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An Examination of the Influences of an International Teaching Practicum on the Perspectives and Practices of Participating Teachers

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Education

by

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By

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ABSTRACT

An Examination of the Influences of an International Teaching Practicum on the Perspectives and Practices of Participating Teachers

by

Elizabeth Schramm Sciaky

This study examines the ways in which an international teaching practicum influenced participants' perspectives about teaching, learning and schooling, and the ways that these new or changed perspectives materialized in the participants' teaching practice over the course of twelve months. To understand these influences, participants were given pre- and post- surveys that aimed to examine their intercultural competence, and were interviewed at three points in time after the completion of the international practicum. Their TEP supervisors were also interviewed. Findings revealed the ways in which participants made sense of their experiences abroad, and how the program supported (and possibly hindered) their sensemaking. Sensemaking was connected to changes in the participants' global awareness, critical consciousness, self-concept, and empathy. Participants felt that these personal impacts were related to corresponding changes in their teaching practices. They attempted to emulate their hosts, bring global awareness into their classrooms, and described culturally responsive practices and attitudes. Participants also reported that their international practicums influenced their professional marketability, goals, and decisions.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Teachers of the 21st century are faced with two different, but related opportunities. First, the world has become increasingly global and interconnected. Second, classrooms in the United States are becoming increasingly diverse, with white students expected to be in the minority within the next decade (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). The students of today will have unprecedented access to information about and contact with members of different cultures, at home and abroad (Monge, 1998). With this increased contact and knowledge of one another comes the potential for greater understanding and cooperation between members of different counties and cultures, and the next generation of students needs proper preparation to succeed in this globalized world (Dolby & Rahman, 2008; Moss, Manis & Soppelsa, 2012; Quezada, 2010).

However, challenges exist that will make it difficult to realize this potential in American classrooms. Teachers in the United States are overwhelmingly from non-minority, middle-class, and monolingual backgrounds (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Feistritzer, 2011; Boser, 2014). Many teachers who fall into this demographic category (white, middle-class, monolingual) have had few substantial interactions with anyone from outside their own cultural context and hold ethnocentric worldviews that they have not been taught to confront. They are thus unprepared to serve as culturally responsive teachers for their minority students (Sleeter, 2001; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Marx & Moss, 2011; Cushner & Mahon, 2002).

Such teachers, however well-intentioned they might be, often reinforce a status-quo that harms their minority students (Bradfield-Kreider, 1999). While teachers often prefer to teach in communities that are familiar to them, a large portion of the jobs that

are available are in urban schools, which often serve a higher concentration of ethnically and linguistically diverse children (Quezada, 2004). Their lack of preparation for multicultural environments is apparent when these teachers accept positions in multicultural classrooms and then subsequently have very challenging, unsuccessful experiences (Sleeter, 2001). This is likely at least partially responsible for the well-documented challenge of high teacher-turnover, which disproportionately (and negatively) impacts achievement at diverse schools (Janerette & Fifield, 2005).

Study focus, purpose and importance

This study will examine one method for better preparing teachers for a diverse and globalized classroom: international teaching experiences for student teachers. These experiences have the potential to help preservice teachers become more flexible and adaptable, more interculturally competent, and more culturally responsive teachers to students from minority backgrounds (Quezada, 2004; Tang & Choi, 2004; Marx & Moss, 2011). Research suggests that these experiences are often successful, but they also come with several drawbacks, including the expense and time-consuming nature of implementation (Walters, Garii & Walters, 2009; Quezada, 2004; Mahon, 2007). Thus, it is important that researchers continue to examine the outcomes of international field experiences, and to uncover what factors contribute to (or detract from) desirable outcomes.

Research examining established international teaching programs has demonstrated that such programs consistently produce desirable and powerful changes in the outlooks and ideas of their participants, including but not limited to self-awareness, cultural awareness, and self-efficacy (Stachowski & Sparks, 2007; Cushner & Mahon,

2002). However, little is known about how long these impacts last, and in what form they manifest once the preservice teacher is responsible for their own classroom.

Method of inquiry

To explore the outcomes of international teaching experiences, I conducted a thematic network analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001) on data collected from a series of semi-structured interviews conducted by myself and another researcher with individuals who participated in an international teaching practicum. Interviews took place at three different points after the conclusion of the practicum up to one year after the conclusion of the international field experience, and focused on the changes in perspectives *and* classroom practices participating teachers felt took place as a result of their experience. Their responses were triangulated with the observations provided by their U.S. supervisors. They were interviewed three months after candidates returned, and had extensive opportunities to witness the impacts of the international experience. Interviewees (both participants and supervisors) were also asked to explain what factors supported and challenged any growth they reported, and how the program either facilitated or hindered this growth. In addition to interviews, I also administered a survey meant to assess cultural awareness and intercultural competence—the My Cultural Awareness Profile, or "myCAP" (Marx & Moss, 2011b)—before and after the participants' international teaching experiences, in order to gain insight into the development of their cultural awareness. In doing this, I hope to contribute to the growing body of literature on the impacts of international teaching practicums, in theory and in practice.

Study boundaries

In this study, I will make use of and examine constructs (for example, culturally relevant pedagogy, and intercultural competence) that appear in the literature to describe outcomes and processes that are associated with international experiences for teachers. However, it is important to be clear that this study is not an attempt to measure any of these constructs. Although the My Cultural Awareness Profile (Marx & Moss, 2011b) was administered both before and after departure, the sample size of participants who completed both surveys was far too small to be suitable for inferential statistical analysis (though in some cases, their responses are illustrative of their personal development and are used to contribute to qualitative analysis).

Furthermore, while this study aims gain a better understanding of the ways that perspectives developed during and after an international practicum translate into classroom practice, the participants will have eighteen weeks of student teaching and four months of post-graduate employment at the time of their final interviews, and it is understood that the participants will only have had a limited time to try and put their ideas into practice. It is also understood that some changes seen in their perspectives and practices could be due in part or in full to experiences they had during the remainder of their TEP program, although attempts were made to determine which experiences they found to be influential.

Terminology

For the purposes of this study, I use the term "culturally responsive" to describe educators and educational practices that have been shown to support minority students. Culturally Responsive Teaching is defined as:

> using the cultures, experiences, and perspectives of African, Native, Latino, and Asian American students as filters through which to teach them academic knowledge and skills. Other critical elements of culturally responsive teaching are unpacking unequal distributions of power and privilege, and teaching students of color cultural competence about themselves and each other. (Gay & Kirkland, 2003, p. 181)

A culturally responsive teacher has the following characteristics: 1) they understand that one's culture influences perceptions of reality, and they recognize that different perceptions are valid; 2) they view cultural diversity as a resource, rather than a deficit or a challenge; 3) they consider themselves responsible for instigating social justice in their schools; 4) they understand how students construct knowledge and how to promote that construction; 5) they know about the lives of their students; 6) they incorporate what they know about their students into their lessons in order to build on what they already know (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

In order to become culturally responsive, a teacher must first develop a "critical consciousness" – an understanding of their own culture, how it influences the way that they see the world, and their role and privileges in society. In their experiences with teaching primarily white, middle-class, monolingual, female teachers, Gay and Kirkland (2003) found that preservice teachers struggle to engage in the self-reflection necessary to develop a critical consciousness, and use avoidance tactics (for example, remaining silent during challenging discussions, or attempting to position themselves as colorblind). The researchers argue that, while guided conversations and lessons in the classroom can help

develop a preservice teacher's critical conscious and self-reflection skills, real world practice with these skills and perspectives is necessary (Gay & Kirkland, 2003).

Another term that frequently appears in research about internationalization in education is "intercultural competence", which can be defined as, "effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations (Deardorff, 2011, p.66)." To assess the skills and mindsets necessary for successful interactions between members of different cultures, researchers have used a variety of terms over the years, for example, cross-cultural awareness, effective intergroup communication, intercultural sensitivity, etc. (Fantini, 2009). Deardorff (2011) points out that the choice of term is often a matter of which discipline is using the term (for example, those in engineering prefer "global competence"). In recent years, attempts to create consensus on a definition of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006) and to develop strategies for assessing this competence or its individual components (Deardorff, 2011; Hammer 2012; Fantini, 2009) have enhanced its usefulness to researchers and helped it to gain traction in the field of study abroad in particular.

The term intercultural competence is useful because of its emphasis on both internal and external outcomes for communicators, and its portrayal of the interplay between knowledge and comprehension, attitudes, and skills as an ongoing process (Deardorff, 2006). However, some researchers prefer to investigate the related, but distinct, term intercultural sensitivity (Marx & Moss, 2011; Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003). This is defined as, "the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003, p. 422)." While it could be argued that this quality could be encompassed by Deardorff's (2006) description of the

knowledge and comprehension aspect of intercultural competence (which includes cultural self-awareness and a deep understanding of another culture), intercultural sensitivity has also proven to be a useful construct to be examined independently of intercultural competence.

Gains in intercultural competence are said to be driven by gains in intercultural sensitivity (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003; DeJaeghere & Zhang, 2008). As Cushner and Mahon (2002) put it, "Specifically, as people's ability to understand difference increases, so does their ability to negotiate a variety of worldviews (p. 50)." Like culturally responsive teaching, sustained and meaningful interactions with members of another culture, rather than lessons about culture taught in classrooms, are thought to be the most powerful catalysts for the development of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2011; Perry & Southwell, 2011), although without proper critical guidance, contact is not always sufficient to bring about transformation. Simply providing opportunities for preservice teachers to interact with students from different backgrounds will not ensure that the teachers will take on an ethnorelative perspective (recognizing that one's culture exists in the context of other cultures, rather than as the "main" culture), or adapt themselves to the cultural norms of their students (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003; Bennett, 2009).

In my view, the constructs of culturally responsive teaching and intercultural competence/sensitivity are connected. In order to become more culturally responsive in their teaching, preservice teachers may benefit from activities designed to help the development of the skills, attitudes, and knowledge described by intercultural competence. To demonstrate intercultural competence, one should be able to think,

communicate and behave in appropriate and effective ways outside of one's own cultural context or with members of another culture (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003; Fantini, 2009; Deardorff, 2011). Furthermore, one must develop certain internal characteristics, such as flexibility, an ethnorelative (as opposed to ethnocentric) view of situations, empathy, and adaptability (Deardorff, 2006). Such skills and attitudes seem like they would be conducive to culturally responsive teaching.

The research on international student teaching experiences makes use of several different terms to label these experiences, for example, "overseas student teaching program" (Mahon, 2007), "international student teaching programs and consortiums" (Quezada, 2004), "international field experience" (Bradfield-Kreider, 1999), etc. However, in general, there is little useful distinction between any terms encountered in the literature to describe these experiences. In fact, most researchers do not adhere to one term at all, frequently switching between synonymous labels within their own work. For the purposes of this study, I will primarily employ the term "international teaching practicum". This term was chosen to convey to readers that program in this study placed a heavy emphasis on *teaching* experience in an international context.

Summary

International teaching practicums provide a context in which preservice teachers have the opportunity for meaningful, sustained, and immersive experiences within another culture by placing them in the center of an institution that holds a critical role in many societies: the education system. Such experiences have the potential to help teachers develop the skills and qualities associated with intercultural competence and

culturally responsive pedagogy. By gaining these attitudes and competencies, teachers will be more able to provide equitable educational experience for *all* students.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

Cross-cultural field placements, in which preservice teachers are placed in a community (domestically or abroad) where they are a cultural minority, have been shown to have a positive impact on teachers' understanding of the importance of their students' various cultural backgrounds, and have lead them to think more about the ways that the local community and cultures can be treated as valuable resources in their classrooms (Sleeter, 2001). During field placements abroad, participants often become more flexible and adaptable in the classroom, less ethnocentric, and more confident in their intercultural and professional competence (Walter, Garii & Walters, 2009). Student teaching abroad provides important opportunities for participants to examine their own beliefs in a new context, helping them to break out of ineffective patterns and behaviors by illuminating new possibilities (Cushner & Mahon, 2002).

International experiences and meaningful cross-cultural interactions have even been shown to have an impact on teacher educators. In her examination of the lived experiences of 80 teacher educators who were considered successful at incorporating multicultural and global education into their programs, Merryfield (2000) found that living abroad was a significant influence on their perspectives about culture and justice and their missions as teacher educators, particularly for white teachers: "Many of the white teacher educators in the study pointed to their living in another culture as a critical step towards their understanding what being "different" from the majority of people in the country entails in one's daily life (p. 437)."

International field experiences are components of the teacher's formal teacher education in which they spend a portion of their field placement in a school abroad. Typically they have two phases, the first being a five to eight week placement in local school and the second being a five to eight week placement abroad, although sometimes there is a third round of student teaching after participants return to the their home countries (Quezada, 2004). These programs vary considerably in their logistics, such as program length, integration into the broader requirements of the teacher education program, pre-departure preparation, expected activities and duties while abroad, and the roles of personnel abroad (Tang & Choi, 2004). However, the overarching goals of these placements are similar: to prepare teachers to meet the demands of increasingly diverse classrooms in an increasingly interdependent world by having them engage in cross-cultural experiences situated in a culture or country that differs from their own (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Tang & Choi, 2004; Walters, Garii & Walters, 2009; Mahon, 2007).

The literature on abroad experiences reflects the notion that the primary mechanism for developing culturally responsive teaching practices and intercultural competence is meaningful interactions with members of another culture, which provide opportunities for self-reflection and taking on new perspectives. While an international field experience ensures that preservice teachers will have plenty of interactions in the school setting, how can a program ensure that those interactions are meaningful, and stimulate the critical reflection necessary for personal growth? Also, what kind of long-term impacts do these experiences have on a preservice teacher's teaching strategies once they have entered the field? Research conducted on several different teacher education programs reveals some of the strategies employed by teacher education programs for

maximizing the abroad experience, and some evidence of the advantages and disadvantages of these approaches.

Common methods of inquiry

Research on international field placements is often based on individual accounts from participants, program evaluations, and perceptions of educators from the host schools (Devillar & Jiang, 2009). Data sources often include ethnographic interviews with participants, participant responses to surveys, and/or content analysis of reflective journals kept by participants. In some cases, researchers engage in on-site observations in the international context, or employ models such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman, 2003) or the related Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (Bennett, 1993). These models attempt to measure teachers' intercultural sensitivity (Perry & Southwell, 2011; Fantini, 2009), which is thought to be an indicator of their capacity for intercultural competence (DeJaeghere & Zhang, 2008). However, most studies encountered in this review do not attempt to assess these constructs quantitatively, describing the degrees to which they have exhibited intercultural competence or intercultural sensitivity. More often, they are satisfied to look for evidence of these developments through qualitative analysis of surveys, interviews, journals, and field observations.

Unlike recent research on the impacts of study abroad programs, for example Jochum (2014), Sutton and Rubin (2010), and Murphy, Sahakyan, Yong-Yi, and Sieloff Magnan (2014), the research reviewed for this study on international practicum for teachers did not include comparison groups of preservice teachers who did not travel abroad. This means that any reported increases in skills or attitudes after completion of an

international practicum are only relative to the skills and attitudes participants believed they had before they departed on their international practicums.

Consistencies and questions

The data from such studies is generally qualitative in nature, and provides rich insights into the experiences of student teachers. The findings of these studies are very consistent, even when looking across different programs, methodologies, or long stretches of time. Studies consistently show that participating student teachers grow professionally (reporting self confidence, self-efficacy, flexibility, and adaptability in their classroom practice) and personally (undertaking an examination of their own culture, becoming more aware of other cultures, adopting an interculturally sensitive, ethnorelative, empathetic outlook), and emerge with a greater appreciation of difference and diversity (Stachowski & Sparks, 2007; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998; Quezada, 2004; Cushner & Mahon, 2010). These findings have powerful implications for teacher education programs seeking to produce more culturally responsive teachers: "Evidence from researchers and practitioners suggests that all teachers should have the opportunity to live and study in diverse and unfamiliar environments as a means of enhancing school programs and student learning (Walters, Garii & Walters, 2009, p.154)."

Yet, there are limitations to this body of data. First, although there are some exceptions (for example Tang & Choi, 2004; Lee, 2011), research on this topic tends to focus on the experiences of western (usually American) students. This limits the generalizability of the results, although Tang and Choi's (2004) findings do suggest interesting parallels between the experiences of American student teachers and the experiences of their own student teachers in Hong Kong.

Second, while most researchers agree on the benefits of student teaching abroad, it is not clear in the research which program models are most effective at delivering those benefits. For example, while some researchers believe that the feelings of isolation experienced by student teachers serve as the impetus for their development of greater self-efficacy (Cushner & Mahon, 2010; Quezada, 2004), others suggest that too much isolation can be alienating and discouraging for candidates (Walters, Garii & Walters, 2009). Also, while some suggest that even relatively short international field placements can be beneficial (Stachowski & Sparks, 2007), there is little discussion in the research about how long the ideal international field placement would be. This is in sharp contrast with the literature on study abroad programs, in which the benefits and drawbacks of different program lengths are explored and discussed at length, with researchers generally favoring longer stays abroad (Obst, Bhandari & Witherell, 2007; Dwyer, 2004).

Furthermore, there has been little investigation of the, "knowledge, skills and dispositions university students have prior to arriving in their host country, as well as after their return to their home country (Quezada, 2004, p.458)." Quezada (2004) cautions that programs need to select and train candidates carefully to avoid "educational tourism", where the candidate may be more motivated by the chance to travel than the chance to learn. While acknowledging the immersion programs can be transformative for preservice teachers, some researchers have pointed out that many questions still exist about the best ways to structure and operate these programs, and what impact they will ultimately have on their participants once they enter the field (Sleeter, 2001; Tang & Choi, 2004).

While the short-term impacts on participants are fairly consistent across studies, less is currently known about the long-term impacts of international teaching practicums (Quezada, 2004; Devillar & Jiang, 2012; Hauerwas et al., 2015). Surveys and interviews conducted with participants often take place either during or shortly after the international field experience (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Stachwoski & Mahan, 1998; Tang & Choi, 2004; Bradfield-Kreider, 1999; Marx & Moss, 2011). For the purposes of this study, "long-term" refers to research that connects with participants after they have graduated from their programs and become practicing teachers.

Existing research on these longer-term impacts suggests that international practicums continue to influence participants after they make the transition from preservice to practicing teacher, although the influence is not always as powerful as the program may have desired (Stachowski & Sparks, 2007; DeVillar and Jiang; 2012; Roose, 2001; Hauerwas et al. 2015). Such accounts from practicing teachers often describe a mix of attitudes and traits teachers feel that they have gained (flexibility, adaptability, appreciation for other cultures, etc.) and actual practical examples from the classroom, though the emphasis is usually on attitudes. Studies examining the ways in which developments in perspectives and competencies translate into classroom practice are scarce, with DeVillar and Jiang (2012) asserting that, "This is an area that has received scant empirical research attention in the student teaching abroad literature. (p. 19)" Roose's (2001) suggestion that researchers observe teachers to gain a better sense of what these changes look like in the classroom remains relevant.

Who participates?

Studies that disclosed the demographics of their participants almost invariably reported a majority of white females (Roose, 2001, Devillar & Jiang, 2009; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Bradfield-Kreider, 1999; Mahon & Cushner, 2010), which reflects the population of teachers in the United States. However, this kind of representation was not necessarily the intention of all programs. As Mahon & Cushner (2010) explained, their program (a consortium involving 15 United States universities) was open to everyone, and everyone was encouraged to go. In spite of efforts to minimize the costs, international field experiences often pose an additional – and considerable – expense to prospective teachers (Mahon, 2007), which may discourage non-affluent applicants.

However, according to Walters, Garii & Walters (2009), the biggest barrier to the more widespread use of international field placements is apathy on the part of preservice teachers. In their 2009 review of the literature on international field placements, they point out that most Americans (including preservice teachers) are not international travelers, and may not be open to such an adventurous new experience. They suggest offering placements that are foreign but still familiar (such as Central Europe, or the Mediterranean) in order to get such teachers comfortable with the idea of having an abroad experience. This idea has its benefits and its drawbacks.

Importance of context

While some researchers do not explore the differential impacts of different international contexts (for example, Cushner & Mahon, 2002), others have given thoughtful consideration to what kind of an impact different contextual factors might have on the international experience. Stachowski and Mahon (1998) examined two different Cultural Immersion Projects run out of the same university. One sent candidates

to do a field placement in a Navajo reservation, and the other sent candidates abroad (UK, Australia, New Zealand, or India).

They observed that, while both groups reported having substantial, meaningful interactions with community members, preservice teachers who did their field placements in a Navajo reservation seemed to experience more dramatic shifts in perspective. The researchers attributed this to two contextual differences. First, while community involvement and service learning were components in both programs (as a means of facilitating meaningful engagement with the host culture), the student teachers who lived in the Navajo reservation stayed in on-campus dorms, while the student teachers who chose international placements stayed with host families. While host families have in some cases been shown to be very effective at providing authentic experiences in the host culture (DeVillar & Jiang, 2009; Tang & Choi, 2004), the dorms inhabited by the preservice teachers at the Navajo reservation gave them nearly constant access to a variety of community members. A homestay, by comparison, did not expose the international placement students to as many new people. Second, the researchers suggested that perhaps the Navajo community was actually more culturally "different" (they did not elaborate on precisely what that meant) to a white preservice teacher than some of the more westernized foreign placements, and that the degree of cultural difference may have inspired more reflection in participants.

The notion that greater cultural difference in a host environment leads to a more powerful experience is supported by DeVillar and Jiang (2009). In their study, they surveyed, interviewed, observed, and analyzed the journals of preservice teachers who participated in placements in Belize, China or Mexico. The researchers took into

consideration contextual factors, such as whether the placement school was public or private, multicultural or relatively homogenous, or affluent/low-income. Their findings echoed those of other studies; teachers learned to think more critically about their own cultures, felt more emotionally prepared to become teachers, and expressed greater appreciation for diversity. However, the researchers noticed that student teachers that did their placements in the more multi-cultural and low income schools showed greater depth of reflection in their responses, and also seemed to think the most about how their experience would impact their teaching in the future. The researchers theorized that perhaps the challenges encountered in these environments – watching children cope with poverty – had pushed the student teachers out of a more tourist-like mentality (DeVillar & Jiang, 2009).

While there may be benefits to sending preservice teachers to more culturally different, and perhaps more challenging, international contexts, there can also be disadvantages to taking this approach. First, as Walters, Garii, & Walters (2009) pointed out, experiences in very unfamiliar locations might intimidate student teachers and prevent them from participating. Second, when a candidate is in an environment where they cannot (for linguistic or cultural reasons) fully engage with the local community, they may become overwhelmed in their isolation, and adopt negative attitudes toward members of the host culture (Quezada, 2004). American student teachers can still learn from a cultural immersion in an English-speaking country, so long as the program is well designed and promotes frequent and meaningful contact with elements of the local culture that might cause dissonance. In their case study of an American student teacher who engaged in a field placement in London, Marx and Moss (2011a) demonstrated that

their American subject did, in fact, struggle to understand the local culture, and through the help of a cultural guide (described in more detail below), was able to make great gains in her intercultural sensitivity.

Importance of reflection and a cultural guide

Reflection on new experiences is considered an important element of critical consciousness (Stachowski & Sparks, 2007; Gay & Kirkland, 2003). While researchers and teacher education programs have employed reflective writing to stimulate critical thinking (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998; DeVillar & Jiang, 2009), Marx and Moss's (2011) case study demonstrates the importance of candid discussions with a cultural insider to the preservice teacher's growing awareness of her own beliefs and prejudices. Having a space and time where she was compelled to ask questions and voice concerns made it impossible for the student teacher in this study to be a passive observer, or remain limited to her own (possibly flawed) interpretations of what she witnessed in a new cultural context (Marx & Moss, 2011a). Findings from research on study abroad programs suggest that a "cultural mentor" can often make or break the abroad experience: "…the presence or absence of a cultural mentor who meets frequently with students may be the single most important intervention that one can make in student intercultural learning abroad (Vande Berg, 2009, p. 21)."

Bradfield-Kreider's (1999) research demonstrated an interesting twist on the cultural guide as a facilitator of learning. Her study looked at the experiences of eleven monocultural (white) student teachers who completed an international field placement in Mexico, where they experienced what it was like to be cultural and linguistic outsiders. Data, in the form of field notes, journal entries, and interviews, were collected by faculty

members who also participated in the immersion experience. Student teachers initially reported feeling helpless, marginalized and isolated from community members in Mexico. However, the faculty served as facilitators, helping them to develop relationships and connections to the Mexican community. The results were powerful. Similar to the participant in Marx & Moss's (2011a) case study, the preservice teachers in this study reported that they were now aware of the underlying racism in some of their previously held beliefs, and were much more observant about the racism that exists in the United States (Bradfield-Kreider, 1999). This was significant, given that prior to the abroad experience, these individuals had expressed "colorblind" ideologies and ignorance about the continued, pervasive existence of racism in American society.

The role of faculty in this program was critical for two reasons. First, without the help of faculty, it is uncertain whether or not the student teachers (who reportedly had very little interaction with members of different cultures before the field experience) would have been able to move past their isolation and form connections on their own. Second, the experience of serving as a cultural guide helped faculty members to, "… benefit from continually reconstructing our cultural identities and our roles as educators and cultural workers, confronting biases and blind spots, and filling in the gaps in our knowledge base (Bradfield-Kreider, 1999, p.31)." Faculty members with experiential knowledge of multicultural experiences have been connected to successful efforts to teach preservice teachers about diversity and equity in the United States (Merryfield, 2000). Involving faculty in international field experiences, therefore, may have benefits for both student teachers and the teacher education program.

Evidence of culturally relevant practices

While many studies have found evidence of attitudes and perspectives that are suggestive of intercultural sensitivity, intercultural competence, and intentions to become culturally relevant instructors, few studies have looked beyond the time spent in a teacher education program to see how these attitudes emerge in practice once participating teachers are given their own classrooms. Bradfield-Kreider (1999) and Tang and Choi (2004) both found that the learning experienced by the preservice teachers in their respective studies was unlikely to translate into their teaching, in spite of the fact that they reported having powerful experiences abroad. Tang and Choi (2004) suggested that the program they studied did not have enough supports in place to help student teachers make connections between what they learned in their international placements and their placements at home in Hong Kong. The student teachers in their study reported that they considered their field placement to be very beneficial, but that it felt like something that was completely separate from the rest of their teacher education program.

Bradfield-Kreider's (1999) findings were similar. Although student teachers had powerful, transformative experiences, they discovered that family members, friends and colleagues were unreceptive to hearing about or discussing racism, and continued to engage in passive or overtly racist behavior. Although this angered the student teachers, they were unwilling to break ties with the rest of their social world, and reluctantly became silent, rather than pushing the issue. Only one student teacher was able to avoid this fate and continue her learning about issues surrounding race, racism and social justice. The difference was that, rather than silence herself around old friends, she found new friends and faculty on campus who were willing to engage in valuable critical discussions and work together to promote equity. Bradfield-Kreider (1999) described this

as a “critical community.” The faculty coordinators for this program learned from the experience of this student, and have made an attempt to build safe, critical communities into the re-entry activities of participating student teachers.

Although the previous examples show the potential limitations of international field placement impacts, the following studies show more promising results. In their 30-year investigation of an overseas teaching program (the same one examined in Stachowshi & Mahan, 1998), Stachowski and Sparks (2007) have accumulated years worth of program evaluations, as well as follow-up surveys administered to program alumni one year after the completion of their program. Sixty-six participants who completed a 2004-05 practicum responded to this one-year follow-up survey. The researchers analyzed these 66 one-year follow-up surveys, and found that respondents reported increased confidence and self-efficacy, greater flexibility as instructors, and positive attitudes about multicultural education as outcomes of their experiences. In particular, respondents described the positive influence of the program’s emphasis on community service and community involvement. “With topics ranging from youth culture to service learning, the message sent is that professional field experiences abroad, combined with assignments that require community participation and reports that demand critical reflection, result in new learning and related insights that move well beyond the classroom sphere, although which may have significant implications for classroom practice (Stachowski & Sparks, 2007, p.122).” Where these findings fall short is in their ability to make a direct connection between what was learned abroad and actual classroom practices.

DeVillar and Jiang (2012) provide an example of a study that focused on the transference of knowledge and attitudes learned in the international placement into teaching practices in the domestic context. The researchers interviewed and observed the classrooms of ten teachers who had at some point in the recent past (within the last six months to five years) participated in an international field placement in China, Belize or Mexico. All of these teachers were white, and they all taught culturally and linguistically diverse students in their U.S. classrooms. DeVillar and Jiang (2012) found that the teachers engaged in culturally responsive teaching practices. They reported an awareness and appreciation of diversity, and they were willing to share their own experiences with students in order to build bridges and foster relationships. They also factored their diverse students' cultures into their curriculum (DeVillar & Jiang, 2012).

These findings echoed those of Roose (2001), who interviewed seven alumni of an international teaching practicum, all of whom were white and female, and had been teaching between six months and three years in U.S. schools. Participants reported greater awareness of the role of culture in teaching and schools, knowledge of what it felt like to be the "other" and attentiveness to students who might feel that way in their classrooms, and a tendency to be more creative and take risks. They also described culturally responsive practices, such as bringing more material about different cultures into their classrooms (and helping their colleagues to do the same), paying attention to and celebrating their students' individual needs and learning styles, and seeing themselves as part of a larger movement of international teachers. While participants provided examples of bringing different content into their classrooms, or forging relationships in their own community (or the international community), Roose (2001)

remarked that, “actions are easier to observe than to explain,” and suggested that a study involving observations of classroom practices would be useful for understanding the practical outcomes of international teaching practicums (p. 47).

A more recent study was conducted by Hauerwas et al. (2015), who examined the experiences of nine white, female preservice teachers during and after an international practicum in Italy that was part of a semester abroad program. Data came from group interviews, personal written reflections, and the myCAP survey (Marx & Moss, 2011b), and continued until 16 months after the experience, with the intention of uncovering any influence on the participants’ intercultural competence and culturally responsive teaching. In many ways, their findings resembled previous studies; participants became less ethnocentric, more resourceful and willing to try new things, and developed in their understanding of the influences of culture on the classroom.

However, the findings revealed that this growth was not immediate, but ongoing, with participants exhibiting change and growth at different points in time during data collection. Researchers learned that their participants still struggled to see themselves as cultural, and sometimes resorted to teaching strategies that minimized difference in the classroom (culturally “neutral” curriculum) rather than acknowledge and celebrate it. They believed that participants needed more support in processing their experience upon re-entry in order to continue developing their new perspectives (Hauerhaus et al., 2015).
Though these findings are promising evidence of the impact international field placements can have on teachers in the long term, the small sample size and the variable amount of time that had passed since the international field placement should make one cautious about generalizing these results. Furthermore, it is not clear what aspects of the

program were connected to the greatest gains in culturally relevant practices and ideologies (homestays, location, etc.). Research in the area of knowledge transference is still sparse, and further research on this topic should be undertaken (Quezada, 2004; DeVillar & Jiang, 2012).

Understanding the sensemaking process

In addition to understanding the impacts that an international teaching practicum can have on a participant's teaching, researchers are also interested in understanding what kinds of experiences facilitate intercultural learning. Much has been written about the power of immersion in a new community and culture, especially one in which the preservice teachers are ethnic and/or linguistic minorities. In such situations, individuals are pushed out of their comfort zones and placed in situations where they must examine different ways of doing things and confront their biases (Cushner, 2007; Merryfield, 2000; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998; Quezada, 2004; Cushner & Mahon, 2010). In particular, preservice teachers often report experiencing "disorienting experiences" - experiences of cultural difference that made the participants feel uncertain or uncomfortable. These experiences with prompt participants to take a step back and practice critical reflection (Trilokekar and Kukar, 2011).

While there is an apparent connection between the experience of immersion and intercultural growth, less is known about the ways in which preservice teachers make sense of their experiences abroad, both while abroad and upon return. "Sense-making" is concerned with the ways in which an individual placed in a new situation finds meaning in an experience – "How they construct what they construct, why, and with what effects" (Weick, 1995, p. 4). In other words, it is, "how we structure the unknown so as to be able

to act in it" (Ancona, 2012). A person engaged in sensemaking has encountered an unfamiliar experience or perspective, and must find a way to integrate it into her understanding of the world. She needs to find a way to name what had previously been absent from her schema, so that she can discuss it with others. It is like trying to understand the rules of a new game.

Researchers have documented a few mechanisms by which preservice teachers are given opportunities to make sense of their experiences while abroad. Common examples include discussions with cultural guides, home stays or mandatory community involvement that provides opportunities for conversations with members of the host community, assignments that include a reflective writing component, and informational pre-departure meetings and/or seminars (Marx & Moss, 2011; Stachowski & Sparks, 2007' Stachowski & Mahan, 1998; Lee, 2011; DeVillar & Jiang, 2010). However, the manner in which participants completing international teaching practicums take up these opportunities and make sense of their experience is a subject that has been underexplored in the literature (Hauerwas, Skawinski & Ryan, 2015), particularly with regards to re-entry.

Sensemaking is like cartography - to get through uncharted territory, one must wander, and from those wanderings, create a map. Except, this "map" might help a person get around in more than just one location, and can be tested and refined in "locations" that look similar (Acuna, 2012). From their new, and perhaps sometimes disorienting, experiences teaching abroad, preservice teachers must create such a map in order to understand what they have seen and apply what they have learned. While much of this process is necessarily internal, a failure to provide external support for the

sensemaking process can lead to participants seeing their experience abroad as something entirely separate from the rest of their teacher training, or too difficult to bring into their lives and practices (Tang & Choi, 2004; Bradfield-Kreider, 1999). A better understanding of the ways in which a teacher education program can facilitate a preservice teacher's sensemaking process, both abroad and upon return, would have implications for the ways that international teaching practicums should be designed.

Proposed contributions

This research contributes to the understanding of the benefits of international teaching practicums, by exploring which aspects of the international experience drive perspective changes among candidates, and how to better facilitate positive, interculturally competent and culturally responsive developments. Furthermore, the study contributes to the gap in the literature regarding the ways in which knowledge and attitudes learned in the international field placement and brought into the candidates' classroom practices once they have their own classrooms. To investigate these areas, I answered the following research questions:

1. In what ways do candidates make sense of their international experience, both while abroad and upon their return?
2. What kinds of challenges do candidates face while trying to make sense of their international experience abroad and upon return, and how do they overcome these challenges?
3. In what ways did the candidates feel that the international teaching practicum supported or hindered their intercultural and professional learning?

4. In what ways, if any, does the international teaching practicum influence the participants as teachers, in terms of their perspectives on teaching, learning or schooling?
5. In what ways (if any) do candidates bring their new or changed perspectives into their practice? In what ways were they supported or challenged in this effort?
6. In what ways are any new/changed perspectives and practices related to intercultural competence and/or culturally responsive teaching?
7. In what ways do the candidates feel that the abroad experience may have influenced their professional goals and decisions?

Chapter 3: Method

Research Approach

This study investigated the outcomes of an international teaching practicum on the perspectives and teaching practices of participating preservice teachers and the sensemaking process that they underwent to facilitate these developments. Due in part to the small sample size and relatively brief timescale (the program under investigation is only in its second year of existence), a qualitative approach relying primarily on semi-structured interviews was deemed to be the most appropriate and effective method of investigation.

The Program

The international teaching practicums under examination in this study were part of a pilot program undertaken by a Teacher Education Program (TEP) in an effort to internationalize their curriculum. The Teacher Education Program is an accelerated post-baccalaureate program operating out of a graduate school of education at one of the University of California's public research universities. In thirteen months, candidates can earn a teaching credential in elementary, secondary, or special education, as well as an optional Master's degree in education.

The Program is rigorous. In addition to coursework, which takes place in the evenings, candidates spend their days engaged in field-work throughout the entire academic year. The candidates do their student teaching in K-12 classrooms composed of mainly white or Latino/a students in partner schools where the population of second language learners ranges from 25% to 80%. The populations of these classrooms reflect the demographics of the state of California; according to the most recent census (2013),

38.4% of Californians identify as Hispanic or Latino, and the California Department of Education (2014) reported that 53% of California public school students identified as Hispanic or Latino during the 2013-14 school year. It is critically important that teachers are prepared to serve this half of their student population. The Teacher Education Program views the diversity of the community a rich and valuable resource for the preservice teachers; the program considers educational equity for diverse groups of students to be one of its top priorities.

International Exchange Program

The international teaching practicum was conceived of as part of the participating school of education's efforts to internationalize. Program organizers identified three partner institutions and communities in Singapore, Switzerland and Denmark and designed the international practicum collaboratively with their counterparts abroad. The initiation of the program was suggested by the TEP program's international partners, who were interested in sending some of their student teachers on international teaching practicums in the United States. Ultimately, three partner universities joined the project, leading to three different destinations for United States student teachers.

It was determined that the United States preservice teachers should travel to their host countries for the month of January. January was chosen for two reasons. First, it fell right in between the participants' two domestic field placements, and minimized the amount of class time that they would miss. Second, this would give the student teachers the opportunity to student teach before their international practicums so that they would not be quite as overwhelmed by the novelty of it abroad. Plus, upon return, they would have the chance to intellectually and emotionally process their experiences, as well as

place some of what they learned abroad into practice, in a second field placement under the guidance of faculty and supervisors.

Organizers recognized the importance of providing the support that the international teacher candidates (ITCs) would need to successfully teach abroad, as well as make sense of their experiences in a new environment. Structurally, the program supported ITCs by outlining clear guidelines for mentoring and evaluation on the part of the host country's cooperating teachers and university supervisors. Support also took the form of guided self-reflection; ITCs were expected to write weekly journal entries, in which they responded to prompts about the people and the practices they encountered abroad. Host cooperating teachers and supervisors were meant to read and respond to journal entries, serving as a "cultural guide" for participants (Marx & Moss, 2011). Finally, to keep the ITCs from getting too far behind in the program's curriculum, they were given coursework at the beginning of the experience that was intended to be completed before they returned to the United States.

The international teaching practicum began at the approximate mid-point of the Teacher Education Program, toward the end of their winter breaks in early January of 2014, and lasted for four weeks. All candidates had already completed their first seventeen-week-long student teaching placement in a local school and were expected to resume a second student teaching placement of similar duration in the United States shortly after returning from their international practicums. The timing of the program afforded the ITCs the opportunity to teach in classrooms before, during and after the international practicum.

Participants

The international practicum attracted considerable interest in its first year, receiving applications from thirty-six teacher candidates. This level of interest runs counter to Walters, Garii & Walter's (2009) observations about apathy regarding these experiences amongst the general public. It is hard to know for sure why this group of preservice teachers behaved differently than predicted, but possibly it could be that California, with its diverse population and internationally known cities might be home to a group of students who start off more globally aware than most.

Candidates were selected through an application and interview process, where they were evaluated for the following qualities: a strong academic and collegial standing in the program, an "openness" to new experiences, and strong communication skills. In particular, program coordinators wanted to find candidates who demonstrated a willingness to (respectfully) ask questions. To discourage educational tourism (Quezada, 2004), coordinators screened out candidates who responded that they were interested in traveling and expanding their horizons in favor of candidates who showed that they had done their research on their prospective host countries, and had complex, thoughtful questions about what education might look like in those contexts.

Eleven teacher candidates were selected to participate in the international teaching practicum (see Table 1). Demographically, the candidates resembled the current United States teaching force: mostly female (64% of the sample, 84% nationally) and mostly white (82% of the sample, 84% nationally) (Feistritzer, 2011). That said, the presence of males (36%) and candidates with minority backgrounds (18%) in this sample is higher than recent assesments of national averages would predict.

Of the eleven candidates selected, four went to Denmark, two went to Switzerland, and five went to Singapore. Five candidates stayed with host families, and six stayed in student dormitories. Although candidates were not directly asked if they were familiar with the language or languages spoken in the host country, statements made during the interviews made it evident that most of the ITCs were not proficient in any of the languages other than English they encountered.

Table 1 below provides background information (gender and credential pursued) about each candidate, as well as logistical information about their practicums (country and living situation). The Teacher Education Program selected the destination for each student based partially on the applicant's expressed preferences, and partially on logistics (what was available). In exchange, the Teacher Education Program hosted four candidates from Denmark, two from Switzerland, and five from Singapore. Guest student teachers were assigned to student teach for one month in partner U.S. classrooms. A fuller description of their experiences is outside the scope of the current project.

Table 1
Participant demographics and pseudonyms

Name	Gender	Credential Pursued	Living Situation Abroad	Country of Study
Austin	Male	Elementary	Home stay	Denmark
Meredith	Female	Elementary	Home stay	Denmark
Ruth	Female	Secondary	Home stay	Denmark
Paul	Male	Secondary	Home stay	Denmark
Ashton	Female	Elementary	Dormitory	Singapore
Isabella	Female	Elementary	Dormitory	Singapore
Antonella	Female	Elementary	Dormitory	Singapore

Reese	Female	Secondary	Dormitory	Singapore
Sofia	Female	Elementary	Dormitory	Singapore
George	Male	Elementary	Home stay	Switzerland
Jesse	Male	Elementary	Dormitory	Switzerland

Note: All names are pseudonyms

The present study focuses primarily on the experiences of the eleven teacher candidates selected to participate in the international exchange; hereafter they will be referred to as international teacher candidates or ITCs. Table 1 lists our participants with pseudonyms, the site of their international field placement, and their specific preparation area (e.g., elementary/primary, secondary science, etc.).

Data Sources

Data was collected from numerous sources, including:

- Teaching candidates weekly journals, kept during their time abroad
- Evaluations from their international cooperating teachers and university supervisors
- Pre- (December 2013) and post- international (June 2014) teaching experience responses to the My Cultural Awareness Profile (myCAP) (Marx & Moss, 2011)
- M.Ed. thesis chapters written by the ITCs about their experiences abroad and how those experiences related to their M.Ed. topics

In addition to the sources listed above, graduate student researchers conducted focus group and individual interviews with the following groups: focus group interviews with visiting students from Singapore and Switzerland during their time in U.S. schools

(conducted in December 2013), focus group interviews with the ITCs shortly after their return from the international field experience (March/April 2014), one focus group interview with a selection of the supervisors responsible for ITCs during their field placements (May 2014), individual interviews with all eleven ITCs at the conclusion of their teacher education program (June 2014), and individual interviews with eight of the ITCs one year after their return from their international teaching practicums, at which point they were four months into their post-graduate teaching jobs (January/February 2015).

Focus group interviews were recorded for both video and audio, to help the researchers identify participants during transcription. This was not necessary for the individual interviews, for which only an audio recorder was used. The majority of the interviews were conducted by the primary author of this study, however, in order to ensure that all interviews could be conducted at convenient times for the participants, another graduate student researcher with extensive interviewing experience was recruited to conduct five of the interviews used in this study. To ensure that all candidates were having similar interview experiences, the interviewers met frequently to discuss the protocol and there emerging observations about each interview they conducted.

Though many data sources were available, only some were deemed necessary to answer the current research questions. Table 2 below outlines the data sources used to answer each research question in this study.

Table 2
Data sources used to answer each research question

Research Question	Data Sources
1. In what ways do candidates make sense of their experience, both while abroad and upon return?	• Focus group interviews (March/April 2014) • First individual interviews (June 2014)

	• Second individual interviews (January/February 2015)
2. What kinds of challenges do candidates face while trying to make sense of their international experience abroad and upon return, and how do they overcome these challenges?	• Focus group interviews (March/April 2014) • Focus group interview with supervisors (May 2014) • First individual interviews (June 2014)
3. In what ways did the candidates feel that the international teaching practicum supported or hindered their (intercultural and professional) learning?	• Focus group interviews (March/April 2014) • Focus group interview with supervisors (May 2014) • First individual interviews (June 2014)
4. In what ways, if any does the international teaching practicum influence the participants as teachers, in terms of perspectives on teaching, learning, and schooling?	• Focus group interviews (March/April 2014) • myCAP responses (January/June 2014) • Focus group interview with supervisors (May 2014) • First individual interviews (June 2014) • Second individual interviews (January/February 2015)
5. In what ways (if any) do candidates bring their new or changed perspectives into their practice? In what ways were they supported or challenged in this effort?	• myCAP responses (January/June 2014) • First individual interviews (June 2014) • Second individual interviews (January/February 2015)
6. In what ways are any new/changed perspectives and practices related to intercultural competence and/or culturally responsive teaching?	• myCAP responses (January/June 2014) • First individual interviews (June 2014) • Second individual interviews (January/February 2015)
7. In what ways do the candidates feel that the abroad experience may have influenced their professional goals and decisions?	• myCAP responses (January/June 2014) • First individual interviews (June 2014) • Second individual interviews (January/February 2015)

Completed Interviews with Candidates and Supervisors

The first phase of interviews were focus groups, with participants organized by country (to the extent that it was possible). One participant, Jesse, was unable to attend a group interview. Group interviews took place toward the end of the first quarter after the ITC's return from their international placements, in March and early April 2014. These interviews were focused on the ITC's impressions of their host communities and schools, and their predictions for how their experiences might impact their teaching practices moving forward (see Appendix A).

Table 3
Group interview participants and dates

Names	Country of Study	Date
Meredith, Ruth and Paul	Denmark	March 19th, 2014
Ashton, Isabella, Antonella, Reese, Sofia	Singapore	March 19th, 2014
George and Austin	Denmark & Switzerland	April 6th, 2014

The second phase of interviewing took place between June 9th-13th, 2014, three months after the first phase of interviews, and shortly before the candidates graduated. Unlike the first series of interviews, these interviews were conducted individually for each of the eleven candidates. Candidates were asked to reflect on the ways in which their perspectives and teaching practices may have changed as a result of the international practicum. As this was a pilot program, candidates were also asked for feedback about how well the program supported their learning abroad and at home, and where the

program fell short (see Appendix B). During the early interviews of the second phase, interviewers noticed that candidates volunteered that the international experience impacted their subsequent job hunts. As a result of this emerging trend, researchers added an impromptu question about the international teaching practicum's impact on their job search to the interview protocol.

This research includes the interview conducted with the ITC's supervisors, who provide a valuable perspective on the ways in which the international practicum visibly impacted the ITCs and their teaching. Supervisors were asked to recount the discussions they had with ITCs after the abroad experience and what changes (if any) they observed in the ITC's practice. They were also asked about their own reactions to the international teaching practicum, the value it brought to the participants and their peers, and the challenges that they felt needed to be addressed in the organization or execution of the program (see Appendix C).

The third phase of interviewing is meant to fill a gap in the literature regarding longer-term impacts on teacher candidates who participate in international field placements. While previous studies have revealed many changes in the student teachers' perspectives and practices in the short term (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Stachowski & Mahah, 1998), and long-running programs have demonstrated that these impacts occur consistently (Stachowski & Sparks, 2007; Cushner & Mahon, 2010), little is known about whether or how these experiences impact the perspectives and practices of teachers once they have their own classrooms. In what lasting ways, if any, have their experiences abroad altered their perspectives on teaching, learning and schooling? Have these perspectives resulted in any tangible differences in their teaching practices during their

first full-time teaching positions? Have they encountered any obstacles to putting their ideas into practice? How do they plan to incorporate their international experiences as they become more deeply entrenched in their careers as teachers?

To answer these questions, I invited the ITCs to participate in a final interview, one year after their return from their international teaching practicums (January/February 2015) (See Appendix D for the protocol). All eleven were invited, and eight agreed to participate. All have been successfully placed in teaching positions; seven are still located in California and one obtained an international teaching position in South America. Each country of travel was well represented in this sample (see Table 4), including 100% of ITCs who traveled to Denmark and Switzerland. Overall, at least half of the ITCs participated in each round of data collections (see Table 4 below).

Table 4
Participation in each round of data collection for each ITC

Name	Country of Study	1st Interview (Group, March/April 2014)	2nd Interview (Individual, June 2014)	myCAP survey (January/ June 2014)	3rd Interview (Individual, January/ February 2015)
Antonella	Singapore	X	X		
Ashton	Singapore	X	X	X	X
Austin	Denmark	X	X	X	X
George	Switzerland	X	X		X
Isabella	Singapore	X	X	X	
Jesse	Switzerland		X		X
Meredith	Denmark	X	X	X	X
Paul	Denmark	X	X	X	X
Reese	Singapore	X	X	X	X
Ruth	Denmark	X	X		X
Sofia	Singapore	X	X		

Selection of Questions

Six ITCs, three representing Denmark and three representing Singapore, responded to the myCAP survey both before and after the international teaching

practicum. The survey was designed to help guide preservice teachers and/or their instructors understand the survey-taker's thoughts and beliefs about their cultural awareness. The creators of the myCAP, Helen Marx and David Moss (2011b) posit that cultural awareness is a critical skill for teachers, and define this construct with four domains: global perspective (knowledge of world events and an understanding of how global and local events are interconnected), cultural understanding (knowledgeable about the beliefs and practices of different cultures), perspective consciousness (seeing themselves as belonging to one cultural among many), and intercultural communication (ability to communicate effectively across cultural differences) (Marx & Moss, 2011c). Cultural awareness as a concept has significant overlap with intercultural competence, which includes most of these domains (excluding global perspective) in its process model under the "Knowledge and Comprehension" stage (see Figure 1 below) (Deardorff, 2011).

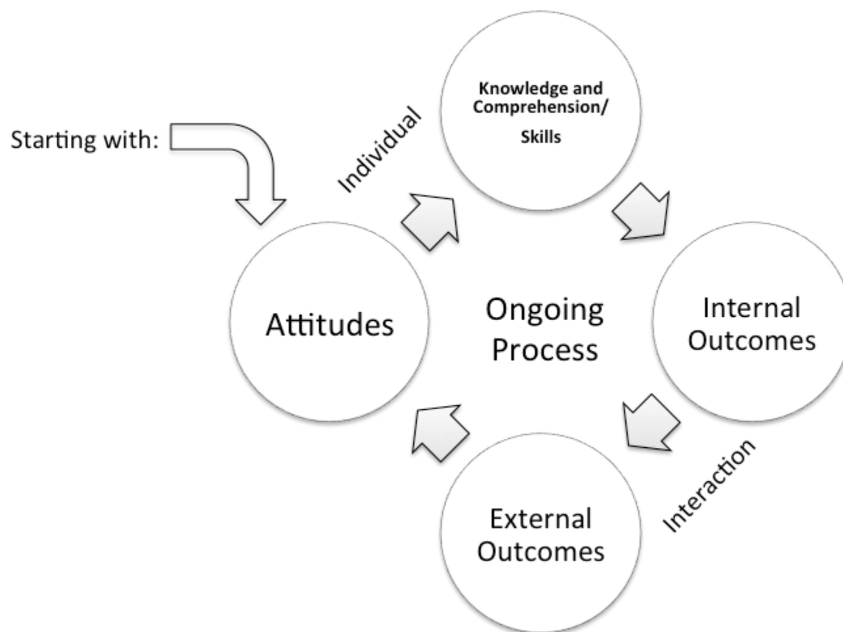

Figure 1: Ongoing Process of Intercultural Competence (adapted from Deardorff 2006, 2011)

Deardorff's process model of intercultural competence listed three interconnected domains in which individuals can develop: 1) attitudes (respect, openness, curiosity), 2) knowledge and comprehension (awareness of own and other cultures), and 3) the skills to listen to, observe and process new information. These attitudes, knowledge and skills lead to internal outcomes, including a frame of reference shift (seeing the world differently), empathy, and an adaptable/flexible/ethnorelative outlook. To have an ethnorelative outlook is the opposite of having an ethnocentric outlook. Rather than having an ethnocentric outlook, in which a person considers their culture central to reality, a person with an ethnorelative outlook recognizes their culture and perceptions of reality to be one of many (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003). These internal outcomes manifest through interaction as external outcomes (effective, appropriate behavior and communication with members of different cultures). The process is expected to be self-reinforcing, with positive (or at least educational) experiences with members of different cultures serving as further influence on the attitudes, knowledge, and skills of the individual.

Since cultural awareness is so closely linked to one's intercultural competence, and since the myCAP was specifically designed for preservice teachers, it was determined that the myCAP would be the appropriate instrument to help get a sense of any changes or developments that took place in the ITCs cultural awareness just prior to departure (January 2014) and again just prior to graduation from their programs (June 2014 - roughly five months apart).

The myCAP is not intended to be a summative assessment of a preservice teacher's cultural awareness so much as a tool designed to start conversations and guide the preservice teacher's reflection on their development. However, the survey's authors do suggest administering the myCAP more than once throughout the duration of their program in order to help preservice teachers see and reflect on the ways that they may have changed (Marx & Moss, 2011c). For my purposes, nine questions have been selected from the myCAP (five multiple choice and four free response) which I felt best represented the elements of cultural awareness that I am most interested in – ones which translate directly into intentions for their practice (see Table 5 below). The selected questions, in addition to the interviews described above, provide insight into the ITC's intentions and ideas for bringing cultural awareness into their own practice.

Table 5
Selected myCAP questions, question type, and corresponding domain

Question	Question Domain	Question type
I will teach and assess curricular units that explicitly address global issues.	Exploring the global context	4-point Likert
Do you think international/global issues should have a central place in a school's curriculum? Explain your reasoning.	Exploring the global context	Free response
I will actively promote cultural awareness in my teaching.	Learning about cultural differences	4-point Likert
How might you incorporate cultural awareness into your teaching?	Learning about cultural differences	Free response
My cultural identity will impact my teaching.	Knowing ourselves as cultural	4-point Likert

Helping students recognize their own cultural identity is essential for good teaching.	Knowing ourselves as cultural	4-point Likert
In what ways might a teacher's cultural identity influence the way they teach?	Knowing ourselves as cultural	Free response
To be an effective teacher, it is essential to learn about the cultural background of my students.	Communicating across cultural differences	4-point Likert
What are some strategies you will implement to effectively teach students from different cultural backgrounds?	Communicating across cultural differences	Free response

Confidentiality

Surveys were administered online, and were sent to participants over email via staff at the Teacher Education Program. To protect the anonymity of the participants (who were still enrolled in their TEP program at both points in time), I generated and assigned ten-digit ID numbers for each participant, which ensured that I would be the only person who could identify them in their responses for the duration of their enrollment. The identities and responses of both survey and interview participants were withheld from program staff (some of whom were involved in the research) until all ITCs graduated from the program. This was done to ensure the ITCs that their decision to participate or the nature of their responses would not influence their final grades.

Analysis

Interview data was transcribed and coded using the qualitative analysis software Transana ® and then analyzed using thematic network analysis, a qualitative

methodology described by Attride-Stirling (2001). Thematic network analysis guides researchers in the process of arranging their codes into meaningful, multi-level themes: basic themes, organizing themes, and global themes. *Basic Themes* are, as the name implies, the lowest or most "basic" level of analysis. Basic Themes identify characteristics of the data that, independently, do not say much about the data as a whole. However, when placed in context with other basic themes, they begin to take on more significance and assist one in interpretation of the data. These clusters of similar characteristics comprise the second level of themes, called *Organizing Themes*. Organizing Themes connect the Basic Themes and the Global Themes by summarizing the underlying idea within the basic themes and by enriching and explaining the main assumptions that underlie the Global Themes. *Global Themes* are the culmination of the two lower levels of themes, and they summarize, interpret, and sometimes make claims about the main themes occurring in the data. Each Global Theme is the "core" of a thematic network, which is represented by a web-like figure (see Figure 2). However, it is possible that analysis will produce more than one Global Theme (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Themes are not mutually exclusive; the basic themes attached to an organizing theme may also have considerable relevance to another organizing theme. The thematic network is meant to show the strongest connections, and should not be interpreted as suggesting additional connections do not exist.

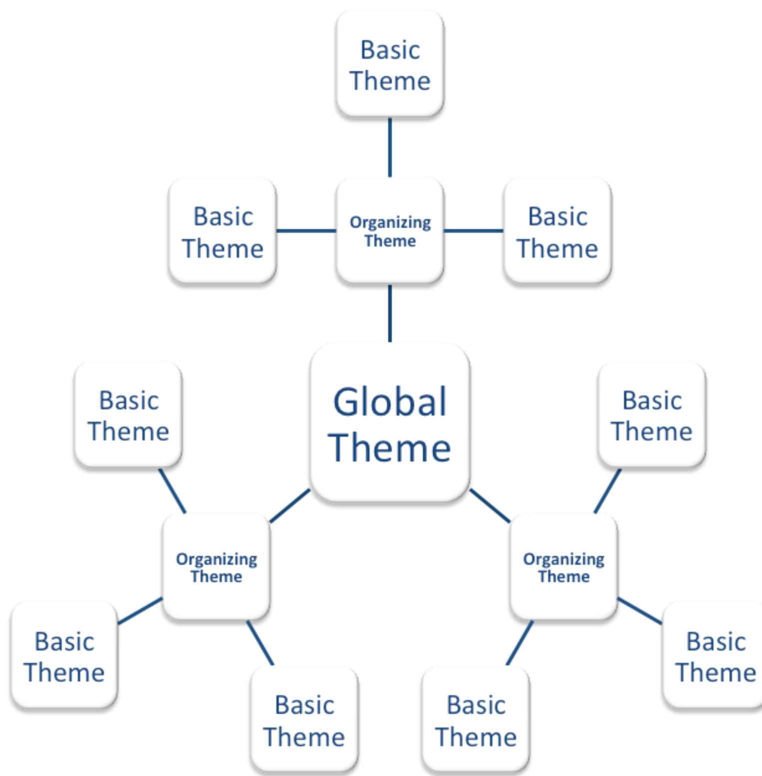

Figure 2: Examples of thematic network analysis. Adapted from Attride-Stirling (2001)

Thematic network analysis is a valuable analytical tool because it encourages the researcher to approach their data thoroughly and logically, and provides a coherent framework for uncovering meaning in data.

The myCAP survey responses were included in the thematic network analysis. However, the nature of these responses is somewhat different, as respondents had to choose from a static list of responses or answer free response questions without the opportunity to ask for clarification. ITCs were inconsistent in the evident consideration given to their pre- and post- experience responses, making it difficult to identify meaningful changes in attitude or intentions from their free responses. Furthermore, the

sample size was too small to allow for any statistical analysis; one respondent represented 17% of the total sample, and 33% of the sample from their respective countries.

While it was not possible to do meaningful statistical analysis for the multiple-choice questions, the nature of their responses and the directionality of the changes in some of their responses over time provided some insight into the cultural awareness of this group of respondents. Free response questions were examined using qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis is an exploratory practice in which the researcher looks for evidence of themes and patterns within a body of text (Huckin, 2004). Much like thematic network analysis, it is an inductive process in which the researcher will likely have some idea of what to expect based on the research questions, but is open to letting the data tell its own story. Due to the inconsistencies in the data mentioned earlier, this analysis was of limited use for uncovering evidence of changes in perspectives or practices (though there were a few scattered occasions where such evidence did appear). Overall, myCAP responses were most useful as corroborating evidence, conflicting evidence, or clarification of perspectives and practices described by the ITCs in their interviews.

Evidence of intercultural competence (ICC) or culturally responsive teacher (CRT)

Although it is not within the scope of this study to try to measure or evaluate any ITCs intercultural competence or culturally responsive teaching practices along a continuum, it is important to be clear that all surveys and interviews were analyzed with both concepts at the forefront of my mind. It is not possible from my findings to label the participants as “interculturally competent” or “culturally responsive.” However, at times, the ITCs responded in a manner that suggested they had experienced some development

with respect to one or both of these constructs, and that this development was attributable to the international teaching practicum.

In order to get a clear picture of what counted as evidence of an ICC or CRT development, I have listed the qualities that I was looking for below. They are organized according to three different domains that emerge from Deardorff's (2006) description of individual ICC characteristics: attitudes, knowledge & comprehension, and skills & practices. Since the qualities of culturally responsive teachers described by Villegas and Lucas (2002) and Gay & Kirkland (2003) also fit neatly into this three-domain framework, even overlapping with the qualities of ICC, it made sense to combine them in order to make this guide.

1. Attitudes:
    a. Respect, curiosity, openness to other cultures
    b. See diversity as a resource, rather than a challenge
    c. Consider themselves responsible for instigating social justice in schools
    d. Believes all students can be successful
2. Knowledge & Comprehension:
    a. Knowing about/awareness of your own culture
    b. Knowledge about other cultures
    c. Knows about the lives of their students (this is also a skill/practice)
    d. Aware of the role culture plays in societies and interactions
    e. Understanding that culture influences perceptions of reality
    f. Understanding that different perceptions of reality are still valid
3. Skills/Practice:

a. Listening

b. Being observant

c. Ability to analyze observations/experiences through a different lens

d. Relating to others

e. Promote knowledge construction in a diverse environment

f. Makes an effort to know about the lives of students

g. Incorporates the lived experiences of their students into lessons

Summary

By conducting interviews with participating student teachers at three different points after the completion of their international practicum, interviewing their supervisors during their time as student teachers, and analyzing their pre- and post-experience myCAP surveys, I was able to learn a great deal about how their views and practices as teachers changed over time. These findings contribute to the literature on how student teachers make sense of the experiences that they have during an international practicum, and upon return, and sheds light on the ways in which a program can support them in their development. The research also adds to literature on the ways in which preservice teachers transfer knowledge gains from international experiences into the classroom environment.

Chapter 4: Findings on Sensemaking of the International Experience

Overview:

Findings are presented in two chapters, each corresponding to a global theme that emerged from the data, serving to answer a selection of the research questions. The first of the two global themes to emerge from analysis is *Sensemaking of the International Experience*. This theme addresses the ways in which the ITCs processed, or made sense, of the experiences they had during their international teaching practicums. In addition to the internal (cognitive) sensemaking strategies employed by the ITCs, this theme also includes the external factors supported or challenged their sensemaking processes, as well as any impacts on their perspectives (see Figure 3 below for a visual representation of the relationship between themes). In this chapter, I will first define all the organizing and basic themes. Then, using the themes, I will show how the data addressed the first four research questions:

1) In what ways do candidates make sense of their international experience, both while abroad and upon their return?
2) What kinds of challenges do candidates face while trying to make sense of their international experience abroad and upon return, and how do they overcome these challenges?
3) In what ways did the candidates feel that the international teaching practicum supported or hindered their (intercultural and professional) learning?
4) In what ways, if any does the international teaching practicum influence the participants as teachers, in terms of perspectives on teaching, learning or schooling?

Figure 3: Sensemaking of the international experience – organizing and basic themes

Data used in this chapter

The data used in this chapter comes from the following sources:

- Focus group interviews
- First individual interviews
- Focus group interview with supervisors
- Second individual interviews

Since most discussions about sensemaking took place while the ITCs were still enrolled in their TEP program, their focus groups and first individual interviews are most frequently referenced. Since they took place less than three months apart, it did not seem

necessary to distinguish between them in the findings (except in a few rare instances). The rest of the data sources appear less regularly, but when they do, they are labeled for clarity.

Candidates tended to respond to sensemaking questions very differently from one another. Some stayed very surface level, listing people and resources that helped them, but not delving too deeply into *how* these people or resources helped. Others were more introspective at times, describing their thought processes and the connections they made in fascinating depth, providing helpful insight into the ways in which a resource might help or hinder their sensemaking. Since ITCs were not consistently providing the same depth of responses, it was not always easy to generalize across the group.

RQ1: In what ways do candidates make sense of their international experience, both while abroad and upon their return?

When the ITCs first returned to their TEP program, they were excited to talk about the experience they had during their international teaching practicums. Through talking about their experiences, they revealed much about the ways that they were making sense of it all. To answer this question, I drew primarily from the organizing theme *Internal Sensemaking*, though at times I highlight connections to other themes.

Internal Sensemaking

This theme encompasses the cognitive processes that ITCs described experiencing both abroad and at home, which generally took the form of classifying and evaluating their observations. These cognitive mechanisms may have resulted from their own initiative to explore, passive observations, or from one of the external mechanisms that facilitated sensemaking. In many cases, ITCs connected their internal sensemaking to

personal impact. This connection is addressed in the discussion of the third and fourth research questions.

This organizing theme is different from the other organizing themes in that it roughly represents different stages of sensemaking – classifying and evaluating, pursuing knowledge, forming connections and ideas, and reflecting. Although they are presented as stages, candidates did not always proceed in this order in which they are listed, and sometimes revisited stages to reinterpret an observation upon receiving new information.

Internal sensemaking: Classifying and evaluating

To make sense of their abroad experiences, the ITCs first classified and evaluated them. Although ITCs were asked in their first interviews to describe aspects of their host country that surprised them, they were never asked to evaluate these observations, or to elaborate on them in subsequent interviews. The persistence of this sensemaking behavior over time suggests that classification and evaluation were processes that ITCs were engaged in before and after their first interviews.

Observations were usually classified as differences or similarities in classroom practice, school structure, and/or aspects of the host culture that they felt influenced schooling in that country (for a look at the more specific topics that came up in discussion, see Table 6). These classifications were sometimes value-neutral, but candidates frequently offered an evaluation of the similarities and differences they observed abroad, bringing their values, past assumptions, and experiences into the mix, and painting a vivid picture of the ways in which they were trying to fit what they saw abroad into their previous conceptions about how education should function at the school and societal level. These evaluations formed the basis for connections and comparisons

between their home and host cultures, and aided in the development of altered perspectives that incorporated their new experiences and ideas.

The ITCs pointed out their share of similarities, but the overwhelming focus was on differences between the home and host culture. Based on the detail and enthusiasm of their responses, and the more tepid accounts they often provided when describing similarities, it would seem that candidates chose to focus on differences because these were the observations that elicited the most excitement – and sometimes concern – from the ITCs. Differences observed by the ITCs formed the basis of important sensemaking questions that the ITCs asked of themselves and others, such as, "Does this work?", "*Why* does this work?", "Would this work back home?", "Do I like this?", and more.

Table 6
Aspects of host and home culture frequently compared by ITCs

Topic under comparison
Multiculturalism
Multilingualism
Assessment*
Special needs*
Classroom management
Whole child philosophy
Technology in the classroom
Trust in students
Attitudes about college readiness
Collaboration between teachers
Cultivating responsibility in students
Accountability of teachers
Instructional strategies
Value of different subject areas
Tracking by ability

**These aspects were directly asked about in interviews rather than spontaneously mentioned by candidates*

Although ITCs who went to different countries addressed many of the same topics, their reasons for describing something as different did not always match, with

differences falling naturally along country lines. For example, although ITCs from each country shared observations about the host country's diversity, these observations were different from country to country. While a detailed analysis of the ways in which observations differed by country is outside the scope of this research, there are occasions when these differences made a difference to the research questions, and in those instances, differences across countries will be highlighted.

Differences were evaluated in several ways, but the most common evaluations were "impressed/positive", "unimpressed/negative", "conflicted/both positive and negative", "surprising/unexpected", and "neutral/no evaluation offered". Although the literature suggests that preservice teachers engaged in an international teaching practicum might initially find differences in culture or instructional practices to be puzzling or off-putting, this did not emerge as a trend for the preservice teachers in this study. While the ITCs did not love everything that they noticed about their host environments, they were far more focused the aspects of their experience that they found impressive, or even superior to what they had encountered at schools in the U.S.

Sometimes they were impressed by a specific teaching strategy, but more often they were impressed by what they perceived to be a different attitude or general approach taken by teachers and schools in their host contexts. This was especially the case when ITCs observed something about their host's schools, school system, or culture that seemed to bring their personal or professional values to life in a way not typically observed in the U.S. Singapore and Switzerland ITCs were impressed by the multiculturalism and multilingualism of their students, and the ways in which their cultural differences were celebrated at school. In Singapore, ITCs observed that their

school offered heritage-language ("mother-tongue") classes for their students, while in Switzerland, students were instructed in several different languages throughout the day, and rewarded academically for being proficiently multilingual. These differences were impressive to everyone who observed them, but were especially meaningful to Jesse and Isabella, who are both bilingual. As Isabella put it, "I just thought that was really cool [the mother tongue classes], the way the students don't lose their culture. They're still holding onto that, even at school."

Similarly, ITCs who went to Denmark acknowledged having familiarity with and respect for the "whole child" approach to education prior to their international teaching practicums. By whole child, they were referring to an educational approach in which educators prioritize a safe, supportive learning environment with strong community ties (ASCD, 2015), believing that the responsibility of the school is go beyond mastery of academic subjects. Proponents of a whole child approach believe that school should also address students' social and emotional needs and develop their natural interests and abilities, in order to develop compassionate, healthy, engaged members of society (Noddings, 2005). The classroom community they observed in Denmark struck the ITCs as the embodiment of these practices, which they found very impressive. Austin summarized it nicely: "Before I left, I had heard rumors of Denmark being like Narnia in the sense that these kids are being treated that way [whole child focused]... I saw it kind of in action there. [In Denmark] it was better than I expected. Truer, I guess, and what I was after."

ITCs also appreciated differences in school structure and classroom practice that did not readily line up with interests and values that they had pre-departure. Those who

taught in Denmark and Switzerland reported that they were initially shocked by the schools' and teachers' permissiveness when it came to rowdy student behavior.

> I was really surprised at the amount of student, what we would view as student misbehavior at the fourth and fifth grade levels. [Paul is nodding] Like in the classroom, I walked in, and was like whoa! There's no classroom control in here. (Meredith, Denmark)

> And when he transitioned to break time, it was pandemonium. There was mayhem; kids jumping on desks, pushing each other, running, yelling, doing all this crazy stuff. My initial reaction was, he's gonna tell them to knock it off. But he didn't! He just let them have their break time, and they were pretty rowdy. (George, Switzerland)

Yet, after spending a month in that environment and seeing that things generally turned out all right, the ITCs adapted, and began to see this behavior as normal. Some even found it desirable, exemplified in Meredith's remark: "I thought through that a lot, and thought of a lot of reasons why it works there, and why it's okay there, and why I value that now, and would like to see more of children being children in our own schools." (Meredith, Denmark)

Sometimes the gap between the ITCs values and practices observed in their host institution was too wide, and ITCs were unable to fully embrace these differences. While most ITCs who went to Singapore were very impressed by the obedient and respectful behavior of students, they struggled to make sense of disciplinary practices that seemed harsh, and made them uncomfortable. According to Reese, who taught at the secondary school:

> Seeing teachers scold - they call it scolding there, but basically they're yelling in the students' face, like 'Stop' or 'Shut up' or 'Do your work' or 'Why didn't you turn this in' or, you know, that actually really happens there… there's good classroom management because there is very strong discipline. (Reese, Singapore)

The rest of the Singapore ITCs taught in elementary schools, and did not witness methods that were quite as severe as what Reese saw in the secondary school. However, they did agree that the classroom management practices were much more strict than in the U.S., and seemed to rely more on cultural expectations about the respect due to a teacher rather than on the relationships that teachers developed with their students. Although they still identified areas of classroom management that they liked in Singapore (for example, some of their time management strategies), they remained uncomfortable with these "harsher" methods of discipline, revealing a clash with some of their personal values, which favored disciplinary practices that worked based on the strength of the classroom community, rather than the authority of the teacher.

Internal sensemaking: Pursuing knowledge

In addition to the external mechanisms that influenced sensemaking, which will be discussed later, candidates often took initiative and sought out more information about differences that had caught their attention. In doing this, they contributed to their own sensemaking by resisting the tendency to generalize, or come to the wrong conclusions based on limited information. For example, Meredith noticed that her Danish elementary school did not seem to have a place on campus where it displayed awards earned by the school. Rather than let this observation pass her by, she asked a teacher at the school if there was any place where they displayed their school awards. His response illustrated an

aspect of Danish culture that Meredith felt differed from the U.S., prompting her to reflect on the values and practices of her own culture:

> And he said, 'No, that's not really what school's all about. You know, we're not about being better than other schools. We're all a team, we're all trying to make a better country.'… it was so teamwork oriented, and [in the U.S.] we definitely have this edge of competition that we kind of glorify here that I hadn't really thought about until we touched on it in Denmark. (Meredith)

Another example of an ITC taking initiative and searching for explanations for differences they observed comes from Jesse, who taught in Switzerland. He was fascinated by his students' fluent multilingualism, but wondered if there was any stigma attached to the use of any particular languages the way that he felt he had experienced in the United States as a bilingual student. To find out, he began interviewing his students:

> I interviewed some of the students there [about] their experience speaking multiple languages, like if they thought the other kids, you know, like if it was looked down upon. It's like, 'well no, not at all.' Like, they encourage it at home, and they encourage at school. (Jesse, Switzerland)

This was an intriguing and influential discovery for Jesse, to be discussed in more depth in a later section.

Internal sensemaking: Forming connections and ideas

The information, classifications, and evaluations generated by the ITCs coalesced into more complex ideas. These ideas were based on connections they started to make between their various classifications and evaluations. At this stage, for example, they started to think about the ways in which culture influence teaching practices, and how

teaching practices reflected culture. The ideas generated in this phase of sensemaking stimulated critical reflection and consciousness (discussed in the next section), and formed the basis for many of their new or changed perspectives.

For example, candidates who went to Denmark and Switzerland reported their initial astonishment when they saw teachers leaving their students, even very young students, unattended in the classroom. Even more amazing was the fact that, when left unattended, students seemed to remain on task.

> We would be on a break drinking coffee, and the bell would ring for recess, and I'd say, “Oh, we're late, we should be there meeting them”. He would say, “Nah, they know what to do. We'll walk there, we'll get there and they'll be doing what they're supposed to”. And they would. (George, Switzerland)

Initially perplexed, ITCs from Denmark and Switzerland wondered why something they had been strongly discouraged from doing in the United States seemed completely fine in different countries.

The ITCs began to connect these observations to trust and responsibility. They reasoned that teachers in the schools they visited gave students responsibility (for example, being alone in the classroom) at a young age, which showed the students that they were trusted, and gave them opportunities to rise to expectation that they could be trusted. Austin developed the opinion that this was done deliberately by teachers in Denmark, with the intention to raise responsible adults, showing the ways that cultural values might make a visible difference in classroom practice.

> They give the kids a lot of trust and responsibility, partially I believe because they are intentional with teaching the kids what is acceptable - there is an ethical

component to the education where the kids learn to value the responsibility they were given. (Austin, Denmark)

Singapore ITCs, uniformly impressed by their Singapore school's heritage language classes, saw these classes as a reflection of their host culture's respect for cultural and linguistic diversity.

They celebrate a lot of cultural uniqueness and I feel like that's a strength. Each kid starts a second language starting in first grade and it's usually the language of their culture, which I think is very valuable. It gives them that respect and that that's really important to who they are as well and not just learning our way in English. (Ashton, Singapore)

The Denmark ITCs developed more problematic ideas about diversity in society. This group was unique from the rest of the ITCs in that they traveled to a country with relatively homogenous population culturally and socioeconomically, a reality that did not escape anyone's attention, and frequently made its way into discussions. In their first two interviews, three of the four ITCs who went to Denmark connected the cultural homogeneity of the Danish population to some of their achievements in the classroom. They questioned whether the levels of social cohesion and cooperation they were seeing in Denmark would be possible in a more diverse society, particularly if that diversity included differences in socioeconomic status. Particularly in the first group interview, candidates sometimes used troubling language to express these ideas.

And I was thinking about it, like, they're able to do what they are able to do, because they don't have population issues like we have here… They don't have tons of illegal immigrants [who] are uneducated. (Paul, Denmark)

While they all commented on how much they valued diversity in the United States, it was clear from some of their comments that were struggling to process their appreciation for the trusting community vibe that they were attributing to cultural homogeneity.

> In Denmark, it was all people that were really from the same socio-economic class, same backgrounds in terms of other areas. So what that did was it created this sort of community - I mean, maybe this wasn't the only cause of it, but the community feel was really tight. And I liked that! I mean, I didn't like that there wasn't... there, the students that came from Syria and some other areas were, like, put in their own classroom to learn Danish for years until they were proficient enough in Danish to be with the main class, and I struggle with that. But overall, the community was just really positive and healthy, and I think, but I do, I try to attribute a lot of that, I think, to the commonalities in their backgrounds.

By their third round of interviews, they seemed to have distanced themselves from these ideas. One year after their international experiences, Ruth and Meredith determined that they were uncomfortable with the segregation of the international students, who needed to learn Danish before they could participate in regular classes. Meredith wondered if the U.S. approach to diversity in schools –including ELL students in mainstream classes – might be more welcoming of diversity. Paul had become aware of the fact that Denmark had racial and cultural tensions, which was something he did not seem to be aware of in the first two interviews. Their responses suggested that subsequent experiences in their TEP and in U.S. classrooms lead them to re-consider their original ideas about the benefits of homogeneity, but unfortunately for our understanding of their sensemaking, the ITCs did not elaborate on which experiences facilitated this change.

Internal sensemaking: Reflecting

The connections and ideas formed by ITCs were often paired with reflection about themselves and their own cultures. The process of looking inward revealed the beginnings of critical perspectives about schooling and education in the United States, an important step in developing the critical consciousness necessary for intercultural competence and culturally responsive teaching.

The ITCs who went to Denmark were amazed at the amount of time teachers were allowed to spend attending to the social and emotional needs of their students, resulting in a classroom community that looked, to them, like a family. Meredith explained: “Every Friday, if a class was having social trouble, social dynamic issues, then they'd have a team building and things like that. They would just cancel academics and work together to get the spirit and social health back into the school.” Her admiration turned into critical reflection, when she continued, “Here in Santa Barbara, they pressure us [to think in] ‘academic minutes’. You must fit in as much as possible academic-wise within a school day, and forget the rest of the fluff.”

In Switzerland and Singapore, ITCs came to see that the promotion of multilingualism in schools was the product of a different history, and different values. Observing that Switzerland was a land-locked country with many immigrants from neighboring countries, George realized that multilingualism would naturally be an asset in that environment. Yet the United States, which also has a lot of immigrants and contact with the international community, seems to have a different attitude. “Your ability to speak a different language is important, because it's Europe and there are different languages everywhere. [In the U.S.] it's English, English, English. They'll say, aw that's

nice that you can speak Spanish, but this is America, we speak English." He questioned whether the United States' attitude and approach towards ELLs was really the best method, given how successful multilingual education seemed to be in Switzerland:

> There would be reading in German in the morning, and switch boom, he'd put a picture of the queen up and say 'English only', you know. And then they'd be in English, speaking, talking, thinking, and then another day switch to French. It was robust; there was a lot of language. And here, 90% of my students are English-language learners. Latinos, primarily. And they only get 20 minutes a week to speak in Spanish and have school time in Spanish, and that's... I don' think that's the best way to do it, so. (George, Switzerland)

ITCs who went to Singapore had a similar reaction, after seeing what appeared to be a very harmonious existence between multiple cultures in the school setting. They realized that by spending instructional time on multiple languages and cultures, Singapore was sending a message that they considered these languages and cultures to be valuable to their society and worth spending time on. Their admiration for the ways that their schools in Singapore outwardly valued diversity was followed by reflection on the attitudes toward diversity that they experienced in the United States. ITCs agreed that, in this respect, the United States could learn something from Singapore.

> They valued diversity so much, and I don't think that we always fully do, and so I think it just gave me a better appreciation for diversity in the classroom and that every child really should value where they come from and I just wish that was more prevalent here. (Sofia, Singapore)

RQ2 & 3: What kinds of challenges do candidates face while trying to make sense of their international experience abroad and upon return, and how do they overcome these challenges? And, In what ways did the candidates feel that the international teaching practicum supported or hindered their (intercultural and professional) learning?

The second and third research questions, while distinct in their intentions, ended up having considerable overlap in their responses, since many of the sensemaking challenges that candidates experienced were attributed to a component (or what they felt was a missing component) of the international teaching practicum, and since many of the ways that the program supported intercultural and professional learning also served as external supports in the sensemaking process.

These questions are best answered by the second organizing theme, *External Mechanisms Impacting Sensemaking and Learning*. By "mechanisms", I am referring to external factors in their environments that enabled or facilitated the ITCs' internal sensemaking processes.

External Mechanisms Impacting Sensemaking and Learning

Mechanisms for processing experiences tended to be similar at home and abroad, and could be divided into two categories: supportive people and supportive structures. A supportive person could be anyone in the ITC's environment who, through discussions, explanations, feedback, or by example helped the ITC understand what they were seeing abroad or help them make connections between what they saw abroad and at home. A supportive structure could be broadly described as an element of the international teaching practicum's program design that enabled or facilitated ITC sensemaking, intercultural learning, or professional learning.

Sensemaking and learning could be supported or hindered by external mechanisms. However, sometimes it was not simple to determine whether something in the external environment fell neatly into the "supports" or "challenges" categories. Sometimes, it was both; sometimes it changed with time over the course of the study.

Responses related to this organizing theme varied considerably according to which point in time the ITCs were describing, since the supports and challenges tended to different depending on whether they were talking about their time abroad, or the time after they returned. Another caveat to consider is that what might be a support for one person could (and sometimes did) turn out to be a barrier for another person.

External mechanisms impacting sensemaking and learning: Supportive people

While abroad

Interactions, discussions, and feedback from others were some of the most helpful supports that ITCs named. These interactions could be formal, such as required meetings or responses to reflective writing assignments, or informal, such as conversations with the host family around the dinner table. Table 7 below lists the people who supported ITC sensemaking and learning both at home and abroad.

Table 7
People who supported sensemaking and intercultural learning abroad and ways they were supportive

Supportive People Abroad	Methods of support
Cooperating teachers in the host school	• Demonstrating teaching methods • Sharing their culture and experiences • Willing to answer questions • Meetings and check-ins with ITCs • Supported and faciliated ITC teaching • Feedback on ITC assignments and teaching
ITCs in the same country**	• Emotional support • Debriefing discussions

Host family	• Encouraging and facilitating cultural experiences • Willing to answer questions • Emotional support • Sharing their culture and experiences
Faculty/Supervisors from the host university	• Meetings and check-ins with ITCs • Feedback on reflective writing • Willing to answer questions
Faculty from the home university	• Pre-departure meeting going over expectations* • Checking in over email
Student teachers from the host university	• Social support • Sharing their culture and experiences
Roommates from the host country***	• Social support • Sharing their culture and experiences
Students in host classrooms	• Welcoming/cooperating with ITCs • Sharing their culture and experiences

*This support was more relevant to ITCs in the Multiple Subject Credential program
**Did not apply to ITCs in Switzerland, who were placed in different communities
***Only applied to Jesse, the only ITC who did not live with a host family or other ITCs

Available supports varied from country to country. For example, ITCs in Singapore roomed with each other in dormitories, ITCs in Denmark stayed with separate host families (but saw each other at school), and ITCs in Switzerland were placed in different communities, one in a host family and one in a dormitory. Regardless of location and circumstance, all ITCs reported finding supportive people in their host environments, with the most critical support coming from the people they interacted with most regularly - host cooperating teachers, host families (when available), and the other ITCs (when available).

As Table 7 demonstrates, the ways that people were most often supportive was through their willingness to share their point of view and answer questions that the ITCs might have. One ITC felt like her cooperating teacher did not have time for her, and requested a switch to a different CT. However, her experience was the exception, and everyone else commented on how welcomed they felt, and how much they learned from watching and talking to their cooperating teachers.

> My CT [cooperating teacher]…was incredible. She was nice and welcoming – letting me ask whatever I wanted and also asking me whatever she wanted. We had a really strong relationship in that sense. (Reese, Singapore)

Host families were supportive in a similar way by engaging in informal discussions and interactions with the ITCs in their homes, often addressing questions that ITCs did not get a chance to ask about in school, or in some cases felt uncertain about asking in public. When something about the host culture did not make sense to an ITC, they felt comfortable asking their host families for explanations, which greatly enriched their understanding of the surroundings, not to mention prevented misunderstandings. After describing how his host family cleared up a misunderstanding for him, Paul remarked, “Things like that, where I could have possibly made a judgment, but asking a question in a more acceptable location was actually okay."

Host families could also push the ITCs to think critically about their own culture and cultural norms. Both George and Jesses reported that they wished they had made an effort to learn some German before going to Switzerland. George explained that the Swiss people he met seemed to judge him for not doing so, and he began to think that it had been careless – and very American – of him not to think about that.

> [My host father] was like, “You came to Switzerland and you don't speak German? I mean, I'm sitting here speaking English with you. I made the effort to learn. You didn't make the effort to learn?” And that's kind of like, oh, I guess he has a point.

The ITCs in Singapore did not have host families, but they did have each other as roommates. This gave them daily opportunities to debrief with one another, comparing experiences from their days and trying to make sense of it together. Though they did not live together, ITCs in Denmark still found time to get together and have open conversations about their thoughts and feelings. They formed a tight bond, and became important sources of emotional and intellectual support for one another, pushing each other to think more deeply about what they were observing.

> [The biggest support for] actual processing of thoughts and being able to articulate what I was seeing as compared to what I knew, were definitely my peers…we had a lot of time to sit down and be like, “look, this is what I'm seeing. Are you seeing this? Like, do you agree that this is different than the way we know it?” (Meredith, Denmark)

Upon return

After they returned from their international teaching practicums, the two main groups of people that supported the ITCs’ continued sensemaking and intercultural learning were other ITCs and the M.Ed. discussion groups. Individuals who got support from peers at home reported similar benefits at home, with the added benefit that this person, even if they went to a different country, could relate to the experience of being an ITC. Two ITCs shared that their M.Ed. discussion groups were helpful, serving as spaces

where they could bounce their new ideas and perspectives off of the members of these small, supportive groups and get feedback.

External mechanisms impacting sensemaking: Supportive structures

The term "structures" is used to describe elements of the international teaching practicum's program design that ITCs found helpful to their sensemaking or learning. This includes reflective writing or other assignments, required meetings with mentors abroad, pre-departure preparation and/or documents, and opportunities to debrief after re-entry. The usefulness of most structures depended on the supportive people from the first basic theme. However, this theme stands alone, since it is referring to goal-oriented events and activities that a program can organize, versus the often impromptu and spontaneous nature of interactions with supportive people.

As it was in the previous basic theme, candidates had far more positive things to say about the support they received for their time abroad. The eight ITCs who were pursuing a multiple subject credential (MST) commending their TEP program instructors for putting together a flash drive with all their assignments and deadlines included. The MST candidates all agreed that this was an invaluable support, and those pursuing a single subject credential (SSTs) wished that they had received something similar.

As for the quality and usefulness of the assignments with regards to sensemaking and intercultural learning, ITCs felt that the assignments were most helpful when they were customized to consider experiences an ITC might have while abroad. They especially valued assignments that asked them to think critically and reflect on their daily activities, or assignments that taught skills that came in handy for them during their international teaching practicums. Assignments that covered strategies for teaching

English Language Learners were especially appreciated, since the ITCs felt like they were in the ideal environment to try these strategies.

The ITCs were also supposed to keep a reflective journal, responding to prompts about their daily lives during their practicums. Journal entries were submitted to various supportive people, including faculty from the TEP program and cooperating teachers abroad. Some ITCs reported that their supervisors from the United States requested the entries as well. Not all ITCs felt that they received sufficient feedback on their journal entries, but for those who did, the feedback helped raise questions about the ways that they were interpreting their experiences, challenging their assumptions.

However, even ITCs who did not mention the helpfulness of the feedback (or who complained about lack of feedback) still expressed great appreciation for the journal assignments. Having this structure in place ensured that the ITCs would take time out of their days to independently reflect on what they had seen and done, and address thought-provoking questions. The journals also provided a record of the ways in which their feelings and ideas changed over time. As Ruth explained, “I don't know if I would have seen the transformations in thinking that occurred if I hadn't had something like a journal and blog to record it."

The opportunity to teach lessons in their host classrooms, versus just observing the classrooms, was also a major driver of sensemaking and intercultural learning for the ITCs. Teaching in an unfamiliar classroom with an unfamiliar culture was intimidating and challenging for the ITCs, and proved to be beneficial for two reasons. First, overcoming this challenge and succeeding in a new and different environment built confidence in themselves as competent teachers. Second, their fears and uncertainties

about teaching in a different cultural context helped them to understand how much culture makes a difference in their teaching. It provided opportunities for them to realize just how easy it can be to completely misinterpret or misperceive a culture that is not one's own.

An example of such a misunderstanding comes from Paul, who decided he wanted to try and emulate the style of Danish teachers during one of the lessons he taught in Denmark. Paul's assessment of Danish teachers was that they brought more feeling and emotions into their lessons, so he tried to do the same, and felt that the lesson he crafted was very Danish in its style. However, when he asked the students for feedback after the lesson, he was surprised by their response. The Danish students commented that their American ITCs seemed to put a lot of emotion and feeling into their lessons, and that it was very different from what they were used to. As Paul put it, "In some ways what I thought was their method ended up not being their method… we kind of formed ideas about what we thought it was like, and then those ideas turned out to be wrong, or had to be adjusted in some way or another."

Another structural support was the flexibility of the international teaching practicum's requirements. ITCs were aware of the fact that they were participating in a pilot program, and they knew that their TEP was still trying to work out all the kinks. While in some circumstances this was a hindrance, some ITCs saw this flexibility as an opportunity to take initiative and help shape the structure of the program. For example, rather than following a rigid program timetable for their entire month abroad, the ITCs felt that they could ask to do more--see different classrooms, attend school meetings, or

participate in school activities--all of which helped enhance their understanding of the local context.

Upon return

Once they returned to the U.S. at the end of their teaching practicums, ITCs were quickly thrown back into the routines of their TEP programs, and reported having far fewer supportive structures in place to help them with their ongoing sensemaking. Faculty from the TEP program supported the ITCs by being sympathetic to how difficult it was for them to jump back into classes after such a whirlwind experience, and giving them ample extensions on assignments. Faculty in the MST program also occasionally gave the ITCs opportunities to present on their experiences in class. While a few ITCs in the MST program had positive experiences with these presentations, describing them as meaningful opportunities to share what they had learned with their classmates, one ITC felt a little perturbed that these opportunities seemed very ad hoc and unplanned, while the ITCs in the SST program bemoaned the lack of any similar experiences in their classes.

Far more helpful to the candidates' sensemaking and intercultural learning processes was the TEP program's decision to allow the ITCs to write one of their Master's degree chapters about their experience abroad. Similar to the journals kept while abroad, ITCs viewed this as an important chance to revisit their experience from a different, more distant perspective, as well as a chance to get feedback from their professors. They also felt that by giving them this option, the TEP was validating their experience and connecting it to the rest of the TEP program. The MA chapters were also an opportunity for the ITCs to go over their old reflection journals, finding a new

appreciation for them, and the ways that they had documented the ITCs' mindsets at different points of time.

When it became apparent that some ITCs were having trouble re-adjusting to the TEP after their practicums, the directors of the TEP organized an informal meeting at one of their houses, and invited all the ITCs to come and share their abroad experiences with one another. This initiative was welcomed and appreciated by the ITCs, who really enjoyed having a space where they could come together and share with and learn from a group of people who were genuinely interested in discussing the international teaching practicums. Several ITCs commented that this was the most important supportive structure that the TEP provided upon return.

> That meeting definitely was one of the highlights when we came back – to be able to discuss everything and we heard a little more about what happened while we were gone. It was a nice closure to the experience. I would maybe say it was *the* highlight. (Antonella, Singapore)

External mechanisms impacting sensemaking: Missed opportunities for sensemaking and learning

While abroad

No program is perfect, particularly in its pilot year, and the candidates experienced their share of challenges both at home and abroad, many of which were related to oversights and miscommunication related to the structure of the program. While these challenges may have been frustrating to candidates, they did not usually present any serious barriers to the candidates' sensemaking or intercultural learning. The discussion below is limited to elements of the program that candidates *did* feel caused them to miss out on opportunities to process and learn.

While abroad, candidates all felt that they had ample support. Even Jesse, the only ITC with no host family or significant contact with another ITC, still felt that he had enough support while he was abroad from the rest of the people and structures described above. Some of the ITCs wished for more feedback on their journals from faculty and supervisors in the United States, but they did not consider this a significant impediment to their learning or sensemaking, since they had so much support elsewhere.

The only program element that ITCs from all three countries named as a missed opportunity was the insufficient amount of time spent with their international counterparts at the universities in the host country. ITCs did have some interactions with international preservice teachers, either from sitting in on a few university classes or from being connected to them in other ways. Their international counterparts gave them new ideas and perspectives about what it was like to go through the education system in a different country, both as a student and as a student teacher, and the ITCs were fascinated. However, the duration of the international teaching practicums was too short to give them much time to visit the host university and explore these connections further. ITCs recommended building more of these opportunities into future iterations of the program.

A few Denmark and Switzerland ITCs felt overburdened with schoolwork during their international practicums. Acknowledging that some assignments were very helpful, and that taking schoolwork along on their practicums helped minimize how far behind they got in classes at home, they still felt that some assignments could have been either pruned or customized further to take advantage of the international context. As Austin put it, “Anything that allows me, or that helps me see what's going on, or understand what's

going on over there, better - keep. I'll take more of that work." These ITCs felt like they were spending a lot of time outside of school doing their schoolwork, instead of spending time interacting with the culture.

Two of the Singapore ITCs, Ashton and Antonella, felt that their opportunities for sensemaking and intercultural learning abroad were limited by cultural differences and their fears about accidentally insulting their hosts by breaking rules of politeness. Both wanted to observe more classrooms in their down time, but perceived that their hosts might not be open to this suggestion. Antonella explained, "Setting up observations with other teachers was complicated. It didn't seem that easy to just go into a classroom and observe more." Ashton concurred, adding that she wished she had taken more chances and made more requests of her hosts.

> We had a hard time reading what they were comfortable with so we just erred on the side of caution and thought we should be as invisible as possible…I think I would be a little bolder with that... It's tricky. They were all so very gracious and polite. I didn't want to step on their toes. It's hard to be a guest and be that bold, like, "I wanna be here." What's polite?

Finally, Meredith commented that it would have been beneficial for the program to go over some strategies for teaching English Language Learners before their departure. She understood that the TEP could not restructure its entire curriculum to accommodate ITCs, but also felt as though she would have had more opportunities to think about and practice these strategies if she had received some instruction ahead of time, rather than completing assignments abroad.

Upon return

Upon return, some ITCs believed they were not getting the sensemaking and learning opportunities that they wanted and needed. They were expecting to have many opportunities to share what they learned, and have discussions with their classmates, but instead felt as though they were thrown back into their teaching programs, almost as if nothing had happened.

> That was probably the hardest part of the whole process, was coming back and not having people understand exactly what you had seen …It felt like I was entering back into a war zone. (Austin, Denmark)
>
> The first day back – it didn't even feel like I was abroad for TEP for a month. It felt like I was sick and gone for a month and now all of a sudden, I was back. (Reese, Singapore)

The extent that this bothered candidates varied from person to person, but most agreed that having more opportunities to debrief and share would have been appreciated, especially within the first week or two after they returned, when everything was new and fresh in their minds.

There was a general sense that, while everyone was well intentioned and did their best to make themselves available to the ITCs, the TEP had not yet determined how best to reintegrate the ITCs back into the larger cohort after they returned. As a result, efforts made to do this seemed impromptu and rushed, such as one instructor's in-class suggestion that ITCs lead a panel discussion with their classmates, during which they could share their experiences and field questions. ITCs commended the spirit of the activity, and some considered it a good opportunity to debrief; however, Meredith pointed out that they were given no warning or time to prepare, and were not sure what to

say, since instructors were not prepared with specific questions. Meredith remarked, “They didn't have a plan to incorporate us back in."

This sentiment was echoed by the candidates’ supervisors. Although they recalled providing opportunities to share in discussions more often than ITCs reported them, they were still uncertain about how to facilitate discussions about the ITCs’ experiences once they returned to the group. The three supervisors who were interviewed (who supervised MST candidates) commented that ITCs seemed reluctant to share during small group discussions, apparently concerned that they would arouse the jealousy or resentment of their peers who did not receive the opportunity to go abroad. One supervisor, who had three ITCs in their group, commented:

> And we did also have them share their own experience by presenting, but I think there was kind of a feeling amongst the three of them that they didn’t want to show off too much about all their stuff, because they had an opportunity to do something that the other four didn’t, and they’re pretty sensitive to the needs of everybody in the group. (Vera, ITC supervisor)

The supervisors agreed that their discussions could have been a valuable space for candidate debriefing, but that they were given little information about the objectives of the international teaching practicum, and felt uncertain about what to ask the ITCs, or what to look for in their actions as student teachers.

In their interviews, some candidates confirmed the supervisors’ suspicions that they were not always comfortable discussing their experiences in a group setting, even though this was something that they wanted, and knew that they needed. They were not sure if their colleagues even wanted to hear about their experiences, which made them

reticent to share. As Reese explained, “I wanted to tell people all about it and then I felt weird talking about it w/out being asked, I guess. I just knew – I didn’t want people – I didn’t want to just go up to people and start talking about it.” Isabella added that their uncertainty about who else had applied to the program was an additional concern:

> And it was kind of hard, too, because… you don't know the people that applied and didn't get in. So, even talking about it sometimes was …kind of hard to do, because you're so excited about everything you've learned, but at the same time, you don't want to come off as like, bragging about it, you know? And…hurt somebody's feelings that, like, didn't get to go. (Isabella, Singapore)

Although ITCs generally agreed that they had limited support for sensemaking upon return, they did not all agree that it was a problem to the same extent. While Sofia acknowledged that she did not have much time to reflect on her international practicum after she returned, she felt that this was due more to her own personal circumstances, and not any oversight on the program’s part. Jesse wondered if perhaps he and his fellow ITCs could have taken more initiative in facilitating their re-integration into their program.

> While the professors were really flexible, it was just awkward. I remember the first class back was just really weird because they already had class … it’s like showing up two weeks late to class. We had assignments and were like, “What assignment?” So, there was a lot of confusion among us returning. Maybe – they gave us a flash drive…but then I mean, it could’ve been on us. We could’ve asked, touched base with the professors, but I didn’t. (Jesse, Switzerland)

Paul also agreed that he did not have much re-integration support, but he did not believe that he needed any: "I didn't have a whole lot of supports, but I don't think I needed a whole lot of supports either."

However, sometimes it was clear that ITCs needed more help than they were getting in order to make sense of what they had experienced abroad. The Denmark ITCs' confusion and uncertainty about their burgeoning ideas on diversity in the classroom is one example of an idea that may have benefited from a more attention from their superiors. Some ITCs, especially those who went to Denmark or Switzerland, also appeared to need help processing some of the negative feelings they had developed about the U.S. education system. Although looking inward and developing a critical perspective on their own culture is a desirable outcome that lays the foundations for intercultural competence and culturally responsive teaching, ITCs were not always sure what to do with their feelings of distress or disappointment.

> Yeah, that's kind of a tough thing. When you see good things, and then you come back, and it's not as good? It makes it hard to come to school sometimes - it makes you question. (George, Switzerland)

RQ4: In what ways, if any does the international teaching practicum influence the participants as teachers, in terms of perspectives on teaching, learning, schooling, and teaching practices?

The observations, reflections and ideas shared by the ITCs often translated into ideas and intentions about who they wanted to be, how they wanted to teach, and their roles in global society. The third organizing theme, *Personal Impact Resulting from Sensemaking*, answers the fourth research question by highlighting the ways that ITCs seemed to change as a result of their international teaching practicums.

Personal Impact Resulting from Sensemaking

Sensemaking experiences sometimes had clear links to an ITC's development of certain personal characteristics. The ways that ITCs were personally impacted varied by individual, but trends emerged regarding their development of critical consciousness, global awareness, empathy, and their self-concept. Understanding these developments is important, as they have the potential to influence the ITCs' practices as lead teachers.

Personal impact resulting from sensemaking: Critical consciousness

The ability to perceive and act against social injustice and oppression is a key factor in the development of culturally responsive teachers (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Responses from the ITCs during all three of their interviews suggest their experiences in the international teaching practicum and the contrasts that they observed upon return stimulated their awareness of aspects of the U.S. school system that may not be fair to all or any students. Critical consciousness stemmed from the ITCs' reflections and ideas that were developed from their sensemaking. The ITCs developed critical consciousness about a number of topics, most notably, disciplinary practices, attitudes towards ELL students, ability tracking, and school priorities (critiquing college readiness as the ideal outcome for all). Below are a few examples.

As previous examples have shown, ITCs who traveled to more multicultural or multilingual countries (Singapore and Switzerland) spent time reflecting on how their host countries' treatment of multilingualism and multiculturalism differed from that of the United States. From these reflections, ITCs emerged with a more critical perspective of their home country. A powerful example of this came from George, whose time in Switzerland helped him realize that the language barrier is not an actual barrier:

> I've always… I don't want to say blame, but I thought that one of the big problems was the language barrier. And over there, it's not a barrier. So, it can be done. In fact, it can be done with multiple languages, with people from all over different linguistic backgrounds. And I'm sitting here complaining – we have a pretty homogenous group of students, yet we can't seem to figure out it. But it can be done. (George, Switzerland).

He began to feel uncomfortable with the fact that, in the United States, there might be 20 students in a classroom who speak primarily Spanish, placed with a teacher who doesn't know any Spanish. "I think that's a problem. No one else does, but it seems like a pretty big problem to me." He also observed that his U.S. school only seemed to value multilingual students if the second language was something other than English, an attitude that he found distressing and hypocritical.

Ashton made similar observations in her full-time position, one year after her international practicum. After receiving a new student from Mexico, she observed that her school seemed to have little to offer this student in terms of support or encouragement as he adjusted to life in the United States. She judged her school's approach to multilingual learners to be inferior next to her school in Singapore's approach, which openly valued the different cultural backgrounds of its students.

> It was hard to tell the school's perspective on his Hispanic background. It's not devalued, but there isn't any other verbal or affirmation otherwise of where he comes from and the importance of that. It was all about getting enough English to learn well, which you need in an English classroom. It's important. Sometimes you need the affirmation part. (Ashton, Singapore)

Another example is Ruth's change of heart about ability-tracked classes. Her own experiences with tracking as a student had been positive, since she was tracked into higher ability classes and formed tight bonds with her peers. However, she began to reconsider the benefits for *all* students after witnessing the relative absence of ability tracking in her Danish school, and seeing the positive changes in the classroom community that took place once competition was removed. Her second U.S. placement stood in stark contrast to what she had seen in Denmark, and what she had experienced as a higher ability student. The classroom was full of students who had been tracked into a lower-ability class. She described this situation as a "classroom management nightmare", and struggled emotionally with the demands of such a difficult class. However, she did not blame the children—she blamed the system, and realized that she no longer supported ability tracking.

> By the time they get to 7th grade it is so ingrained in them that their role is to push back against every rule a teacher has, and they are not to trust the teacher, and that they need structure and rigidity and a rule for every single thing, and if you don't set that up, then they will fight it and they will defy it. And, that we have tracking that puts all the students who are thinking that way in one group, so they perpetuate each other, and they spend all day together in classes where teachers are yelling at them all day because this keeps happening over and over and over again. And of course, that just perpetuates it. (Ruth, Denmark)

One year after his international practicum, Paul's experiences with tracking opened his eyes to the realities of systemic racism. He was teaching lower-ability science classes in a somewhat diverse school, and noticed that his lower-performing classes

tended to be populated with students from non-white backgrounds and/or lower socioeconomic status. He observed that these students, who might need more support, tended to get stuck with less experienced teachers like himself. He also realized that schools with more diverse populations and lower SES are given fewer resources, and that within those schools, classrooms for the lower-performing students are given even less. He began to see these observations as related to one another in a feedback loop that disadvantages minority or economically disadvantaged students, and questioned why this pattern was allowed to persist.

> So, why are we giving the tougher classes to the inexperienced teachers? And why are, why are these classrooms not getting the attention they need? Whereas, maybe other classrooms are. Why are the lights dimmer in my classroom than in someone else's classroom? (Paul, Denmark)

Personal impact resulting from sensemaking: Global awareness

ITCs returned from their international teaching practicums with a greater awareness of what was out there in the world, and the different ways that these differences could influence education. As George put it, "It also just made me realize it's a big world. I mean, it's crazy. Right now there's people all over the world, and their learning is a lot different than our learning." Seeing that things did not always have to be done in the same way helped them to realize that they had more options than they had previously realized. Having an awareness of different ways of thinking about and approaching education helped them to re-evaluate their practices through a more global lens.

> Obviously it opens up my perspective, and helps me think about my teaching practices differently, and question why I do the things I do. Why… when you see something you liked or don't like, it makes you excited or uncomfortable. It makes you think about why you feel that way, and what's important to bring into the classroom. (Ashton, Singapore)

After returning from their international practicums with greater awareness of another country and culture, ITCs began to perceive their own country and culture as lacking in this awareness.

> We are a very diverse country, but I think that we're pretty sheltered in a lot of ways, and we don't know about other countries in the world. And I think that would just be useful to know about in order to interact with people in, I think, other countries, and have understanding and cultural awareness about other ways of doing things. (Paul, Denmark)

The ITCs recognized the importance of having a more global perspective, and they wished to share that perspective with their students. As George remarked, "Well, it made me want to be more, made me want to have global students. Students with a global outlook, more than just what's around them, what they can see." Intentions of bringing more global awareness into their practice were mentioned by nine of the eleven ITCs while they were still student teachers. Eight of those nine ITCs participated in interviews one year after their practicums, and of those eight, seven still expressed a desire to keep exploring ways to bring global awareness into their practice. Jesse explained:

> I think it helps you see the people in your own world better when you can understand and see how people grew and learn, and are interesting and creative

> just like you were, with a totally different background. I think you understand the people in your own context better, and they're maybe more minor differences or interests. (Jesse, Switzerland)

Further discussion of the ways that ITCs did (or did not) bring these intentions into their practice is included in the second findings chapter.

Personal impact resulting from sensemaking: Empathy

The experience of being immersed in a society where English was not the primary language was very eye-opening for several ITCs, particularly those for whom English was a first language. While their hosts were all very helpful and welcoming, there were times when ITCs became aware of the fact that they needed and depended on their hosts to understand what was going on in their surroundings.

> I think so much in Denmark was like, you know, they talk in Danish for an hour and they turn to us and go, "We're gonna go learn this now"… We don't know what we heard. And so much of what we know is through conversation, or interpretation. (Meredith, Denmark)

This lead them to ponder what it must be like to be an English Language Learner, or come from a different culture, and then try to immerse oneself in an American classroom. They felt like they got a glimpse at how difficult this might be. For example, Paul remarked, "Like someone here, for example, who doesn't know the lang- English - I feel like I'm able to relate to that a lot more." George described a scenario in which his Swiss CT suggested he try to take one of the students' math tests – in German.

> I couldn't do any of it… I didn't know what it was asking. So, and then I came back here, and 19 out of 20 of my students are English Language Learners, and

it's one thing to say, 'Oh, you're an English Language Learner", but it's another to have been in another country where someone's speaking a different language. And not just speaking a different language... but giving instructions and then expecting that those instructions are executed quickly and efficiently. (George, Switzerland)

Reese described an experience of seeing secondary students receive the results of a very high stakes test in Singapore. Their intense reactions of joy or misery made it visible to her how much pressure the children were under to succeed, and made her think about how that pressure co-exists with other responsibilities for many students – not just in their other classes, but in their families, and other aspects of their lives. Upon return from her international practicum, she found herself making an effort to keep in mind that the classes she taught were just one of many different responsibilities faced by her students. This awareness seemed to be apparent to (and appreciated by) her students from her full-time teaching job, who started coming to her as a confidante.

Empathy—relating to students and sharing the feelings of their students—is a critical skill in both intercultural competence and culturally responsive teaching, and their development of this ability has promising implications for their teaching practice.

Personal impact resulting from sensemaking: Self-concept

This theme emerged when an ITC described themselves as more confident, more relaxed, more prepared, or more informed. However, this theme is also applied in a few instances in which ITCs questioned themselves or their abilities.

Teaching in a different cultural context was a challenge, and rising to this challenge helped the ITCs develop more confidence in themselves as teachers.

Sometimes, they felt more confidence about their abilities to perform well in certain areas of their teaching, such as instruction for English Language Learners.

> Experience working with students [for whom] English wasn't their first language was super beneficial to me, because my class was almost 90% English Language Learners, that I came back to teach. So, I use so many of the same skills sets for teaching students who English isn't their first language. So that was really valuable. (Ruth, Denmark)

> I think personally it's made me more comfortable with teaching second language learners and students of varying nationalities that would be in my classroom. (Ashton, Singapore)

Other times, ITCs expressed that their success abroad gave them confidence in a more general sense.

> I would say…a big thing that changed was my confidence in my ability to stand in front of a classroom and just be a teacher. (Reese, Singapore)

> It just felt a little reaffirming to be able to step into that role in another country as well. And when I came back, I felt like I had it down. I [went into it] saying 'great class!' It was really a big confidence booster for me. (George, Switzerland)

In addition to confidence, some ITCs also reported that they felt more open-minded, less judgmental, and more aware of the different, and equally valid options that they had available to them as teachers.

> It was definitely a lesson in making assumptions, and the danger of making assumptions… At first sight, we might think that something is worse or better, but

then maybe on second thought, we realize that it's just different. So I think that was really valuable. (Paul, Denmark)

It just gave me a wider perspective of all the ways things can be done. (Antonella, Singapore)

It opened my eyes, made me realize that I don't think anyone has the right answer on what's the best way to teach students. I feel like we all…everyone has their ideal way of the best way to teach students and has the students' best interests in mind…There's not one way to do it. That's what it taught me. (Jesse, Switzerland)

Personal developments such as confidence tend to go hand and hand with gaining experience, and would have likely happened for the ITCs regardless, as they faced and overcame the challenges that arose at various points in their careers as teachers. Still, the candidates appreciated these developments, and the point at which they occurred in their training. They entered their subsequent classrooms feeling more competent, enthusiastic, and eager to try new things.

Chapter 5: Findings on Perspectives into Practice

Overview:

The second global theme, *Perspectives into Practice*, is focused on the ways in which the ITCs brought their new or changed perspectives into the their practice and their career decisions, the challenges or barriers they encountered in the process, and supports and strategies they developed to help themselves succeed. Organizing themes under this global theme are: *Classroom Practices, Challenges and Barriers, Supports and Strategies,* and *Career Trajectory*. See Figure 4 below for a visual representation of this global theme, including corresponding basic themes.

Figure 4: Perspectives into practice – organizing and basic themes

This chapter addresses the following research questions:

5. In what ways (if any) do candidates bring their new or changed perspectives into their practice? In what ways were they supported or challenged in this effort?
6. In what ways are these new/changed perspectives and practices related to intercultural competence and/or culturally responsive teaching?
7. In what ways do the candidates feel that the abroad experience may have influenced their professional goals and decisions?

Data and findings by research question:

As it was with the previous global theme, organizing themes from *Perspectives into Practice* correspond with particular research questions. Also similar to the findings from the *Sensemaking of the International Experience* global theme, the boundaries between organizing themes and research questions were somewhat porous, and at times, a basic or organizing theme might be required to answer elements of two different questions. Answers to Questions 5 and 6 proved inextricably linked, and are thus presented together, while the answer to Question 7 is considered separately.

RQ5 & RQ6: In what ways (if any) do candidates bring their new or changed perspectives into their practice? In what ways were they supported or challenged in this effort? And, in what ways are these new/changed perspectives and practices related to intercultural competence and/or culturally responsive teaching?

The fifth and sixth research questions were both related to classroom practices, and the manner in which perspectives developed as a result of the international teaching practicum may have influenced these practices. Question 5 has interrelated components, concerning classroom practices and the supports and challenges ITCs experienced in implementing these practices. Since Question 6 discusses a subset of topics covered in

Question 5, and since the challenges and supports components of Question 5 were also relevant to the subset addressed in Question 6, the same three organizing themes were necessary to answer both questions: *Classroom Practices, Supports and Strategies*, and *Challenges and Barriers*.

The passage of time is important to consider when answering these questions, since the ITC's intentions and attempts that they described while they were still perservice teachers sometimes looked different from what they hoped and tried to achieve once they had their own classrooms. Since their classroom contexts and their roles in the classroom both changed between the first and second individual interviews, the supports and constraints that they experienced also changed. This was accounted for in the reporting of these findings.

Classroom Practices

During their first individual interviews, all eleven of the ITCs reported that they believed the international teaching practicum would, or already had, influenced their practice. The specific takeaways varied from individual to individual, although they did tend to cluster into a few categories (see Table 8 in the next section). One year after the experience, all eight ITCs who agreed to be interviewed believed that the perspectives they developed during and after the international teaching practicum were still influencing their teaching practices, although perhaps in different ways than while they were still student teaching. For this reason, each basic theme has been subdivided into two subcategories: Preservice Teacher and Practicing Teacher.

Classroom Practices: Practices influenced by host

Preservice Teacher

ITCs provided numerous examples of the ways that they had already tried to bring their new or changed perspectives into their teaching as preservice teachers. As Austin explained, “It definitely defined how I will function in the classroom as an educator. It defined how I will look at the profession and look at children in the classroom." Table 8 documents the areas in which they felt that their practice was influenced during their second U.S. placements, divided into sub-categories when possible (classroom management, technology, etc.).

Table 8 is limited to their descriptions of actual, tangible changes that they believed took place in their practice. This excludes instances of “heightened awareness”, or “cultural awareness”, which are considered personal impacts resulting from sensemaking (for example, when candidates realized that something was important to them in their practice). However, it includes instances of reported self-efficacy, since this was usually connected to a tangible outcome such as a willingness to take chances and try new things. Also included are reports of outcomes that were vague, but still actionable, for example, feeling like they prioritized the development of personal relationships with their students.

Table 8
Preservice Period: Instructional areas influenced by international practicum, ITCs influenced, countries influenced, and examples

Area of impact	ITCs reporting influence	Countries	Examples
Classroom community	Austin, Ruth	Denmark	• Surveying students on their opinions of their classroom community • Having the students present to each other, and offer constructive criticism
Classroom management	Austin, Meredith, Antonella,	Denmark Singapore	• Allowing students to go to the bathroom without asking

	Isabella, Jesse	Switzerland	• Giving small breaks when transitioning between subjects
Collaboration	Isabella	Singapore	• Reaching out to other student teachers to collaborate on lesson plans
English language learners	Ruth, Ashton, Isabella, George	Denmark Singapore Switzerland	• More attentive to ELL students • More comfortable with ELL teaching strategies (providing more scaffolding, awareness of vocabulary, etc.)
Funds of knowledge	Sofia, Jesse	Singapore Switzerland	• Speaking Spanish to students on the playground • Bringing students' language/culture into lessons
Global connections	Ashton	Singapore	• Facilitated letter exchange between U.S. and Singapore classrooms
Instructional strategies and assessments	Austin, Meredith, Paul, Antonella, Ashton, Reese, Sofia, George	Denmark Singapore Switzerland	• Assigning collaborative projects • Interactive lectures; checking for understanding
Relationships with students	Paul, Antonella, Ashton, Isabella, Sofia	Denmark Singapore	• Positioned self as a "co-explorer" rather than authority figure • Wrote personal letters to each student to get to know them
Self-efficacy	Meredith, Sofia, Antonella, Isabella, Reese, George	Denmark Singapore Switzerland	• Willing to try knew things • Expanded options
Technology	Meredith, Isabella	Denmark Singapore	• Planned a lesson around Google Earth • Daily use of iPad
Whole child	Austin, Ruth	Denmark	• Prioritizing connections to the global community

	• Developing students' trust and responsibility

Candidates from Denmark and Singapore made up the bulk of this list, but this is because they were a much larger group – two ITCs went to Switzerland, versus five who went to Singapore and four who went to Denmark. All three groups felt like their teaching practices were influenced by their hosts. The instructional areas where they reported the most influence was in their approaches to classroom management, English Language Learners, forming relationships with students, self-efficacy, and general instructional strategies and assessments. There are also areas that were exclusively the domain of one country, like classroom community, which was emphasized only by candidates from Denmark. However, while their comments responses were separated into these domains, it is important to understand that these domains interacted differently for each ITC. For example, some ITCs, forming relationships with students was part of their classroom management strategy, whereas for others it was primarily to understand and tailor instruction to the strengths and weaknesses of the class.

Most changes or influences that the ITCs reported as preservice teachers were connected to practices that the ITC had observed and admired, or even tried, abroad. However, sometimes a candidate was influenced by something that they *did not* want to bring into their practice. ITCs who went to Singapore tended to believe that their Singapore CTs did not emphasize personal relationships with their students.

> In Singapore, classrooms are so large that teachers don't get to spend a lot of small group time with their students and really have conversations or really watch how they're learning... I realized in my teaching practice, that is really valuable to

> me – to be able to sit down with students and watch what they're doing and have a conversation about what they're doing it so that I can understand how to reach them better. (Ashton, Singapore)

Like Ashton, the other ITCs from Singapore returned with a renewed commitment to developing individual relationships with their students, after coming to the conclusion that this was something they thought was lacking in their host environment.

ITCs from each country believed they developed greater awareness and attentiveness toward their English Language Learner students, and greater confidence in their abilities to serve this population. These gains were connected in part to the intensive practice they received in classrooms full of students who were learning English. However, their experience of being foreigners in a country where English was not the main language was also very relevant to this development in their practice, in that it helped develop their empathy for the experience of ELLs. Seeing the different (and usually more positive) ways that their host countries approached multilingualism and being a language learner also stimulated critical self-reflection on their own culture, and the inadequacies of the American approach to multilingualism.

Classroom management, another area that ITCs across all three countries felt influenced in, tended to look the most different between the three countries in terms of actual strategies. In Denmark, ITCs were impressed by the trust and responsibility given to students in a more relaxed and casual atmosphere, while in Singapore, they were impressed (and sometimes shocked) by the orderliness of student conduct. Switzerland ITCs were somewhere in between, impressed by both the orderliness of classroom conduct, but the comparatively lax approach to managing student behavior during breaks.

These differences were reflected in their revised approaches to classroom management, with Denmark ITCs experimenting with more relaxed strategies (giving students more freedom, turning a blind eye toward rowdiness, etc.), and Singapore ITCs trying to make better use of routines and signals to manage student behavior and class time. While Switzerland ITCs admired both the order and disorder they saw in the Swiss system, at this point in time, they only reported attempting the more relaxed strategies they observed (such as giving small breaks before transitioning to a new subject).

At this stage, the influence was often subtle. For example, Reese noticed that during lessons where she had to spend a lot of her time lecturing, she was more mindful to break up her lecture by checking in with her students to assess their understanding, a method she saw her Singapore CT using to great effect. A second straightforward example is Paul and Meredith's enhanced appreciation for and openness to assigning group work after seeing how effective it could be while in Denmark. This was especially noteworthy for Paul, who acknowledged that he had previously disliked assigning group projects as a form of assessment.

Sometimes these differences were even harder to pin down. For example, a few ITCs said that it had become more important in their practice to outwardly value the diversity of their classrooms, or create a supportive classroom community, but the examples they provided for how they planned to go about this were somewhat vague.

> Here, I focused more on developing their observational skills, developing their - creating ways for them to learn expression, and how to associate words with feelings. How to talk through what they're thinking. A lot more discussion-based learning. (Austin, Denmark)

While they believed that their perspectives were influencing their practice, were these influences visible to others?

According to an interview with three of the classroom supervisors responsible for a selection of the multiple-subject ITCs, the answer was, 'No.' Through their discussions and interactions with the ITCs, supervisors were aware of the aspects of their respective host cultures that they found intriguing. They knew that Jesse and George were fascinated with the classroom management practices in Switzerland, and that Sofia felt a renewed commitment to developing relationships with her students, but they were unable to name any ways in which they had seen these interests (or anyone else's interests) come out in practice.

There are a few explanations for why changes in the ITCs' classroom practice may not always have been visible to an observer. Some ITCs were not observed by this set of supervisors (including all the SST candidates). Also, the supervisor interviews took place one month before the pre-graduation interviews with the ITCs, and it is possible that behaviors reported by the ITCs had not taken place yet. One also cannot rule out the possibility that the supervisor did not see enough of the candidates' teaching before the international teaching practicum to notice a small change upon return.

However, there are several other reasons why it may have been difficult for an observer to recognize many of these changes. One reason is that, in certain matters, ITCs sensed that the changes they were experimenting with might meet with disapproval. For example, Jesse gave students little breaks when they were transitioning to a different subject, but he felt that his principal would not approve, and hoped to escape notice. Other times, changes in the candidates may have simply blended into the background.

One example comes from Antonella, who reported that she did not use routines in classroom management until she witnessed them being used very effectively in Singapore. Upon return, she was placed in a classroom that already had established routines, and she made and effort to learn them and use them. While this development in her practice was related to her international practicum, it would not have been easily visible because she was using a structure that was already in place rather than bringing something completely different into the classroom.

Much of the time, though, changes may not have been visible because they were still developing and emerging. Candidates reported an expanded sense of what was possible, but since they were still exploring, sometimes the influence on their practice was limited to ideas.

> Maybe it's just that I have more experience, or just more exposure to different things, but it was nice to see a different way of doing things…I think it might have made me more comfortable with trying new things, and just realizing that there's different ways of doing things, and finding the way that works for you in your own class. So I think that's something that I've become more comfortable doing – trying new things. (Antonella, Singapore)

Practicing Teacher

All eight of the ITCs who participated in the third round of interviewing had full-time employment in a school, six in a lead teacher role, and two in a support role (Ashton was hired as a Certified Tutor, and Meredith was hired as an Instructional Assistant). They were asked if their perspectives gained from the international practicum had changed or evolved with time, and whether or not these perspectives (evolved or not)

were influencing their practice in their full-time positions. All agreed that international experience was still influencing their approach to teaching, though this looked different for everyone. Table 9 shows the areas where ITCs reported continued influence in their teaching practices, with examples.

Table 9
Practicing Teacher Period: Instructional areas influenced by international practicum, ITCs influenced, countries influenced, and examples

Area of impact	ITCs reporting influence	Countries	Examples
Classroom community	Meredith, Paul, Ruth, Austin	Denmark	• Choosing to work at a school that prioritizes classroom community • Starts lessons with an ice breaker
Classroom management	Austin, Meredith, George, Jesse	Denmark Switzerland	• More tolerant of rowdiness – slower to intervene • Giving small breaks during transition times
Collaboration	Austin, Ruth	Denmark	• Shares ideas with other former ITCs from Denmark
English language learners	Ruth, Ashton, George	Denmark Singapore Switzerland	• Frequent checking for understanding • Speaking slower, and explaining vocabulary
Funds of knowledge	Austin, Paul, Jesse	Denmark Switzerland	• Uses culturally relevant examples in lessons • Working with families to support development of heritage language
Global connections	---	---	
Instructional strategies and assessments	Austin, Meredith, Ruth, Ashton, Reese, George, Jesse	Denmark Singapore Switzerland	• Assigns weekly presentations of global current events • Plans weekly units where students “visit” another country

Relationships with students	Paul, Ashton, Reese, Jesse	Denmark Singapore Switzerland	• Share their interests and experiences with students • Serving as confidante to students – building trust
Self-efficacy	Ashton	Singapore	• Able to enthusiastically adapt to change
Technology	Meredith	Denmark	• Higher expectations of student technological literacy
Whole child	Austin, Reese	Denmark Singapore	• Gives students more responsibility and autonomy • Sympathetic to the other responsibilities and pressures in students' lives

The developments that stood out the most in the findings were in classroom community, classroom management, approaches to English Language Learners, funds of knowledge, instructional strategies and assessments and relationships with students. The remaining domains (whole child, technology, collaboration, self-efficacy) were only described as impacts by 25% of the group or less, although it is worth mentioning that several ITCs still exhibited self-efficacy in their responses. However, they largely neglected to report self-efficacy as a continued outcome of their international practicums, indicating that at this point in time, they may have felt that any increases in their self-efficacy that occurred since the last interview were due to other factors.

Once again, Denmark ITCs were the only group to heavily emphasize Denmark's influence on their attempts to create a strong classroom community, by which they meant the cultivation of the supportive family vibe they felt in Denmark. For Ruth, Meredith and Austin, their desired to have a strong classroom community ended up playing a significant role in their career decisions, as they all chose to work at schools that they felt

espoused the values and practices of a tight-knit, supportive community by involving parents, avoiding ability-grouped classes, focusing on social-emotional development, etc. Paul was the only Denmark ITC who chose to work at a “regular public school”. Although he did not have the same level of structural support for classroom community at his school, this did not stop him from trying. One approach he shared was that he would open his lessons with ice breakers in order to get everyone comfortable with each other, advice he received from his supervisor in Denmark.

Several things that ITCs had wanted to do or tried to do as preservice teachers became easier, or more natural, once they had full time jobs. Supporting and attending to the needs of English Language Learners became second nature for Ruth, George and Ashton. Ashton believed that the techniques she used to help her ELL students, such as checking in to make sure that all vocabulary was understood, were beneficial to all students:

> Good teaching is good teaching, and everybody can use it. [It can give] even students who know English just a more deep, a better understanding and a deep understanding of language, and how to use it properly, and academically, and formally. (Ashton, Singapore)

The Singapore ITCs who admired and wished to emulate Singapore’s more rigid approach to classroom management did not participate in the third round of interviewing, but ITCs from Denmark and Switzerland discussed their evolving views and practices regarding classroom management. Austin, Meredith, George and Jesse had returned from their international practicums favoring the more relaxed approaches that they had seen abroad (such as allowing students to roughhouse), or have more autonomy with small

decisions (such as when they wanted to use the restroom). Austin, Meredith and Jesse continued in this spirit as teaching professionals.

Austin admitted that sometimes he struggled to find an effective balance between regulating student behavior and giving students autonomy, but was largely happy with the results of his efforts. He believed that by allowing them to make choices, he was teaching his students about how to make responsible, pro-social choices. Jesse continued his practice of giving students small breaks between subjects, which he felt helped them to clear their minds and prepare for the next activity. He had expressed discomfort about doing this as a student teacher, fearing supervisor disapproval. As a practicing teacher, his concerns seemed to have dissipated as the benefits of this practice became clear to him:

> [The Swiss] have little mini five-minute breaks. And I'm using that as well in my classroom, where after, I think it's like an hour and fifteen, I'll give a little five minute break, and then get back to academics. And I feel like that's helped me, help them get a little break and then come back. (Jesse, Switzerland)

Meredith and Jesse continued to express a heightened tolerance for “wild” behavior on the playground, seeing it as “kids being kids” rather than “misbehavior”. They both openly preferred a more permissive playground environment, and expressed frustration with the micromanagement of children that they witnessed in these environments. Meredith felt that, although rules existed for safety and liability reasons, sometimes children needed to learn by pushing physical boundaries, and she tried to facilitate this exploration by occasionally turning a blind eye on the playground.

As a preservice teacher, George had shared his admiration for the ways in which students in Switzerland knew to remain on task during class, but then ran wild during their break periods. As a teacher in a South American school, he attempted to implement a similar system, using signals for when students were supposed to be focused and when they were allowed to take breaks. After attempting to implement a Swiss system of order in a South American classroom for six months, he gave up, realizing that either he wasn't doing it right, or it simply was not culturally compatible with his classroom. His struggles are elaborated on during the section in this chapter on challenges and barriers encountered by teachers.

As teachers, ITCs still strove to develop personal relationships with their students, influenced by the ways that their host teachers succeeded in doing this (Paul and Jesse), or by the ways in which they felt this practice's absence in their host country (Ashton, Reese). Once the restrictions of being a student teacher were removed, Paul, Jesse and Reese felt free to spend more time investing in their relationships with their students, telling personal stories, and learning about their histories and interests. Reese's firm, but non-judgmental approach with her students helped her to gain the trust of both her "star" students and her lower performing students alike, and she often found herself in the role of confidante. In this role, she was able to get a better understanding of why one of her lower-performing students was struggling so much, and was thus in a better position to help him work through his problems in the class.

A desire to expand students' global awareness was important to nearly all of the ITCs during the final round of interviewing. As student teachers, they had felt limited in their ability to do this, but as practicing teachers, some of them became more creative,

finding ways to bring the wider world into their lessons. The methods they pursued will be presented in more depth in the discussion of the basic theme *Global Awareness*, but here it is worth noting that even in cases where ITCs reported that global awareness was not large priority in their teaching—Meredith and Ruth—they were able to provide examples of ways in which their teaching promoted global awareness. For example, Ruth pointed out that as a science teacher, her topics were inherently global, since advances in science and scientific problems impact everyone (Reese made similar observations, and acted on them more deliberately in the classroom). It is possible that their global awareness found its way into their teaching whether they intended it to or not.

Many of the international practicum's influences on teaching practice related to their abilities as culturally responsive teachers. Their attentiveness to ELLs, desire to build relationships and community, and their efforts to bring their students' funds of knowledge into their teaching are all examples of domains that were influenced. Overall, the ITCs who participated in the third round of interviewing described practices that demonstrated growth in their culturally responsive teaching skills, though the growth was not uniform across the group. These developments will be discussed in more depth in the basic theme *Culturally Responsive Practices.*

Some ITCs had to let go of or shelve ideas that they tried (or wanted to try) as student teachers, due to a challenge or barrier encountered during their first year. For example, the demands of being a first-year teacher left little time for such exploration. Several of the ITCs had hoped to connect their U.S. classroom with classrooms abroad for some form of cross-cultural exchanged. Only Ashton was able to implement this in

her second U.S. placement, and for various reasons (to be discussed in a different section), no one was able to implement an initiative of this sort during their first year.

Many of the ways that the ITCs were reportedly influenced by their U.S. practicums would have likely remained invisible to a casual observer, as many of these strategies could have just as easily come from gaining experience at home. Gains in their comfort and confidence with teaching ELL students are one example of this – while most ITCs reported that they believed that had improved in this area, some specified that this improvement was more strongly influenced by their U.S. placements (these are not included in Table 9) while others were more inclined to credit their international practicums. However, two areas where ITCs claimed or appeared to have made gains connected to their international practicums was in the global awareness and culturally responsive teaching.

Classroom Practices: Global Awareness

One result of the ITC's sensemaking was that they felt more globally aware, recognizing and respecting the different approaches to education and society taken by people in different countries and cultures. As preservice teachers, most of them had intentions (and some reported attempts) of fostering global awareness in their students. As practicing teachers, most of the ITCs held onto these ideals, and several were able to point to concrete examples of strategies they had developed for bringing global awareness into their teaching.

Preservice Teacher

As student teachers, the ITCs were interested in bringing more global awareness into their classrooms, but were often prevented from doing so by a challenge or barrier

that they encountered, including their own uncertainty about how to approach this new priority. Only two ITCs provided concrete examples of how they tried to help their students become more aware of the world.

In order to get his students thinking about the world outside of their own communities, George frequently shared his experiences and observations from abroad with his students. He also wanted to make different countries more real to his students by teaching them about geography, noting that the students in his second U.S. placement learned how to find Switzerland (and other countries that he had or would soon travel to) on a map.

To bring global awareness into her second placement classroom, Ashton organized an "International Friendship Day", in which students from her U.S. school exchanged letters with students from her school in Singapore. Although she felt that the activity had room for improvement, she was pleased with the high levels of participation at both schools, and hoped to continue organizing events like this in the future.

Although ITCs felt limited in their abilities to bring global perspectives into their student teaching, their responses on the myCAP show that this was something that several of them felt committed to in the future (see Table 10, below).

Table 10
Response to myCAP Question: I will teach and assess curricular units that explicitly address global issues.

ITC	Country	Before Practicum	After Practicum	Response Change
Meredith	Denmark	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Agree	N/A
Austin	Denmark	Somewhat Agree	Agree	More agreement
Paul	Denmark	Somewhat Agree	Agree	More agreement
Ashton	Singapore	Agree	Agree	N/A
Isabella	Singapore	Agree	Agree	N/A
Reese	Singapore	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Agree	N/A

Table 10 also shows that, at least for this subset of ITCs, one-third planned to bring global issues into their teaching *before* the practicum. It also shows that two ITCs felt more inclined to bring global awareness into their teaching after the practicum. However, regardless of which point in time they took the survey, everyone at least somewhat agreed that they planned to bring global issues into their teaching. Responses to the open-ended question, “Do you think international/global issues should have a central place in a school's curriculum? Explain your reasoning,” shed some light on why ITCs responded as they did.

Meredith, who never moved beyond “somewhat agree,” explained that global issues might be too difficult for young children to comprehend, but that she believed it was important to prepare them by instilling some awareness of the world around them.

- Meredith (post-practicum): “I think they should in middle and high school, but I think it's more important to focus on the local community in younger grades as students are still forming an understanding of the world around them. Comprehending international issues is a bit to abstract for some of the younger grades.”

Isabella and Ashton agreed that they planned to bring global issues into their teaching at both points in time, and their responses to the open-ended question both before and after the international practicum were nearly identical. For example:

- Isabella (before the practicum): “Absolutely! I believe that all children should be aware of what is going on in other parts of the world aside from what goes on on their side.”

- Isabella (after the practicum): “Yes! Students should be taught about issues that are taking place worldwide so that they are better prepared for the future.”

Austin and Paul both reported an increase in their agreement with the idea that they would teach about global issues. In the open-ended question about whether or not global issues should have a central place in a school’s curriculum showed an interesting divergence. Before the international practicum, Austin felt certain that international issues should be a priority in school curriculum. After the practicum, although he reported stronger agreement with the statement that he would teach about global issues, he felt less convinced that global issues should be a school-wide priority, seeing them instead as vessels for the development of other skills.

- Austin (before the practicum): “Absolutely… Knowledge of the world reminds us that we are not at the center, that there are others with needs and dreams, struggles and triumphs. I believe we are more complete people when we realize life is not just about us. Global curriculum imparts perspective that counters the egocentric tendency we all have.”
- Austin (after the practicum): “I think the world is big and exciting, and so offers a plethora of real problems to solve that are worthy of the student's attention and energy. International and global issues are a means to an end, in that aspect. Frankly, my motivation is first for the student's success as readers, writers, thinkers, and learners before it is for their knowledge of world issues. (Austin, Denmark, post-practicum myCAP).”

Paul, on the other hand, went from feeling not at all sure of the value of global issues in curriculum (although partially he seemed confused by what was meant by

“global issues”) to feeling very strongly that global issues should be a priority in curriculum. Paul’s response was also noteworthy in that he directly connected this change in his perspective to his international practicum.

- Paul (before the practicum): “I want to say ‘yes,’ it should have a central role, though this is kind of a surface level answer. I don't know how or to what extent international issues should be integrated in a school's curriculum. It doesn't help that the term "global issues" is so vague. Which global issues?”
- Paul (after the practicum): “Yes, I do. Humans are not isolated beings, and neither are countries isolated from each other. After going abroad, it has become more apparent how in America it seems like no other countries exist outside... If the issue is a global issue, than it affects every person. As such, we need to be aware of it. It is a weird to consider that my actions affect someone all the way across the globe, but that is indeed the case.”

The response rate to the myCAP survey was too small to show any meaningful trends in the groups’ development of intentions to include global awareness in their teaching. Rather, the responses provide another dimension to their interview responses by showing that most of them had at least some intention of doing this to begin with, and fleshing out some of the reasons that they believed it was important.

Practicing Teacher

Of the eight ITCs interviewed one year after their international teaching practicums, five were able to describe concrete ways that they had attempted to bring global awareness into their practice.

Reese, Paul and George all reported that they talked about their international experiences with their students regularly. George, who was teaching in a small town in South America, felt that it was important for his students to hear about the outside world, since they had such limited access to people from different societies, including limited access to the internet. Reese, who was teaching in an affluent community in California, found that many of her students were international travelers, and that swapping stories with them was a way to build rapport and start discussions about the importance of learning about different perspectives. Paul would share stories with his students about what schools were like in Denmark, asking them to consider how they would feel if their schools were more like Danish schools. For example, he shared that in Denmark, students stayed with the same teachers and classmates for several years in a row, and then asked his students how they would feel if their schools adopted that policy (they did not like the idea).

Austin and Meredith both reported engaging their students in discussions in which they were asked to consider the feelings and perspectives of people in different countries, who lived with different cultural norms and realities. As a jumping-off point for these discussions, Austin would read to his students from a book that included photos of children's bedrooms around the world, paired with stories about their lives. He was pleased with the level of discussion that his elementary-school students were able to engage in about topics like immigration and health care. However, at the forefront of his mind was a desire to teach his students empathy:

> I do want them to be aware, but not just in a fashionable sense, of the world. Not to be internationally minded, but in the sense of being able to empathize with all people, and know that they're part of a bigger community. (Austin, Denmark)

Meredith was not as convinced that her younger students were able to engage in sophisticated discussions about global issues, but she still attempted through informal discussions to encourage her students to consider issues from different perspectives, including perspectives of people in different countries. She also implemented an activity called "World Explorers", where she guided students through "visits" to different countries each week. In these "visits", she was limited to mostly superficial details - having students sample different foods, look at pictures, learn about holidays, and listen to different music. However, she hoped this activity would pique their curiosity, and inspire them to learn more.

In addition to sharing her experiences with students, Reese, a high school science teacher, had students present on science-related current events each week. The catch was that these events had to take place partially or completely outside of the United States. The activity was only intended to be an icebreaker on the first day of class, but it was so well-received by her students that she implemented it as a weekly activity. She was pleased with the level of discussion about global events that the activity had inspired, and intended to continue and possibly expand this activity during her subsequent years of teaching.

George, Jesse, Ashton and Reese all hoped to find ways to connect their U.S. (or in George's case, South American) classrooms to classrooms in different countries, but encountered challenges and barriers that prevented them from doing so in their first year

after TEP. Jesse and Reese lacked time, and Ashton lacked her own classroom. George actually received approval to connect his students to video pen pals in the United States, but was prevented from doing so after leadership at his school determined that his time would be better spent on activities more directly related to academics.

As a preservice teacher, Ruth had predicted that guiding students to think of themselves as global citizens would be a large priority in her teaching: “Where I'm putting my energy is on teaching students to be citizens of the world, and to be people.” However, once she had her own classroom, she no longer felt that global awareness and global citizenry were a large part of her mission as a high school science teacher. In fact, she seemed to have forgotten that this had ever been a priority for her: “It's not really one of the—I can totally get how that can be something that you can take out of that experience. I guess it really wasn't one of the things that my focus was on coming back.”

Classroom Practices: Culturally Responsive Practices

The biggest findings regarding the ITC’s development of culturally responsive practices fell into the domains of “attitudes” and “knowledge & comprehension”. Their development of critical consciousness and empathy was already discussed in the previous chapter. However, there were also a few more visible/tangible ways that ITCs were adopting culturally responsive practices in their classrooms and careers.

Preservice Teacher

As preservice teachers, the ITCs reported that the international teaching practicum had inspired them to spend more time learning about the different cultural backgrounds of their students, and to find ways to openly show appreciation for diversity in their classrooms. While most ITCs from Singapore returned with the intention of prioritizing

relationships with their students, Sofia, Isabella, and Ashton added that learning about their students' backgrounds would be a critical step in the development of these relationships.

George, Sofia and Ashton described their efforts to show appreciation for multilingualism in their classrooms during their second U.S. placements by bringing different languages into their classroom activities.

> And when we do our math warm up, we do a warm up and they have to repeat the answers back to me…We would do, like, "one" in English, and then the next in Spanish, and then the next in German, and then the next in French, and then then next in Japanese…they thought it was like the coolest thing ever…I thought it was cool too. (George, Switzerland)

> I already tried to incorporate [value for diversity] in my placement. Like, we did different language greetings in the morning, and then, the kids that - there was one student in my class that spoke French, and another that spoke Bulgarian, so they would do the dates in those languages every morning, just so that they could share their, their native language with other kids in the class and myself… Outwardly value those kids everyday for their differences. (Sofia, Singapore)

Ruth, whose second U.S. placement classroom was 90% English Language Learners, felt that her time in Denmark had made her more aware of the stigmas associated with being an ELL in the U.S., and ways that she may have implicitly contributed to those stigmas in the past.

> There isn't that stigma [about being an ELL] in Denmark, because they are Danish…whereas here, it's like, a problem… I think it helped me have a bit more

> of a mind shift… Like, getting out Google translate to work with students whose English wasn't as good as their Spanish, which I did all the time in Denmark…Here, you don't see anyone doing that, you know? And like, why not? (Ruth, Denmark)

These ITCs seemed to be unconcerned about any disciplinary action that might be taken against them for bringing different languages into the classroom, perhaps because they were only doing so in superficial ways with the intention of demonstrating enthusiasm for multilingualism, or in Ruth's case, supporting English language development. Jesse was a bit more cautious in his approach to bring different languages into his practice. As a bilingual (Spanish-English) individual himself, he was concerned that bringing different languages into the classroom could be misinterpreted by superiors as an attempt to give instruction in a different language, which he believed would not be well-received at his school. In his efforts to support and validate his multilingual learners, he instead chose to speak to them in Spanish on the playground instead of during class time.

> What I try to do – I can't really do it in the classroom, but when I'm outside on the playground, I talk to the students in Spanish and I feel like the students react to it very positively…I feel like it brings it up – an adult in a teaching position values their native language or values different languages. I feel like that's what I saw abroad – you know, a teacher spoke multiple languages. (George, Switzerland)

The myCAP responses to the statement, "I will actively promote cultural awareness in my teaching," showed that most respondents planned to do this

"sometimes" before the practicum, but almost all of them responded "Often" after the practicum (see Table 11 below).

Table 11
myCAP responses to the question: I will actively promote cultural awareness in my teaching.

ITC and Country	Response 1	Response 1	Response Change
Meredith (Denmark)	Often	Often	N/A
Austin (Denmark)	Sometimes	Sometimes	N/A
Paul (Denmark)	Sometimes	Often	More often
Ashton (Singapore)	Sometimes	Often	More often
Isabella (Singapore)	Often	Often	N/A
Reese (Singapore)	Often	Often	N/A

The corresponding open-ended question, "How might you incorporate cultural awareness into your teaching?" demonstrated that, whether or not they actually intended to bring cultural awareness into their classrooms, they had plenty of ideas for how they might do it, even before their practicums.

- Ashton (pre-practicum): "I will teach from books written with different cultural perspectives."
- Reese (pre-practicum): "I think the most important factor in cultural awareness is being welcoming to it, and addressing it in my classroom whenever the opportunity may arise."

Responses to this question did not strongly differ before and after the international practicum. Though their ideas might differ, they all held the common threads of either bringing in culture from the outside world (through news and literature) or from the world inside the classroom (sharing and appreciation of student backgrounds). The exception was the case of Paul. In his initial response, he wrote about the importance of empathy. After returning from Denmark, his answer became more complicated. While explaining that he still believed in the importance of culturally relevant teaching and

intended to try, he was struggling to find effective methods in the context of a high school science class.

- Paul (post-practicum myCAP): "I think it is particularly difficult to do in Physics class. I've tried in the past to make connections between things we are learning in Physics and global issues, such as global warming and nuclear weapons. Yet, the connection between the actual science and these topics is hard to make. I often wonder whether science class is the place to teach these topics. While cultural issues are difficult to incorporate, I think teaching methods should be culturally relevant. This means tailoring curriculum materials to your demographics. It is important to take the everyday experiences and cultural background of students into account. This is difficult to do."

The myCAP did capture evidence of growth for two ITCs, Austin and Paul, who initially did not think that their cultural identity would influence their teaching, but ultimately realized it would have a significant impact (see Table 12, below). While most of the ITCs who responded to the myCAP ended up agreeing that their culture would at least sometimes influence their teaching, Reese was the only ITC who maintained that it would not be a large factor.

Table 12
Responses to myCAP question: My cultural identity will impact my teaching.

ITC and Country	Response 1	Response 1	Response Change
Meredith (Denmark)	Sometimes	Sometimes	N/A
Austin (Denmark)	Not Often	Often	More often
Paul (Denmark)	Not Often	Often	More often
Ashton (Singapore)	Often	Often	N/A
Isabella (Singapore)	Often	Often	N/A
Reese (Singapore)	Not Often	Not Often	N/A

This selection of the ITCs responded to the question, “In what ways might a teacher’s cultural identity influence the way they teach?” Although their pre-practicum responses showed that they were not entirely blind to the influence of culture on teaching, in their post-practicum myCAP surveys, ITCs displayed a more sophisticated understanding of this concept.

- Meredith (post-practicum): “It's likely they'll preference a certain way of looking at the world, and their expectations for their students and what they produce might vary. The way the grade or assess the children, their efforts, and performance may vary culturally, because their values probably vary. However, a cultural identity can provide a richness and passion and is, overall, a benefit I think, provided that the teacher is AWARE of it.”
- Ashton (post-practicum): “Your culture tells you how all the pieces of the world fit together so that will bleed into how you explain everything to your students.”
- Isabella (post-practicum): “When a teacher has cultural identity it makes it allows him/her to be more open about culture with his/her students and be able to help their students find their cultural identity as well.”

The only question that elicited a decidedly *less* culturally responsive answer from an ITC on the second myCAP was, “Helping students recognize their own cultural identity is essential for good teaching.” In general, responses to this question remained stagnant between the pre- and post-practicum myCAP, with most ITCs saying that they somewhat agreed (see Table 13 below). While Meredith returned from her experience feeling more inclined to agree with that statement, Austin returned feeling less inclined to agree. Although he did not address this directly in a free response question, responses to

his other questions indicate that he may have taken issue with the word “essential”, since he had established different priorities. Austin’s clear priority upon return was on whole child education. In response to an earlier question, he had reported that he now considered global awareness to be secondary to that goal, and he may have felt the same way about helping students recognize their cultural identities.

Table 13
Responses to myCAP question: Helping students recognize their own cultural identity is essential for good teaching

ITC and Country	Response 1	Response 1	Response Change
Meredith (Denmark)	Somewhat Agree	Agree	More agreement
Austin (Denmark)	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Less agreement
Paul (Denmark)	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Agree	N/A
Ashton (Singapore)	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Agree	N/A
Isabella (Singapore)	Agree	Agree	N/A
Reese (Singapore)	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Agree	N/A

Practicing Teacher

One year after their practicums, the ITCs were asked during their interviews to describe the demographics of the schools that they found work in. Half of the ITCs (Ruth, Paul, Ashton, and Jesse) worked in schools that served students from mostly middle and lower-middle income families, and had a significant percentage of non-white students. Reese’s school population was mostly white and affluent, although it contained a lot of cultural diversity with a large population of students from Muslim and Jewish backgrounds. As an outsider to the local culture, George was not sure how to describe the ethnic diversity of his school in South America, but he was aware that his students were generally from higher-income families. Meredith and Austin worked in schools with predominantly white, affluent students.

School demographics were a factor in the ways in which ITCs approached diversity in the classroom. For Paul and Jesse, the demographics of the school were an important factor in their decision to work at these schools - both ITCs wished to serve diverse populations. Ashton also felt this way, but acknowledged that the diversity of her school was not a factor in her decision to work there, since it was her only offer. George and Austin were also interested in eventually teaching in diverse U.S. classrooms, but for various reasons (discussed in the *Career Trajectory* organizing theme) chose different options for their first jobs as classroom teachers.

Apart from their choice of schools, ITCs described culturally responsive practices that they felt could at least partially be attributed to their international teaching practicums, summarized in Table 14 below.

Table 14
Culturally responsive practices reported by ITCs one year after their international practicums

Culturally responsive practice	ITCs reporting practice
Consciously choosing to serve diverse populations	Ashton, George, Jesse, Paul
Learning about the backgrounds and lives of students	Ashton, Austin, George, Jesse, Paul, Ruth
Attentiveness to the needs of ELL students	Ashton, Ruth
Learning a second language	George
Drawing attention to privilege/ recognizing own privilege	Meredith, Reese
Using culturally relevant examples in lessons	Austin, Paul
Encouraging use and maintenance of heritage language	Austin, Jesse

Encouraging participation in cultural activities	Jesse
Mindfulness about treating all students fairly/serving all students equally	Reese, Ruth

While Table 14 provides a snapshot of the practices that they reported, it is not necessarily an exhaustive list – it only represents the aspects of their practices that they highlighted in their interviews. Most of the ITCs were in some way grappling with inequality, and were searching for the best way that they could be a part of the solution rather than exacerbate the problem. Below are a few examples of how they went about this, in their words.

On encouraging heritage language maintenance:

> I've noticed that students are speaking more Spanish as well, so I think that's pretty cool… I mean, I don't teach in Spanish, but I sprinkle, like Spanish words in the playground, or if I'm just having a casual conversation… I interact with the students [in ways that promote their heritage], and I think it's really nice to be able to do that and for the kids to appreciate it. (Jesse, Switzerland)

> I know a boy that speaks a little bit of Spanish, and sometimes I'll speak Spanish to him. I make little - I did a language test. Recognizing long and short vowels, and certain sight-words with the girl who speaks Icelandic. I emailed her parents, and they gave me some Icelandic vowel sounds to see if she could identify it - she did. (Austin, Denmark)

On mindfulness about treating students differently:

> I try and be very aware of [differences in how I treat students], because I don't want to ever run into a situation where I'm, like, depending it on race or whatever it may be, or demographic, or class even? Um, so yeah, I'd say I think about it all the time. And probably, if not solely, because of my experience in Singapore. (Reese, Singapore)

On bringing attention to privilege:

> There's times where I'll just try and remember - help them reign in their perspective, and help them remember that not all kids in the room have had the …not all kids in the rooms dad's have a private jet. (Meredith, Denmark)

On attentiveness to ELL students:

> Whether with majority students or minority students. I just - explaining vocabulary that I choose, and making sure that that's very clear, so that I can understand if they're misunderstanding a question or the actual topic or subject. I'd say it's something I have a heightened awareness of - what language choices I'm making. (Ashton, Singapore)

On culturally relevant lessons and examples:

> I definitely try to accommodate every student, so, I try to provide culturally relevant examples. I try to make lessons accessible for language learners - language learner students… I try to bring their interests into the classroom. (Paul, Denmark)

Classroom Practices: Future intentions

Even in their full-time positions, the ITCs reported that there were ways that they wanted to bring their perspectives into their practice, but for various reasons, were unable

to do so at the points in time when they were interviewed. These fell into the following categories:

- Connecting their classrooms to classrooms in different countries (i.e. video pen pals with students in other countries)
- Teaching appreciation for different cultures (i.e. culture-themed months, where students would spend a month learning about a different culture, or bringing in international literature)
- Use constructivist approaches (i.e. assign more collaborative projects, give students more autonomy)
- Collaborate with other teachers
- Develop their ability to create strong classroom community
- Incorporate more handcrafts
- Show appreciation for different cultures (i.e. learn Spanish, bring in guest speakers from different cultures).

A discussion of the challenges and barriers that prevented their ideas from taking place is in the next section, negating the need for extensive discussion in this section. The point to be made here is that seven out of the eight ITCs who participated in the third round of interviews felt that even when they had their own classrooms, they were not always able to implement their plans right away. However, it also points to the possibility that ITCs may continue to look for opportunities to implement these new perspectives in their practice in the future.

Challenges and Barriers

The challenges and barriers that prevented ITCs from bringing their perspectives into four main categories: lack of experience, lack of power, the realities of a different context, and their own internal conflict. In the descriptions below, I give examples of the various challenges and barriers they faced and specify at which point in time they were facing these challenges. If the ITCs came up with any solutions to the challenges, these are named as well, although it was not always the case that a candidate knew what to do about their situation.

The challenges and barriers below are separate from the challenges and barriers to candidate sensemaking (which were discussed in the previous chapter), and instead focuses on situations identified by the candidates that prevented them from following through on their ideas and intentions for classroom practice.

Challenges and Barriers: Lack of Experience

The ITCs relative lack of experience as teachers was a challenge they faced both as preservice teachers and in their full-time jobs. As preservice teachers, they felt constrained by their inability to prioritize what they wanted to do (bring their new perspectives into their practice) while balancing everything else that they had to do (meet the requirements of their TEP program). They also weren't entirely sure how to go about implementing some of their desired changes.

> I think mostly my experiences in Denmark have kind of taken a back seat over the past couple months of student teaching, but they're still there, and I feel like the experiences are just waiting to happen. (Paul, Denmark)

As practicing teachers or teaching professionals in a different capacity, this challenge persisted as they learned to face the demands of taking on more responsibility

in their classrooms. They also discovered that the leap from theory to practice was not always so straightforward, and that they needed more time to get their classrooms up and running before trying anything too ambitious.

> I think once I was able to develop better curriculum with them, I would also incorporate that into those classes, and it's unfortunate that I can't yet, but I just... you know. Not everyone's perfect, [I have to remember that]. (Reese, Singapore)

The ITCs tended to view their inexperience as a temporary setback, rather than something that seriously threatened their ability to be the kinds of teachers they wanted to be.

Challenges and Barriers: Lack of Power

The barrier “lack of power” was also encountered by ITCs in both their student teaching and professional contexts. As student teachers, the problems were predictable; they did not have their own classrooms, and sometimes their cooperating teachers were unwilling to fully give up control, or at least needed extra persuasion. Austin described his CT as being “old-school” - unfamiliar with inquiry-based practices, and reluctant to give children any autonomy in the classroom. He persuaded her to give his ideas a chance, but other ITCs who ran into (or at least perceived) this barrier were more inclined to save their ideas until they had their own classrooms in these situations.

Two of the ITCs, Ashton and Meredith, still faced this issue as teaching professionals who assisted or did intervention in other teachers’ classrooms. Though they still found plenty of opportunities to bring their perspectives into practice, they also ran into situations where they felt limited by the reality that they did not control the agenda of any particular classroom.

Even as lead teachers, other ITCs still ran into situations where, as first-year teachers, they did not have much say. George and Jesse both found that senior colleagues might take issue with any activities that they perceived as taking too much time away from academics. In Jesse's teaching position, he worked collaboratively with the team of teachers responsible for his grade level. When a senior teacher said that they did not have time to implement his idea of "culture-themed" months (where students would learn about a different culture each month), he felt that he needed to defer to her as a mentor and cooperate with his group. Similarly, George wanted to connect his students in South America to students in the United States for a collaborative project. While the school leadership told him they liked the idea, they told him that it would take up too much time.

Similar to the barrier of inexperience, ITCs did not consider their lack of power to be a permanent circumstance. Ashton and Meredith hoped to eventually get their own classrooms to address these challenges. George and Jesse were biding their time and looking for the right moment to re-introduce their ideas (or modified versions).

Challenges and Barriers: Different Context

Bringing ideas from one culture into another culture can be tricky, because each culture creates its own systems that are designed to accommodate its own set of beliefs. The candidates found ideas that seemed to work very well in their host countries would not always work at home. Unlike the previous two challenges, contextual differences were not always resolvable for the candidates.

As preservice teachers, ITCs ran into three main contextual differences: different rules and laws, different resources, and different cultural expectations from the students. It was against the rules for students to be left unattended in U. S. classrooms, making it

impossible for the ITCs from Denmark and Switzerland to duplicate a practice that they saw abroad and had interpreted as a method of teaching responsibility and trustworthiness. Meredith and Sofia both felt that their schools were underresourced regarding technology, making it difficult to plan lessons that taught the kind of technology literacy that they saw in their host countries (Denmark and Singapore).

At this point in time, it was only the Denmark ITCs who were preoccupied with the ways in which the cultural expectations of their students stood in the way of them doing anything specific. The Denmark ITCs struggled to foster a supportive classroom culture, and attempts to give students more freedom and responsibility usually backfired.

> I wanted to come back, and I wanted to trust these students, that they had to go to the bathroom, or they had to get something from their backpack the way that I learned in Denmark, and then over the course of the months was like, "Wait a minute, you're taking advantage of me as a student teacher!" And, and having, that was a bit challenging as well… that was probably the hardest transition part, if that makes sense. (Meredith, Denmark)

ITCs theorized that their students were raised under a different system, one in which the school did not treat them with trust or give them opportunities to earn trust with responsibility. According to these ITCs, because these children were not usually trusted, they did not know how to behave when someone *did* trust them, making it difficult for teachers to grant them more autonomy.

Denmark ITCs ran into the same issue when they tried to foster a positive, supportive classroom community. This was particularly difficult for Paul and Ruth, who were teaching in secondary school classrooms that had an existing (less positive)

classroom culture instilled in them. Ruth felt that her students were very resistant to the changes she wanted to make, which she found very distressing.

> I knew what my goal was. I knew that I was looking to have a group of students who were supporting each others' learning, and where students felt able to be open about things, or able to challenge each others' ideas, or all of those sorts of things. And that was exactly the opposite of what was happening in my class, and my students knew it too. (Ruth, Denmark)

Finally, as a preservice teacher, Paul was also concerned that the high volume of curriculum they were supposed to get through might leave little room for anything extra in their schedules like team building activities, or ambitious collaborative projects. Austin was the only Denmark ITC who did not experience any of these barriers in his second placement, which he credited to the culture of the progressive charter school that he was placed in.

In their full-time teaching positions, Paul was the only Denmark ITC to feel that he faced cultural barriers to bringing his perspectives into practice (though it didn't stop him from trying). The other three had accepted jobs at charter and private schools that had missions and philosophies that aligned with the values that they appreciated from Denmark. George, who accepted a position at a bilingual private school in South America, experienced tremendous cultural barriers when he tried to implement a more strict, Swiss classroom management style in a culture that he had not quite learned the rules for yet.

> I mean, so it's just very different. It's made me realize how important the culture is that the student comes from to the classroom. It's really a reflection of that. And I

> tried to implement a very Swiss-like culture, and it's not happening. (George, Switzerland)

Some ITCs continued to feel constrained by the rules of their U.S. schools. For example, Meredith's inclination to turn a blind eye to rowdy behavior for longer than some teachers might made her concerned that she would someday get in trouble for putting the school in a situation where it was liable.

> When I'm chaperoning recess this year… the first time I see a kid doing something that could be, you know, going on the swing wrong… I'll kind of turn a blind eye for a few minutes, and then I have to go and tell him that hey, you can't do that. But I want the kids to be able to push these boundaries in ways that they're not allowed to, because it's on the clock, and it's on the school property, and I get it, that's the rule. (Meredith, Denmark)

When faced with contextual differences, some ITCs opted to change their context and work in places where they felt they would have a chance to bring there perspectives into their practice. However, sometimes the best option available was to adapt, and see it as an opportunity.

> What I…[learned] from my international teaching experience is that, as I said, the classroom reflects the culture, so this half of the year, I'm not trying to do the Swiss approach. I'm trying to do the [South American] approach, which is a little more lively… I can't do a Swiss approach. I guess that's what I learned from my experience. (George, Switzerland)

Challenges and Barriers: Internal conflict

This set of challenges is unique in that it only seemed to only emerge in the ITCs after they were employed full time. Prior to that, they may have questioned *how* to do things, or wondered about the different ways that they may or may not be able to implement their ideas. However, at this point, some of the ITCs questioned whether they *should* do certain things that they had wanted to do as student teachers, or whether those things were really as important as they had originally thought.

Some of this internal conflict came from conflicting priorities. Some ITCs felt pressured to make sure that they were getting through all the required curriculum, and some of the activities that they wanted to do to promote global awareness might take too much time away from the responsibilities they had been hired to fulfill. As a preservice teacher, Ruth had stated: "Where I'm putting my energy is on teaching students to be citizens of the world, and to be people." Four months into her position as a high school science teacher, her focus had changed:

> I guess it really wasn't one of the things that my focus was on coming back… I feel like global awareness is something that's like, inherently part of our curriculum… and we talk about things that happen everywhere. You know, like, diseases and epidemics that happen all over the world... But, I don't know, it's not really something where I guess I put a lot of my energy right now. It's not one of my focuses. (Ruth, Denmark)

While recognizing that her subject matter was inherently global, she no longer felt like she needed to explicitly spend time pointing this out to her students.

In two cases, internal conflict took the form of self-doubt. Austin wanted to give his students freedom and autonomy, and teach them through guided discussions.

However, he sometimes caught himself slipping into old habits, and realized how difficult it is to try and break out of ingrained patterns of behavior: “I see myself reverting to old habits and tendencies. Just defaults with teaching that I don't want to be in…ways to crowd control, and raising my voice to get their attention.” Jesse wanted to prioritize awareness and respect for other cultures in his teaching, but understood that he would need help from cultural insiders to do this correctly: “Because I think - you know as much as I want to be unbiased, or to represent that culture, I wouldn't be able to since I'm not part of that culture.”

Usually candidates felt they could resolve their conflicting priorities problems with the curriculum by eliminating a different barrier. By gaining more experience, they could better learn how to bring their perspectives into their teaching, or by gaining more power (for Ashton and Meredith, their own classroom), they would have the flexibility to try more. Ruth, however, seemed to have simply changed her mind about how much of a priority it was for her to promote global awareness in her teaching.

Supports and Strategies

While the ITCs did face many barriers to bringing their new perspectives into practice, they were not without support. ITCs were supported by senior colleagues and school leadership, the philosophy and structure of the schools they were employed at, and in the case of the Denmark ITCs, each other. There is some overlap in these themes with the *Supportive People* and *Supportive Structures* basic themes in the *Sensemaking of the International Experience* chapter. However, here, people and resources are considered with respect to the question, “How did they support candidates in *implementing* their

ideas?" as opposed to, "How did they support candidates in *making sense* of their experiences?"

Supports and Strategies: Senior Colleagues or Leadership

For the most part, the role of supportive colleagues and leadership seemed to be to provide an environment where it was safe for the ITCs to try new things (which is strongly connected to school structures and philosophies), or to stay out of the way while ITCs explored. There were a few exceptional cases in which ITCs felt that a colleague or superior played a pivotal role in the implementation of their ideas. As a preservice teacher, Isabella specifically named her cooperating teacher during her second U.S. placement as a person who supported her attempts at bringing her perspectives into her practice. She appreciated her CT's curiosity about the international teaching practicum, and the freedom that the CT gave her to try new things in the classroom (in particular, classroom management strategies). As a practicing teacher, Jesse believed that his principal would readily support any ideas he had for raising global or intercultural awareness, but he hesitated to bring his ideas to him directly, for fear of looking like he was trying to usurp his team leader's authority.

Austin and Reese reported that they stayed in touch with faculty and supervisors from their TEP program, and that these individuals sometimes served as sounding-boards for their ideas. While this support is more related to the ITCs' sensemaking, revisiting their international experience with colleagues also helped keep it fresh in the their minds as they developed their craft.

Supports and Strategies: School Philosophy and/or Structure

This basic theme emerged during the third round of interviewing, after the ITCs had found full time jobs. The structure and philosophy of the schools that the ITCs were employed at was one of the most important factors in whether or not they felt supported in their efforts to bring their international experience into their teaching. ITCs who worked in schools that had missions and values that matched their own experienced fewer contextual barriers, and felt supported in their efforts to bring their perspectives into their practice.

Reese, Austin, Ruth, and Meredith were all offered positions at schools that, according to them, had philosophies and structures in place that supported them explicitly in their goals. This group consisted mostly of Denmark ITCs who actively sought positions in schools that advertised themselves as being community focused and collaborative, with an emphasis on hands-on learning and the social and emotional growth of students. These three ITCs believed that, while distinctly American in certain respects, their schools had philosophies and structures that more closely resembled what they saw in Denmark, which provided a platform where they felt comfortable, or were even encouraged, in bringing what they liked from Denmark into their teaching. For Ruth and Meredith, the culture of the schools that they chose resolved many of the issues that they faced during student teaching. For example, Ruth's new students were already accustomed to being part of a school that emphasized supportive relationships between students, and did not resist her efforts to strengthen these bonds in the ways that her previous students had done.

> I think overall it's an environment where if I want to try something that I saw there, or if I want, if I want to like... you know, I feel like things are in the spirit, in the same spirit. (Ruth, Denmark)

Reese's school had a culture that supported international travel and global awareness. She felt like her school considered her international experience to be an asset, and unlike Ruth and Paul (who also taught high school science), she did not express any hesitation in bringing global events into her science teaching on a regular basis, a practice which was very well received by her students.

Supports and Strategies: Other ITCs

The Denmark ITCs were unique in that one year after returning from their international teaching practicums, they all named each other as significant sources of support for bringing their perspectives into practice. Although primarily, their relationships with one another served as a continued sensemaking support, they also shared stories and practical advise for how to keep their experiences alive in their teaching.

> I think it's interesting that the people that I went over there with - we still routinely meet and talk about what we saw... And we frequently talk about how we're applying it to our practice now as teachers, and the things that we're doing and seeing, and relating it back to that. (Austin, Denmark)

RQ7: In what ways do the candidates feel that the abroad experience may have influenced their professional goals and decisions?

The final research question from this study is answered by the organizing theme entitled Career Trajectory, which outlines the various ways in which the international teaching practicum was an influence on the ITCs' career paths.

Career Trajectory:

All eight of the ITCs who participated in this round of data collection had found full-time employment in schools, though not always in the same type of school, and not always as the lead teacher. Table 15 displays their positions and the type of school they were hired at – public, private, or charter. Their decisions about where to work were based on a number of factors, including their personal circumstances and relationships, and number of opportunities that they were offered. However, during their interviews as student teachers, nine out of the eleven ITCs felt that their international practicums would (or already did) have an impact on their job search, and all eight of the ITCs who responded to the third round of interviewing believed that their choice of current position and/or their ambitions for the future were in some way influenced by their international practicums.

Table 15
School type and position title for each ITC

ITC name	Country traveled to	School type	Position
Austin	Denmark	Charter	Lead teacher
Meredith	Denmark	Private	Classroom assistant
Paul	Denmark	Public	Lead teacher
Ruth	Denmark	Charter	Lead teacher
Ashton	Singapore	Public	Certified tutor
Reese	Singapore	Public	Lead teacher
George	Switzerland	Private*	Lead teacher
Jesse	Switzerland	Public	Lead teacher

Note: George accepted a job at a private school in South America.

The were four primary ways in which a candidate felt that their careers were influenced: 1) they became more competitive as applicants, 2) it influenced the types of

schools they were interested in applying to and working in, 3) interest in future experiences teaching abroad, and 4) contributing to or clarifying their long-term goals. Table 16 shows which candidates reported each of these impacts, followed by descriptions and examples of each basic theme. ITCs spoke about these impacts in their first individual interviews right before graduation, and in their follow-up individual interviews after they had found employment.

Sometimes an ITC's perspective on this impact would change between these two interviews, which took place seven or eight months apart (depending on the participant). For the eight ITCs who participated in the follow-up interviews, the information in Table 16 reflects their most up-to-date ideas regarding the impact of the international practicum on their career trajectories. For Antonella, Isabella and Sofia, who did not participate in the final round of interviewing, only information from the first individual interviews is available. For that reason, for any category where they did not report an impact in Table 16 (for example, "Choice of School"), this is marked with two dashes (--) rather than an N/A, to reflect the fact that I did not receive complete information about the career trajectories of these participants. For the rest of the participants, cells filled in with "N/A" mean that the participant did not describe impacts on that particular area of their career development. This does not necessarily mean that they *did not* experience these impacts; only that they did not discuss them at the time of the final interview.

Table 16
Impacts on career trajectories reported by the ITCs

ITC Name	Appeal as an applicant	Choice of school	International interest	Long-term goals

Antonella*	Yes	--	--	--
Ashton	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes
Austin	N/A	Yes	N/A	Yes
George	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A
Isabella*	--	Yes	Yes	--
Jesse	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes
Meredith	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A
Paul	N/A	Yes	N/A	Yes
Reese	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
Ruth	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Sofia*	--	Yes	--	--

Note: For Sofia, Antonella and Isabella, this data is considered incomplete, since they did not participate in the final round of interviewing and did not have the opportunity to expand on their responses from their interviews as preservice teachers

Career Trajectory: Increased appeal as an applicant

Nearly half of the ITCs felt that their international practicums made them more attractive candidates when applying for jobs. These candidates discussed their international experiences during their job interviews, and sensed that their prospective employers took more of an interest in them.

> I got a job, but honestly, one of my huge selling points was saying that I taught in Singapore for 5 weeks. I think it really set me apart from other people that they had been interviewing. It was definitely something I was happy to have on my resume and just being able to share experiences w them. It's already a talking point for me in my job. (Reese, Singapore)

Career Trajectory: Choice of school

Six candidates, all of whom went to either Denmark or Singapore, reported that their international practicums helped them to realize what kind of school they wanted to work at. Three of the ITCs who went to Denmark (Austin, Ruth and Meredith) wanted to work in schools that supported them in their quest to build a positive, collaborative classroom environment, as exemplified in this quote from Ruth: "I felt so frustrated when

I came back, that I was like, kind of this cog in a system that I think works against that [community], and so I wanted to be somewhere where I didn't have to be working against it." All three of them found schools that satisfied this desire – two charter schools and a private school, all of which had missions and values that the ITCs felt resembled Denmark.

Paul's experienced differed somewhat from that of the other Denmark ITCs. He too was interested in working in a school with a small community feel, no academic tracking, collaboration among teachers, and additionally, an emphasis on practical, career-related skills. He felt that he could only find this combination of qualities in a small private or charter school, but was concerned about pursuing these schools for fear of giving up on his desire to teach in a more diverse community: "I wanted to work at a big school, where I can kind of work to see some more cultural equality and integration." For his first year of teaching, he chose to work in a large public school with a relatively diverse population. However, a few months in, he was questioning whether this was really the right environment for him, and had become interested in seeking a position at a school that reflected his values.

> Now that I've worked in a place for a year, I feel like I know a lot more about what I want out of a school. And, part of that is more collaboration, more project based learning… I think it's possible to find a diverse, small school. I think that, in [a larger metropolitan area] especially. (Paul, Denmark)

Two ITCs who went to Singapore, Sofia and Isabella, were inspired by their Singapore school's valuing of its multilingual and multicultural population, and wanted to find something similar in the United States. For Sofia, this meant paying close

attention to the mission statements of the schools that she applied to, searching for an outward valuing of diversity and a focus on hands-on learning (something that she did not see much of in Singapore, and came to realize was important to her). Isabella loved her Singapore school's heritage-language classes. During a TEP-sponsored field trip to a bilingual school that took place after her return from her international teaching practicum, Isabella noticed that the classes at the bilingual school reminded her of the mother-tongue classes she observed in Singapore. She developed an interest in working in a bilingual school, a pathway that she had not previously considered.

Career Trajectory: International interest or ambitions

Five of the ITCs reported that their international teaching practicums either inspired them to consider working abroad in the future, or gave them the skills and confidence to pursue careers abroad that they were already interested in prior to their international practicums.

Ruth, George and Ashton fell into the latter category. George and Ruth were already considering international teaching jobs (George applied to his South American job during his international practicum), and although they did not credit their international practicums for giving them this idea, the practicums did help them realize that this was something that they were capable of enjoying and succeeding at. Though Ruth chose a job in the U.S. for her first year of teaching, during her final interview, she reported that there was a strong possibility that she would teach abroad in the future. Ashton, who had previous international teaching experience, explained that the international teaching practicum reinforced her love of teaching abroad, and that she was considering pursuing another opportunity to do so in the future.

Isabella and Reese did not report any previous interest in teaching abroad, but after their international teaching practicums, found themselves considering the possibility of returning to Singapore, where they felt very welcomed. Reese described, "My principal there was like, 'Come back. I'll give you a job,' … I could definitely see myself doing that, which I never would've known before. I would love to."

Career Trajectory: Clarifying future goals

The last way in which the ITCs felt that the international experience influenced their career trajectories was by helping them to clarify their long-term goals. These changes were not usually too dramatic – in most of these cases, candidates explained that the international experience re-affirmed interests and ambitions that they already had, or helped them clarify an aspect of these ambitions. Jesse and Austin both have ambitions of becoming principals eventually, Austin at a regular public school and Jesse at a bilingual school. These ambitions existed before their international practicums, but both ITCs credited their international practicums with helping them form a clearer vision of what they would like to accomplish in their leadership roles. For Austin, the goal was a more community-centered, collaborative school where teachers had more creative freedom and freedom to attend to social-emotional needs. As a principal, Jesse reported that he would like to see the kind of fluid multilingualism that he saw in Switzerland into his own school.

Ashton had previous international teaching experience, which she had enjoyed immensely. After having a great experience teaching abroad in a different location, Ashton came to realize that she liked living in and learning about different cultures, and began to think more often about pursuing a more international career.

Reese’s long-term goals were the most noticeably influenced by her international practicum. She realized that the expanded sense of what was possible that she gained from her time in Singapore might make her a valuable asset as a decision-maker, and began setting her sights on ways that she could get involved politically at some point.

> Well, I'd say going bigger picture. Like, wanting to be a part of - even if it's just the school board for my district, or whatever it may be, you know, being on the district board. Implementing different practices at schools. Cause I think Singapore does an extreme one way, and the United States kinda does it in an extremely other, and I think there are pros and cons of both, of how they run their education systems. And I think with my experience in that, and then hopefully experiences in other countries, it would be able to help implement best practices at schools. (Reese, Singapore)

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusions

Summary of findings

Summary of Chapter 4: Sensemaking of the International Experience

Chapter Four examined the internal processes undertaken by the ITCs as they attempted to make sense of the experiences they had during their international teaching practicum, as well as the external supports they encountered in doing so both abroad and at home. The sensemaking mechanisms did not change much between the abroad and home contexts – discussions with knowledgeable others or cultural insiders, reflective writing and assignments, and independent observations and assessments. Sensemaking processes facilitated the formation of connections between their independent observations, comparisons and reflections.

What changed between the abroad and home context was support. Abroad, ITCs felt like they had plenty of helpful people to talk to, as well as structured reflective writing (journals, responding to prompts), and guided opportunities to practices new skills through assignments. Once they returned from their international practicums, many felt that they did not have sufficient opportunities to continue receiving guidance in their sensemaking. They needed to jump back into a very demanding schedule with their TEP, which left little time for further guided exploration of their experiences. They felt that everyone in their TEP wanted to be supportive, but that they were not sure what the ITCs needed, or how to re-intergrate them into their program. As a result, many felt like their experiences went unacknowledged, and that they had a difficult time making connections

between what they saw abroad and how to apply it in their home contexts. These findings are reminiscent of Bradfield-Kreider (1999), Tang and Choi (2004) and Hauerwas et al. (2015), who all cautioned that insufficient support upon return seemed to result in either backslides in intercultural development (Bradfield-Kreider, 1999; Haurwas et al., 2015), or difficulty for the participants in understanding how their experience abroad was related to anything else that they were learning (Tang & Choi, 2004).

In spite of these challenges, candidates still reported or demonstrated many changes in their personal outlooks that were connected to their sensemaking. Similar to the teachers studied in Roose (2001) and Marx and Moss (2011a), ITCs' responses suggested developments in their intercultural competence and their capacity for culturally responsive teaching. ITCs described ideas and beliefs that revealed a greater awareness of the world around them and the ways that it could be both different and the same (global awareness), a more clear-eyed view of flaws in the U.S. education system that might lead to injustice or damage to some students (critical consciousness), and greater empathy for their students from different backgrounds, particularly English Language Learners. They also began to see themselves differently, describing themselves as more skilled, confident, and open-minded than they were before their international teaching practicums. These personal developments were consistent with the findings of previous studies (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Stachowski & Sparks, 2007; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998; DeVillar & Jiang, 2009).

Summary of Chapter 5: Perspectives into Practice

Chapter 5 described the ways that the ITCs brought the perspectives developed through their sensemaking into their practice as teachers and their career trajectories. This

chapter also addressed the supports and challenges that they encountered when trying to bring perspectives into practice, both in their student teaching classrooms and their own classrooms. In some cases, ITCs simply tried to emulate a teaching practice or attitude that they liked from abroad. Other times, the influence on their practice was more related to the personal impacts that resulted from their sensemaking. Attempts at emulating a practice or attitude that they admired from abroad were met with mixed success. As it was for the teacher in DeVillar and Jiang's (2012) study, the ITCs learned that these practices were not always culturally compatible with the classrooms they taught in after completing their international practicums.

Although barriers sometimes prevented them from doing so, ITCs wished to foster a sense of global awareness in their students. Some had ambitions of connecting their U.S. students to students from their international practicums by using technology, although only one, Ashton, was able to so. Others cited barriers like lack of time, lack of access to technology, and lack of power as reasons for why their ambitions had not yet been realized. However, this did not stop them from trying to bring global awareness into their classrooms by teaching students about different countries and cultures, teaching global current events, sharing their personal international experiences, and other activities. They believed that by doing this, they were teaching their students to be less judgmental, and to consider the ways that they might be connected to people who lived far away.

Some ITCs reported practices that were consistent with culturally responsive teaching. They realized the importance of culture, and how much their culture influenced their own teaching, as well as their students' understanding and perceptions of reality.

This realization manifested as patience and empathy for students from different backgrounds, and a willingness to be flexible and accommodating in their instruction. These findings both agreed with and contradicted findings from Hauerwas et al.'s (2015) recent study. Participants described similar developments in patience and flexibility. However, the researchers also observed that the teachers in their study (who were all white) struggled to recognize their own cultural identity and the ways in which it might influence teaching.

The ITCs also took an interest in their students' lives, and tried to bring these interests into their lessons, a finding also observed in Roose (2001), Stachowski and Mahan (1998), and DeVillar & Jiang (2012). In particular, ITCs were more sensitive to the needs of their ELL students, making an effort to be attentive and sympathetic, and when possible, to support their students' heritage language by having casual conversations in that language or by assigning additional work (with the cooperation and assistance of parents). For several of the ITCs, working in a school with a diverse population was a high priority. These ITCs believed in the importance of serving students who are not always well-served by the system, and they believed in their abilities to do a better job.

Most ITCs reported that the international practicum had at least some influence on their career trajectories. At the very least, it helped clarify or solidify goals that they had prior to the experience, but for some, it inspired new goals, including the possibility of future teaching abroad. ITCs also reported that the experience abroad had an impact on what types of schools they wanted to work at, with several reporting that they were looking for schools that had values and practices that were in some way similar to

something that they saw and liked abroad. As Stachowski and Sparks (2007) observed with their international practicum alumni, the ITCs also felt that the international practicum gave them a competitive edge when they were searching for positions, and in some cases, may have been a significant factor in obtaining the offers that they received.

School selection played a big role in the supports and challenges encountered by the ITCs as they tried to bring their perspectives into practice. In some cases, ITCs had supportive people in their lives (senior colleagues, or other ITCs) who helped them to bring their perspectives into their practice by talking it through with them, collaborating, encouraging, etc. However, the biggest support turned out to be the philosophies and structures of the schools that some ITCs chose to work for. When the school's priorities aligned with the ITC's priorities, they found it easier to try the ideas that had taken root during their time abroad (spending time working through student conflicts, bringing current events into science classes, collaborating with other teachers, etc.). When the school's philosophy did not align with the ITC's goals, then the ITCs did not have the freedom or power to try everything that they wished to try (culture-themed months, connecting students to students abroad, etc.).

Other barriers encountered were differences in context, lack of experience, and internal conflict. Contextual differences, which were also a factor observed by DeVillar and Jiang's (2012) participants, made certain ideas very difficult to implement, such as rules that banned cellphones in class, or cultural differences that made it difficult to implement more rigid classroom management practices. However, even in the absence of these differences, ITCs still felt the pressure of being a first year teacher. They were still trying to settle into their new roles, and did not yet have much extra time to plan

additional activities. In some cases, ITCs felt conflicted about what they wanted to do. They might have admired something that they saw during their international teaching practicums, but questioned whether it would be appropriate to bring that attitude or practice into their own teaching.

Connections between Sensemaking and Perspectives into Practice

The two global themes, *Sensemaking of the International Experience* and *Perspectives into Practice*, were connected to each other in several ways. The strongest links came through the organizing theme *Personal Impact Resulting from Sensemaking*. Its basic themes (*Global Awareness, Empathy, Critical Consciousness* and *Self-Concept*) had a direct influence on the ways in which ITCs attempted to bring their perspectives into practice. It is most strongly connected to the organizing themes *Classroom Practices* and *Career Trajectory*. Figure 5 below illustrates the relationships between the various basic themes.

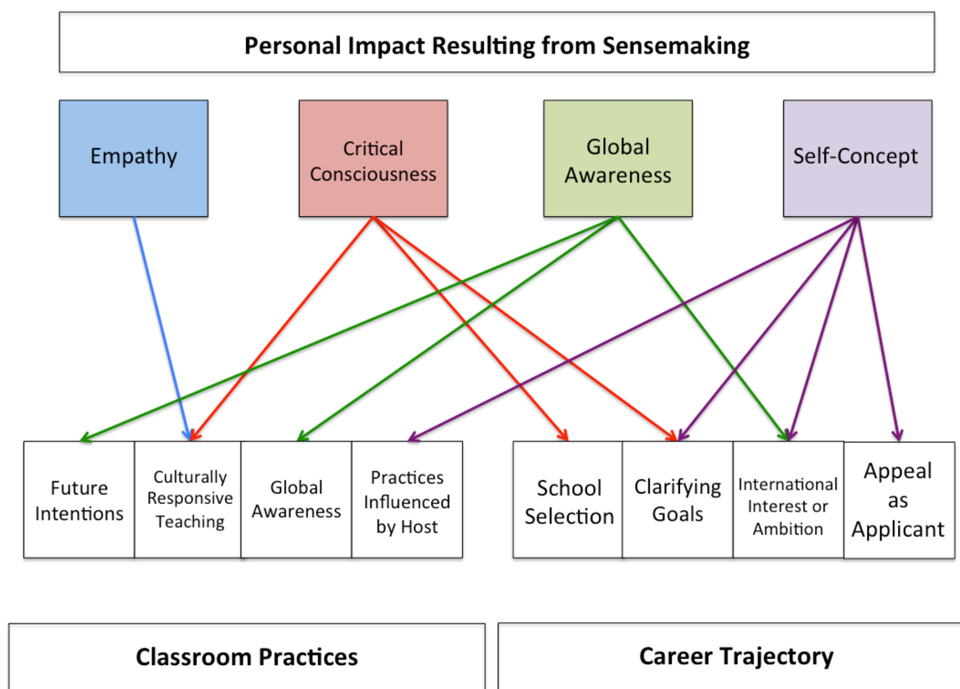

Figure 5: Connections between Personal Impacts from Sensemaking, Classroom Practices, and Career Trajectory

Influences of Sensemaking-Global Awareness

The development of more globally aware perspectives was connected to the candidates' intentions and efforts to bring global awareness into their teaching and their interest in working internationally in the future. Candidates learned new ways to think about how different aspects of society (school, healthcare, environmentalism, etc.) might be approached, and they wanted to share these perspectives and a corresponding sense of openness with their students. Students are growing up in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, where they are likely to need intercultural skills to be able to collaborate and solve global problems alongside members of different nations and cultures (Coulby, 2011). ITCs attempts at fostering awareness and interest in global issues and cultures may be an important first step in preparing students to participate in the global community.

Even if they had not yet settled on the best way to do this in their practice, bringing global awareness into their teaching was a goal that many of the ITCs held onto for the future. Like Roose's (2001) participants, who found themselves attracted to difference after participating in an international practicum, the ITCs' greater awareness of the world around them also made them hungry for more international experiences. After seeing how different things could be in one country, they realized how much more there was to see. Some ITCs, who had not previously been interested in teaching abroad, began to consider doing so for a portion of their careers.

Influences of Sensemaking-Critical Consciousness & Empathy

The ITCs' development of critical consciousness had an influence on their professional decisions by helping them to understand the priorities they might have for an ideal work environment, as well as re-affirming or clarifying goals that they had prior to the international practicum. Critical consciousness and empathy also played large roles in their attempts to be culturally responsive in their practice.

Improving in their confidence and competence for teaching ELL learners and efforts to learn about and validate their students' cultures in the classroom are two main examples of influences on teaching practice that stemmed from the empathy and critical consciousness that developed from the ITCs' sensemaking. The importance of experiencing what it is like to be a cultural outsider has been addressed in the literature (Bradfield-Kreider, 1999; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Marx & Moss, 2011), and this experience was shown to be important to the ITCs as well. They were placed in a situation where they were no longer speakers of the dominant language, or members of the dominant culture, and although they were well-supported during this time, the experience was humbling. They realized how much they relied on their own cultural and linguistic knowledge at home, and empathized with students who might feel out of place or unwelcome at school, or who might struggle to understand directions and content that are delivered without consideration of their knowledge of English.

When determining what kind of school they might like to work at in the future, critical consciousness was a factor for some ITCs. These candidates wished to teach in schools with diverse, multilingual populations and to support the success of all students. Critical consciousness also contributed to some candidates' motivation to be in positions of power later in their careers (such as principals, administrative roles, or becoming

policy makers), which they viewed as putting themselves in the position to influence the school-level barriers they felt were in place which might prevent teachers from serving all students effectively.

Influences of Sensemaking-Self-Concept

Changes in the candidates' self-concept lead to influences on their teaching practices, professional ambitions, and their perceptions of their appeal as job applicants. Their reported increases in confidence and open-mindedess translated into interest and courage to try new things in the classroom, these things often taking the form of a practice or attitude from their host country that they appreciated. Confidence, open-mindedness, and creative risk taking are commonly reported outcomes of international teaching practicums (Hauerwas et al, 2015; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Walters, Garii & Walters, 2009), and this study was no exception.

Self-concept also played a role in their professional ambitions in that they felt more confident in their ability to tackle new challenges, and as a result felt more ambitious when considering career directions. For some, this meant considering future teaching abroad. Some ITCs reported that they would have considered this a daunting challenge before the international teaching practicum, but afterward, began to see it as a realistic and interesting option. George, the ITC who taught in South America after his TEP, already intended to pursue an international teaching career prior to the international practicum, but felt that his experience during the practicum confirmed this goal, as well as gave him the confidence that he could succeed. George and several other ITCs also believed that having the experience of teaching abroad and the resulting confidence

helped them to appear more confident and competent during job interviews, which they suspected contributed to their appeal as applicants.

Did candidates become more culturally responsive teachers?

Culturally Responsive Teaching: A quick review

Villegas and Lucas (2002) proposed six characteristics for culturally responsive teachers: 1) recognizing that there are different ways of viewing reality and respecting these alternate perspectives as valid, 2) viewing classroom diversity as a resource rather than a challenge, 3) feeling responsible for and capable of making schools more responsive to all students, 4) understanding and promoting constructivist educational practices, 5) knowing about their students' lives and backgrounds, and 6) bringing students' lives and backgrounds into lessons in order to build on what they already know. To develop culturally responsive practices, a teacher must be willing to critically reflect on their own culture, believes about education, and teaching practices, in particular the ways that these understandings and practices acted on by societal norms and assumptions that promote racial and cultural inequality (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Howard, 2003). A teacher's belief in their ability to be culturally responsive (self-efficacy) *combined with* the belief that culturally responsive teaching practices will be beneficial to their students is thought to be a good predictor of whether or not the teacher will use culturally responsive teaching methods in their practice (Siwatu, 2007).

Culturally Responsive Teaching and the ITCs

The findings from this study suggest that participation in the international teaching practicum may have helped ITCs to become more culturally responsive, both in

their attitudes and their practices. These developments were evident through the evidence of critical consciousness and their reported use of classroom strategies that were intended to engage and affirm their multilingual and multicultural learners.

As I have stated elsewhere, the experience of being a cultural and linguistic minority in a school setting was an important factor in the development of culturally responsive attitudes and practices. In Trilokekar and Kukar's (2011) study, student teachers that returned from international practicums described uncomfortable, or "disorienting" experiences that they had while abroad that served as the jumping-off point for many of their reflections. ITCs also encountered the disorienting experiences that prompted them to reflect. ITCs observed critical attitudes towards some U.S. practices (for example, the Denmark ITCs got the sense that the Danish disapproved of the individualistic American culture), or in other cases, developed these perspectives on their own by witnessing the ways that members of a different culture might approach the same scenario from a different—and more effective—angle. For example, after seeing the different approaches to classroom diversity pursued in Switzerland and Singapore, ITCs felt that they appeared more affirming and effective. This caused some discomfort, as it required that they reconsider their entrenched understandings about how diversity can be factored into education. ITCs who returned from those two countries tended to be especially critical of the U.S. approaches to multilingual and multicultural learners, which they felt undervalued the benefits of diversity and instead favored assimilation. These opinions point to developments in critical consciousness that were linked to the international practicum.

Although research supports the idea that critical consciousness can be an outcome from an international teaching practicum, some research has demonstrated that in some cases (perhaps when there is insufficient support provided to help with the candidates' personal development), abroad experiences have been shown to create or reinforce negative stereotypes (Walters, Garii & Walters, 2009). Although the ITCs did not necessarily form negative opinions of their host countries, they sometimes struggled to let go of stereotypes about diversity in their own country. Critical consciousness developed differently for Denmark ITCs. Unlike their peers in Singapore and Switzerland, they had traveled to a very homogenous country. Three out of four of the Denmark ITCs (Ruth, Paul and Meredith) returned feeling conflicted about diversity after seeing, what they felt, were the benefits of living in a more homogenous society (social cohesion and mitigation of conflict resulting from abiding by the same value system).

ITCs returning from Denmark still made gains in their empathy and awareness of the needs of their ELL learners, but struggled to process these new experiences with diversity in a manner consistent with culturally responsive teaching. Though they did not express any skepticism about the benefits of being affirming and inclusive of their multicultural/multilingual students, their responses in early interviews made it clear that, at least to a certain extent, diversity was a *challenge* faced by teachers in U.S. classrooms, rather than a resource.

Although it is unclear what sensemaking processes these ITCs underwent between their final interview as preservice teachers and their interviews as practicing teachers, these attitudes seemed to change over time. Two of these three ITCs sought work in schools with diverse populations, with Paul in particular feeling that it was part of his

mission as a teacher. Ruth and Meredith expressed more critical opinions about the Danish approach to classroom diversity (which they described as the exclusion of non-Danish students), and became more appreciative of the importance of inclusion in mainstream classrooms.

In the classroom, the ITCs' reported (in various combinations) making efforts to get to know their students and their backgrounds, outwardly value and include all students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds in lessons, and to support and scaffold for their ELL students. Some of them deliberately sought employment at diverse schools, seeing it as part of their mission as teachers to serve diverse populations. These practices and career decisions are consistent with the description of culturally responsive teachers described by Villegas and Lucas (2002).

Unlike the development of critical consciousness, bringing culturally responsive practices into the classroom did not seem to be related to which country the ITC had traveled to so much as the type of school they found work at, and opportunities encountered in these environments. For example, ITCs who worked in schools or classrooms with small ELL populations had fewer opportunities to use or improve their ELL instructional practices. The influence of post-graduate place of employment may be a beneficial avenue for future research to pursue in order to better understand the environments within which international practicum alumni are attempting to bring their perspectives into practice.

Culturally Responsive Teaching: Limitations

While all eight of the ITCs who were interviewed one year after their practicums were making an effort to be culturally responsive in their classrooms, it is important to be

clear that this does not mean that the ITCs became masters of culturally responsive teaching, or that developments were due exclusively to the international teaching practicum. Since they were not being compared to candidates who did not participate in an international practicum, it is impossible to know whether they exhibited growth in this area to any greater extent than their non-traveling peers. Although the findings only reported on developments that candidates attributed or partially attributed to the international experience, one must keep in mind that each participated in a second placement in the U.S. and resumed a full load of coursework upon their return. It is likely that culturally responsive teaching practices reported when the candidates were practicing teachers were the result of a confluence of factors, including but not limited to the international teaching practicum.

While each candidate tried in their own way to respond to the needs of diverse learners, no one responded in such a manner as to suggest that they met *all* of Villegas and Lucas's (2002) criteria. However, their belief in the benefits of culturally responsive practices combined with their enhanced self-efficacy and their early attempts suggest that they are likely to continue attempting to grow as culturally responsive teachers.

Did candidates become more interculturally competent?

Quick review of intercultural competence

Deardorff's process model describes an interculturally competent person as someone who is engaged in an ongoing process of intercultural development through attitudes (respect, openness, curiosity), knowledge and comprehension (awareness of own and other cultures), and the skills to listen to, observe and process new information. These attitudes, knowledge and skills lead to internal outcomes (frame of reference shift,

adaptable/flexible/ethnorelative outlook, empathy) and external outcomes (effective, appropriate behavior and communication with members of different cultures) (Deardorff, 2011).

Intercultural competence and the ITCs

Attempting to place ITCs along a continuum of intercultural competence is outside the boundaries of this study. However, the findings did point to the development of interculturally competent attitudes, knowledge and comprehension, skills, and desired internal outcomes. The literature generally points to increased flexibility and adaptability, self-awareness, acceptance of differences, better listening and observations skills, and ethnorelative outlooks as tangible evidence of intercultural development (Mahon & Cushner, 2010; Hauerwas et al., 2015; DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Roose, 2001), with Roose (2001) adding a practical example in which participants made efforts to include global themes in their teaching in order to appeal to their diverse students.

The ITCs demonstrated similar developments to those highlighted in the literature (such as embracing difference, self-awareness, and evidence of ethnorelative outlooks). They commonly reported frame of references shifts consistent with the desired internal outcomes outlined by Deardorff (2006; 2011), realizing that there was more than one way of teaching well, or correctly, and that teachers in other countries were doing their best to serve their students, just like teachers in the United States. They also felt that they were more aware of the world outside of their own country. Differing from most previous studies, it was these gains in global awareness and efforts to bring global awareness into their practice were the most concrete indicators of gains in intercultural competence.

Quezada (2004) wrote that little is generally known about the dispositions, knowledge and skills of participants before they embark on their international practicums. The selection process for the international practicum in this study answers that question to a certain degree. From the beginning of their international practicums, ITCs had already demonstrated a degree of the perquisite attitudes for intercultural competence development. Their decision to apply to the international teaching practicum in the first place indicates a certain level of curiosity, and openness to the possibility that there may be something to learn from other countries. While abroad, they developed their knowledge and comprehension by learning about a new culture, which made their own culture more visible to them (a finding supported by both interviews and the myCAP survey). During their interviews, they demonstrated emerging intercultural competence skills by recounting their observations, and attempting to interpret and analyze them.

ITCs were much more inclined to offer positive evaluations of their host countries than negative ones. Even when a practice differed dramatically from what they were used to (such as the practice of telling students directly when they were wrong), ITCs usually either admired the differences they observed or made an effort to understand why these differences might work in a different cultural context. Admiration of practices and attitudes they saw abroad was often, but not always, connected to values they already, such as Austin's pre-existing interest in whole child education. Still, they were also open to considering practices and attitudes that did not readily align with their values, indicating that they either approached the experience with an open mind, or they developed an open mind abroad.

It was not possible to determine if the ITCs developed the “effective and appropriate communication and behavior in an intercultural situation” described as a desired external outcome of intercultural competences (Deardorff, 2006; 2011), though through their discussions of global and cultural awareness, it was possible to see evidence that emerging intercultural competence was influencing their teaching practices. In becoming more aware of their cultural identities, some ITCs began to consider the ways in which these identities might influence their teaching. Their efforts to bring global awareness into their teaching showed that they considered imparting knowledge about other countries and cultures to be an important part of their mission as teachers.

Intercultural competence limitations

It is possible that this particular group of preservice teachers was predisposed toward developments in intercultural competence. The ITCs were selected based in part on their display of interculturally competent attitudes (respect for other cultures, curiosity, etc.), which means that gains in intercultural competence should be interpreted cautiously. The attitudes of intercultural competence are considered “a fundamental starting point” (Deardorff, 2006), making it possible for an individual to be open to developing the skills and knowledge necessary for interculturally competent outcomes. While perhaps this group of ITCs was able to grow from their international practicums, a different group that was not selected for their attitudes might not experience the same growth.

As was the case with culturally responsive teaching, it is not possible to say exactly *how much* development the ITCs experienced, or how much of it was truly attributable to the international teaching practicum. However, the evidence does suggest

that living and teaching abroad and having meaningful connections with members of a different culture may have prompted them to undergo the process outlined by Deardorff (2006; 2011).

Implications for international teaching practicums: Expected outcomes

The findings in this study were, in most respects, in line with the findings from previous studies on the outcomes of international teaching practicums. Previous studies had shown that preservice teachers return with a bigger-picture view of education after learning about and engaging with a different educational system (Stachowski & Sparks, 2007). Like the participants studied by Cushner and Mahon (2007), ITCs developed greater cultural and global awareness, self-awareness, confidence, and empathy. They felt more competent as teachers, and gained exposure to new ideas about pedagogy and a greater understanding and appreciation for classroom diversity (Cushner, 2007).

DeVillar and Jiang (2012) found that participants attempted to bring skills, techniques and knowledge they learned from abroad into their classrooms in the United States, and encountered similar barriers in doing so (primarily lack of time, lack of power, and contextual differences) (DeVillar & Jiang, 2012). Participants became more aware and disapproving of racial and cultural biases in educational practices and structures (Bradfield-Kreider, 1999), and developed culturally responsive practices and attitudes (DeVillar & Jiang, 2012).

As DeVillar and Jiang (2009) found, the setting of the international teaching practicum had an influence on types of lessons learned by candidates. In their study, the affluence of the host community played a role in the development of participants, with those visiting less affluent countries making deeper, more insightful observations and

connections during their experience. In the present study, affluence was not a factor (all three countries were relatively affluent), but differences in the cultural diversity of the host country were related to differences in ITC development of critical consciousness, with more diversity leading to greater gains. Authentic, meaningful interactions with members of the host school and community, who fulfill the role of "cultural guides", were also critical to the ITCs' personal development, in agreement with findings from Stachowski and Mahan (1998), Marx and Moss (2011a), Stachowski and Sparks (2007), and Bradfield-Kreider (1999).

While a small number of previous studies do examine an international experience's impact on the perservice teacher once they have began their teaching positions (DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Cushner, 2007; Haurwas et al., 2015), this area is still in need of further exploration from researchers (Haurwas et al., 2015). The present study contributes to the body of literature on outcomes of teaching abroad experiences on a teacher's practice by showing what such outcomes might look like, and connecting them to the sensemaking practices that they at least partially originated from. The analysis affirmed previous findings that an international teaching practicum can be an opportunity for a participating preservice teacher to develop greater knowledge of their own and other cultures, positive changes to their self-concept, critical consciousness and empathy, and then expanded on these findings by showing the ways that these personal developments manifest in classroom practice, including attempts at culturally responsive and globally aware teaching.

DeVillar and Jiang (2012) and Bradfield-Kreider's (1999) studies addressed some of the challenges that participants might face in bringing perspectives into practice, which

were similar to findings in this study, although not identical. Although some participants in this study did feel uncomfortable sharing their perspectives and experiences with other students in the TEP, this was due to feeling self-conscious about receiving an opportunity that others had been denied, rather than fear of social isolation from others with narrow-minded views on other countries and cultures, as was the case in Bradfield-Kreider's (1999) study. DeVillar and Jiang's (2012) participants encountered similar challenges faced by preservice and practicing teachers wishing to bring their new perspectives into practice. Although the researchers did not categorize these challenges in the same way, their descriptions resembled lack of time, conflicting priorities, lack of power, and contextual differences.

Unlike previous studies, the present study also sought to uncover supports in the school environment that participants could take advantage of in order to facilitate attempts to bring perspectives into practice. The values and practices held by their school of employment and ongoing support from fellow ITCs were the two biggest supports, though some ITCs also named senior colleagues as important members of their support system.

Another unique contribution this study makes to the literature is its exploration of the career choices undertaken by participants in the international practicum. Stachowski & Sparks (2007) previously observed that candidates believed their international practicums made them more attractive in the job market, findings with the present study corroborates. However, they did not examine whether or not the international experience influenced the candidates career choices or goals. For the participants in the present study, the international practicum had a surprisingly large influence on their post-TEP

goals and pursuits. These goals and pursuits included greater interest and confidence in their ability to teach abroad in the future, more careful attention to the mission statements and philosophies of the schools that they applied to (often with the intention of duplicating certain aspects of the host country that they appreciated, such as whole child emphasis), and greater clarity about what they hoped to accomplish in their careers, with some of them reportedly feeling more ambitious than they had before the international practicum.

Implications for international teaching practicums: Program design

Based primarily on the supports and challenges reported by the ITCs, the findings of this study have implications for the design of future international teaching practicums. Some suggestions may appear to be in competition with one another, but really, it is about balance: making sure that candidates are given the right balance of healthy challenges and supports, structured activities and time to explore, etc.

Send ITCs to countries where English is not the primary language

As has been discussed elsewhere in this study, gains made in critical consciousness and empathy, as well as changes in self-concept, were connected to the experience of being a cultural and linguistic minority in their host schools and societies. While with proper support, a perservice teacher can still develop interculturally in an English-speaking environment (Marx & Moss, 2011a; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998), being in an environment where they depended on members of the host culture to understand what was going on was humbling for the ITCs, and contributed significantly to the development of more empathetic, culturally responsive attitudes and practices with ELL students.

Have a plan for what ITCs should be doing abroad and communicate this plan to all stakeholders

Providing a set of structured activities and assignments helps keep ITCs from feeling unsure about what to do, and wasting time abroad. Well-designed activities and assignments will initiate and facilitate engagement with the host culture and provide opportunities for guided reflection. Provide clear expectations about how much time ITCs are expected to spend in the classroom, what they are expected to do in the classroom, and who they need to meet with and how often.

Giving the ITCs assignments (in moderation) was a beneficial component of the international practicum, and should be continued, provided that the assignments 1) are given in advance, with clear expectations for requirements and deadlines, 2) are modified to take advantage of the unique opportunity to practice skills in a different cultural environment, 3) keep the ITCs from falling too far behind in their coursework, and 4) include ample opportunities for the ITCs to engage in reflective writing. Reflective writing, whether for journals (free-writing or responding to prompts), blogs, or other assignments, was frequently acknowledged by ITCs as one of the most important sensemaking tools they had available both at home and abroad.

All stakeholders, both abroad and at home, and including the ITCs, should be aware of the program's goals, and their role in bringing these goals to fruition. Failure to effectively communicate these goals and requirements can result in important stakeholders, such as cooperating teachers, to unintentionally fail to provide the level of support ITCs are expecting from the program, leading to frustration and missed opportunities for discussions and exploration.

Do not make this plan too rigid

While the benefits of a well-planned program are clear, ITCs also need free time to reflect, complete their assignments, and have spontaneous interactions with members of the host culture. While well-thought-out assignments are important, it is also important not to underestimate the value of time spent with host families, or other members of the host culture that they may encounter and befriend. A workload that is too heavy can interfere with some ITCs' ability to have these spontaneous interactions and relationships.

Consider the benefits of sending cohorts versus sending lone students

While sending ITCs abroad in groups might raise concerns about the tendency of cohorts to band together and shield each other from exposure to the host culture (Norris & Dwyer, 2005; Chang et al., 2011; Vande Berg, 2009), this did not seem to be the case with the cohorts in this study. The Denmark and Singapore ITCs named each other as important emotional *and* sensemaking supports, both during and after the international experience. It is possible that the potential negative impacts of traveling as a group were mitigated by the amount of time that they were expected to spend in the schools, and among Denmark ITCs, time spent with host families. While the Switzerland ITCs did not seem to mind their independence, the case of the Denmark ITCs in particular shows that cohorts have the potential to remain sensemaking resources for long after the international practicum is complete. Although one cannot guarantee that the same outcomes would happen with a different cohort of ITCs, it is worth considering whether this feature should be deliberately included in the program structure.

Expose ITCs to as many different elements and people from the host culture as possible

The more people the ITCs encounter and interact with, the greater the potential for developing a complex understanding of new perspectives. One of the strengths of the international practicum was that it provided opportunities for ITCs to engage with teachers and personnel at the school site, university faculty and students, students in their placement classrooms, and members of the community. All of these individuals were usually willing to answer questions and share their perspectives, which helped the ITCs form their own insights and ideas.

While ITCs can certainly take initiative and seek these interactions on their own, some may feel uncomfortable doing so, making it advisable to continue building these interactions into the structure of the program. Required meetings with university supervisors and/or cooperating teachers are one effective strategy (although make sure that supervisors and CTs are aware of and willing to take on this obligation). When possible, placing ITCs in host families was a successful approach to facilitating authentic interactions with members of the community, particularly in cases in which there is the potential to interact with community members near their age who can share more relatable perspectives (this happened for George, with the host family's son). In addition to providing sensemaking support, Walters, Garii and Walters (2009) suggest that host families can also combat the feelings of isolation faced by some participants, which can detract from the benefits of the overall experience.

In addition to exposure to multiple people, ITCs also benefit from exposure to multiple settings. Spending a significant amount of time in one school and classroom has its benefits (described below), but ITCs who had opportunities to visit different schools

and classrooms felt that it greatly enhanced their experience and broadened their perspectives on what education might look like in the host country. Along those lines, candidates also appreciated opportunities to visit the local teaching universities. Not only was this an opportunity for them to interact with same-age peers from different countries, but also a chance to see differences in how teachers are trained in a different cultural context.

Give ITCs a chance to get intimately acquainted with one classroom

Spending time getting to know one classroom was a great way for ITCs to learn about the lives of their students, develop relationships with their cooperating teachers, and learn about new routines and approaches. By teaching in these classrooms, ITCs learned to function as professionals in an unfamiliar cultural context, and built confidence by overcoming this challenge. Since the students in each country were all English Language Learners, teaching in their host classrooms also provided valuable opportunities to strengthen their abilities at teaching students with limited English proficiency.

Have a plan for how to provide emotional and intellectual support to ITCs upon return

After spending a month having an exciting and educational teaching experience in a different country, ITCs returned exhausted, but eager to share. However, most ITCs felt that the opportunities to share their experiences or continue developing their new perspectives through discussions and feedback were minimal. As Bradfield-Kreider's (1999) findings suggest, preservice teachers who have just had transformative experiences with regards to how they perceive culture in schools and society need continued emotional and intellectual support when they return from their international

practicums, or else these perspectives might be swept under the rug or minimized upon return. Tang and Choi's (2004) findings were similar; failure to integrate the international experience into the larger TEP caused participants to view the experience as something separate from their teacher training, and struggled to make connections between what they learned abroad and how to apply these lessons at home.

Responses from several ITCs indicate that finding connections between what they learned abroad and at home was an issue that they struggled with, and wished to have more help with. Opportunities for the ITCs to continue their sensemaking upon return should be pursued by TEPs in order to maximize the benefits of the international practicum. The TEP's decision to allow ITCs to write one of their Master's chapters about the international experience was a valuable step in this direction. Providing suggestions for TEP instructors and teacher supervisors on how best to engage with the learning experiences of ITCs would also be a welcome support, according to the teacher supervisors, who were not always sure about how to support further sensemaking.

Upon return, ITCs often felt disconnected from the rest of their TEP cohort, and sometimes from their professors. They felt as though their absence was barely noticed, and that there was no plan to re-integrate them with the rest of the group. The most helpful emotional support that they received from the Program came in the form of an after-hours barbeque hosted at a professor's home, during which ITCs came together and discussed their experiences with each other and with key program faculty. This gathering was very well-received by candidates, who felt that it helped them articulate some of the thoughts and feelings they had been trying to process independently.

Activities of this nature, where candidates are brought together to have debriefing discussions, are useful tools for providing both sensemaking and emotional support to ITCs. ITCs reported that they needed or wanted more opportunities like this, both inside and outside of class. Planned opportunities for ITCs to share their experiences help them to feel acknowledged, and provide a space where they can continue developing their perspectives and considering the ways in which they can bring those perspectives into their teaching.

Limitations of this study

Although the findings from this study suggest that ITCs experienced intercultural and culturally responsive developments similar to those in previous research, it would be overstatement to claim that participation in an international teaching practicum will definitely lead to those outcomes. As Walters, Garii and Walters (2009) point out, sometimes contact with different cultures reinforces or develops *negative* stereotypes, rather than promoting open-mindedness or other desirable traits, and more research is needed to understand how to minimize this occurrence.

Furthermore, while candidate responses strongly indicated that their attitudes and behaviors had been influenced along culturally responsive or interculturally competent lines, both constructs are complicated targets for assessment (Deardorff, 2012; Siwatu, 2007), making it possible that an attitude or behavior that appeared to fit into one of these constructs may have been misidentified or misunderstood by the researchers. It is also possible that the selection of candidates based on evidence of prerequisite attitudes of intercultural competence may be partially responsible for the degree to which these candidates appeared to experience growth. Candidates who did not enter the international

teaching practicum with the same prerequisite attitudes might not be prepared to experience similar growth themselves.

Candidates were interviewed and surveyed at four time points up to one year after their international practicums, providing rich insights into their perspectives and practices, and the ways that these outcomes changed and interacted over time. However, the sample size of participants was small (eleven ITCs total), and I did not achieve 100% participation in each round of data collection. This made it difficult to track the progression of outcomes for some ITCs as comprehensively as I could for others.

Future directions

The small sample size of this study made it impractical to consider the ways that different ITC characteristics may have influenced their personal experiences and outcomes. For the ITCs who identified as men and women of color (two total), certain experiences abroad (usually involving the host country's approaches to multilingualism) seemed to have a different, more personal impact. Previous research has shown that participants from minority backgrounds may have different (and sometimes more challenging) experiences from their white peers (Cushner, 2007; Trilokekar, 2011), but as it was in the present study, the numbers are usually too small to draw any definitive conclusions. Future research should examine the influence of, not only race, but gender, disability status, and other demographic factors on the experiences and outcomes reported by participants in international teaching practicums.

This study uncovered a connection between the international teaching practicum and the ITCs' career trajectories. The connection merits further investigation, as it could have considerable implications for participating schools and teachers. The philosophy

and structure of the schools that ITCs were ultimately employed at also seemed to play a large role in their ability to experiment with new perspectives in the classroom. Further exploration of this connection may help enhance researchers' understanding of the different contexts that teachers may enter, enabling TEPs to better prepare candidates for different challenges they may face.

Comments from the ITCs raised questions about what types of assignments might best facilitate learning during the international teaching practicum. DeVillar and Jiang (2009) proposed that open journal entries (where students were not expected to respond to a prompt, or fulfill any specific requirements in their writing) were more conducive to authentic and unpredictable revelations on the part of the preservice teacher. Findings from the present study suggest that a mix of guided and open reflective-writing practices may be equally suitable, as it provides opportunities for unstructured reflection (through blogs and personal journals) and guided reflection (through responses to prompts and their M.Ed. chapters). The benefits of different types of reflective writing were not explored in this study, but this might be a productive question to explore in future research.

Finally, while recent studies (including this one) have shed light on the types of internationally-influenced practices that ITCs attempt to bring to the classroom upon return, more research is needed to understand how successful they are in these attempts, and whether or not they persist in the face of inevitable challenges.

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Appendix A

Focus Group Interview Protocol

1. Regarding your experiences in *country*, what are three things outside of the classroom or school that surprised you? What are three things inside the classroom or school that surprised you?
2. What are some of the contrasts and similarities in terms of teaching practices?
3. What types of assessment experiences did you observe being used in the classroom? In your opinion, did this capture student learning?
4. Were there children with special needs in the classroom where you student taught? If no, why not? If yes, what kinds of needs and how were they attended to?
5. In what ways will this international experience affect your teaching moving forward?

Appendix B

Individual Interview Protocol

1. How did your experience abroad change the way you think about teaching, learning, and/or schooling? Can you describe these changes?
2. If you feel you've developed some new perspectives on teaching/learning/schooling by teaching abroad, can you give me an example of an interaction you've had or observation you've made since your return that connects to your new perspective?
3. How else have you been integrating your experience into your teaching upon return? Can you provide an "artifact" from you teaching that illustrates this?
    a. Have you encountered any challenges or barriers to incorporating your new perspective into your teaching?
4. What supports did you have while abroad (e.g., a supervisor or person to debrief with, documents, peers, etc.) that helped you make sense of what you were seeing/experiencing?
5. What supports did you have when you returned to make sense of what you experienced? What suggestions do you have to improve supports or the re-integration experience for the next round of ITCs?
6. If you could go back and do the program again, what changes would you hope for in terms of the program structure?
7. If you could go back and do the program again, what would you personally do differently?
8. What were some of the benefits for you in participating in the program?

a. For your peers?

b. For your UCSB program?

9. What were some of the drawbacks for you in participating in the program?

    a. For your peers?

    b. For your UCSB program?

10. BONUS (not included in the original protocol): Has your experience abroad had any impact on your job search and/or professional aspirations?

Appendix C

Supervisor Interview Protocol

1. During individual or small group discussions with one or more of the ITCs, did they compare or contrast their classroom experiences this semester with those they experienced in their host country? In what ways, or do you recall some examples?
2. Did you notice a difference in their actual classroom practice after they returned? (this will apply to all MST supervisor and some SST who observed them in the fall placement)
3. Did you purposefully try to "bring in" their international experiences, either to the small group or during post observation discussions? If yes, how? Examples?
4. In your view, what value did the international experience have for the ITCs, for their peer TCs, and for the program?
5. What challenges do we still need to work on and/or what are ideas for improving the experience next year?

Appendix D

One-Year Post-Experience Interview Protocol

1. When you first returned last year, you were asked to describe how your experience abroad change the way you think about teaching, learning, and/or schooling. How would you describe these changes now?
    a. How have your perspectives evolved since last year?
    b. What experiences have you had that influenced these changes?
2. Can you give me an example of an interaction you've had or observation you've made since your return that connects to your new perspectives on teaching/learning/schooling?
3. How else have you been integrating your experience into your teaching now that you have your own classroom? Can you provide an "artifact" from you teaching that illustrates this?
4. Have you encountered any challenges or barriers to incorporating your new perspective into your teaching? If so, please describe.
5. In what ways have you been supported in your efforts to integrate your perspectives into your teaching practice?
6. What are your future plans for your career? How, if at all, does your international experience influence those plans?