across the identified region of this study, the disproportionate representation of diverse student enrollment and primarily white, middle class, female teachers continue to exist (NCES, 2017). The study indicated a need to explore a more diverse population of teachers but also to provide teachers with increased experiences outside of one's culture to build trust and create a greater global sense of community for all students (Shiveley & Misco, 2012). The research of Nadelson et

al. (2012) reported on the limited experiences white preservice teachers bring to the multicultural classroom because of their limited cross-cultural experience or knowledge.

For this presentation, culturally diverse students are defined as African Americans, Alaska/Native Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and students of two or more races, both immigrant and U.S. born students of foreign descent (NCES, 2015).

## Slide 10



Culturally Appropriate Instruction

Culturally appropriate instruction is defined as instructional practices that both empathize and acknowledge differing values and beliefs through applied learned practices gained through diverse cultural experiences (Doyle & Aas, 2011; Gunn & Molese, 2012).

What is culturally diverse instruction? Why is it important? Read slide. Creating a culturally responsive classroom allows students to share their experiences and embrace diversity through equitable educational opportunities. Through observations and instructional opportunities to engage in culturally responsive instructional practices abroad, teachers gain insight into how cultural differences influence student learning thus increasing understanding and implementation of culturally appropriate instruction in the classroom (DeVillar & Jiang, 2012).

By breaking down the barriers that prevent culturally minded thinking, as teachers prepare students to address global issues by facilitating intercultural understanding and awareness of teachers, may be the first steps in changing attitudes and behaviors that lead to positive social change (Cushner, 2012). With a projected increase of minorities in the classroom and the small

percentage of diversity among teachers (NCES, 2017) that represent and understand how cultural differences effect student growth, the need for expanding culturally rich experiences, such as teaching abroad opportunities presents a viable solution to increasing teachers implementation of culturally appropriate instructional strategies in a multicultural classroom. This will support teachers as they strive to enhance culturally appropriate instructional practices as creative means for developing respect of cultural differences, advance student learning, as they prepare students to become future global leaders for positive social change.

### Slide 11

#### Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence: one's ability to effectively and appropriately interact with others who are linguistically and culturally different, able to respond effectively between individuals and organizations of different backgrounds or cultures, and an internal shift in flexibility and adaptability regarding other cultures (Pak, et al., 2015).



As we saw in the previous power point, cultural differences can impact student understanding and their ability to accomplish assignments, follow directions, and adapt to the educational system. As teachers, we have a responsibility to the students in our class and part of that includes understanding who they are and understand their lived experiences.

### Slide 12

#### Understanding Cultural Differences that provide opportunities for Global Perspectives



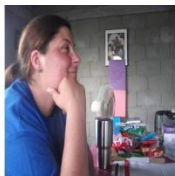
Understanding the cultural differences of students and embracing diversity is important, bringing to the educational setting an understanding of global perspectives that enhance creative thinking and cultural and global awareness that are as unique as the dynamics of the classroom and the experiences of the teacher (Batey & Lupi, 2012).

The results of additional studies supported the belief that teachers' implementation of culturally relevant instructional practices enhances learning in the multicultural classroom (Biraimah & Jotia, 2012; DeVillar & Jiang, 2011; Doppen & An, 2013; Lupi & Turner, 2013). Some examples might include: Language Arts short stories are culturally diverse to provide a better

understanding of cultural differences found within the readings, small group discussions that include lived experiences of students from other countries – immigrants from the Middle East living through war, violence and ongoing destruction of their homeland, sharing their experiences. In social studies or geography courses, teachers can create projects that expand on the cultural differences of the students and their homelands, sharing traditions and experiences (Mason, 2017).

### Slide 13

The role of the classroom teacher is complex and ever changing to include creatively implementing instructional practices that meet the constructs of the students within the classroom. (Mason, 2017)



Teacher's need to be flexible, participate in opportunities to increase knowledge, and be provided an opportunity to reflect on knowledge to gain new insight and application. The typical US classroom currently reflects our ever-broadening diverse population as travel and communication continue to shape a global society. With this paradigm shift, educational leaders need to empower teachers with the tools to meet all guidelines of a quality education (Mason, 2017).

### Slide 14

#### Culturally Relevant Teaching



Ladson- Billings (1995) which discusses culturally relevant teaching that is based on three propositions of academic success that include a) maintaining contact and cultural heritages, b) learning how to challenge current instructional practices, and c) transform inequities, injustices.

Presenter's note: Read slide. All three needs to be present in our daily instructional practices. Research suggested the importance of intercultural perspectives that values teachers' ability to interact with diverse populations through appropriate instructional practices and embrace global education (Cushner & Chang, 2015; Moeller &

Osborn, 2014; Paik et al., 2015). Stressing the importance of intercultural perspectives, the research found that with a mindset of acceptance of international views enabled teachers to develop better communication and a willingness to learn from and about their students (Cushner & Chang, 2015; Moeller & Osborn, 2014). With the increased understanding and an openness to embrace cultural differences, created a heightened awareness among teachers that included increased intercultural sensitivity, knowledge of other countries, and the skills necessary for the implementation of a culturally appropriate instruction define the specific competencies (Paik et al., 2015).

Interculturally competent educators possess both the language and skills that include a positive open-minded attitude, values cultural differences, and has obtained knowledge about different cultures, gaining insight of others while deepening one's cultural understanding. A process that allows students to explore other cultures and develop as global communicators (Deardorff, 2006; Moeller & Osborn, 2014). Specific examples could include: reflecting on one's culture and beliefs, respectful discussions that engage in shared cultural experiences, or small group problem-solving activities that include diverse cultural practices.

## Slide 15

## Small Group Activity

In small groups:

- Collaborate with others to address questions provided to each group and possible implementations
- Prepare to share findings with the larger group
- Ask if you have questions
- 55 minutes to complete activity

As part of this activity. Teachers are to remain in small groups at each table, read and reflect on the questions being passed out to your tables, and share in a professional dialog how your perceptions/ understanding may have changed. Be prepared to share responses with the larger group. You will have 55 minutes to share in this activity. Presenters note: This should take approximately 55 minutes to complete. Each group receives a list of questions (see appendix E) to discuss with peers. Through peer collaboration, each group will identify culturally appropriate instructional practices and implementation into daily instruction. Prepare to present findings with the larger group.

## Slide 16


Understand that every child is different and every situation calls for a different response.



## Slide 17

Bank's Five Dimensions of Multicultural Education Theory

- Content Integration
- Knowledge Construction
- Equity Pedagogy
- Reduced Prejudice
- Empowering School Culture



A major goal of multicultural education is to restructure schools so ensure that children acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to function in an ethnically and racially diverse nation and world (Banks, 2006, p. 137). Multicultural education focuses on promoting pedagogical equity among the marginalized and underrepresented students of diverse cultures while simultaneously providing educators with the tools to design opportunities that can improve student learning (Banks, 2006, 2013).

## Slide 18

Essential Questions When Designing Culturally Appropriate Lessons

- What are the big ideas?
- What do I need to teach to ensure learning/ understanding has taken place?
- What are the District standards?
- What are my goals / student's goals?
- What culturally appropriate instructional strategies will enhance engagement and understanding for mastery?
- How will I assess the project?

When designing culturally appropriate lesson, ask yourself these essential questions. Presenter's note: Read each question on the slide, answer questions as applicable. Have you addressed these in your lessons and your daily classroom routines?

## Slide 19

Culturally Appropriate Instructional Strategies

- Academic vs. Survival
- Make adjustments to instructional strategies as gaps in practice are identified
- Recognize and Embrace Diversity
- Strengthen the skills from knowing to mastery
- Knowledge base/ prior knowledge/ lived experiences/ identify goals



Understand the difference between academic and survival skills. Survival is when students struggle to have basic needs met that include food, shelter, love, security, etc. When basic needs are not being met, it is difficult for students to switch from survival to academic, where they can focus on learning. Understand the difference between conversational English and English for comprehension. Teaching for mastery vs. introducing new skills. Strive for mastery. Diversity is not a



problem to be dealt with but an opportunity to share experiences that can provide insight to new knowledge and creative ideas.

## Slide 20

Ensuring Success with Implementation

- Know your students
- Thoroughly examining what you teach and establishing essential questions
- Proactively planning units for challenge and variety to accommodate students' needs
- Incorporating culturally appropriate instructional strategies
- Teach towards mastery of understanding
- Implement frequent brain breaks
- Respectful environment
- High expectations for learning
- Students feel welcomed and valued



To ensure the success of culturally appropriate instructional strategies, let's discuss the points listed here. The findings of this study and others address the importance of implementing culturally appropriate instructional practices. Essential elements include knowing your students – their lived experiences, educational background, cultural background, current level of performance and learning strengths. Examine your curriculum and establish the essential questions and outcomes of the lesson/ curriculum. Design lessons to meet standards and the performance level of students. Incorporate culturally appropriate instructional practices to enhance student understanding and mastery. Teach to mastery of skill and not to pacing guides when applicable. Implement frequent brain breaks as defined in the study to include short 5-minute breaks to allow students to relax, visit with friends, expel energy, etc. and increase productivity. With the implementation of brain breaks, this study found a reduced number of behavioral disruptions and increased teaching time (Mason, 2017). Create a classroom environment of respect through shared cultural activities – lived experiences, literature, etc. Set a high level of expectations for learning that values diversity in the

classroom where every child feels welcomed.

## Slide 21

## Steps Towards Mastery



- Assessment
- Instruction
- Guided Practice
- Independent Practice
- Assessment
- Revise/ Redirect / Review

As we identify key elements and diverse strategies, lesson designs need to include the following steps. When designing culturally appropriate lessons, each plan should include all the following components (read slide) as defined by individual district requirements. See lesson plan format (appendix A).

## Slide 22



Our biggest challenge as teachers is to respond to the diverse needs, backgrounds, and learning styles of the children in our classrooms.

## Slide 23

## Small Group Activity

- In small groups
- Design culturally appropriate instructional practices for implementation within the classroom, possible ideas for future lessons
- Complete the activity based on the information provided today
- Each group will share one lesson plan with the larger group
- 1 hour and 45 minutes
- Internet and district curriculum is available to assist with this assignment

As you begin this activity, remember the essential elements, the steps of lesson design, and the factors to promote culturally diverse implementation. You have been given copies of lesson plan formats to create your small group lesson. With the assistance of your district curriculum, identify one skill and design a culturally appropriate lesson that includes CAIP and be prepared to share with the larger group. You will have 1 hour and 45 minutes to complete this activity. Remember that we have resources available to

assist with this activity. Please ask if you have any questions.

## Slide 24

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### Supplement 1: Professional Development Plan Components

**Introduction:** The findings of this study identified how teaching abroad experiences contribute to the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional strategies.

Additionally, to address the local problem identified, to provide insight into those experiences and implementation practices that provides data that defines the goals and outline of this PD program.

**Purposes:** The purpose of this PD program is to share those experiences of participants who have recently traveled abroad and engaged in a teaching abroad experience and identify those insights that prompted the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional strategies within their classroom. Recognizing that travel abroad may not be a viable option, a professional development program was designed to address the local problem, and prepares students for the global society of tomorrow.

**Audiences:** Local teachers and administrators.

**Methods:** PowerPoints, small group collaboration, reflection activity, large group presentation and sharing activities, off sight observation, administrative observation with feedback for professional growth.

**Limitations:** implementation timeline – based on the availability of teachers and staff to promote the understanding of cultural awareness, intercultural competence, and implementation of culturally appropriate instructional strategies. Additional limitations could include administration support, however, given the identified local problem, I

believe this is a minimal barrier and can be addressed to meet the needs of the individual schools.

Time Line: This PD program is a 36-hour program that has been dived onto five sessions and are able to be implemented at the principal's discursion.

Budget: Funding is minimal. Drinks and lunch is provided by the local parent teacher association. No additional expenses have been identified.

Evaluation Plan: Attached is a sample of a feedback evaluation for each session. Teachers complete the evaluation and turn in to a manila envelope and then sign out for the session.

Activity	Session 1: What is Teaching Abroad and how does cultural awareness and how does it impact student learning?	Start Date/Time	Completion Date/Time
Introductions, daily agenda, goals and objectives	Introduce participants, the day's agenda/timeline, and goals and objects.	9:00-9:15	
Presentation	Share PowerPoint of teaching abroad experience and cultural differences as it increases awareness. Provide testimonies of participants and examples of cultural differences. Both in Honduras and those within the local classroom. Presenter shares clips of teaching abroad experiences and examples of cultural differences with culturally appropriate instructional practices (found in the research data). *Presenters note – the first portion of the PowerPoint provides an overview of the teaching abroad experience with AI. Includes some examples from the research findings.	9:15-10:10	
Reflection/ Questions	Opportunity to ask questions about the PowerPoint, the teaching abroad experience or	10:10-10:40	

	cultural difference within the classroom		
Break	Break	10:40-10:55	
Large Group PowerPoint	Define Cultural awareness and its impact on student learning, provide research data to address ways to increase students' academic performance through the study "Teaching Abroad and Implementing Culturally Appropriate Instructional Strategies"	10:55-11:30	
Reflection/ Questions	Opportunity to ask questions about the PowerPoint, the teaching abroad experience or cultural difference within the classroom	11:30-12:00	
Small group activity	Provide handouts of the power point session 1, part 2 with cultural awareness information, a classroom scenario of a culturally diverse classroom, identify factors within the scenario that might impact student learning based on the information presented. Additionally, identify factors within your own classroom that might impact student learning.	12:00-2:00	
Lunch	Within the small group activity, teachers will participate in a working lunch with meals provided from a local restaurant.		
Break	Prior to returning as a large group, participants will be encouraged to take a quick restroom break.	2:00-2:15	
Large Group	Share findings and experiences that could have impacted student learning. Short question session as needed.	2:15-3:45	
Exit Surveys	Teachers will be asked to complete a short survey on the day's presentation	3:45-4:00	
Total Time		7 hrs.	

Activity	Session 2: Off Site Observation	Start Date/Time	Completion Date/Time
Classroom Observations	Teachers observe a culturally diverse classroom within the district (different than their own school). To identify cultural differences and the implementation of culturally diverse instructional practices. School observations and times are coordinated through the principal and approved locations.	1hr. 30 minutes	

	Three 30-minute observations		
Teacher Reflection	Teachers will reflect on their experience and provide a reflection paper (or they can meet with their principal to share their experience) understanding cultural differences and their experience as it impacts teaching culturally diverse students in the classroom. Each reflection and writing/ conference lasting approximately 1 hour.	3hrs. 30 min	
Total Time		5 hrs.	

Activity	Session 3: What is Culturally Appropriate Instruction and What does it Look Like	Start Date/Time	Completion Date/Time
Introductions, daily agenda, goals and objectives	Introduce participants, the day's agenda/timeline, and goals and objects (shown on PPT).	8:30-9:45	
PPT	PowerPoint that provides definition, examples, and key elements for designing culturally appropriate instruction	9:45-10:30	
Break	Short 10-minute break before small group activity	10:30-10:45	
Small group activity	Collaboration with others to address questions provided to each group and possible implementations	10:45-11:50	
Large group	Teachers share results	11:50-12:30	
Lunch	Teachers break for lunch. Local restaurants are within 5 min drive and provide additional time for peer collaboration	12:30-1:45	
Presentation	Presentation with sharing of ideas and how to create a culturally appropriate instructional activity or lesson plan design	1:45-2:30	
Break	Short restroom breaks and opportunity to break into small groups	2:30-2:45	
Small group activity	Small groups design culturally appropriate instructional practices for implementation within the classroom, possible ideas for future lessons	2:45-4:15	
Large group	Small groups share newly designs culturally	4:15-5:00	

	appropriate instructional practices within lesson plans		
Reflection and Exit Surveys	Provide participants with an exit survey to evaluate the professional development	5:00-5:15	
Total Time		7 hrs. 30 mins.	

Activity	Session 4: Peer Collaboration	Start Date/Time	Completion Date/Time
Follow up Sessions	Designing Culturally Appropriate Instructional Strategies within Lesson Plans	4-7 sessions	
Small group activity	Within a professional setting designed for peer collaboration, teachers (peers/ grade level) meet at least twice a semester to design and implement additional culturally responsive instruction and share experiences. Each session is designed to last between 2-3.5 hrs. Members will agree on the frequency and length of each session and location. Groups will provide notes for documentation to principal (required to receive PD credit within the school district).		
Peer Collaboration	With administration support, teachers can meet on a regular basis to share new ideas and strategies to implement culturally appropriate instructional strategies and experiences.		
Total Time		15 hrs.	

Activity	Session 5: Principal Observation	Start Date/Time	Completion Date/Time
Follow-up Sessions	Principal observation		
Requirements, lesson plan documentation, agenda, goals and objectives	Principals can provide additional documentation to support the findings of this study by including two or three additional observation statements to the observation checklist to ensure culturally appropriate instructional strategies are being implemented into the daily routine and		



	lesson plans.		
Observation forms	Present teachers with a copy of the observation forms that include culturally appropriate instructional practices.		
Classroom Observations	Principals conduct regular classroom observations that now include culturally appropriate instructional practices for documentation of implementation and assessment.		
Total Time		3 hrs.	

Supplement 2. docx: Small Group Reflection Questions

Focus Group Session3: What is Culturally Appropriate Instruction and What does it Look Like?

In a small group, answer the following questions individually and share how your perceptions/ understanding may have changed. As a group, deliberate on and create a collaborated answer to the following questions.

1. How would you define cultural diversity?
2. How can teachers exhibit cultural sensitivity?
3. How can you, your team, or school interact in ways that embrace the rich culture in your instructional practices?
4. How do you see yourself adapting to the cultural diversity within the classroom and implementing culturally appropriate instructional strategies witnessed in the PowerPoint (or shared here) in the classroom?
5. Given the feedback provided in your group, what additional instructional strategies might you implement in the classroom as a result of this activity? (teaching strategies, curriculum learning strategies, engaging activities, cultural traditions/ customs)
6. As a group, identify specific strategies and ideas to share with the large group.

### Supplement 3.docx.: Classroom Scenario

#### Group 1

You are assigned to a third-grade classroom with 25 students. 9 are African American, 6 Latino, 3 Asian, 2 Somalians, and 5 Caucasian. 4 students have been in the USA for less than 6 months and speak very little English, 8 receive English as a Second Language services and the remainder are English speakers. Based on what you heard in the presentation today, and a copy of the power point, identify factors within the scenario that might impact student learning based on the information presented. Additionally, identify factors within your own classroom that might impact student learning. Prepare to share with the large group.

#### Group 2

You are teaching ninth grade literature. You have 21 students in first period and 22 students in second and fourth period. You also teach 10 grade Literature with 24 students. In total, you have 12 students who receive English as a Second Language services and although they speak conversational English, they all still struggle with comprehension. With all classes, you have 26 African American, 15 Latinos, 4 Somalians, 3 students from the Middle East, 3 Brazilians, and 9 Asians, the remaining are Caucasian. Your principal informed you this morning that on Monday a family from Malaysia will be enrolling in the school with a 9th, 10th, and 11th grader. Based on what you heard in the presentation today, and a copy of the power point, identify factors within the scenario that might impact student learning based on the information presented. Additionally, identify

factors within your own classroom that might impact student learning. Prepare to share with the large group.

### Group 3

You teach kindergarten and you have 19 students. 8 are African American, 3 Caucasian and 8 Latinos. All 8 Latinos have limited English and are being tested to receive services. Based on what you heard in the presentation today, and a copy of the power point, identify factors within the scenario that might impact student learning based on the information presented. Additionally, identify factors within your own classroom that might impact student learning. Prepare to share with the large group.

## Supplement 4: Observation Form

### Observation Form and Field Notes

Date of Observation:

Time of Observation:

Setting:

Participants:

Observer:

Research Question: How does a travel abroad experience contribute to the implementation of culturally appropriate instructional practices in the multicultural classroom?

Instructional strategy:

NOTES:

Supplement 5.docx.: Sample formative observation form (principal form) Observation  
Evaluation

Teacher Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

School/ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Observer \_\_\_\_\_

Observation evaluations are conducted to provide documentation of the implementation culturally appropriate instructional practices. Multiple observations are recommended throughout the academic year to show growth in understanding and application. Please complete the observation evaluation after the individual has completed the first three sections of the PD program. Once completed, the administrator conducting the observation is encouraged to share the findings/ provide feedback with the observed teacher.

1. How did the teacher provide quality lesson plans, following district guidelines, using appropriate vocabulary, process, that includes culturally appropriate instructional practices and implementation?  
(Attach lessons to evaluation)
2. How was the lesson culturally appropriate for the grade/class? Where adaptations needed and if so, were they implemented?  
Please explain
3. How was the teacher effective when using a variety of culturally appropriate instructional strategies (either recommended by you or presented in the PD sessions)?  
Please explain
4. How can the teacher reduce any cultural barriers while observing in the classroom? What improvements could have been made, please explain

5. How did you observe instructional practices that were sensitive to the cultural differences, language, and were lessons adapted appropriately?  
If so, please explain
  
6. How did the teacher implement creative adaptations as needed within the classroom /positive feedback/assist other teachers when explaining the objectives and engage others, as appropriate when working in a multicultural classroom?  
If so, please explain
  
7. When designing lessons and implementing strategies, how did the teacher work with peers for collaboration of design, share ideas and participate in professional dialog prior to the implementation, when appropriate?  
Please explain
  
8. Any additional comments:

Signature:

Date:

## Supplement 6.docx: Session Evaluation Form

Session Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Complete the following evaluation form, with 1 as not very helpful, 2 somewhat helpful, 3 helpful, 4 very helpful, 5 extremely helpful. Circle the number that best addresses the statement. Once completed after each session, return to the manila folder on the back table and sign out to receive credit for this session.

1. The power point provided information that increased my understanding of the cultural differences.

1 2 3 4 NA

2. The facilitator provided new and appropriate information.

1 2 3 4 NA

3. The facilitator addressed all my questions / or willing to find the answer.

1 2 3 3 NA

4. The small group activities were engaging and appropriate for the subject matter addressed in the session.

1 2 3 4 NA

5. The sharing sessions were engaging and appropriate allowing for peer collaboration.

1 2 3 4 NA

6. The culturally appropriate instructional practices are applicable in my classroom.

1 2 3 4 NA



7. The sessions provided new and appropriate information for my classroom.

1      2      3      4      NA

8. The information presented, the activities, and sharing sessions are applicable to my classroom/students.

1      2      3      4      NA

9. The facilitator, administration and peers provide the resources and support needed to implement new information to meet the needs of my students.

1      2      3      4      NA

10. The timeline, facilities, and breaks were appropriate for each session.

1      2      3      4      NA

## Supplement 7.docx: Lesson Plan format

**Lesson Plan**– Design one lesson plan as a group, using an effective teaching strategy, culturally appropriate instructional practices, and at an appropriate level to provide students with an engaging lesson. Each lesson should contain culturally appropriate instructional practices, the required components, and align with the district curriculum. Be prepared to share this lesson with the large group.

Culturally Appropriate Instructional Strategy (identify the skill and level to be addressed)	Time (amount of time needed to complete the activity)	Materials	Implementation Process	Assessment Strategy
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> </ol>	

## Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Where do you currently teach? (pseudonym)
2. What can you tell me about the cultural make up of your classroom?
3. While abroad, what topics/ lessons do/ did you teach?
4. While abroad, tell me about your experiences inside the classroom(s)?
5. What can you tell me about the differences in curriculum content, and integration to include local customs or traditions, between the USA and your host country?
6. While teaching abroad, how was the classroom structured in terms of instructional practices?
7. Tell me about the Honduran teacher's perception of engaging and culturally appropriate instruction? What would be some specific examples?
8. How was teaching different when you were abroad versus the US classroom? – support, curriculum, content, student growth, family or community support?

9. When you returned to the United States, as you worked through the reflection process, how did you transfer experiences to understanding and did you integrate those experiences into practical lessons (culturally appropriate instructional strategies) in your current, or former classroom(s)? If so, tell me about the implementation of those instructional

## Appendix C: Sample Interview Questions with Responses

## Interview Robin

Okay today is March 26 at 4:20 we're here with Robin as part of our interview. She has agreed to participate and answer the interview questions. She teaches in one of the local schools and attend the AI teaching abroad program a couple years ago. This research is for the teaching abroad and implementing culturally appropriate instructional practices. I appreciate you meeting with me this afternoon. As you know, this study is confidential and you have been assigned a pseudonym, and your school and your principal and students will not be identified in the study. You are also free to drop out of the study at any time. Are you ready to get started?

Yes.

Ok. Can you tell me about the make-up of your class?

Yes, I had 11 boys and 10 girls and I have three Vietnamese students, one Hispanic and three Indian students in my class this year.

What about your school and that make up at diversity?

It's about the same, 80% Caucasian American, the rest of the students represent a variety of ethnic backgrounds.

While you were teaching abroad what topics did you teach?

I taught greetings – hello, how are you, things like that. I also taught colors, numbers, and days of the week.

While abroad, tell me about your experiences inside the classroom(s)?

We taught in teams of three teachers. We would introduce ourselves and our daily objectives for the day. We would introduce the lesson and provide practice with a lot of repetition, we always had some type of hands on activity. We rotated throughout the school, teaching the same lesson three times each day to a different grade.

Okay. What can you tell me about the differences in curriculum content, and about any integration to include local customs or traditions, between the USA and your host country?

The main difference that I saw was that we taught pretty much the same standards. But the main thing was the instructional practices, we would show them how to do it together, they would try it. Just some kind of activity or task. Then on their own they would try it. The other thing I noticed was the data collection system. Here we collect data all the time. The Honduran teachers just seemed to observe their students and after the students understood the skill, they would move forward.

What about the Honduran teachers, did you see them do anything different?

I didn't get to observe the teachers, so that would be something that would've been helpful to see. I don't know if the others understood would have understood without knowing Spanish what they were teaching. But we would literally go and take over the classroom and they left. The other thing I noticed was the classroom was set up with the desks all in rows, and my class has the student desks grouped together, so that was different. I am curious as to if they could turn and talk to each other, like, peer-to-peer discussion. But when you were teaching, it was very effective. The students they were

always ready, they were always wanting to do whatever you asked of them. They were eager and willing to participate. A lot of the things that we did was new and different, so fresh and it really went well. They what we're doing very engaged, because sometimes we would just do silly things to get them motivated.

Like you said you didn't get to observe them but when you saw the teachers outside the classroom, during breaks or whatever, what was your perception?

You could see that they really cared about the students, that they had a good relationship. The students could be acting silly or just playing around outside, but when the teachers asked them to come inside or to start a lesson, the kids got serious.

What can you tell me about the differences in curriculum content, and about any integration to include local customs or traditions, between the USA and your host country?

I saw the kids with them, they were going to talk to them, in a positive way if the students misbehave and they would talk with them and just letting them know okay.

What I loved was that they could take a lot of breaks throughout the morning. They could just go outside and burn off some energy. They were like mini brain breaks. It was so helpful for the students. I wish we could do that here in the U.S. Just go outside for a few minutes to relax and reenergize before going on to the next lesson. The other thing I noticed was the food provided to the students. In the U.S., we are so worried about food allergies, or dietary restrictions, we can't give them a snack if they get hungry. We can't do anything without permission. But the teachers in Honduras knew their students, and could provide a snack or breakfast to the kids if necessary. One thing the kids loved to

do, was go outside and catch these giant grasshoppers. A huge difference classroom, they could go outside for just a few minutes and come back and get started again. That's what was different about their daily routine United States. I wish I could do that in my class, they kids could still get the material and skills needed. They could teach everything and get it all done by noon. I mean you can get what you need, state-mandated, I think that's exactly what they need and the teachers there have the freedom to truly teach and students learn. They can spend extra time on something if needed and still get everything covered.

Do you might have anything else you want to add that was teaching different when you were abroad versus in the US class. How was teaching different when you were abroad versus the US classroom? – support, curriculum, content, student growth, family or community support?

One thing that was different was the data collection. We collect data all the time and just write down information every week but that is something I would've liked to have seen. How they collect data. What I observed was that the teachers had the freedom to teach the material until the students all understood. So, teaching to mastery was great. Oh, and I will say here I see that there's a lot of peer to peer support. The students would help each other out with understanding and completing the assignments. I didn't see any students reading to others, that doesn't mean it didn't happen, I just didn't see it. But the students all worked together, played together and there's learning in that. I did see that they care for them I was just saying but I didn't see us on playing games together and do another thing what about like in the afternoon we need to see this one little guy playing



and I think he had about 10 mothers. Everyone helped and made sure this little guy was included and safe. The biggest surprise honestly, it's what I brought back saying that all of these worldly things that we think are important – aren't. These children have so little, I mean they have what they need – food, shelter, clothing. But without all the other materialistic things, and yet they're thriving and they're doing great! The other thing is, I went in with a little bit of prior knowledge, but nothing prepares you for what you will experience. As a mom, it was hard, to see these children without families or other things, and yet here's this program that gives them the ability to go to school and make something of himself, that really makes a difference. One recommendation would be that teachers are able to observe the teachers in the classroom, that would have been really good. But yeah, I would absolutely say yes, have the teachers definitely observe. Even if you can't understand the language, you can still understand the structure for instructional practices, the pacing of the classroom, understand the instructional practices and you can still observe all of those without understanding language.

When you returned to the United States, as you worked through the reflection process, how did you transfer experiences to understanding and did you integrate those experiences into practical lessons (culturally appropriate instructional strategies) in your current, or former classroom(s)? If so, tell me about the implementation of those instructional changes.

So, basically, I would take my understanding that my first year back when I was able to reach the children who didn't understand. Even though I was delivering better teacher practices, to really present it right where the student is performing. With other

students, if another student was struggling, I could jump in and assist, re explain, or whatever was needed. I could do little things like provide visual aids or just simplify directions. Give them the directions, better ways implement it. Just being more understanding and patience with them, so that no child ever feels embarrassed or afraid to ask a question. I could explain the directions again, or modify things for her. To continue to assess how much she understands and adapt my instruction accordingly. I do a lot of last-minute changes to ensure understanding. I can quickly look up something up with technology, with quick access to things I can provide a visual picture for the students. I will have compassion for the kids. I can take the extra time and asses their ability that impacts how would group students. And I just I just want to say that I think it was a great experience. I have been to Central America a couple of times, and have a little bit of prior knowledge but again, I never experienced anything like that. Nothing in the classroom can provide this type of an experience to better understand the kids in our classroom. I was an amazing experience.

Thank you, I really appreciated you time and the next step will be I will transcribe all of this and put it in a word document, and then I will send you a copy so you can look at it make sure I'm representing your thoughts and experiences. Thanks again!

#### Interview Iris

This is Denise Mason and I'm with Iris who has agreed to answer the questions by the data for my research study on teaching abroad and implementing culturally

appropriate instructional practices in the classroom. We're going to ask Iris some questions that I emailed to her earlier in the week, she has agreed to participate in the study and understands that this is voluntary and she is able to drop out at any time. So, Iris, thank you for participating. Also know that you have been given a pseudonym to protect your privacy. Your name, your school, and your principal, will not be identified in any of the research. When we're done if you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Where do you currently teach? (pseudonym) and What can you tell me about the cultural make up of your classroom?

I teach at ##### and the cultural make up of my class is 1% of African-American and 1% Asian. I have equally 50-50 boys and girls, most of them are from rural backgrounds, and all are from a middle-class lower middle-class. Most of the students have been in this same school since kindergarten.

While abroad, what topics/ lessons do/ did you teach?

The topics or lessons that I taught were colors, community locations, school vocabulary, directions, a lot of vocabulary. I taught a lot of culturally appropriate vocabulary.

Can you expand a bit on that?

Sure, so when we were teaching community places we focus on community places that they would have there and not so much what we have here but if they have a small little store there then we would not call it a supermarket. The store or something like that or if they have a town square, we would talk about that and we were able to focus on the things that they had in their community. We talked about places around school, we talked jobs, and I taught a three little pigs lesson. We read the story, and the students built

the houses, and blew them down. For the clothing lesson, we had the students get dressed up. The students were very engaged and really enjoyed the lessons.

While abroad, tell me about your experiences inside the classroom(s)?

When I first walked into the class I was surprised that not all kids were the same age, that was a shocker. That they start school whenever they can start school and then the students just follow that grade. That made designing age appropriate lessons because there was one class with several different aged students. Also, in Honduras the teachers and the school climate is laid-back. Meaning that they're not as rigid as we are in the U.S. The teach the students until they understand the skill, they don't have the mindset of "if you get the content you get the content," it's more like you are here to learn so let's all sit down, be quiet and get started. Another big shocker to me was that they kept standing up to sweep or clean or do things like that, they really taking pride in their school. Much different than my current classroom, where my kids are throwing their trash on the floor and leave it there for the next person to pick up. The kids were more eager to learn, they were very appreciative of their education, it whereas I think (in the United States) that is something we take for granted. In Honduras, they were more engaged in lessons, each day they took pride in that they had learned. Even if it was one simple thing and it wasn't so much of "are we learning this for the test" and that is a question I get everyday question. In USA, I get this everyday "is this going to be on the test?" There was none of that in Honduras, there it was just learning for the sake of learning. Which is really, just learning toward mastery and not so much towards the test. So, I liked that they taught for individualized mastery. As for the physical aspects of the class, so we used natural light,

we sat on the floor a lot, we sat the circle did activities on the floor together, as a group It wasn't sitting a straight row look at your desk pick up your pencil it was very much a together time. A come together in unity classroom and I think it made it more engaging. Also, they had decorations and stuff on the wall but they were pretty basic, handmade and either students or teachers obviously put a lot of time into doing it. As I said earlier, they're always cleaning, so, if we were working on a project, say cutting strips of paper and some fell on the floor, the students were constantly getting up to clean their classroom. It took me a minute to get over that. As for technology, they had very limited technology, we didn't even have electricity all the time, so we didn't use a computer. I think one of us one day someone brought in one of our phones and a speaker to play a song on and so they had a TV but we brought a DVD player DVD player to watch an educational movie. That was a treat, so technology was really not reliable. Which was different, in the United States, we're pushed every single day to incorporate technology. Every day you have to incorporate technology into your lessons.

What can you tell me about the differences in curriculum content, and about any integration to include local customs or traditions, between the USA and your host country?

They started out the day with a prayer, it is a Catholic country, started the day with a prayer and then the second-grade teacher went directly into lecture about the importance of keeping your shoes clean, you need to brush your teeth, you need to have a nice appearance, you need to cut your hair, and it was very different. But when maybe you don't have parents around and take care of that, teaching hygiene means it becomes part

of the curriculum. Other things I observed it was very much about being actively engaged in a lesson, about having to be the culture of the classroom. It was more about what are you doing, and not about what I'm telling you to do. About traditions, the format of the day was different than what we have in United States. Like I said before, so they started the prayer. They had the flexibility to not only ensure students mastered the skills, but also to embrace their traditions, they went to mass, they would participate in different celebrations. While we were there, they had an earth day celebration and one of the assignments was to create something out of trash – to recycle and repurpose. The kids received awards. That was pretty cool to see. Also, the students were always trying to share things. So, if the kids maybe got a popsicle for a snack they were always bringing it to us trying to share it with us, that's a cultural thing. I would say that my kids in the U.S. they wouldn't likely share their food with me but more likely, try to take my food. Another thing I liked was that their school day school day shorter. They only attended class until noon. They got out after lunch and then they went home where they had chores to do, they had homework. But during their school day, the teacher will take them out for a few minutes. They had quite a few breaks it was nice because the kids had a moment to reset their brains, they go outside swing for about two minutes and come back inside.

While teaching abroad, how was the classroom structured in terms of instructional practices? And How was teaching different when you were abroad versus the US classroom? – support, curriculum, content, student growth, family or community support?

I saw a lot of instructional practices like, “I do, we do, you do.” That's we would usually practice, we also included an activity not just sitting at a desk with a pencil writing on a piece of paper. It was very different than what we do here and I think a lot of that must do with the freedom to teach towards understanding of skills and not focused on curriculum and pacing guides. I know that they have an end-of-the-year assessment. I feel like maybe we put more emphasis on it or something because it never felt like the teachers were overly stressed out about the test. I didn't hear them say like “I didn't teach that skill, so what are they going do on this test.” Which is something that you hear here all the time. “I have to get to this point on this day so that they'll be prepared for this test.” It wasn't an issue and that gave the Honduran teachers more freedom. The students never mention anything about freaking out about it but, they were overly anxious, to share anything new that they had learned. They were very open to criticism or critique, I guess constructive criticism, if they didn't pronounce something correctly or is they pronounced something slightly wrong, they wanted to know if they got it wrong. It wasn't like in the States where you hear, please don't tell me because I don't want to look bad - it was please tell me because I do want to know so I don't make a mistake again. Another thing I noticed was that for the most part, the teachers were involved in the lessons too. There were quite a few times when the teachers were doing activities with us or sat in the room even if they were grading something looking at something else they were always in there they wanted to go with their students were learning because they wanted to learn. That was okay, they seemed like they were always trying to better themselves as well.

I think it's learning English was important to them. The teachers understood that it was important to bring in English into the classroom. They know that in the real world, there may be some encounter with the English speaker, so that English may not be culturally appropriate in one context, but cultural appropriateness depends on context and they recognize that so I think they understand that the world is bigger than their classroom. I think for the Honduran teachers, they could understand the bigger picture of global learning, where as in my school, some of her teachers tell me I'm not going to teach that, my kids can't relate to it. However, my response is generally, I've got a little introduction to this, maybe all that's all they will ever get, but they might be exposed to this sometime in their lives. I think it just depends on the teacher, in the curriculum some teachers are so focused on teaching the curriculum that they forget to teach. I appreciated how open they were to learning things that may not seem appropriate at the time or necessary to work at the time but it might be necessary in the future

How was teaching different when you were abroad versus the US classroom? – support, curriculum, content, student growth, family or community support?

We always had an assistant in the classroom, which made a huge difference. There was always just another set of hands there to help you. Maybe some kid needs to go to the bathroom and you don't have to stop teaching right now, someone's there to help that kid or maybe some child can't open his glue now this person to help you do that and you can keep teaching. As far as curriculum goes we got to develop around curriculum they told us the kinds of things that they thought would be good for us to teach and we kind of went from there. We had more freedom in the curriculum which was nice because



we got to teach it in whatever way we thought we could be the most effective. Instead of being confined to whatever district/ curriculum/ book says you have to teach. Where you have to do this activity because it says this on this page. I could adapt lessons that I thought the students could get more out of this activity and I think I could teach it better this way. So, some flexibility, lots of flexibility, and I think the students picked up on the fact that I'm enjoying the lesson. With community support and family support, things are different because the kids aren't necessarily living with their families. So, their community is other students and the teachers or their mentors. They may not have families or their families may live far away, so they all learn to depend on each other. I saw a lot of student interaction, they put themselves in kind of the study groups. Nothing that is required but more of, that I know I could benefit from this or that I could learn something from another student, learning life lessons and people skills, and that's good. When talking about curriculum and the content, we did one lesson on transportation. I know that we didn't necessarily really talk about the airplane, so we focus more on things that we knew they would have in the community. That's when the discussions with their teachers came into play, what kinds of things do you have done you think would be beneficial because yes, we are bringing in this new language that may not be culturally appropriate. That is lesson may not be on their level at that moment, but we still want them to be able to relate it. Providing the students with the prior knowledge of something. For example, when I was teaching my school lesson I didn't teach computer lab or art room, they didn't see that in their school, so we adapted to what was culturally appropriate. In Spanish class today, they were asking me I thought you said that this

word meant long is ... now you're saying that we need to say this. So, they were confused on that and you must explain it to them in a different way so it is applicable both in Honduras and in United States.

When you returned to the United States, as you worked through the reflection process, how did you transfer experiences to understanding and did you integrate those experiences into practical lessons (culturally appropriate instructional strategies) in your current, or former classroom(s)? If so, tell me about the implementation of those instructional changes.

So, I think, the biggest thing for me was cultural understandings and it made me really realize some cultural gaps in knowledge. I started to realize the kinds of things that I was told in school versus what I experienced, and then I started looking at my curriculum a different way. I wanted to see what kinds of gaps I could identify in the curriculum and started to develop ways to fill in the missing pieces. So, in February because I could identify some pretty important gaps, I was able to incorporate additional instructional practices and knowledge to fill in those gaps. As far as instructional practices, I use more creative activities, more hands-on stuff. For example, I made them make abolitionist posters for one of their assignment to write Frederick Douglass and I told them that they were trying to get people to join the abolitionist movement just like Frederick Douglass. So, they made abolitionist posters using the same language and all that stuff and so we related back to protests that are going on today. Establishing a relationship between things going on then and for those things are still going on and so we were able to take this new culture this whole time. So, all those things that stuff that I

picked up on there more actively engaged lessons, so what if they're not writing the correct answer and leave one answer blank. They may be able to use this in a real setting. Practical and applicable.

#### Interview Diane

It is March 27 and it's 530 in the afternoon and I'm here with Diane who has agreed to this interview and to answer questions for the research on teaching abroad and what contributes to implementing culturally appropriate instructional practices in the classroom. Diane, thank you for agreeing to this interview and answering these questions and if you have any other questions just let me know. Just to review you understand that participation in this study is voluntary and that you can drop out at any time, you have signed the letter of cooperation, and that this is confidential with you, your school, and principal identities will not be released.

Can you tell me where you are currently teaching?

I am currently teaching at ##### elementary school which is a suburb of Memphis.

Can you tell me about the cultural make up of your classroom?

I have students who are Caucasian, African American, and Asian.

While abroad, what topics/ lessons do/ did you teach?

I taught lower level English, lessons on colors, greetings, shapes, numbers, body parts, just the basics.

While abroad, tell me about your experiences inside the classroom(s)?

I saw a culture of students that were really wanted to be there, not because they were forced to be there. I saw classrooms that included multiple ages and basically, it's just really humbling experience seeing so many kids school. Not their job supposedly, but they chose to do in addition to their everyday work and life. They really wanted to be there, understanding there were a lot of kids, they live in poverty in the second worst country in this hemisphere. A lot of those kids don't have the option to go to school, and some of don't have the option because they need to work up to put food on the table and pay their bills. That the kids might be 12 years old just getting into school just learning how to read, and he's so excited to be learning a letter, learning a word, something that is so simple to us, it is something that you see every day. A lot of them are excited to be there to be able to have an education.

What can you tell me about the differences between the curriculum contents and the integration of teaching strategies to include local customs or traditions, between the USA and your host country?

The United States is very standards-based, everything designed at grade level. There, (in Honduras) I noticed have a lot of flexibility. I noticed they didn't have social promotion, so as I said earlier about the teenager in the second-grade classroom, teachers were really able to meet them where they were and if they were having difficulty with division, the teachers did not move forward. If the students did not understand the teachers made sure the students really understood before moving on. They would only move forward once mastery was obtained. Not like in the United States, where instruction is driven by the pacing guides. Teachers here, teach an inch deep and a mile

wide, in Honduras it was just the opposite. I really liked that. I really want to implement that in my classroom.

While teaching abroad, how was the classroom structured in terms of instructional practices?

I didn't notice that the classroom was structured differently in terms of instructional practices with the physical setting in the classroom. Well they lacked a lot of resources, manipulatives, technology, Internet and computers. Just normal day to day things that our students can't live without, I wasn't really prepared for that, but the fact is that it seemed to work for them. Possibly because the want was there. What was there, was decorated, no air-conditioning, or they had some struggles within the school that really were looked over, and it was just the teachers who were really able to teach. Cut and dry, they could teach what they needed to teach. They could teach without having a lot of interruptions or announcements or computer glitches.

Tell me about the Honduran teacher's perception of engaging and culturally appropriate instruction? What would be some specific examples?

They were meeting the students on their level. They were taught in their home language; the teachers were really respected. It seemed like they were both, interested in their students and knew what needed to be taught. That they both knew their roles well and they could be to work with them in the borders of where the students were and what needed to be taught. Some examples of culturally appropriate instruction would be that they are they were able to teach religion, and they were able to pray at the school, and they were able to go out for little breaks, and provide a meal of rice and beans for

breakfast, that's not something we would like but might be the only meal the students received if they were not living on site.

How was teaching different when you were abroad versus the US classroom? – support, curriculum, content, student growth, family or community support?

They didn't seem to use a lot of data, it was basically what they saw, they would use that information structure the lessons for mastery. They did not use technology very often, of course their families were not involved as many of the students were orphans or lived at the site. So, you didn't have guest readers coming up to help in the classroom. The parents lived in their own communities and worked to provide food for their families and to support their children's education. Apufram seemed to have its own little community with teachers, house moms and others to support the students and provide their own kind of family or community. So, I feel like there was support and the organization give the teachers the freedom to teach what they feel is necessary to pass the end of the year exams and stressed the importance of knowing the material.

Tell me about your cultural awareness outings?

There were different cultural experiences that increased our awareness. The fact that these children come from poverty, increased my awareness to be in tune to what was going on in the students' lives. Day in and day out, I noticed that all the students had clean clothes, they washed their own clothes by hand. That they had all the necessities, everything that they needed but just the basics – two or three pairs of clothes, one pair of shoes, food, shelter, just the basics but they're laughing, appreciative, and still able to get the job done. The students don't let poverty or life situations hinder them from receiving

an education. You're not the only one, you're included in the program, the teachers teach until you understand the material. They really want the students to learn. Here in the United States, you may get scolded for not having your pencil or for bringing your materials or homework to class. But there, the kids are respected and appreciate their education. Having what they need versus the kids in the United States having what they want. The students in Honduras really wanted to be in school and learn, the students were different than those in the United States. One difference is that in Honduras, the kids may not have all the supplies, or technology or even electricity for the day, and they still come to school and work hard. But here, if one of our children did not have electricity for the day, they probably would not be at school or if there was no air-conditioning that day, school would be cancelled. The things we consider day-to-day necessities - having three meals a day that's what it takes to be fed here, in Honduras they were happy with simple things. They were okay if they had a meal a day. Clean water was a privilege to have.

When you returned to the United States, as you worked through the reflection process, how did you transfer experiences to understanding and did you integrate those experiences into practical lessons (culturally appropriate instructional strategies) in your current, or former classroom(s)? If so, tell me about the implementation of those instructional changes.

Mostly be more understanding of the background the culture that people come from. Not just assuming that every child is school ready or will be considered to be school when they are five years old. Understanding that things in their lives may not be as it seems. I try to be a more loving, compassionate, kind, and caring teacher. I try to

understand that not all two kids are the same or have the same problem or background. Those things you know, influence the way how they're able to deal with their day. I just tries to be a person in my classroom that it's not what is the problem but how can I help solve the problem. If there's anything that I can do it can be the smallest thing that really does make a difference in their day. Because they have someone that cares and that's willing to help them, someone with the resources that they need. I can understand the I would have never thought that it would have been an issue that they did but because of this experience, I was affected a little bit deeper, to really understand these kids on a deeper level than just educational level. It's a humbling experience, one that everybody should go through. I think to be culturally aware, that there are just things that go on in other countries and places that we could never understand or experience in the United States. I think whenever you're able to see that perspective you're able to grow as a person, as an educator. But the bottom lines are, that all kids want love, aside from anything else and if you're able to love that child, you're able to educate them. Teaching them that they can learn, and having fun they're going remember and it's going stick with that and so I think just being able to take that out of the experience has really help me to be a better person.

One thing that really stands out in my experience was the gratitude these children had for our teaching. I had this one little girl Alyssa, she really liked this necklace I wore. So, on the last day I gave her the necklace. She cried and cried and cried. Then it really hit me that I have done more there than what I really thought that I was going do. It I really made that connection for me. The other thing that had an impact on me was that the



children were out the open area playing soccer, and there were rocks where they were playing soccer. Without any shoes, playing soccer in the field with rocks and they were so happy so and okay with it. But it's not okay at all, these kids needed to wear shoes. They had school shoes, but didn't want to get those dirty so they played bare footed. These children were happy and content with the bare necessities in life. Their living conditions were so much less than in the U.S., but while at the school, the conditions were so much better than their lives at home. It was disturbing to me, but it's a negative and a positive at the same time. They are so happy and appreciative with so little. From here, I will save this to a word document and I'll send it to you have you look at it make sure that I've accurately describe your responses and thoughts. Feel free to correct them if it's wrong or add something after we're done and then I'll go ahead and put that in the report. Hopefully if we were able to schedule an observation schedule, after I hear back from your district and your principal. we can get into the classroom. Thank you very much.