



Review article

Teachers crossing borders: A review of the research into cultural immersion field experience for teachers



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HIGHLIGHTS

- International and domestic cultural immersion programs show promise to develop teacher interculturality.
- A typology of programs is offered based on a review of programs studied over the past 15 years.
- Learning outcomes for teachers related to cultural competencies are outlined.
- A critique of the existing research highlights tensions and directions for future research.

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ABSTRACT

As schools become increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse, there is an acute need for teachers who possess the skills and understandings to work across cultures, a capacity called interculturality. This paper reviews the body of research that has investigated ways in which interculturality is developed among teachers, particularly within the context of cultural immersion field experiences. The review identifies a set of learning outcomes that have been documented in the research to develop teacher interculturality and maps out tensions that limit the impact and utility of this emerging body of research. It also offers some directions for future research.

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1. Introduction

The coping skills I tried, the things I learned, and the feelings I felt reflect how I have grown in maturity and cultural understandings. I really feel that my successes, failures, and emotions while learning and living in a different language and new culture will help me relate to my students and to my world. I have a new respect for those who have enough courage to leave their homes completely and come to a place that is pretty hostile toward them (it was hard enough for me and I was welcomed with open arms).

Comments of a pre-service teacher after an immersion experience abroad

Intercultural Speaker - *Acting interculturally presupposes that one is aware of difference and similarity and can decentre in order to help others to act together—or indeed to act oneself with others—in ways that overcome obstacles of difference.*

(Byram, 2008, p. 76)

As schools become more linguistically and culturally diverse, teacher educators face the challenge to inspire teachers with the confidence and the abilities to teach in today's more diverse classrooms (Castro, 2010). In view of the documented 'achievement gap' for English learners and those of marginalized groups (Banks, 1995; Gándara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2006; Gay, 2000; Sleeter, 2001, 2011), we can assert that preparing *culturally responsive* or *intercultural* teachers represents one of the most daunting tasks facing teacher educators today (Gay, 2000; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008; Morrison, Robbins, & Rose, 2008).

When teacher educators engage with pre-service teachers to prepare them for teaching in diverse school contexts, they act with the understanding that socioeconomic status, language, and the fluid construct of 'culture' play significant roles in student learning. The pre-service teacher's thoughts, offered as a preamble above, may suggest that structured immersion experiences in culturally-different communities (either within the home culture or abroad) will guide teachers to draw upon their students' cultural worlds in order to develop meaningful learning experiences for all students. But, will this teacher's newfound respect for learners whose daily lives play out in unfamiliar linguistic and cultural contexts come alive in her instructional practices? What has she learned about instructional strategies to engage students of other cultural and language backgrounds? And, how will the attitudes and empathy that she has developed in a culturally different space endure and transfer to her work with individual learners? What elements of such immersive field experiences seem to be productive for teacher learning? Our goal in this review was to find and report on empirical descriptions of immersive field teaching experiences and the insights gathered from that research to answer those questions.

Over the past fifteen years, there has been a significant expansion in the body of research that examines how to prepare teachers as culturally responsive educators, and in particular, what it means to become 'intercultural.' To synthesize that growing body of research, we have identified and reviewed over 90 empirical studies that explore cultural and linguistic immersive field experiences for teachers (in both domestic and international settings) with the stated objective of developing culturally responsive or intercultural teachers.

Our goals in this work are multiple: First, we consider the question: What does it mean for a teacher to be intercultural? Following Byram's (2008) definition of an 'intercultural speaker' in the introductory quote, we seek to understand how teachers can develop the capacity to recognize, interact with, and support the learning of students who come from families in which English is not the dominant language and who are of cultural or racial backgrounds that differ from the white English-speaking majority. Additionally, given the explosion in the number of domestic and international immersion programs for teachers in recent years, we seek to specify and classify the range of models and practices used in teacher education to promote intercultural competency and furthermore, identify specific learning outcomes that have been reported in the research on these interventions. Specifically, we aim to address the following questions:

1. How is the development of intercultural competence understood and operationalized in the research examining immersive experience for teachers?
2. In what ways do cultural immersion field experiences promote intercultural learning and competence? What specific learning outcomes for teachers emerge through an analysis of the body of research in this area?

At this juncture, we emphasize that this work does not encompass explanations of how to develop culturally responsive pedagogies, but instead considers how we might develop teachers' intercultural skills, attitudes, and knowledge which are interrelated elements of the construct of intercultural competence or interculturality (Byram, 1997; Dervin, 2010, 2016). Indeed, we argue that the notions of *culturally responsive pedagogy* and *intercultural competence* are frequently conflated and we suggest that it would be a productive move for both research and practice to consider these as two distinct theoretical constructs.

2. Theoretical commitments

We began our investigation by consulting existing reviews of the literature related to preparing teachers for culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. In two reviews that examine empirical research of programs that intentionally seek to prepare teachers for diverse classrooms, Sleeter (2001, 2008) underscores that the

growing demographic gap between students and teachers matters because it means that students of color (especially Black and Latino students) “are much more likely to be taught by teachers who question their academic ability, are uncomfortable around them, or do not know how to teach them well” (Sleeter, 2008, p. 559). Teacher preparation programs continue to be populated by students of White, middle-class, English-speaking backgrounds (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005) and as a group, White pre-service teachers are less likely to bring cross-cultural background, knowledge, and experience to their teaching practice (Sleeter, 1992, 2001, 2008; Marx, 2008; Salas, Flores, & Smith, 2005; Scahill, 1993; Terrill & Mark, 2000).

In her 2001 review, Sleeter identified two general approaches to address the cultural gap between teachers and students: 1) to develop the orientations and knowledge base necessary to prepare prospective teachers to work with culturally-different students, and 2) to recruit a more racially and culturally diverse body of pre-service teachers (p. 96). For White prospective teachers in particular, she concluded that community-based immersion experiences with some classroom or tutoring practice coupled with coursework seemed to hold the most promise (2001). In a later work, Sleeter (2008) outlined a three-pronged approach to prepare pre-service teachers to teach diverse students well and asserts that all three components are necessary and essential elements of teacher preparation (p. 563). First, a coherent set of courses that emphasizes equity and which values diversity and in turn, has direct linkages to school-based fieldwork. Both of these activities, courses and field experiences, should intentionally develop students' conceptual foundations and culturally responsive teaching skills and be informed by faculty, cooperating teachers, and administrators who share a vision that embraces diversity and the resources it brings to classrooms. Additionally, a third component is cross-cultural community-based experience in which prospective teachers are first equipped with listening, observational skills, and conceptual knowledge about culture which can then support their capabilities to interact effectively in intercultural spaces.

Sleeter's (2008) review offers several conclusions related to cross-cultural community-based experience for teachers. First, extended (over several months or longer) immersion situations seem to offer the most promise because they require that people manage and adjust to dissonance and discomfort over a period of time (Mahan & Stachowski, 1990; Zeichner & Melnick, 1996); and secondly, shorter immersion experiences do offer the potential for teachers to discard deficit thinking and create positive orientations to culturally different communities and peoples (Cooper, Beare, & Thorman, 1990; Marxen & Rudney, 1999).

At the same time, Sleeter (2008) acknowledges that community-based experience may not be enough to do more than raise awareness. There is a lack of research following prospective teachers into their future classrooms to see how their experiences in culturally-different communities might have influenced their attitudes towards diverse students and their teaching. Sleeter (2008) asserts that while community-based experience does not necessarily lead to excellent teaching, it provides an experiential foundation which in combination with learning of concepts in courses and guided reflective practice may lay a groundwork for ongoing learning and teacher development over time.

2.1. Teacher interculturality

Central to instruction that responds to and intends to sustain (Paris, 2012) culturally distinct ways of being is a capacity to recognize, interact with, and build upon cultural differences to develop meaningful learning experiences for all students. This capacity has been termed *intercultural competence* (or alternately,

intercultural communicative competence, cross-cultural competence, cultural competence, interculturality, or global competence) for which there exist a range of theoretical models (cf., Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009 for a review of 22 models of intercultural competence, as well as a more recent review by Chen, 2014). Theoretical understandings of intercultural competence have developed out of a broad spectrum of disciplines including anthropology, applied linguistics, psychology, education, and communication. Most models include what Martin (2015) has called the ‘ABC (Affect, Behaviors, and Cognition/Knowledge) triumvirate,’ and include components that speak to: 1) attitudes or orientations toward cultural difference; 2) a set of skills for behavioral interactions; and, 3) conceptual knowledge of culture and cultures (Chen, 2014; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

More recently, critical orientations towards intercultural competence have been articulated and suggest that culture might be looked at as enacted negotiations of multiple and contested group identifications and representations (Collier, 2015); these models call for more attention directed to contextual factors, power relations, and the differential benefits for diverse parties accrued during intercultural encounters (Chi & Suthers, 2015; Collier, 2014; Dervin, 2016; Martin, 2015).

Within the literature on teaching and learning (frequently within the realm of second language teaching), the process of ‘*intercultural learning*’ and its assumed goal ‘*intercultural competence*’ or ‘*interculturality*’ are frequently investigated, while their exact meanings are likewise under debate (O'Dowd, 2003). As a basis to interpret this body of research, we relied on a specific definition of interculturality (James, 2007), and a framework of intercultural competence for teachers (Byram, 1997).

Firstly, a report of The Baring Foundation in the UK, which undertook a succinct analysis of the theoretical frameworks of leading thinkers as part of a concerted effort to explore the concept of interculturalism (James, 2007) asserts that *interculturality* is:

a dynamic process by which people from different cultures interact to learn about and question their own and each other's cultures. Over time this may lead to cultural change. It recognises the inequalities at work in society and the need to overcome these. It is a process which requires mutual respect and acknowledges human rights. (p. 1)

This definition emphasizes learning through direct interaction with people who are culturally different in real-life settings as a means to promote self-awareness and cultural sensitivity; a move that combined with classroom instruction has been shown to influence teacher-learners' critical consciousness (Nieto, 2006; Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012). The development of interculturality for teachers would include an acknowledgement of the interconnections between school and society and an understanding that schools maintain social structures that can severely limit achievement for immigrant students (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Thus, teacher education for diverse classrooms would require a critical analysis of one's own culture as well as an awareness of how human differences are used by people in power to rationalize inequities and maintain their position of dominance in society (Smolcic, 2011, 2013). In this view, we might work to move teachers away from a ‘deficit’ perspective about the capabilities of culturally and linguistically diverse students to see themselves as playing a part in addressing inequities as they uncover them in classrooms and schools (Alfaro & Quezada, 2010; Nieto, 1999; Sleeter, 1996, 2004, 2008).

Finally, a comprehensive model of intercultural competence for teachers is Byram's (1997) model which was designed specifically for the context of second language teaching and includes

educational objectives which specify the roles of the learner and teacher. According to Byram (1997), students can develop the ability to analytically compare their own experiences with that of others to demonstrate a 'critical cultural awareness' which may be a more realistic goal during a short-term immersive experience than development of 'competence.'

Byram's model adopts a broad view of what intercultural competence might include, encompassing attitudinal factors, culture-general knowledge, knowledge about specific cultures (including one's own), skills of interaction, discovery, and interpretation, and finally a critical awareness which would move attention beyond the self to macro-social structures of society. In Table 1, we summarize the major categories of learning that constitute Byram's model.

3. Methodology

3.1. Review procedure

We began with a search of five online databases (ERIC, Google Scholar, ProQuest, Web of Science, LionSearch (university search engine) to locate peer-reviewed studies published since 1999 that included the keywords (teacher education, teacher candidate, preservice teacher) and (cultural competence, intercultural competence, global competence) with additional studies added through reviews of reference lists of frequently cited articles. The search yielded a group of 91 research articles. Although we encountered some quantitative studies, the majority of the research is qualitative with a few mixed methods studies. Many of the articles were purely descriptive accounts of the design or the activities that constitute a cultural immersion program and in some cases, simply described a particular instructional practice within a program. We decided to examine only those studies that reported on empirical research of cultural immersion for teachers. After conducting an initial review of the identified studies, we excluded the descriptive accounts and focused attention on a group of 44 studies for initial coding which included only those that offered: 1) evidence of empirical data assessing or capturing some level of development of intercultural competence or cultural awareness through an explicit pedagogical intervention; and 2) a clearly articulated research methodology.

Importantly, due to the specific search parameters indicated above, this survey does not include a number of related studies that may address issues of culturally-relevant pedagogy, social justice education, multicultural education, and racial and ethnic identity among teachers. Although many of the studies reviewed here contribute to ongoing conversations in these areas, not all researchers in these fields may explicitly position their work in the field of cultural or intercultural (or cross-cultural) competence. While we acknowledge that there is noteworthy overlap between the research on teacher interculturality and the broader fields of multicultural education, equity in education, and racial and ethnic identity, we do not claim to be comprehensive of all of those areas in this review.

In the first phase of analysis, we identified the major differentiating elements of the programs in order to categorize them and create a descriptive framework to aid in further analysis. The following variables emerged from the initial review of the 44 studies: 1) Program Type, 2) Academic Specialization (of the teacher participants, i.e., ESL, general education, special education), 3) Context (international, domestic, including other contextual factors like homestay or other community component), 4) the presence and nature of Teacher Mentoring, 5) the Theoretical Framework underlying the study, and 6) Research Methodology (qualitative, quantitative, mixed methodology). This initial coding procedure enabled a classification of the studies by "Program Type," in effect, creating a typology of cultural immersion field experiences that are being developed and implemented within teacher education.

3.2. Program types: cultural immersion experience for teachers

Based on our analysis, four broad program types to develop teacher intercultural competence emerged from the literature: 1) Stand-alone course or professional development program, 2) International study tour, 3) Overseas student teaching, and 4) Cultural immersion programs and field experience. In each of these areas, researchers have begun to document how these activities can help equip prospective teachers with the capacity to work effectively with the culturally and linguistically diverse student populations that increasingly characterize schools.

3.2.1. Stand-alone courses or professional development programs

This first category of studies report on stand-alone courses (as a component part of a teacher preparation program) or targeted professional development for in-service teachers with a focus on intercultural learning. In some cases, the course integrated a guided interaction with a culturally different population, for example, tutoring adult immigrants or interacting with international university students or immigrant families (Dunn, Kirova, Cooley, & Ogilvie, 2009; He & Cooper, 2009; He, 2013; Keengwe, 2010). Other efforts prompted teachers to look reflectively at their beliefs about or practices with culturally and linguistically diverse populations through readings, discussion, or problem-solving with actual classroom scenarios (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009; Reidel & Draper, 2013). Additionally, this group included investigations of web-mediated experiences in which US-based students collaborated over a semester with international peers in other countries (Ertmer et al., 2011; Ko & Boswell, 2013).

3.2.2. International study tours

Another type of program that seeks to develop intercultural awareness for teacher is the international study tour (Burton, 2011; Gleeson & Tait, 2012; Wernicke, 2010). Such programs are typically faculty-led and do not include a teaching practicum or field experience in classrooms, although they might include a school visit or observations. They often involve travel to different sites, focused learning about the host country's society, history, culture, and

Table 1
Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence, (Byram, 1997).

Attitudes – curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend belief about other cultures and beliefs about one's own
Knowledge – of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction
Skills of interpreting and relating - ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it, and relate it to documents from one's own
Skills of discovery and interaction – ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction
Critical cultural awareness/political education – ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and other cultures and countries (pp. 50–53)

sometimes offer discipline-specific knowledge, such as typical methods of teaching the English language in the schools of that country. Most frequently international study tours do not include a local homestay, nor second language study or extended interactions with local people.

3.2.3. Overseas student teaching

The studies in this group examine overseas student teaching in several different countries to answer the broad question of how such experience might influence teachers' professional practice and personal life (Alfaro, 2008; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Garii, 2009; Kabilan, 2013; Karaman & Tochon, 2010; Marx & Moss, 2011; Quezada & Alfaro, 2007; Ruiz & Baird, 2013). In overseas student teaching experiences, students complete part (or all) of their student teaching requirement in an international setting, typically in an international school which often includes students from several countries. Participants may or may not be teaching in their certification area; in some cases, student teachers teach English as an additional language, regardless of their certification area because of language constraints. The studies in this category take up a broad range of questions for investigation ranging, for example, from Kabilan (2013) who seeks to understand how the international practicum generally affects students' perceptions of their professional practice to Quezada and Alfaro (2007) who ask how the teaching abroad experience might contribute to the development of ideological clarity, a specific construct previously outlined in the teacher education literature (Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001). Much of this work is only loosely tied to a theoretical framework to explain intercultural learning or teacher development in an intercultural/international space. Also, the overseas teaching experience while incorporating cultural immersion through daily life experience, does not typically offer structured reflection or intentional analysis of culture. Thus, we have categorized these studies together since intercultural competence (while it may be developed) is not intentionally guided nor documented in the research.

3.2.4. Cultural immersion programs and field experience

Finally, the last program type, "cultural immersion programs and field experience," is the largest category in terms of the body of research reviewed. These programs attempt to immerse program participants in a different cultural context, participants often live in a homestay situation and have some type of teaching or assisting teacher role in schools and classrooms. The studies in this category included numerous well-developed and parallel instructional practices and reported a broad range of learning outcomes related to intercultural learning for teachers. We took this group of studies as the focus of our second phase of analysis.

3.3. Analysis of intercultural learning outcomes

The goal of the second phase of analysis was to synthesize the findings or cultural learning outcomes reported by the studies. Given that our goal was to understand the impacts of cultural immersion on teacher attitudes, dispositions, and teaching practices, the second phase of analysis focused on the 22 studies reporting empirical data about cultural immersion experiences, both international and domestic, and which offered findings on the outcomes of the learning around interculturality that occurs in these kinds of programs. Studies that were aggregated into this category were defined for our analysis as programs that included the following components: 1) cross-cultural community-based learning or daily life experience in another cultural context (for a minimum of a week), 2) explicit teaching about, exploration of, and reflections on culture in that setting, and, 3) some form of structured field

teaching experience in a formal or informal educational setting. In other words, research studies that reported on students who teach overseas as individuals without structured feedback or teacher mentoring were not included, nor were studies of experiences embedded within on-campus courses since the dynamic of cultural immersion would not be present. The majority of the studies investigated short-term immersion experiences of several weeks in duration and most also included interactions within a language context that differed from the native language of the program participants. See Appendix 1 for a brief summary of the studies reviewed for learning outcomes in the second phase of the analysis.

In-depth coding of this subset of 22 studies was an emergent coding process, in which themes were identified, clarified, and refined in multiple iterations. At the end of the coding process, seven general themes of teacher intercultural learning were identified, with 42 sub-codes comprising the seven larger themes. Repeatedly, we found that reported outcomes relate to one another; they are not mutually exclusive and often exist in relation to one another. It is also true that studies on teacher education practice emphasize specific learning outcomes that potentially grow out of the particular objectives of the program or the theoretical orientation that the researchers have adopted. We acknowledge the subjective nature of our decisions to categorize learning outcomes in a specific category or other. However, the framework we have created here meets our goal of organizing and providing concrete examples of ways that teacher educators are working to develop intercultural competence in teachers who are preparing to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. The seven broad outcomes for immersive field experience programs are described below.

4. Developing teacher interculturality: a synthesis of reported outcomes

In this section, we synthesize the body of work as a whole in order to develop a picture of what intercultural learning for teachers might include. In some studies, the research process attempted to track *a priori* learning objectives, and in other cases, the researchers followed a grounded analysis to analyze aspects of developing interculturality that arose out of their data analysis. We report on the main threads that were common to the body of literature which together might be thought of as primary intercultural learning objectives for teachers.

4.1. Building knowledge of culture

One core outcome of a cultural immersion experience is clearly the development of culture-general knowledge, awareness of specific cultural ways of being, and differences and similarities between cultural groups. As a component of cultural competence, some fundamental knowledge about culture and how culture operates is crucial for teachers to demonstrate a cultural competency necessary for culturally responsive teaching. Yet what constitutes fundamental knowledge about culture is not a settled question, and the literature identifies a variety of outcomes for cultural immersion programs that address a need to build foundational knowledge of what culture is and how it functions. Zhao, Meyers, and Meyers (2009) for example, contend that the immersion program they study in China allows participants to understand their own culture as well as develop general concepts around culture. This may also include seeing culture as necessarily multifaceted, fluid, and dynamic (Dantas, 2007; Phillion, Malewski, Sharma, & Wang, 2009; Tang & Choi, 2004), and not necessarily defined in national terms (Lee, 2009; Willard-Holt, 2001). Similarly, several studies explore participants' deeper understanding of how culture

and language relate to each other, as overlapping systems of meaning (Lee, 2009; Malewski, Sharma, & Phillion, 2012; Nero, 2009; Zhao et al., 2009).

A broadly identified outcome concerning building fundamental knowledge of culture is that building schema or conceptualizations about culture can be developed through connecting personal experiences of immersion with theory and concepts (Addleman, Nava, Cevallos, Brazo, & Dixon, 2014; Dantas, 2007; Malewski et al., 2012; Phillion et al., 2009; Zhao et al., 2009). For example, Addleman et al. (2014) use 'debriefing circles' with a group of students during the time abroad to create a dialogue structure that encouraged students to process incidents of cultural disequilibrium without judgment and allowed the group to analyze their cultural and intellectual bias. In this sense, the focus is less on abstract conceptualization of culture, but rather the active process of connecting lived experiences with theoretical concepts that describe and help us to understand how culture influences how people think, change, and interact. Personal dispositions toward cultural differences are also important outcomes cited by this body of work. Lee (2009), Malewski and Phillion (2009), Phillion et al. (2009), and Zhao et al. (2009) all identify the development of respect, curiosity, and appreciation for other cultures, values, and practices as key cultural learning outcomes in their studies.

4.2. *Build awareness of the role of culture in teaching, school structures, and educational systems*

A second category of learning outcomes that arise out of cultural immersion experience can be described as a deeper awareness of how to apply knowledge of culture to educational systems, schools, classrooms, and teaching practices. At the level of experience in classrooms, this may include gaining awareness of and adopting different classroom activities or curricular content that are encountered in the host country or community (Johnson & Battalio, 2008; Lee, 2009; Nero, 2009; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Trent, 2011; Willard-Holt, 2001; Zhao et al., 2009). As an example, Willard-Holt (2001) reports that pre-service teachers returned from immersion in Mexico to incorporate content from their trip into their subsequent teaching. Some taught entire units or lessons on Mexico while others added a global perspective to the standard curriculum, such as by the example of converting pesos to dollars in math or by comparing Pennsylvania's flora and fauna with that of the desert (p. 510). An awareness of culture in schooling can also be built by an exploration of cross-cultural differences in teaching styles, schooling norms, and learning expectations between the host and home countries (Causey, Thomas, & Armento, 2000; Dantas, 2007; Hamel, Chikamori, Ono, & Williams, 2010; Lee, 2009; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Malewski et al., 2012; Nero, 2009; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Tang & Choi, 2004; Willard-Holt, 2001; Zhao et al., 2009). Lee (2009) reports that Hong Kong teachers who spent six weeks in New Zealand return to their home classrooms noting the New Zealanders' commitment to multiculturalism, environmental sustainability, and tendency toward learner-centered classrooms. More importantly, Lee (2009) concludes that the opportunity to see and interact in a foreign classroom environment gave teachers a window through which they might look more deeply at their own educational context and question the ways that education unfolds in schools and classrooms at home.

In some cases, there is evidence that this encounter of cultural difference in education prompt development and change in participants' professional identity; this may involve questioning one's own professional teaching practices (Olmedo & Harbon, 2010; Phillion et al., 2009; Zhao et al., 2009), rethinking one's commitment to becoming a teacher (Trent, 2011), or to re-orient oneself as

a 'globally-minded' teacher (Trent, 2011; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011). Importantly, awareness and identity growth enable participants to identify ways to become more culturally responsive in teaching, in particular, imagining and understanding ways that they might adjust teaching in the home context to be more culturally responsive (Causey et al., 2000; Johnson & Battalio, 2008; Lee, 2009; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Marx & Pray, 2011; Phillion et al., 2009; Tang & Choi, 2004; Willard-Holt, 2001). However, across a number of studies, researchers concluded that a growth in cultural awareness in school contexts while abroad was sometimes not easily translated into changes in teaching that could easily be implemented in the participants' home contexts (Addleman et al., 2014; Causey et al., 2000; Johnson & Battalio, 2008; Tang & Choi, 2004; Willard-Holt, 2001). Johnson and Battalio (2008) analyzed data from a follow-up encounter with special education student teachers four months after their immersion program concluded. They note that the teachers indicated that it was difficult to merge changes in teaching practices that they observed while abroad into their typical daily routines because these new patterns of thinking about teaching were not reinforced by the expectations and school structures of their home context. Further, Johnson and Battalio (2008, p. 99) recommend that preparation for the field experience abroad requires more thorough instruction about the educational context of both the host and home countries in order to facilitate cross-cultural comparisons. Program leaders cannot assume that students will perceive differences and then reflect on them in light of their own educational system, without making the differences transparent.

4.3. *Developing cultural and societal self-awareness*

A key outcome for immersion programs is to enable the participants to place themselves in a cultural matrix, through which they then can begin to understand cultural differences vis-à-vis their own. In a number of programs this self-awareness arises through self-reflection that leads to a critique or re-examination of one's own beliefs, in particular cultural stereotypes that may have been hitherto unexamined (Addleman et al., 2014; Causey et al., 2000; Domangue & Lee, 2008; Lee, 2009; Malewski et al., 2012; Tang & Choi, 2004). In other cases, it is so-called 'critical incidents' that participants experience in the immersion experience that drive self-awareness and promote new cultural learning (Addleman et al., 2014; Dantas, 2007; Domangue & Lee, 2008; Hamel et al., 2010; Santamaria, Santamaria, & Fletcher, 2009). Similarly, participants may realize during the immersive experience that they themselves are being identified by new or different racial categorizations in the host country or other cultural setting, a situation that drives cultural and societal self-awareness (Addleman et al., 2014; Causey et al., 2000; Malewski and Phillion (2009); Nero, 2009; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Zhao et al., 2009).

Importantly, many programs want to ensure that cultural and social self-awareness that is developed during an immersion experience leads to productive ends, such as more positive perceptions of and deeper empathy for the linguistic and cultural minorities in the home society (Addleman et al., 2014; Causey et al., 2000; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Marx & Pray, 2011; Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Santamaria et al., 2009; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Zhao et al., 2009). However, a number of studies have in fact identified undesirable outcomes that emerge with participants' emerging self-awareness of themselves as cultural and social beings, in particular the increased likelihood of asserting the superiority of one's cultural ways (Domangue & Lee, 2008; Hamel et al., 2010; Marx & Pray, 2011; Santamaria et al., 2009; Willard-Holt, 2001) or a sense of alienation in a different culture which leave participants unable to make

connections to dynamics of power and privilege back in their home culture (Domangue & Lee, 2008; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011).

4.4. Create a sociopolitical awareness and a critical consciousness

The studies in the review also demonstrate that through participation in cultural immersion experiences, participants develop new sociopolitical awareness and consciousness. For example, participants gain a better and more concrete understanding of how to recognize privilege related to class, race, ethnicity, or gender (Domangue & Lee, 2008; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Phillion et al., 2009) as well as privilege arising from global power relations (Nero, 2009; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011). This understanding may prompt examination of one's own stereotypes and prejudices (Phillion et al., 2009), or it may reinforce stereotypes based on a limited experience in the host culture (Marx & Pray, 2011; Santamaria et al., 2009). Emerging sociopolitical consciousness may in some cases be embedded in educational contexts the participants encounter, allowing them to be aware of deficit perspectives in schooling (Addleman et al., 2014; Malewski et al., 2012; Marx & Pray, 2011; Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012) or the role privilege plays in the availability or lack of educational opportunities (Addleman et al., 2014; Malewski et al., 2012; Marx & Pray, 2011; Phillion et al., 2009; Santamaria et al., 2009).

On the other hand, Palmer and Menard-Warwick (2012) indicate the limits of developing a robust critical consciousness among participants, given the relatively short amount of time participants spend in an immersion setting. Instead, it may be valuable to look at a more limited outcome, which Palmer and Menard-Warwick (2012) term "critical cultural awareness" (p. 19) that would entail evaluation of one's own and other's cultural perspectives, but which may not map onto a fully Freirean conscientiousness that includes understanding the entirety of the cultural context, commitment to change, and personal action. However, Palmer and Menard-Warwick (2012) suggest that this kind of more limited objective may be more attainable in a month-long study abroad immersion experience for pre-service teachers.

4.5. Understand the process of second language learning

One crucial outcome for immersive field experiences is the deepened understanding of complex processes of second language acquisition and learning. By understanding these processes more deeply, prospective and practicing teachers are able to both better scaffold content for linguistically diverse learners and support emerging bilingual learners in their language learning (whether they are general classroom teachers or ESL specialists). This learning may consist of reflecting on the nature of second language learning and better understanding its complexity (Addleman et al., 2014; Marx & Pray, 2011; Nero, 2009; Olmedo & Harbon, 2010; Zhao et al., 2009). A more concrete outcome however, may be the opportunity for participants to develop their own L2 proficiency and confidence in L2 communication in an immersive context (Marx & Pray, 2011; Nero, 2009; Olmedo & Harbon, 2010); in some cases participants may be L2 learners of English who will be teaching English as an Additional Language in their home environment (Lee, 2009; Tang & Choi, 2004; Trent, 2011).

This direct and personal encounter with language learning drives learning about the second language acquisition process. Significantly, studies report that participants leave these experiences having developed empathy for the non-dominant groups of L2 learners who they may encounter in their home schools and society (Addleman et al., 2014; Malewski et al., 2012; Marx & Pray, 2011; Olmedo & Harbon, 2010; Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Phillion et al., 2009; Pray & Marx,

2010; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Zhao et al., 2009). Several studies show that this empathy arises when participants find themselves in the position of a "linguistic other" in the immersion setting (Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012; Phillion et al., 2009; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011). Indeed, this empathy can help move the teacher participants towards more linguistically and culturally responsive modes of language support and pedagogy, such as encouraging learners to draw on L1 resources and recognizing beneficial use of the L1 in learning a new language (Pray & Marx, 2010). On the other hand, there is evidence that immersive experience as a linguistic other can drive negative outcomes, including a tendency to over-generalize their own new language learning experience in immersion to that of immigrant children in their home context (Pray & Marx, 2010) and be less likely to see value in the use of the L1 in language teaching and learning (Marx & Pray, 2011).

4.6. Acquire and demonstrate skills and attitudes that support cross-cultural interactions

While the majority of the intercultural learning documented in immersive field experiences address participants' changing orientation toward and understanding of cultural difference, there is a small subset of studies that have reported helping participants to develop or adopt specific behaviors that promote cross-cultural interactions, in particular teaching about specific responses that can facilitate integration into a new culture (Hamel et al., 2010; Lee, 2009); this component of intercultural competence corresponds to the category of "Skills of discovery and interaction" in Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence. For example, Hamel et al. (2010) assert that pre-service teachers in a U.S./Japanese cross-national exchange engaged in multiple strategic practices in response to cultural disequilibrium and that these practices can be modeled to prepare teachers for the cultural experience abroad. Some of the possible responses to cultural disorientation include modeling for students how they can 'reframe' a cultural incident, observe and mimic localized ways or behaviors, and take an open stance to different cultural ways and ideas. However, in some cases, participants may also develop behaviors in the context of an immersive field experience that enable them to shelter themselves from the host culture (Hamel et al., 2010).

4.7. Personal growth

Throughout the literature on immersive field experience, numerous studies point to reported personal growth as one key outcome. This personal growth can be specifically related to intercultural and global competence, in that these experiences lead to deepened interest in international teaching and/or travel (Johnson & Battalio, 2008; Nero, 2009; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Willard-Holt, 2001). In other cases, this personal growth may manifest as a reported increase in qualities such as self-confidence, independence, risk-taking, and maturity (Lee, 2009; Miller & Gonzalez, 2010; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Tang & Choi, 2004; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Willard-Holt, 2001). Along with these qualities, there is evidence of increase of empathy for others, regardless of cultural background (Addleman et al., 2014; Causey et al., 2000; Lee, 2009; Miller & Gonzalez, 2010; Olmedo & Harbon, 2010; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Willard-Holt, 2001). These reported changes in self may be described as an overall change in one's self-awareness and a desire to reorient one's own perspective (Addleman et al., 2014; Causey et al., 2000; Dantas, 2007; Hamel et al., 2010; Lee, 2009; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Tang & Choi, 2004).

5. Discussion

Building on the analytic coding and categorization described in the results, we want to offer two main points of consideration and critique in order to move the field forward. In the first of the two following sections, we look specifically at the body of literature on cultural immersion to contextualize it in ways that help explain methodological limitations that were frequently observed throughout our review. The second section of the discussion broadens its scope, including all studies on intercultural competence for teachers, in order to make sense of the theoretical dissensus, which reflects not so much a diversity of intellectual approaches, but rather the challenge of facilitating dialogue between studies when they differ on conclusions they make as well as the fundamental questions that orient the studies.

5.1. A critical synthesis of the research on cultural immersion programs for teachers

As we look at the present research on cultural immersion, we acknowledge the widely varied settings and configurations of programs across the globe. The studies we reviewed might be thought of as situated on a continuum reflecting a growing interest in cultural immersion as a pedagogical intervention toward the goal of intercultural competence. As the incorporation of cultural immersion into teacher education programs is a relatively recent phenomenon, there is a preponderance of case studies and site-specific qualitative work (for example, [Cavanaugh & Corbett, 2014](#); [Keengwe, 2010](#); [Stachowski & Sparks, 2007](#)). Studies which are primarily descriptive in nature serve to build a case for institutional acknowledgement of the benefits of such experiences and to disseminate information to support program development. These descriptive studies function to: 1) illustrate the critical elements of such an experience for those interested in program development; 2) showcase the voices of program participants who speak to impact upon their personal and professional development as teachers; and, 3) garner the support of the university administration to develop and maintain immersion experiences as cohesive and integral components within teacher preparation programs. The last point can be a challenge; by definition cultural immersion takes place outside of the confines of the university classroom or school-based experiences of a teacher education program, and thus, requires additional resources and specific types of expertise. For example, program development requires that faculty leaders need to identify and build contacts in culturally distinct communities; they may need second language proficiency, and they also need to rely on their own intercultural expertise.

In many instances, the descriptive studies did not attend to methodology very closely ([Cavanaugh & Corbett, 2014](#); [Eisenhardt & Sittason, 2009](#); [Emmanuel, 2003](#); [Lai, 2009](#)) perhaps because methodological considerations were secondary to a “case study description” of how a program works, but consequently, these do little to address a general lack of evidence in what the authors argue their program does and the outcomes it accomplishes. Some of these methodological issues included failing to indicate who the sample included, how data were collected, vague explications of a theoretical approach, or a lack of explanation of analytical processes. In short, these descriptive studies play an important role which is valuable to further institutionalization of such experiences within the academy and which we see as a first phase in the evolution of this body of research literature. As interest from practitioners and researchers grows, this research field will benefit from studies which take on clearer theoretical commitments and methodological procedures.

While fewer in number, this review uncovered some empirical

work which offered more robust methodologies, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies. These studies frequently seek to document the changes that could be observed in participants as a result of cultural immersion, or in other words, to document the impact that the programs might have on the program participants. The research attending to “impact” typically ended at the end of the program (or a few weeks after). Indeed, across the entire body of literature, there is very little longitudinal research investigating how these “interventions” promote long-lasting changes or development. A few exceptions included studies by [Johnson and Battalio \(2008\)](#) which incorporated a focus group four months after the experience; [Pence and Macgillivray \(2008\)](#), which administered a questionnaire one year later; and [Willard-Holt \(2001\)](#), which conducted a focus group four months later and phone interviews one year afterwards. Furthermore, the outcomes highlighted were almost always changes in teacher dispositions rather than changes in teaching practices, reflecting the lack of longitudinal work and challenges involved in following program participants over longer periods of time after program conclusion.

One way that research in this area can move forward would be to identify and explore the mediating factors that drive the “impact” the studies are aiming to measure. Much of the work in this area creates a ‘black box’ perspective in which the researchers seek to establish a connection between program objectives and reported student accounts of learning through largely ex post facto interviews, focus groups, or collections of student artifacts with little or no exploration of the mediating factors that are critical to the learning process. An example is the uncritical use of student self-reporting on their experiences abroad without attention or analysis of the elements of the experience that lie behind those student comments. Many of the published research studies were based exclusively on student self-reporting (for example, [Addleman et al., 2014](#); [Pence & Macgillivray, 2008](#); [Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011](#); [Willard-Holt, 2001](#)).

Future research might explicitly attend to and theorize the characteristics that individual participants bring to the experience such as previous cultural/language learning background, racial or gendered identities, or the participants’ initial (and perhaps transformed) motives and goals. Further, there are a multitude of factors that teacher educators can orchestrate or emphasize within the immersion experience which might be fruitful to serve as the focus of research. Potential areas of investigation might consider how participants are prepared and debriefed after the program’s conclusion, the program length, the ways that participants interact in local communities, or the type of classroom practical experience, among many other factors. A research framework that seeks to analyze how these program elements interrelate and mediate learning, would move the lens away from learning as a product, to direct light on the processes of cultural immersion.

5.2. Dissensus in theoretical approaches

Through the interpretative coding of the literature on intercultural competency and learning for teachers, the diversity of theoretical frameworks and approaches among those studies that actually articulate explicitly their theoretical commitments, became evident. [Table 2](#) below offers some representative studies for which a clear theoretical framework (or a clear absence of a theoretical framework) could be identified; frameworks include those that were developed specifically to explain, describe, or assess intercultural competence ([Bennett, 1993](#); [Byram, 1997](#)) as well as those that have been borrowed from other traditions of social critique and analysis, such as “communities of practice” ([Wenger, 2000](#)) or “conscientization” ([Freire, 1970](#)).

Table 2
Representative theoretical frameworks.

Theoretical frameworks emerging from intercultural competence research	Representative Studies
Byram (1997) intercultural communicative competence DIMS (Bennett, 1993)	Wernicke, 2010 Dejaeghere & Cao, 2009; Johnson & Battalio, 2008; Marx & Moss, 2011
Theoretical frameworks emerging from other traditions	Representative Studies
Transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991, 2000)	Addleman et al., 2014; Hamel et al., 2010; Kambutu & Nganga, 2008; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011
Funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992)	Dantas, 2007
Communities of practice (Wenger, 2000)	Ertmer et al., 2011; Gleeson & Tait, 2012;
Culturally relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995)	Marx & Moss, 2011; Nero, 2009; Phillion et al., 2009; Santamaria et al., 2009; Zhao et al., 2009
"Conscientization"/Critical consciousness (Freire, 1970)	Quezada & Alfaro, 2007; Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012
Deweyan experiential learning	Domangue & Lee, 2008; Lee, 2009
Teacher identity formation	Trent, 2011
Perspective consciousness	Burton, 2011
Theoretical framework absent or unclear	Cavanaugh & Corbett, 2014; Eisenhardt & Sittason, 2009; Keengwe, 2010; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Reidel & Draper, 2013; Willard-Holt, 2001

It is important to specify two key ways in which underlying theoretical approaches vary across the literature: a) variation in the underlying assumptions guiding the development and design of the teacher preparation immersion programs themselves, and b) variation in the theoretical constructs used to assess interculturality in research on these programs. The variation in theoretical assumptions in program development and design may be not be surprising, nor even problematic, given that the diversity of theoretical approaches reflect the diversity of program designs, objectives, and even settings. For example, Santamaria et al. (2009) specifically ground their study in a culturally relevant pedagogy framework (CRP) as a means of operationalizing the concept of cultural competency in a way that explicitly addresses concerns of equity and social justice for multilingual learners in US schools, while at the same time situating it in a cross-cultural experience for teacher candidates in and around Guanajuato, Mexico. Other studies of other programs, may not integrate CRP in similar ways, in part because of goals and settings that are less amenable. In this sense, therefore, the theoretical dissensus that can be seen in the literature base may be considered as a richness and a resource that future researchers can make use of.

However, we also suggest that the theoretical dissensus of the latter type can be limiting to ongoing inquiry into the question of how intercultural competence is developed among teachers. In this discussion, we identify three key ways in which this wide theoretical diversity among research constructs can be problematic: a) an inability to put research findings into dialogue across different programs or settings, b) a disconnection between these teacher-preparation studies on intercultural competency and the general theoretical knowledge base of intercultural competence across disciplines and professional discourse (cf., Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), and c) a concerning absence of any clear theoretical commitment in a substantial number of studies on the phenomenon.

When one looks across the variety of frameworks that are being used to describe or assess intercultural competence within Table 2, it is clear that the studies in this body of literature diverge widely in the way that they define the phenomenon of interest itself, that is, intercultural competence, such that intercultural competence for teachers as a construct becomes conflated with other phenomena. We argue that one such conflation is the use of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) as an explicit theoretical framework for explaining intercultural competence, which was done in a number of studies (cf., Marx & Moss, 2011; Nero, 2009; Phillion et al., 2009; Santamaria et al., 2009; Zhao et al., 2009). CRP does describe necessary elements for teachers to meet the academic needs of culturally diverse students, of which cultural competency is one

element. What CRP does not do, nor does it intend to do, is explain how cultural or intercultural competency is developed or measured, in the same way as other frameworks set out to do (cf., Bennett, 1993; Byram, 1997; Dervin, 2010, 2016). CRP is a valuable tool for understanding and developing teachers' classroom practices; however, we argue that it has been widely misused as a theoretical basis for explaining how cultural and intercultural competence is developed among pre- and in-service teachers, particularly in community-based and immersion programs. The studies that draw explicitly on CRP risk conflating CRP, as an instructional approach for teaching culturally diverse learners, with a theoretical framework for understanding teacher development of interculturality. In a similar vein, Freirean approaches to making sense of the social contexts of schooling and conscientization (cf., Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012; Quezada & Alfaro, 2007) are powerful and important theoretical lenses which can be applied to teacher learning and identity. However, like those that draw on CRP, such studies require a more explicit shift toward teachers' intercultural learning as the phenomenon of interest, given that many of these theories (CRP and conscientization, for example) were not originated to speak to the specific question of intercultural learning and development.

There is however a broad and rich body of theoretical knowledge that has developed around intercultural competency, not just in the field of teacher preparation, but across a range of scholarly disciplines. This field too is theoretically diverse, with at least twenty competing models of intercultural competence (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009); however, much of this diversity is not reflected in the studies being done on intercultural competency within teacher preparation. Only one of the contemporary models of IC that Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) describe has been utilized in the literature reviewed, namely Byram (1997). Indeed, we would argue that failing to draw more extensively on the rich theoretical bases that have been generated to describe intercultural competency *writ large*, indicates a significant limitation in the studies looking at intercultural competence among teachers.

Finally, the most problematic theoretical stance found in the body of literature that we looked at is the *absence* of any clearly explicated theoretical framework guiding the study design or analysis. Of the studies we reviewed, a few clearly positioned themselves as a grounded theory study to illuminate particular questions (cf., Malewski & Phillion, 2009). Other studies are seeking to make an institutional case for support (cf., Cavanaugh & Corbett, 2014; Stachowski & Sparks, 2007, see also Section 5.1 above). A substantial number of other studies failed to either provide a clear theoretical framework or a rationale for not drawing on an *a priori* theoretical frame for making sense of the data and analysis (cf.,

Eisenhardt & Sittason, 2009; Keengwe, 2010; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Reidel & Draper, 2013; Willard-Holt, 2001). We posit that it is highly problematic for future efforts to connect and integrate studies across different contexts, when these studies themselves do not position themselves in broader theoretical conversations.

6. Conclusion: towards contextualized, reflexive, and situated research on intercultural competence

Developing intercultural competence in teachers is a multifaceted and dynamic endeavor and one that is clearly a life-long learning project for the individual teacher-learner. This review of the research has resulted in a typology that represents a set of program designs which are being implemented to develop teacher interculturality. These cultural immersion programs for teachers, which intentionally include classroom teaching experience, cultural interaction through homestays or daily activity within local communities, and structured reflection and dialogue within the student group, with local teachers and program leaders reveal a range of learning outcomes. The cultural learning outcomes that emerged encompass building knowledge of culture (their own and other cultures); developing an awareness of the role of culture in teaching and school systems; growth in cultural and societal self-awareness; sociopolitical awareness and consciousness; understanding processes of second language learning; personal growth and demonstration of behaviors that support cross-cultural interaction.

We note that many of the thematic categories that emerged from our review of the literature link directly to Byram's (1997) framework of intercultural competence (See Table 1 above) namely in regard to individual personal growth, developing cross-cultural skill/attitudes, and cultural self-awareness. However, while the development of sociopolitical awareness and critical consciousness is parallel to Bryam's (1997) last arm of the intercultural competence framework, 'Critical cultural awareness/political education,' we emphasize that many of the obstacles teachers must confront in diverse classrooms are not resolved through increasing awareness and growth at the level of the individual. Problems of racism and discrimination do not simply arise out of interpersonal interaction, but are institutionalized structures and processes that ensure differential access to educational opportunity based on race, culture, and language background and which are rooted in the historical events that are foundational to our conceptualizations of these categories and the people that we assign to these groups. Thus, programs that seek to help teachers move along a continuum

towards a deeper level of interculturality must propel teacher-learners in equal measure towards their own individual development *and* towards the building of a cultural consciousness to engage within and understand communities of people who might be unlike them.

This has important implications for future work in this area, as the research to date consistently takes the perspective of teacher-learners as individual beings. Absent from this body of research are the voices and perspectives of the communities of people within which its participants move and learn. Indeed, intercultural interaction is most often documented and described as if it were a static product rather than a contextually contingent process of negotiation and struggle (Collier, 2015; Kinginger, 2009). Intercultural interactions occur in specific contexts and are relational processes developing out of frames of global, historical, political, and economic systems and ideologies. Future research on immersion experiences for teachers would benefit from attending to hierarchies and power relations which offer differential benefit to people engaged in these programs (Collier, 2015). For example, the relationships that participants develop while living in a homestay family may be positive and supportive or may not meet the expectations of the student and in this way can become an obstacle to learning about culture and learning in general. Attention to contextual factors at several levels of analysis: the macro (structural), meso (level of the group), and micro (situated) can reveal how individuals identify, how they are positioned by others, and therefore, how they are supported in their learning and to what ends.

As classrooms around the world grow in cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity, it is critical that teacher educators work more purposefully towards developing coherent learning experiences that help teachers (pre-service and in-service) to teach effectively within culturally and linguistically diverse spaces. The outcomes discussed above demonstrate the potential for carefully-orchestrated cultural immersion experience as part of teachers' professional preparation to bring about specific intercultural competencies. As the body of research continues to build, it can more truly reflect the dynamism of the process of intercultural learning, attuning to the relational, self-reflexive, and situated aspects of this work.

Appendix 1. Summary of studies reviewed.

Article	Description
Addleman, R. A., Nava, R. C., Cevallos, T., Brazo, C. J., & Dixon, K. (2014). Preparing teacher candidates to serve students from diverse backgrounds: Triggering transformative learning through short-term cultural immersion. <i>International Journal of Intercultural Relations</i> , 43, 189–200.	A qualitative study of a three week international field experience, the participants engage in an immersion experience in Austria or Ecuador to observe, tutor or assist in local schools. Grounded in Mezirow's transformational theory, the study maps participant's experiences onto three stages of transformational learning.
Causey, V. E., Thomas, C. D., & J Armento, B. (2000). Cultural diversity is basically a foreign term to me: The challenges of diversity for preservice teacher education. <i>Teaching and Teacher Education</i> , 16(1), 33–45.	A qualitative study of a three week immersion in a US-based urban school setting, the research documents cognitive changes that occur for the pre-service teachers over the course of their observations.
Dantas, M. L. (2007). Building teacher competency to work with diverse learners in the context of international education. <i>Teacher Education Quarterly</i> , 75 –94.	A qualitative study of an embedded study trip abroad for a graduate-level literacy course that took students to Brazil for 8 days to prompt participants to explore their assumptions of cultural identity and communities' funds of knowledge.
Domangue, E. & R. Lee (2008) Preparing Culturally Competent Teachers: Service-Learning and Physical Education Teacher Education. <i>Journal of Teaching in Physical Education</i> , 27 (3), 347–367.	A mixed-methods study of a domestic service-learning immersion program for 16 pre-service physical education teachers, this research investigates the ways in which this kind of experience prompted the development of cultural competency among the participants.
Gleeson, M., & Tait, C. (2012). Teachers as sojourners: Transitory communities in short study-abroad programmes. <i>Teaching and Teacher Education</i> , 28(8), 1144–1151.	A qualitative study of Hong Kong based in-service EFL teachers' professional development through a 5-week immersion experience in New Zealand, this

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Article	Description
Hamel, F. L., Chikamori, K., Ono, Y., & Williams, J. (2010). First contact: Initial responses to cultural disequilibrium in a short term teaching exchange program. <i>International Journal of Intercultural Relations</i> , 34(6), 600–614.	research examines the role that developing communities of practice plays in an international professional development experience for teachers. A qualitative study looking at Japanese pre-service teachers engaging short-term cultural immersion in the US as well as US preservice teachers in short-term cultural immersion in Japan, the article identifies patterns of cultural responses that participants engaged in, in order to engage or disengage with cultural integration.
Johnson, L. E., & Battalio, R. (2008). Expanding the Boundaries of Special Education Preservice Teachers: The Impact of a Six-Week Special Education Study Abroad Program. <i>International Journal of Special Education</i> , 23(3), 90–100.	A mixed-methods study including qualitative analysis of journal entries and administration of IDI instrument, this research documents how cultural competence is developed through a short-term international field experience in Scotland for pre-service special education teachers.
Kambutu, J., & Nganga, L. W. (2008). In these uncertain times: Educators build cultural awareness through planned international experiences. <i>Teaching and Teacher Education</i> , 24(4), 939–951.	A narrative inquiry study of pre-service and in-service teachers participating in a three-week international experience in Kenya, the research conveys the lived experiences of participants, including apprehension prior to the program and difficulty adapting to new living conditions.
Lee, J. F. (2009). ESL student teachers' perceptions of a short-term overseas immersion programme. <i>Teaching and Teacher Education</i> , 25(8), 1095–1104.	A mixed-method study of a six-week cultural immersion experience in New Zealand for Hong Kong based pre-service EFL teachers, the research charted themes in students' perceptions of such experiences and identified limits or obstacles to students' learning in these settings.
Malewski, E. Sharma, S. & Phillion, J. (2012). How International Field Experiences Promote Cross-Cultural Awareness in Preservice Teachers Through Experiential Learning: Findings From a Six-Year Collective Case Study. <i>Teachers College Record</i> .	A six-year study of 49 student participants in a cultural immersion field experience in Honduras, this research raises questions about how such experiences contribute to pre-service teachers' ability to go on to teach in diverse US school settings.
Malewski, E., & Phillion, J. (2009). International field experiences: The impact of class, gender and race on the perceptions and experiences of preservice teachers. <i>Teaching and Teacher Education</i> , 25(1), 52–60.	A qualitative study of five-week international field experience in Honduras, the research examines how gender and race impact the ways in which student participants in the field experience make sense of self, peers and community hosts.
Marx, S., & Pray, L. (2011). Living and learning in Mexico: developing empathy for English language learners through study abroad. <i>Race Ethnicity and Education</i> , 14(4), 507–535.	A qualitative study of ESL certificate seeking participants in a study program in Mexico, the research documents how white, monolingual English speaking pre-service teachers developed a level of empathy for English learners through participation in the international field experience.
Miller K. and A. Gonzalez (2010). Domestic and International Service Learning Experiences: A Comparative Study of Pre-Service Teacher Outcomes, <i>Issues in Educational Research</i> , 20(1), 29–38.	A comparative mixed method study of participants across two service-learning programs (a US-domestic based program and an international China-based program), the research differences in cultural competency, along with other outcomes, between the two groups.
Nero, S. (2009). Inhabiting the other's world: language and cultural immersion for US-based teachers in the Dominican Republic. <i>Language, Culture and Curriculum</i> , 22(3), 175–194.	A mixed method study of pre-service and in-service teachers enrolled in a graduate seminar on second language learning and teaching that included a short-term immersion experience in the Dominican Republic, the research identifies key outcomes of deeper empathy for language learners, improved Spanish proficiency, and richer understanding of second language learning processes.
Olmedo, I., & Harbon, L. (2010). Broadening our sights: Internationalizing teacher education for a global arena. <i>Teaching education</i> , 21(1), 75–88.	A qualitative study of internationalizing initiatives at two university-based teacher education programs (in US and Australia), the research suggests ways that teacher educators may create opportunities to prepare their students for the international and multicultural contexts they will be entering.
Palmer, D. K., & Menard-Warwick, J. (2012). Short-term study abroad for texas preservice teachers: On the road from empathy to critical awareness. <i>Multicultural Education</i> , 19(3), 17–26.	A qualitative study of a short-term study abroad experience in Mexico, the research closely examines participants' experiences during a critical incident, and suggests that the kind of empathy that is developed during these experiences may be limited, and posits that "critical awareness" as a more appropriate and productive objective.
Pence, H. and I. Macgillivray (2008) The impact of an international field experience on preservice teachers, <i>Teaching and Teacher Education</i> , 24, 14–25.	A qualitative study of a short-term program for general pre-service teachers in Italy, the findings suggest that there are a range of lasting impacts a year after the program, including cultural appreciation, valuing of feedback and reflection, and improved professional confidence.
Phillion, J., Malewski, E. L., Sharma, S., & Wang, Y. (2009). Reimagining the Curriculum: Future Teachers and Study Abroad. <i>Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad</i> , 18, 323–339.	A qualitative, phenomenological study of pre-service teachers' experience in a short-term field experience in Honduras, the study suggests ways to re-imagine a teacher preparation curriculum that actively develops teachers' cultural and global competencies.
Pray, L., & Marx, S. (2010). ESL teacher education abroad and at home: A cautionary tale. <i>The Teacher Educator</i> , 45(3), 216–229.	A qualitative study of ESL certificate seeking participants in a study program in Mexico, the research documents how participants can gain a deeper understanding of language learning processes, while cautioning about the limits of translating the learning to US-based contexts.
Santamaria, L., Santamaria, C., and Fletcher, T. (2009) Journeys in Cultural Competency: Pre-Service U.S. Teachers in Mexico Study-Abroad Programs Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education, 3(1), 32–51.	A qualitative study of a short-term study abroad experience in Mexico, the research explores how participants develop cultural competency during the experience as well as ways that cultural immersion experiences can better prepare teachers to work with students of Mexican background.
Tang, S. Y. F., & Choi, P. L. (2004). The development of personal, intercultural and professional competence in international field experience in initial teacher education. <i>Asia Pacific Education Review</i> , 5(1), 50–63.	A comparative study of Hong Kong based pre-service language teachers, the study investigates qualitatively the experience of students who completed a field practice in China or New Zealand, to understand the ways in which participants' cultural identity interacted with the cultural context they were working in.
Trent, J. (2011). Learning, teaching, and constructing identities: ESL pre-service teacher experiences during a short-term international experience programme. <i>Asia Pacific Journal of Education</i> , 31(2), 177–194.	A qualitative study of Hong Kong based pre-service English language teachers who complete a cultural immersion and teaching practice in Australia, the

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Article	Description
Trilokekar, R. D., & Kukar, P. (2011). Disorienting experiences during study abroad: Reflections of pre-service teacher candidates. <i>Teaching and Teacher Education</i> , 27(7), 1141–1150.	research focused on identity construction and identity conflicts that arose for the participants during their experience in a cultural different system.
Willard-Holt, C. (2001) The Impact of a Short-term International Experience for Pre-service Teachers. <i>Teaching and Teacher Education</i> , 17, 505–517.	A qualitative study of an international internship for education students at a Canadian university, the research draws on Mezirow's transformative learning theory to make sense of disoriented experiences around race, status and power.
Zhao, Y., Meyers, L., & Meyers, B. (2009). Cross-cultural immersion in China: Preparing pre-service elementary teachers to work with diverse student populations in the United States. <i>Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education</i> , 37(3), 295–317.	A qualitative study of a program for pre-service teachers to undertake a cultural immersion experience in Mexico, the research was among the earliest to document the range of outcomes for student participants, including empathy, confidence for teaching culturally diverse students.
	A qualitative study of pre-service elementary education students participating in a cultural immersion experience in China, this research examines how participants' experience in China promotes a variety of culturally responsive teaching outcomes.

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