

WALKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: THE IMPACT OF AN INTERNATIONAL  
IMMERSION PROGRAM FOR K-12 TEACHERS

by

CHRISTA SHOUP HOFACRE

(Under the Direction of Juanita Johnson-Bailey)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact an international multicultural immersion program rendered on beliefs and practices of K-12 educational personnel participants. This study examined the impact to beliefs and practices, as well as the learning processes precipitated by immersion experiences. This was a case study which employed qualitative research methodology using constant-comparative data analysis and involved 12 participants of an international multicultural immersion program to Costa Rica during June, 2005.

Aspects surrounding this study allow unique insight to the impact and learning processes precipitated by international multicultural immersion programs. This case study is different from other multicultural teacher education studies because it is longitudinal in nature in that it follows teaching professionals through three programmatic stages: preimmersion, immersion, and postimmersion. Data collection includes participant immersion journals, and researcher observations. This allows insight to the unique individual journey of each participant. No reviewed studies provided pre-programmatic data and most investigated only one programmatic stage. This study also

rendered data on the impact and learning from multiple perspectives resulting from the participants' wide-ranging backgrounds, experiences, school characteristics (e.g., demographics, location), and current job responsibilities (elementary, middle, high school, and system levels in positions ranging from classroom teachers to system-level administrators).

Four major themes emerged through data analysis 1) growth through disequilibrium, 2) utilization of prior knowledge to create meaning and connections, 3) growth through critical reflection, and 4) transfer of learning from an international to domestic context. Study findings resulted in three major conclusions. First, this international multicultural immersion program resulted in experiential learning: immersion experiences created knowledge gaps resulting in a cycle including disequilibrium, efforts to create understanding through prior knowledge connection, and subsequent growth. Second, the international cultural immersion program affected participant beliefs: immersion experiences catalyzed critical reflection, and perspective shifts which resulted in growth and affected previous belief systems. Finally, the international cultural immersion program experiences and subsequent growth impacted all levels of practices and programming.

INDEX WORDS: Adult Education, Experiential Learning, Immersion, International Immersion, K-12 Professional Development, Multicultural Immersion, Multicultural Professional Development, Teacher Education, Transformational Learning

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother, Hazel E. Shoup (1898-1979) and parents, John Albert Shoup (1925-2004) and Paulina Walz Shoup (1929-2005), who I know are always with me and shine with pride at this moment. Mom, Pop, and Grandma Hazel you forever have my love, gratitude, and thanks for providing me the strength, courage, perseverance, and downright strong-willed stubbornness to forge ahead and complete this dissertation despite all obstacles I encountered throughout this journey.

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Defining moments occur in everyone's life, one of mine was in June 2002 (my second semester as an Adult Education master's student). I vividly remember sitting on a South African hill with Juanita Johnson-Bailey at sunset, during a Maymester study abroad program when she said, "Christa, you really should get a Ph.D." My first reaction being, "No, I would have to take the GRE and I don't test well". She presented a solution to every reason I had not to.

Six weeks later (mid July 2002) I was in her office asking her to be my major professor and getting specifics on what was necessary to apply to the Ph.D. It was also during that meeting I described my conceptualization of the M.Ed. project and explained how this would lead into my Ph.D. research, a study of an immersion program for K-12 teachers to Mexico. In my UGA position I worked on a grant specifically related to this program and I wanted to study it; I didn't know how or by what means, but that is what I wanted to do. I thought of this as I was on my way to meet with her to discuss my final dissertation chapter in mid July 2006. How ironic was it that although the study was based on a Costa Rican program, it had actually happened in spite of the chaos around me.

I say this because without Juanita I would most likely not be completing this dissertation; for she is the one who planted the seed, watered, fertilized, and nurtured me through this process. It was Juanita who was there for me when I needed an advocate, an ear, a shoulder (to lean or cry on), knew what to (or not to) say and when, and kept

pushing (or sometimes pulling) me through the next door. And for this, you will always have my love and gratitude; you are a true blessing in my life!

Family members provide a foundation and remain in the background which is their value and sacrifice to this process. As the doctoral program progresses they allow themselves to be pushed even further to the back. They are the ones who give up the evenings and weekends, who allow you to bring your computer, a box of books, a printer, and a case of paper on your traditional family beach trip so you can continue with your online course. They also make time for you to find an internet café while in Europe to do the same. They help you make copies (Beth), transcribe (Beth), and are cheerleaders (telling you that you only have ten pages left, think of how little that is to where you started!). For the love and support of my family, I am truly grateful, and thank you all: Chuck, Beth, Christopher, Pete, John, Paulina, Sandy, and of course Luigi.

I have been told the best study titles are often generated by the data. *Walking Outside the Box* was generated as I reflected upon the data and my own personal experiences in Costa Rica: our struggles, sometimes sheer exhaustion, and seemingly endless walking with backpacks. The immersion program created an environment in which we were together 24/7 for 14 days in sometimes very stressful circumstances (to say we got to know each other well is an understatement), causing all of us to walk outside normal boxes. This study quite literally would not have been possible without the 12 women who agreed to participate. These women, who are all highly dedicated to making a difference in the lives of immigrant Latino families, allowed me total access to their lives and feelings and gave enormous amounts of their time to this study. They made time for pre- and postimmersion interviews during their work days at two of the busiest times of

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Changing demographics are creating a paradigm shift oftentimes rendering cultural and linguistically diverse students and parents the norm rather than exception. A pointed example is the Latino population, currently the second largest racial or ethnic group -- Whites being the largest (Pew Hispanic Center, 2005). This creates a reality of a continual proliferation of like-minded professionals educated from a one-sided dominant cultural perspective who are ill-prepared to facilitate diverse learner needs. The demographic make-up of the current United States K-12 educational personnel cadre, teacher education faculty, and undergraduate pre-service teaching students is overwhelmingly White, monolingual, middle-class, female, and educated in methods espoused by dominant culture values and norms (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Melnick & Zeichner, 1998; Sleeter, 2001). This study focuses on the impact an international multicultural immersion program, designed to increase the capacity to serve the emerging Latino population, rendered to beliefs and practices of Georgia K-12 educational personnel participants.

The United States Latino population is rapidly growing. Currently, the U.S. Census Bureau reports 39.9 million (i.e., 13%) of the United States population are Latino. More pointedly, they predict that by 2050 Latinos will be the majority-minority. The dramatic increase in the Latino immigration is demonstrated by Rong and Preissle (1998), who state in 1880 1.3% of immigrants originated in Latin America compared with 43% in

1990. Latinos comprise the fastest growing U.S. population, with an increase of 20.7 million between 1980 and 2000 (38% of the nation's population growth). During the same period, the White population increased by 14.3 million (26% of the population growth). This trend is expected to continue, with estimates through 2020 indicating Latino growth to be 46% and White 24% (Pew Center, 2005; U.S. Census Bureau).

The State of Georgia, a vivid example of this demographic shift, experienced a 300 percent increase in Latino population from 1990 to 2000. Currently an estimated 541,123 Latinos (6.2 percent of the state population) reside in Georgia, comprising the nation's tenth largest Latino population. Consequences of this demographic shift include a severe gap in services provided the Latino community by federal government, state agencies, and community organizations. Cultural and linguistic barriers are primary limitations to effective service delivery and render an underserved population in critical human service areas (i.e., education, social services, and healthcare).

Cultural and linguistic differences between K-12 students and the current educator cadre (including pre-service teaching students) are precipitating an inadequately educated population ill-prepared to compete in the current economic environment. Scholars provide illustration by the term "demographic imperative" (Banks, 1995; Dilworth, 1992), which is composed from statistics and information surrounding the diverse student population, homogeneous teaching cadre, and "the demographic divide" (Gay & Howard, 2000). The demographic divide describes the educational, resource, and achievement disparities diverse populations' face. Multicultural education and critical social scholars strive to increase awareness of mainstream culture's failure to recognize surrounding societal changes, and illustrate the inevitable consequences maintaining this course will

precipitate. Specific consequences include a continual “top-heavy” growth pattern of educational opportunities, resources, and achievement; subsequently this allowed only dominant culture members to reap economic and power-related benefits generally accorded via increased educational levels (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004).

Perpetuation of control depends on invisibility, normalcy, and truths which make differing perspectives appear illogical. Government serves as a primary gatekeeper through legislation, social policy, and education. Consequently, schools and educational personnel are a major vehicle for instilling dominant culture values, beliefs, routines, and expectations. The traditional and current U.S. hegemonic culture ascribes to White Eurocentric male values, beliefs, and norms (Darder, 1991; Gramsci, 1971; McLaren 1988).

Dominant culture norms determine individuals by position, privilege, and power. Positionality is defined as the invisible markers which determine hierarchical social location and affect every aspect of one’s life. Social position is mirrored in the classroom and is posited as the most influential component of knowledge construction (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998; Maher & Tetreault, 2001). Subsequently, position affects how educators and their students construct and convey knowledge. Differing contexts and realities can create a complex quagmire in educator practices and professional development.

### Problem Statement

A current snapshot illustrates an increasingly diverse U.S. population educated by a homogenous dominant culture professional cadre. The reception any immigrant population receives is based on historical U.S. relationships with the country of origin.

The traditional colonial relationships between U.S. and Latin America render a dominant culture refusal to recognize and facilitate Latino cultural and linguistic differences.

Positionality, the most influential component in knowledge construction, affects how educators teach and learn. To effectively facilitate diverse learners necessitates dominant culture educator awareness of these social constructs and their role to teaching and learning processes.

The demographic imperative illustrates the critical need for U.S. recognition and facilitation of education for citizens. Multicultural teacher education and professional development provides a vehicle for this. Banks (2004) states a primary goal of multicultural education is to provide school and educational institutional reform, providing educational equity to students from diverse racial, ethnic, social class, and gender backgrounds. This study's relevance stems from a critical need for capacity-building of K-12 educational personnel to effectively serve the emerging Latino population.

Review of the multicultural teacher education and professional development research base provides dismal results on this front. Zeichner (2003) posits the low status afforded to multicultural teacher education in general (via promotion and tenure processes and resource allocation), results in talented faculty being drawn to areas more conducive to attaining status. Any negative impact seen in pre-service multicultural education is magnified in the professional development arena. Deteriorating university budget conditions result in funneling of available resources to graduate and undergraduate instruction, away from professional development programming.

Although teacher education curriculums have evolved, they still encompass a one-sided perspective with major focus directed to homogenous dominant culture needs. Multicultural teacher education curricular requirements are often met with one lecture-based course which fails to address social realities from a critical lens (Banks, 2004; Cochran-Smith et al., 2004; Sleeter, 2001; Zeichner, 2003). Consequently, K-12 teacher education and professional development curriculums have failed to keep pace with the evolving global economy and subsequent diverse and changing U.S. demographic.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact an international multicultural immersion program rendered on beliefs and practices of K-12 educational personnel participants. This study examined the impact to beliefs and practices, as well as the learning processes precipitated by immersion experiences. The research questions include: 1) What are the representative experiences of the K-12 educator international multicultural immersion program participants? 2) In what ways did the international multicultural immersion program affect K-12 educator participant beliefs? and 3) In what ways did the international multicultural immersion program affect K-12 educator participant practice and programs?

#### Significance of Study

The emerging and dynamic nature of the current U.S. population is creating a severe gap in K-12 educators adequately prepared to facilitate the social and economic success of cultural and linguistically diverse student populations. Continued failure to bridge this gap will expand the existing divide between dominant culture members and diverse populations. Current U.S. Census statistics illustrate that the emerging Latino population will soon become the majority-minority. A continued failure to provide educational

resources critical to the social and economic success of diverse populations will render it impossible for successful U.S. competition in the continually dynamic and emerging global economy. This issue is not a future problem to be pondered; it is here and increases daily. Time is of the essence, requiring resource allocation providing sustainable and relevant methodologies to build the capacity of K-12 educators to meet this challenge.

The previous discussion outlining the shifting U.S. demographic, dominant culture K-12 educator cadre, inadequate multicultural teacher education and professional development curriculum, and literature base gap provide implicit evidence of the need and significance of this study. This case study is different from other multicultural teacher education studies (Bradfield-Kreider, 2001; Mahan, 1982; Mahan & Stachowski, 1993-94; Melnick & Zeichner, 1998; Roose, 2001; Rymes, 2002; Stachowski & Frey, 2003; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998) because it is longitudinal in nature in that it follows teaching professionals through three programmatic stages, includes participant immersion journals, and researcher observations. This allows insight to the unique individual journey of each participant. No reviewed studies provided pre-programmatic data and most investigated only one programmatic stage.

Theoretically this study will inform adult education, critical social theory, and multicultural teacher education knowledge bases through increased understanding of learning processes and impact rendered through multicultural immersion experiences. This knowledge will advance the ability to design and implement sustainable, relevant, and successful methodologies for K-12 educational personnel.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact an international multicultural immersion program rendered on beliefs and practices of K-12 educational personnel participants. Research questions guiding this study are: 1) What are the representative experiences of the K-12 educator international multicultural immersion program participants? 2) In what ways did the international multicultural immersion program affect K-12 educator participant beliefs? and 3) In what ways did the international multicultural immersion program affect K-12 educator participant practice and programs? This literature review examines and identifies factors surrounding educator preparedness for instruction of cultural and linguistically diverse students, specifically focusing on the emerging Latino population.

#### Introduction

Although the U.S. population stems from many cultures and in fact is multicultural, White Eurocentric male cultural beliefs and norms have traditionally reined supreme and dominant. Schools have historically provided a frontline defense mechanism to maintain this status quo hegemonic cultural dominance. Government and school policy accomplish this by attempting to make students relinquish any non-majority cultural beliefs, values, traditions, and language to become American (Darder, 1991; Gee, 1996; Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 1988; Noel, 2000; Ruiz, 1998). Bohon, Macpherson, and

Atilas (2005) posit new social issues are combining with traditional social inequalities and compounding the educational barriers current Latino immigrants encounter.

Despite a more diverse society and policy specifically aimed at providing improved educational standards for this population the current teaching cadre remains predominantly, White monolingual Eurocentric females, inadequately prepared for their constituency. The primary focus of this study is rooted in multicultural professional development for K-12 educators. However, the scope and underlying issues which precipitated and allow continued proliferation of the current inadequately trained cadre require understanding of past and current teacher education methodologies.

Garcia (1999) pointedly emphasizes this stating, “Professional preparation and assessment of teachers who serve culturally diverse students are problematic, complex, and cumbersome processes, an area ripe for criticism” (p. 257). In an effort to take these differences into account the term multiculturalism has become a popular catchword. The aim, goal, and scope surrounding multicultural education is tremendous; therefore, a seemingly appropriate place to begin discussion encompassing it is via definition. Banks (2004) states a primary goal of multicultural education is to provide school and educational institutional reform, providing educational equity to students from diverse racial, ethnic, social class, and gender backgrounds.

Although multicultural teacher education seeks to offset this process, Cochran-Smith (2003) posits critical multicultural teacher education is needed and can only be accomplished if teacher educators not only, “urge prospective teachers to rethink their own beliefs and attitudes about difference, privilege, diversity, and culture” (p. 3), but also understand how to critique the many political agendas permeating the system at any

given time. Garcia (1999) also emphasizes the importance of teacher preparation programs addressing changing needs emerging in response to changing United States demographics stating, “If teachers continue to be prepared as they were in the past, the power will remain in exactly the same places, which very likely will mean the status quo will be maintained and that culturally and linguistically diverse students will suffer the consequences” (p. 264).

Specifically related to teacher education Cochran-Smith et al. (2004) state, “In short, it is the recognition that bridging the chasm between the school and life experiences of those with and without social, cultural, racial, and economic advantages requires fundamental changes in the ways teachers are educated” (p. 935). Cochran-Smith et al. recognize multicultural teacher education alone will not completely change American education or societal norms. However, they posit (citing others including, Earley, 2000; Weiner, 1990, 1993, 2000; Yeo, 1997) teachers who believe in and are cognizant of issues surrounding multiculturalism can serve as frontline societal change mechanisms. These factors combine to create complex, interwoven, and oftentimes invisible factors surrounding multicultural teacher education programs.

To provide a contextually relevant background for this study, discussion will include literature surrounding the following areas: historic and current U.S./Latin American relationships; the role power, privilege, positionality, and societal views render; multicultural teacher education roots and current professional development methodologies used with the current teaching cadre; discussion of adult learning theories possibly offering an effective tool in facilitating K-12 educator cross-cultural professional development programs; discussion of adult education literature surrounding power,

privilege, and positionality; and identification and discussion of how the previously discussed factors may affect dominant culture K-12 educator knowledge construction and/or learning in cross-cultural learning situations.

#### Overview of Historic and Current United States/Latin American Relationships

To contextualize and position this study's significance requires discussion of historical foundations encompassing U.S./Latin American relationships and current issues stemming from Latino immigration. Although there is an evident racial component, the Latino population is not considered a racial group or a nationality and is comprised of populations from many countries (e.g., Mexico, Central America, South America, Caribbean), ethnic backgrounds, and languages. The 2005 Pew Hispanic Center report, *Hispanics: A People in Motion*, states "the single overarching trait that all Hispanics share in common is a connection by ancestry to Latin America" (p.3). This broad definition and wide diversity encompassing the Latino population creates a conundrum in addressing issues surrounding Latino history and migration.

To assist the study and understanding of Latino history, Sanchez (2002) delineated two characteristics applicable to virtually all Latino group experiences: colonial background (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries), and migrant experience (20<sup>th</sup> Century to present). Colonial background allows understanding of historical Latin American/U.S relationships and migrant experiences allows comparative analysis of immigration experiences surrounding different Latino groups (20<sup>th</sup> Century to present).

Colonial relationships incorporating the first Latinos began with nineteenth century U.S. nation-building and border expansion initiated through 1820 Monroe Doctrine policies. Wars such as the 1836 Texas Rebellion, 1848 Mexican American War, and

1898 Spanish American War led to territorial annexations, appropriations, and purchases. Key purchases include the 1803 Louisiana Purchase for 15 million dollars and the 1819 Florida Purchase from Spain. Colonization was accomplished through direct oversight of Latin American governments including Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba.

Sanchez (2002) states, “U.S. lawmakers determined the proper direction of acquired colonial possessions and their populations in a wider framework” (p. 48). Sanchez credits the comparative historical work of Nieto-Phillips (1999) in providing a broadened understanding of colonial discourses surrounding the U.S. and Latin America and its role in decision making surrounding language policy, citizenship, and race. Migrant experiences, Sanchez’s second common denominator of Latino experience, allows comparative analysis of different Latino groups. Migrant experiences are determined by historical U.S. relationships with the country of origin, immigration conditions, and current American sentiment surrounding immigrant populations.

The U.S. relationship with Mexico predates any other Latino group (Gutierrez, 1995). In addition to previously stated wars surrounding Mexican territory, the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hildago provided the U.S. nearly one-half of Mexico (i.e., portions of all of the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, & California). Moll and Ruiz (2002) state, “Mexicans became Mexican Americans with the stroke of a pen” (p. 364), and subsequent Anglo occupation resulted in the spread of commerce and development. Manifest destiny provided an ideological and philosophical justification to displace Mexican Americans of their lands, property, language, and culture (Velez-Ibanez, 1997).

Ruiz (1998) states scholars of Mexican history characterize a “push/pull” (p. 7) model to U.S./Mexican migration. The push/pull model of immigration refers to factors occurring within countries stimulating migration. Push refers to conditions necessitating populations to leave their homelands to survive (e.g., war, famine, and unemployment). Pull refers to U.S. economic conditions and labor markets requiring, or pulling, a labor pool (e.g., agriculture, mining, and railroads). Two forms of migration, chain and circular, occur between Latino countries and the U.S. A family or individual relocating from their home country to a specific U.S. location characterizes Chain migration, other family and/or community members often following in stages. Circular migration usually occurs in U.S./Mexican border towns, and entails a continual process of moving back and forth to follow available labor markets (Sanchez, 1993).

Puerto Rico became a U.S. possession in 1898, which marks the beginning of its colonial relationship with the U.S. Since the 1950s Puerto Rican migration to the U.S. (historically concentrated in the New York City area) has continually ebbed and flowed. A great deal of contention surrounds these immigrants, a subsequent result of U.S. colonial domination and policies (Carrasquillo & Sanchez-Korrol, 1996; Moll & Ruiz, 2002; Rodriguez, 1995).

Cuba demonstrates a striking contrast to the colonial mentality surrounding Mexican and Puerto Rico. The Cuban Revolution of the 1950s initiated Cuban immigration to the U.S. in flight of the communist regime. Strong U.S. anti-communist ideology and phobias created a supportive, welcome and conducive climate for Cuban immigrants. As a result billions of dollars were infused to promote and ensure the success of Cuban immigrants. This included establishment of the first and perhaps still best bilingual

Spanish education program in Dade County, Florida (Moll & Ruiz, 2002; Suarez-Orozco & Paez, 2002).

Latinos share the distinction of being the oldest and newest U.S. immigrant population. Themes surrounding the U.S.-Latin American relationship include: U.S. territorial expansionism, cold war (and subsequent communist threat), and a continual U.S. globalization and economic growth trend. Undisputed U.S. hegemonic power and nation-building subsequently created an unequal U.S./Latin American partnership. The post World War II communistic threats following expansionism resulted in ideological refocusing. Racism and cultural superiority were replaced by relentless and sometimes fanatical anticommunist dominated policy toward Latin America (Suarez-Orozco & Paez, 2002). Previous discussion of historical U.S./Latin American relations provided perspective to the complicated and interwoven issues encompassing current Latino immigration dynamics. The following discussion will focus on Latino immigration issues in the State of Georgia.

Latinos constitute the second-largest U.S. labor group (Whites being first), and are more likely than any other group racial/ethnic group to seek employment. U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics indicated 28 million working age (16 or older) Latinos in the third quarter of 2004. This fast-paced growth trend is expected to continue, with the addition of 10 million workers by 2020. Currently the majority of Latino labor is foreign born (63 percent originating from Mexico), and provided via immigration to the U.S. (legal and illegal) (Cornelius, 2002; Pew Hispanic Center, 2005). However, the 2005 Pew Hispanic Center report states, "Assuming that current trends persist, future growth of the Hispanic

labor force will be driven less by immigration and more by the children of immigrants” (p. 9).

Georgia had only a minimal immigrant population until 1970; however the U.S. Census Bureau indicates from 1970 to 1990 numbers rose dramatically to 2.7%. From the period 1990 to 2000 the U.S. Census reported a 300% increase in Latinos, translating to 435,000 Latinos or 5.3% of Georgia’s population, thereby providing Georgia with the tenth largest population in the nation (U.S. Census Bureau). Figures updated in 2002 indicate an even more dramatic growth, indicating an estimated 660,000 Latinos in Georgia, comprising 8% of the total population. In 2000 Georgia’s Latino growth rate ranked number three in the nation; currently Georgia has the largest Latino population growth (U.S. Census Bureau), and it is predicted by 2007 more than 1.1 million Latinos will call Georgia their home.

Beck and Alleksaht-Snider (2002) attribute Georgia’s influx of Mexican immigrants to a decreasing American labor pool willing to do farm labor. Georgia farmers initially reluctant to hire Latinos soon discovered a labor force willing to work long hard hours for minimal pay. As a result, farmers began hiring Latino workers year-round in the barn or with other field crops. Atilas and Bohan (2002) list agricultural jobs, the carpet industry, and the 1996 Olympic Games as impetus for Georgia’s increase. Further stating, although there are jobs in other regions of the United States, specific reasons make Georgia more desirable “...jobs were available not only in Georgia but also in other states. Factors such as pay levels, job conditions, and opportunities for women made Georgia’s jobs more attractive than job[sic] in other states” (p. 16).

This new labor force has forever changed state demographics and social dynamics. For centuries Southern society has traditionally defined race, a primary determinant of life limits and possibilities, as either Black or White (Beck & Allexshat-Snider, 2002). Latino immigrants typically occupy low status and low paying jobs and are generally characterized with low educational levels, illiteracy, and speak little or no English. Their inability to speak English, is a key factor in American anti-immigrant sentiment, as it is viewed as a resistance to assimilate to American culture and norms (Cornelius, 2002; Pew Hispanic Center, 2005; Sanchez, 2002). Like many Southern states, Georgia's initial reaction to this was the establishment of English-only laws. Georgia passed such a law in 1986 (Georgia Section 50-3-100) with metropolitan Atlanta following suit via selective enforcement of ordinances limiting the content of languages other than English on business signs. They note however, that these codes were only enforced for Spanish language content signs.

The 1990s demonstrated increased anti-immigrant sentiment throughout the country demonstrated by an attempt to make English the official language of the U.S. government, with Georgia House member, Newt Gingrich being a strong supporter of the "English Language Empowerment Act of 1996" (HR123). It was during this time that Georgia State Department of Education Superintendent, Linda Schrenko developed an assimilation via English-only ideology subsequently influencing state education bureaucracy. This ideology permitted hostile attitudes consequently crippling the state's ability to accommodate English language learner needs (Beck & Allexshat-Snider, 2002).

These laws, initiated due to American sentiment that Latino immigrants do not want to learn the English language, stem from the cultural anxiety Americans face rather than a

refusal of immigrants to learn English. Suarez-Orozo and Suarez-Orozo (2001) state, “Though new immigrants are often accused of not wanting to learn English, in fact enrollments in adult English as a Second Language (ESL) courses are increasing rapidly” (p. 54), further noting demand exceeds the supply of available ESL classes.

The Latino labor force influx translates to an incredible demographic shift in Georgia school systems and front-line K-12 educators. In 2002, although 5.5 % of Georgia school children were Latino, only .8% of school personnel (administrators, support personnel, and teachers) were Latino (Georgia Department of Education). In spring 2001 the Georgia Department of Education reported 69,953 Latino students. Of those students 43,551 or 61% were reported as Limited English Proficient (LEP). In October 2004 the Georgia Department of Education reported 119,505 Latino students enrolled in schools, an increase of 59% in a two-year period. Data from the Georgia Department of Education indicates in 2002 only 2.4% of Latino students graduated with a high school diploma and The Manhattan Policy Institute reports Georgia has the lowest graduation rate of Latinos in all 50 states.

In a study identifying educational barriers Georgia Latino immigrants face, Bohon, Macpherson, and Atilas (2005) reported the changing dynamic creates an environment in which Latino students feel alienated. They state almost all study participants reported “...frustration at being caught in a state that equates minority with African American. The feeling of being a nonperson was pervasive” (p.52). This study also found lack of immigrant related infrastructure combine with other obstacles discouraging upward mobility to create a bleak picture for Latino education. This study specifically identifies six primary deficiencies:

(a) lack of immigrant understanding of the Georgia school system, (b) low parental involvement in the schools, (c) lack of residential stability among the Latino population, (d) little school support for the needs of Latino students, (e) few incentives for Latino adolescents to continue their education, and (f) barred immigrant access to higher education. (p. 48)

The previous discussion has framed historical U.S./Latin American relationships and the current climate surrounding Latino immigration, specifically focusing on the state of Georgia. The overarching aim was to provide contextual background and illustrate the role of dominant culture ideology in creating critical service delivery barriers to those who are oftentimes most in need.

### P<sup>3</sup> – Power, Privilege, and Positionality

According to Cornelius (2002), the U.S. demand for Mexican labor is “so deeply embedded in the U.S. economy and society that it is largely decoupled from the business cycle” (p. 167). Latino immigrants provide a labor pool for traditionally difficult to fill manual labor (i.e., meat packing, construction, carpet, landscape, restaurants...), and are so structured into the economy that cyclical economic factors, such as recessions, fail to affect it. The powerful economic need for this work force affects government policy and immigration law enforcement. Border control is not properly funded; employers do not insure the legal status of immigrant employees, with the government looking the other way because of benefits accorded to dominant culture economics. Studies also indicate that as the educational level of U.S. citizen’s increases, negative perception of immigration decreases.

Although the United States is traditionally a nation composed of immigrants, historically successful immigrant populations have been those able to assimilate into the White Eurocentric ideology dominant in the United States. The Pew Center (2005)

defines assimilation as, “the process by which immigrants and their offspring adopt some values, beliefs and behaviors more characteristic of the U.S. culture than the culture of the countries from which they or their ancestors originate”(p. 17). As all individuals in a population differ, assimilation cannot be considered a uniform or complete process.

Although not a predictable uniform process, failure to assimilate rapidly enough to please dominant culture members has caused Latino immigrants to be labeled a “problem minority” (Cornelius, 2002, p. 178). Language, only one component of assimilation, is a primary lightning rod. Currently laborers immigrating to the U.S are meeting the high labor demand, and Pew Center (2005) statistics indicate 72% of first generation immigrants are Spanish dominant, with Spanish language dominance dramatically decreasing to seven percent in second generation, and zero percent in third generation immigrants.

Language, how we communicate, is the bedrock of culture. It is a way to establish and communicate cultural norms and hierarchies of a society. The statement, “Knowledge is Power” has been used by many activists groups. While the phrase only contains three words, they are three very telling words in the historical context of language, literacy, and societal development. Societies have been defined and categorized since the beginning of time. Oral/primitive societies are similarly described as, “small, homogeneous, regulated by face-to-face encounters rather than impersonal laws, and having a strong sense of solidarity” (Finn 1999, p. 121). Definitions of literate/civilized societies parallel each other as, “large diverse, logical, scientific, technological, having a sense of history, regulated by impersonal laws, and sacrificing solidarity somewhat in favor of individualism” (Finn, p. 121).

Finn's (1999) discussion of oral and literate Western societies focuses on how rapidly the Greeks moved from a primitive to civilized society after introduction of the written word. An alphabetic script introduced around Plato's time allowed critical analysis of knowledge previously unavailable to oral societies. The act of writing, allowing reflection of knowledge and beliefs, also provides the ability to recognize and resolve inconsistencies possibly undetected in oral cultures. Until the Middle Ages there were few books and those written, were in Latin, thereby maintaining control of the Western literate society. The invention of the printing press in 1450 changed the world, allowing the written word to become available to the masses.

Previous discussion demonstrates the power literacy can render. Focus will now shift to how American society has and continues to view the power of knowledge. In the U.S., except for slaves overt violence has never been attached to becoming literate. Subsequently, illiterates (have-nots) are considered a liability and become common scapegoats for social problems, with a common belief that increasing literacy will eliminate poverty and social problems. Because of *educational opportunities* afforded in the U.S., those who don't become literate are found at fault for not taking full advantage of them. However, these views fail to recognize that English language is a key component to literacy in the U.S. (Finn, 1999; Moll & Ruiz, 2002).

Recent studies indicate English acquisition as a key component to assimilation (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2002-2004; Pew, 2005). These surveys, even after controlling for factors such as race, gender, education, income, and country of origin, indicate English-dominant Latino attitudes to be far more similar to those held by non-Latinos than Spanish-dominant Latinos. These surveys are indicative of reasons

language is such a lightening rod for contention among dominant culture members. As populations become English language dominant, their original cultural values, views, and beliefs begin to fade, resulting in assimilation.

Power, privilege, and positionality are components of every society, affecting each member. These elements determine one's place, how they view others, and how others view them in the social hierarchy. Anzaldua (1990, 1999), Darder (1991), Giroux (1983), Maher and Tetreault (2001), and McIntosh (1990) are only a few critical theorists who have written on the concepts of hegemony, power, and positionality in society and therefore education. These works illustrate how the power lies in White's ability to remain invisible while intricately weaving and embedding themselves within society, invisible privileges (McIntosh, 1990). The following discussion surrounds power, privilege, and positionality providing illustrations of how these factors combine in the U.S. to construct societal views toward Latino immigrants.

#### *Power and the Hegemonic Culture*

The promise of multicultural education is to demonstrate differences in society enabling people to see different worldviews, but key to this is "different worldviews." How and through whose lens is the basis for differing worldviews defined? Akintunde's (1999) addresses modernist multiculturalism through the white supremacist frame. This framework "...through its efforts to increase an 'understanding' of 'others' actually reinforces and cements 'otherization' and reinforces and perpetuates White supremacy" (p. 5). This frame also cements the concept that "others" are inferior to Whites and need to "be raised to the status of Whites" (p. 6).

Darder (1991) discusses the role of how culture and power effect United States bicultural education. In the educational arena, Darder posits culture and power to be separated, with culture characterized as neutral, stating: “Hence, educators have most often been involved with definitions of culture derived from a scientific rationality that is individualistic, apolitical, ahistorical, and based on a positivist notion of value-free inquiry and interpretation” (p. 26). This positivist rationality perpetuates the generation of “truths” seldom questioned and subsequently ingrained into the U.S. educational system.

To further analyze the concept of truths, Darder (1991) draws from the writings of Foucault (1977). With this she opines that for schools to move toward a “cultural democracy” (p. 28) it is imperative that all cultural truths be recognized as valid, thereby challenging currently held acceptable truths coined by the hegemonic culture. Gramsci (1971) was one of the first to describe the theory of hegemony, a term describing dominant and controlling societal powers. While the hegemonic population dominates and controls cultural norms, it is not necessarily the numeric majority. And power is not achieved through threats or coercion, but via covert means of control. Darder states:

At the heart of hegemonic control is political power—a power derived from control of the social structures and natural configurations that embody routines and practices inherent in different social relationships resulting from both the content and the manner in which knowledge is structured in society. (p. 34)

McLaren (1988) describes it as “a cultural encasement of meaning, a prison house of language and ideas that is freely entered in both by dominators and dominated” (p. 174). In other words, both parties understand that the dominators’ culture is superior and more desirable and rejecting this idea would “be unnatural, a violation of common sense”

(McLaren, p. 174). According to Darder (1991), “Hegemony in American schools results, more specifically, from institutionalized social relations of power that are systematically asymmetrical, and therefore unequally privilege students from the dominant culture over students from subordinate cultures” (p. 34-35).

McLaren (1988) and Giroux (1983) offer views of how the hegemonic process is achieved. McLaren posits four distinct modes of the process: legitimation, dissimulation, fragmentation, and reification. Legitimation occurs through rules and guidelines set by the dominant culture that is posited to be just and fair to all. Dissimulation occurs in the form of domination via a smoke screen, with processes and programs initiated in the “best interests of the students” (e.g., placing non-English speaking students in a technical track based on language, not intellectual ability or future academic desires of the student). The old adage, “divide and conquer” illustrates fragmentation. The dominant group uses programs such as affirmative action to pit groups against each other, deflecting from the real issues. The final mode, reification occurs in the form of “returning to the good old days,” the good old days being a time when the dominant cultures were in control and their views safe.

Giroux’s (1983) hidden curriculum, or how he believes hegemony is filtered into the classroom, is identified via four methods: selection and validation of cultural values and materials deemed socially legitimate, determination of appropriate cultural content and forms, appropriate school and classroom relationships, and appropriation of culture and knowledge to specified groups. This methodology of incorporation and distribution of knowledge via the curriculum subsequently leads to invisible teacher buy-in and participation in a process enabling the proliferation of continued subordination.

### *The Concept of White Privilege*

A key component to the phenomena of hegemony in the United States is White privilege and supremacy. McIntosh (1990), Akintunde (1999), and Anzaldua (1999) share similar assessments of White privilege. Akintunde discusses one means of protection adapted by the White race. He states “*White society* not only can ensure that the system of White supremacy remains intact but can, in fact, successfully create smoke screens that actually implicate “others” in the maintenance of such a system” (p. 3). According to McIntosh, White privilege is a gift that is by design, mostly unseen and unknown to those who possess. She states:

I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was “meant” to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks. (p. 31)

Society fears how awareness may affect changes to existing social structures. For example, Anzaldua (1990) discusses reactions (e.g., recoil, horror, & discomfort) just mention of the word racism can render. Verbalization of the word makes it tangible and disrupts the bubble of comfortable complacency in which White Americans so often surround themselves. Anzaldua posits “selective reality, the narrow spectrum of reality that human beings select or choose to perceive and or what their culture ‘selects’ for them to ‘see” (p. xxi) as another method in which racism is perpetuated.

By design, these acts of privileging and subordinating members of societies can be so subtle that most privileged members are unaware they exist. McIntosh (1990) describes her encounters with the concept of White privilege below:

One factor seems clear about all of the interlocking oppressions. They take both active forms which we can see and embedded forms which

as a member of the dominant group one is taught not to see. In my class and place, I did not see myself as a racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth. (pp. 35-36)

Akintunde (1999) discusses how ingrained and embedded White privilege and supremacy are in the United States social construction, and how a limited view of racism allows cultivation of this phenomena, stating, “for most Whites, however, racism is like murder: the concept exists but someone has to commit it in order for it to happen” (p. 2). A similar analogy, if a tree falls in the woods and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound, can also be applied to this situation. Akintunde’s analysis correlates closely with McIntosh’s statement that she was acculturated to believe racism was limited overt acts of meanness, not the covert ways of society. Anzaldua (1999) states “Like a tenacious weed, Racism crops up everywhere—it has a stranglehold on everyone. It is cultivated and produced in families, churches, temples and state institutions” (p. xix).

### *The Role of Positionality*

Maher and Tetreault (2001) provide a substantial theoretical base surrounding positionality. Specific evidence of this influence is illustrated via its inclusion in numerous research studies since the original 1994 publication (e.g., Brown, Johnson-Bailey, & Cervero, 2000; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000; Tisdell, 1993; Tisdell, 1995; Tisdell, Hanley, & Taylor, 2000; Tisdell & McLaurin, 1994). With this in mind, Maher and Tetreault (2001) and Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2000) frame the following definition: positionality is ones’ location in social hierarchies commonly defined by major categories of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and or disability. Identities are solvent allowing locations to be ever changing, contextual,

convoluted, and sometimes without clear demarcation. Positionalities, constantly evolving and changing, are at work all around us. Maher and Tetreault (2001) state, “The meanings people create about aspects of themselves, like gender, cultural identification, and class position, vary widely in different classrooms. Although these meanings are in constant flux, they nevertheless reflect the unequal power relations that govern the society outside the classroom” (p. 202).

Mirroring society classroom positionalities are not fixed but relational, continually renegotiated and transformed. Relative to teaching/learning or classroom experiences Maher and Tetreault (2001) state, “position perhaps more than any other single factor, influences the construction of knowledge, and that positional factors reflect relationships of power both within and outside the classroom itself” (p. 23).

### *P<sup>3</sup> and the U.S. Educational Arena*

If the United States is based upon freedom and democracy, how and why do we educate to domesticate? This question has many answers, for example Noel (2000) discusses education’s role in the socialization process. Although education most prominently entails teaching the “three R’s, reading, writing, and ‘rithmetic,” Noel states, “Both directly and indirectly, schools and teachers help instill within their students the values, beliefs, routines, and expectations of the dominant society in which they live” (p. 20).

Moll and Ruiz (2002) discuss two methods in which schools were utilized as a tool for Americanization with colonial territories (i.e., Southwest and Puerto Rico), Indians, and African Americans. The first method, exclusion of education was accomplished through the waiving compulsory education laws for these populations. The second

method encompassed controlling the content and purpose of schooling and Moll and Ruiz state:

Public officials wanted Mexican children in schools but segregated so that they could be controlled and indoctrinated—so that they could be ‘Americanized,’ learn English, and rid themselves of their native language and customs, which the officials deemed detrimental to assimilation to the maintenance of a unified nation. (p. 364)

Gee (1996) defines discourses as ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing that are accepted as norms of particular roles (or ‘types of people’) by specific *groups of people*. Discourses define who we are and to which group we are associated. They are everywhere and are part of social and cultural present and past. Gee posits discourses as a way of understanding and without them language does not make sense, with school discourses being just one of many involved in student lives.

What then happens if as Noel (2000) posits, schools are the main source of acceptable hegemonic socialization but students speak in discourses other than the majority culture? This culturalization at school can often cause conflicts within students. Children are socialized at home to believe and act one way, and often find their behavior unacceptable in the school environment. Their culture is oftentimes devalued and disregarded. Noel states, “The result may be such harmful effects as misinterpretations of students’ actions, inconsistencies in expectations, and treatments of students, and possible failure in the schools” (p. 21).

Valenzuela (1999) dubbed exclusion and removal of primary resources like language and culture, “Subtractive Schooling.” Subtractive schooling sends Latinos, as well as other diverse and low-income students the message that their culture and knowledge

bases are inferior and should be replaced with “normal” or dominant culture knowledge and ideologies. Anzaldua (1999) discusses the affect cultural alienation and dual identities between Mexican and Anglo-American cultures can render stating, “We are a synergy of two cultures with various degrees of Mexicanness or Angloness. I have so internalized the borderland conflict that sometimes I feel like one cancels out the other and we are zero, nothing, no one” (p. 85).

According to Gee (1996), schools need to adapt to other cultural groups thereby rendering students and parents “visible, valuable, and meaningful” (p. 161), noting only a genuine commitment from schools and society will enable the process. Giroux (1994) suggests production of a multicultural curriculum with, “a language that deals with social problems in historical and relational terms, and uncovers how the dynamics of power work to promote domination with the school and the wider society”(p. 344). In other words, to accept and demonstrate how events really occurred while recognizing the factors contributing to it. This would entail critical analysis and subsequent changes to behaviors and systems currently employed as “normal” by the dominant culture.

Previous discussion illustrated the value of multicultural education as a methodology in assisting dominant culture teachers to better serve diverse student populations. Continued discussion will focus on literature surrounding multicultural teacher education roots and current frames and research surrounding U.S. multicultural teacher education.

#### United States Multicultural Teacher Education and Professional Development Programming Overview

Currently, Cochran-Smith et al. (2004) depicts the climate for multicultural teacher education as being the best and worst of times. The best of times stems from current political positioning of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, bringing achievement of all children

regardless of race, gender, or other factors including language from an “it would be nice mentality” to an “if we don’t, we will lose funding mentality.” The flip side or worst of times stems from a lack of effective and applicable methods to evaluate children (testing) and lack of focus and commitment of training teachers to adequately serve diverse students. A clear example of such is teacher education policies initiated and funded by the George W. Bush administration. These policies organized around five specific areas fail to include teacher preparation for educating diverse populations (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004).

Banks (2004) characterizes the evolution of multicultural education through four phases. Initial roots of multicultural teacher education, phase one, stem from incorporation of the study of differing ethnic groups to college and university curricula and date back to teaching materials developed by African American scholars such as Williams (1882), Woodson and Wesley (1922), and DuBois (1935; 1973), with formal incorporation of the “Black Studies movement” emerging in the 1960s and 1970s.

Phase two, multiethnic education, is a product of the realization that the insertion of ethnic study content was insufficient in obtaining educational equity for diverse students. Phase three emerged as other groups, such as women and people with disabilities demanded curricular incorporation of their histories, voices, and cultures. The fourth and current phase of multicultural teacher education surrounds the development of theory, research, and practice that interrelate variables connected to race, class, and gender (Banks, 2003; Grant & Sleeter, 1986).

In 1972, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) initiated the first official movement toward inclusion of multicultural teacher education

via formation of the first of many subsequent multicultural education commissions. By 1976 the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) joined the movement by adding multicultural education standards as a requirement for institutions to attain accreditation (Banks, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2003; Cochran-Smith et al., 2004).

Banks (2004) states researchers and scholars agree that successful multicultural education curricular implementation must resonate through commitment at the institutional level with integration via “teaching materials, teaching and learning styles, the attitudes, perceptions and behaviors of teachers and administrators; and the goals, norms and culture of the school (Banks, 1992; Bennett, 2001; Sleeter & Grant, 1999)”(p. 4). However, in practice school and university practitioners have incorporated multicultural education through curriculum reform rather than philosophical methodologies usually only consisting of including content surrounding different ethnic groups, women, and diverse cultures.

Cochran-Smith (2003) stated most teacher education programs reported incorporation of multicultural education to curriculums simultaneously identifying a major caveat, unspecific guidelines and standards surrounding multicultural curriculums, which subsequently allow multiple meanings, interpretations, and applications. This leads to multicultural curriculums that range from one stand-alone “add-on” course to extensive programs that consist of several courses, some including required immersion programs (Sleeter, 2001).

In reviewing the literature base on teacher education programs, it is evident that while many agree a critical need for change exists, it is difficult to measure what is being done

and is effective due to a large disparity between conceptual and empirical literature (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004; Sleeter, 2001; Zeichner, 2003). An extensive base of conceptual multicultural teacher education frameworks exists, with examples including Garcia (1999), Ladson-Billings (1999), Larkin and Sleeter (1995), and Zeichner, Grant, Gay, Gillette, Valli, and Villegas (1998). However, large amounts of empirical data are unavailable to confirm which conceptual frameworks are in fact, effective and applicable. In a 2001 literature review Sleeter states the published research base "...provided no clear guidance about what to do in pre-service education. This is a limitation of the research that has been done thus far rather than an indication that interventions are not needed" (p. 96), further identifying existing research as "piecemeal" (p. 96).

The previously identified caveat has bred long-range criticisms from multicultural teacher education proponents. Cochran-Smith (2003) cites critics such as Garcia (1999), Gollnick (1995), Grant and Secada (1990), Jenks, Lee, and Kanpol (2001), Ladson-Billings (1995), and Zeichner and Hoeft (1996) who posit curriculums have not really changed and in fact, a climate of "conservative multiculturalism" (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p. 3), or focus on "assimilation and preparing minorities for economic competition in the mainstream" (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p. 3), permeates teacher education programs.

The executive summary of The 2006 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report, *Teacher Professional Development in 1999-2000: What Teachers, Principals, and District Staff Report*, provides an overview of the conceptual model surrounding educator professional development. It states teacher professional development has been recognized as a key component in student learning improvement major reform efforts of the past two decades. Traditional professional development consisting of stand-alone

workshops with administrator defined formats and topics have long been considered inadequate for teacher and student needs. As a result professional development guidelines were restructured with the specific identification of essential components: student and teacher needs, school level collaborative components, and evaluation (teaching practice and student learning) (Choy, Chen, & Bugarin, 2006).

However, the purpose of the NCES report (2006) is to identify the realities of professional development programming through the actual teachers, principals, and district staff participating in the activities. NCES findings indicate participants reported overall determinant of professional development topics and methodologies were administratively determined by school principals and/or system or government initiatives, reforms, and performance standards and indicated the need to give teachers voice in professional development determination. Factors identified to increase educator professional development involvement included administrative support, financial assistance, time allocation for professional development, educational level, years in profession, and minority composition of school.

The NCES (2006) study indicates that although professional development has been recognized as a critical component to change, a gap still exists in effective and applicable methodology. This gap stems from a failure to allow teachers voice in the determination of programmatic applicability, administrative support, and resource allocation (time and financial).

Grossman, Wineburg, and Woolworth (2000) discuss professional development challenges resulting from the lack of an educational professional community. They posit

the lack of voice and subsequent accountability as factors. Teachers have little or no input to the selection of new teachers or to policy and curricular decisions and state:

Compared to medicine or law, education has not been able to forge a shared language of norms and values, and practically every significant question in education remains contentious. In deed, one way to interpret the standards movement sweeping the country (including the formation of the National Board of Professional Standards) is as an attempt to create a collective professional vision for teaching where none has existed before. (Grossman et al., 2000, pp. 9-10)

Grossman et al. (2000) also state cultural norms of the U.S. K-12 educational arena are not conducive for workplace learning. Classrooms and subject matter expertise can create an isolated and territorial environment. Because of this individual teachers find the greatest learning opportunities in off-site and summer institutes. Individual learning can be problematic because lack of buy-in from other staff often renders change impossible. A willingness to give up vacation time and pay out of pocket for professional development creates a system in which only the most motivated participate.

The contentious nature surrounding the overall picture of educator professional development does not improve when one looks at multicultural professional development. Review of the multicultural professional development literature base provides even more dismal results than the pre-service teacher education multicultural literature. Zeichner (2003) posits the low status afforded to multicultural teacher education in general via promotion and tenure processes and resource allocation results in talented faculty being drawn to areas more conducive to attaining such. Any negative impact seen in pre-service teacher education will be magnified in the professional development arena. Deteriorating university budget conditions result in funneling of

available resources to graduate and undergraduate instruction, thus away from professional continuing education programs.

*The Conceptual Literature Base*

Although the possibility of nationally adopting a consistent conceptual frame is unlikely, an excellent synopsis of good practice in multicultural teacher education is provided by Zeichner et al. (1998). This frame, compiled via the Multicultural Pre-service Education Project, is designed around three major areas of multicultural teacher education: institutional and programmatic reform, staff and student populations, and curriculum and instruction. This frame is used because its extensive collaborative development includes input by top-notch U.S. multicultural teacher education faculty. The five-step process included extensive literature review, a two-day literature evaluation by an expert panel, subsequent creation of design principals, presentation and review designed to solicit feedback at the 1996 annual meeting of The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, and finally incorporation of the above for finished product generation.

The area of institutional and programmatic reform encompasses the basic foundations of programs. The idea being that multicultural teacher education must be supported, advocated, and emphasized via institutions in a top-down fashion. Institutions must explicitly demonstrate their commitment via mission statements, policy, and procedures. Multicultural commitment should be evident through day-to-day workings of the institution not just, "Sporadic and fragmentary exposures to diversity in the form of special events and celebration, such as one-time lectures, seminars, or conferences" (Zeichner et al., 1998, p. 164).

The second area, staff and student populations, is described by Zeichner et al. (1998) as not only employing a faculty and staff that uphold the ideological values of multiculturalism, but creating a diverse environment through the acquisition of faculty, staff, and students of color. Lastly, the area of multicultural curriculum and instruction, Zeichner et al. posit is accomplished via a holistic approach, not just stand-alone courses. Effective curriculums must train pre-service teachers to understand complexities relating to power and privilege, encompass high expectations for all students they serve, incorporate families and communities into school life, reexamine their own identities, develop the commitment and capacity to become change agents, and validate and utilize multiple types and sources of knowledge in their classrooms.

Incorporation of this framework by Zeichner et al. (1998) creates a holistic approach to multiculturalism and presents it as a priority rather than another vague policy mandated by university and institutional administration, forgotten when the next best thing comes along. Because current society realities limit the possibility of creating the extensive framework previously discussed, the following will discuss of current methods that can be initiated on a smaller, more realistic scale.

Conceptual models exclusive to multicultural professional development were not located. However, information on this subject was located in publications (Banks, Cookson, Gay, Hawley, Irvine, Nieto, Schofield, & Stephan, 2001; Garcia, 1999; Noel, 2000). Although not specifically directed at teacher professional development, Banks et al. (2001) provide a model of effective multicultural professional development while also encompassing ideas present in the other noted publications. The report was selected because like the conceptual framework for pre-service teacher education, it is a

collaborative work utilizing the work of top-notch multicultural education faculty throughout the U.S.

While the report provides principles to create a teaching and learning multicultural society, the first essential principle is teacher learning via professional development programs. Specifically, Banks et al. (2001) state through professional development programs, teachers should:

- 1) uncover and identify their personal attitudes toward racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups; 2) acquire knowledge about the histories and cultures of the diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups within the nation and within their schools; 3) become acquainted with the diverse perspectives that exist within different ethnic and cultural communities; 4) understand the ways in which institutionalized knowledge within schools, universities, and the popular culture can perpetuate stereotypes about racial and ethnic groups; and 5) acquire the knowledge and skills needed to develop and implement an equity pedagogy... (p. 197)

The same caveat exists with this framework as the pre-service conceptual framework, reality offers a very different picture of what actually occurs. That being said, the focus will now turn to programs actually reported.

#### *Conceptual Meets Actual - Welcome to Reality*

This section will focus primarily on current multicultural teacher education and professional development strategies. Sleeter (2001) presents a broad overview of multicultural teacher preparation. Two main conceptual methods are identified: attempts to create a more diverse teaching force via recruitment of teachers of color, and changing attitudinal beliefs and knowledge bases of the White Eurocentric female cohorts traditionally and currently dominant in teacher education programs.

### *Mix it up!*

Recruitment of teachers of color has become an alternate vehicle in the struggle to improve diverse student educational attainment. Some noted proponents of this method include: Cochran-Smith et al. (2004), Haberman (1991, 1993, 1996), Sleeter (2001), Zeichner et al. (1998), Villegas and Lucas (2002), and Zeichner (2003).

Numerous benefits are associated with this method however two specifically stand out: acquiring a teacher base more representative of current K-12 student populations, and providing an alternative method to increase the success of the White teaching cadre currently serving diverse K-12 students. Haberman (1996) posits success or failure of teachers in urban setting depends on more than teacher education programs. Life experiences and worldviews, or what one brings to the table, are also determining factors in success. Zeichner et al. (1998) and more recently Villegas and Lucas (2002) argue institutions must recruit and retain diverse candidates not only to increase the number of diverse teachers, but also to enhance and strengthen teacher education quality on a societal level. Diverse student populations allow traditional White teacher education students more insight and knowledge to difference and otherness, possibly increasing their success rate in serving diverse K-12 student populations.

### *Fixing the Existing White Teaching Cohort*

Although a more diverse teaching cadre is desired, the reality of a predominately White one remains. The fact that the majority of White teacher education students are totally unaware of issues surrounding societal and cultural inequities is well noted (Banks, 2001; Larkin & Sleeter, 1995; Mahan, 1982; Melnick & Zeichner, 1998; Sleeter, 2001). Ukpokodu (2003) states the fact many White pre-service teachers are unaware of

social inequalities, “Pre-service teachers, who have been socialized into the belief that racial minorities are intellectually incompetent, unknowingly undervalue, and underestimate the potentials of diverse students.” Consequently, they will engage in what Haberman (1991) called ‘pedagogy of poverty’ by teaching down and watering down the curriculum” (p. 17). Therefore teacher educators must work with the current cohort to improve teacher quality. Current course delivery methodology identified by Sleeter (2001) includes stand-alone multicultural courses, cross-cultural immersion programs, and the combination of both methods.

*Stand-alone multicultural courses.*

The literature seemingly indicates currently stand-alone course delivery is the most prevalent mode of facilitating multicultural curriculum course requirements. Economics and resource allocation often play a role in this, as it is by far easier and cheaper to offer classroom-based courses as opposed to community-based or international immersion programs (Mahan, 1982; Melnick & Zeichner, 1998).

Banks (2001) states effective stand-alone courses allow development of clarified cultural and national identifications, allowing students to learn how to “critically analyze and rethink their notions of race, culture, and ethnicity and view themselves as cultural and racial beings” (pp. 11-12). Sleeter (2001), however, states the jury is still out on the effectiveness of these courses. She reports most research has been produced by faculty members reporting action research or reflective analysis of their courses, few being critiques. Experimental study results are not as optimistic in their assessment of stand-alone course effectiveness. Sleeter (2001) states most studies identified small gains;

however, some identified no gains and one actually identified lost gains during a one-week follow-up.

Three studies were reviewed surrounding stand-alone multicultural courses: Banks (2001), Brown (2004), and Ukpokodu (2003). Of these studies, two were reflective (Banks & Ukpokodu) and one a mixed method analysis (Brown, 2004). Banks (2001) and Ukpokodu (2003) both found that while subject matter was critical, it was often an emotionally draining process for students and professors alike. Some students became resistant when faced with critical analysis challenging deeply embedded cultural values and norms, for example recognition that “institutionalized racism privileges some groups and disadvantages others” (Banks, 2001, p. 12) and they, in fact, may play a role in this. Banks and Ukpokodu found resistance, if unresolved, might cause rejection of all concepts presented. Another issue these authors brought forth was consequences resulting from low course evaluations. Without institutional support and understanding this can damage an untenured professor’s career; this leads faculty to be unwilling to rock the boat and/or teach effective multicultural course material.

Brown’s (2004) mixed method study evaluating the effect of a nurturing atmosphere on decreasing student resistance in multicultural coursework found, “a relationship does exist between the instructional methods used in stand-alone cultural diversity courses and changes in the cultural awareness of students” (p. 335) and the most effective method providing opportunities for self-examination at course outset. This study illuminates the issue of effective course delivery, possibly giving merit to the phrase, “it’s not what you say, but how you say it.”

*Cross-cultural immersion programs.*

Cross-cultural immersion programs are programs designed to allow students an opportunity to step outside the box of traditional classroom dynamics and power bases to experience unfamiliar cross-cultural realities, experiences, and understandings (Mahan, 1982; Melnick & Zeichner, 1998; Rymes, 2002; Sleeter, 2001). Experiences can be accomplished via a local community or international venue, ranging from daily classroom and visits to actually living within a community. Review of the cultural immersion literature base identified many such programs (Bradfield-Kreider, 2001; Mahan, 1982; Mahan & Stachowski, 1993-94; Melnick & Zeichner, 1998; Roose, 2001; Rymes, 2002; Stachowski & Frey, 2003; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). Only two programs (i.e., Stachowski & Mahan, 1998 and Roose, 2001) were identified for discussion due to space limitations. Basis of program selection was longitudinal program data and identifiable outcomes of students related to teaching practices.

Stachowski and Mahan (1998) provide a longitudinal database surrounding cultural immersion experiences (American Indian Reservation, Hispanic Community, and The Urban Project), with research at Indiana University beginning in the 1970s. From these data they report students are more likely to attain better understandings of differing communities and cultures than students in conventional student teaching experiences. They posit this is a result of requirements and expectations forcing students to reach beyond current knowledge and comfort zones to adapt to this new situation (Mahan, 1982; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). An unfortunate caveat to their research is no follow-up to study how these experiences affect long-term teaching practices. Although they state pre-service teachers report a direct impact to their practice (Mahan, 1982) and some

students actually remain at the Indian Reservation (Stachowski & Mahan, 1998), they provide no study specifically targeting long-term outcomes on practice.

The work of Roose (2001), director of a teacher education program requiring all students to participate in an international immersion experience, provides insight to international immersion experiences on teaching practice. Participants, practicing teachers for periods ranging from six months to three years, reported the following effects on their practice directly resulting from the experience: “understanding schools as cultures and schools’ relationships to the broader culture; understanding students, learning, and curriculum; and understanding themselves as learners and risk-takers. They all agreed that their cross-cultural education internships were among the most critical experiences in their preparations as teachers” (Roose, 2001, p. 46). Although this study provides important information regarding how immersion experiences affect practice, a major drawback is the small sample size (10 participants). However, as previously documented, this is an inherent issue in the multicultural teacher education research base.

#### *Multicultural professional development programs.*

Four publications will be reviewed (Cahnman, 2004 unpublished manuscript; Paccione, 2000; Suarez, 2002; & Yawkey, Jackson, Wang, & Chuang, 2003). Of these studies, Paccione (2000) deals with life experiences leading to multicultural commitment, the Yawkey et al. (2003) study addresses classroom training, and the Cahnman (2004) and Suarez (2002) studies deal with cultural immersion programs. Paccione explored life experiences leading to a commitment in multicultural education in 45 in-service teachers. The five most frequently cited themes were: initiative from job situation (44%), influence of family/childhood experiences (36%), discrimination due to minority status

(36%), interactive/extended cultural immersion experience (27%), and influence of training, educational course, or books (23%). Her stated implications from these findings are that cultural immersion and multicultural courses offer the greatest promise for teacher educators, specifically in the pre-service arena.

Yawkey et al. (2003) demonstrates the results of a four-course training program for in-service graduate level teachers. After participants successfully completed coursework (curriculum and instruction, multicultural/multilingual learners, materials development, and assessment of diverse learners) their classroom strategies were observed, evaluated, and compared to participants not completing the coursework. Findings indicate long-term professional development can make a difference in teacher performance with diverse students. A familiar limitation with this study is the small number of participants (12) and lack of longitudinal data.

Suarez (2002) and Cahnmann (2004) discuss experiences with professional development immersion programs to Latin America. Cahnmann examines ten practicing teachers during and after return from a two-week immersion program to Mexico. She found teachers did bring back a clearer understanding of the “otherness” immigrants experience and enthusiastic intentions to facilitate their adjustment. However, they failed to use experience and knowledge as a springboard to attain greater understanding of dominant culture privilege and their associated roles, generally associated with transformative multicultural education. One such example, while teachers returned more sensitive to Latino bilingualism, they continued to stigmatize African American dialects.

Suarez (2002) provides findings from a three-week immersion program of 22 Masters level students (20 practicing English for Speakers of Other Language [ESOL]). Similar to

Cahnmanns' (2004) findings, Suarez (2002) found participants could experience "otherness", but there were limits to understanding the actual experiences of immigrants. However, a striking difference arises, Suarez reports participants recognized this limitation, a key factor for multicultural transformational education.

Both researchers agree immersion experiences can be valuable tools. However they felt that such programs should only be one component of a multi-faceted strategic plan rather than a single stand-alone or add-on "quick fix" approach. Cahnmann (2004) states, "without this on-going work, we risk perpetuating a superficial model of multicultural education that does little to heal cross-cultural and cross-linguistic conflict in society and school" (p. 27).

#### United States Multicultural Teacher Education and Professional Development Programming Summary

An overarching goal of the previous discussion was identification of methodologies teacher education programs currently use to expose educators to multiculturalism. While not surprising, findings are none-the-less quite disturbing. Initial inability to locate an extensive empirical literature base left me quite disturbed. While able to find some small-scale studies, no major longitudinal works were found. What was I doing wrong? I then found two articles (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004; & Sleeter, 2001), confirming the lack of empirical data related to this topic.

The previous discussion illustrates issues, challenges, needs, and gaps surrounding current multicultural teacher education curriculums. Quick synopsis reveals that while a critical need for multicultural education exists, effective delivery and/or dissemination systems do not. In an effort to offer more applicable and effective methodologies,

possible applications of current adult learning theories applicable to multicultural teacher education programs will be discussed.

#### Adult Education Foundational Base

The following discussion will focus on the adult education literature base providing the foundational anchors for this study. This discussion will include experiential learning, transformational learning, and the role power, privilege, and positionality render in learning environment dynamics and knowledge construction.

#### *Experiential Learning*

Experiential learning is the process of learning via experiences. Undisputedly, John Dewey (1938) is synonymously attached as a pioneer in the advocacy to accept experience as a valid learning method in lieu of traditional, positivistically-based formal classroom learning and teaching (or “banking” as referred by Freire, 2000). Dewey’s gift to educators was the recognition and legitimization of these concepts. Dewey also recognized that although all education originates via experience, learning is not guaranteed through every experience. Not only can an experience fail to result in personal growth, the reverse or “mis-education,” can occur, as most reflecting on their life can attest.

Dewey (1938) characterizes two distinct elements necessary in successful experiential learning, continuity and interaction. Continuity serves to link known experiences and knowledge with new experiences providing learners with tools to mold them into applicable knowledge. Interactions are transactions or negotiations occurring between the learner and experiences allowing value determination of experience, retention, and if applicable knowledge base modification. A musical composer is analogous to Dewey’s

concept of an educator's role, combining sounds from differing instruments, musical notes, speeds, and pitches eventually yielding a beautiful (or not) song or symphony.

Since Dewey's (1938) initial work, experiential learning researchers have continually investigated and expanded the frame (Bateson, 1994; Boud & Walker, 1996; Jarvis, 1987; Kolb, 1984; & Usher, Bryant, & Johnston, 1997) utilizing differing lenses. Fenwick (2001) introduces five orientations emerging through experiential learning research: 1) Constructivism (cognitive reflection on concrete experiences), 2) psychoanalytic (unconscious dimensions), 3) situative (social action and transformation), 4) critical cultural (social action and transformation), and 5) enactivist (co-emerging of human action, organizations, cultures, and nature). Of these orientations, Fenwick posits constructivism as the most dominant. This factor, time, and page limitations, and subsequent discussion surrounding transformational learning precipitates the decision to center primary discussion focus around a constructivist frame.

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) state, "a constructivist stance maintains that learning is a process of constructing meaning; its how people make sense of their experiences" (p. 261). Although simplistic sounding many perspectives surround it, specifically criticism aimed at a lack of attention afforded the roles social context and emotion play in knowledge construction. (Boud & Walker, 1991; Fenwick, 2001; & Jarvis, 1987)

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) illustrate how cumulative effort toward better understanding of experiential learning has identified four learner characteristics essential in the ability to affect experiential learning: 1) willingness to participate in an experience; 2) ability to observe and reflect an experience from differing perspectives; 3) analytical ability to create and integrate ideas and concepts gained via experience; and 4) decision

making and problem solving abilities allowing integration of new ideas and concepts.

Kolb (1984) integrated these characteristics into a cyclical process: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Kolb also maintained that while all experiences do not teach, completion of the four-stage cycle does affect learning.

Jarvis (1987) added social context to Kolb's (1984) model stating, "learning is not just a psychological process that happens in splendid isolation from the world in which the learner lives, but that it is intimately related to that world and affected by it" (p. 11). Jarvis also posits disjuncture between one's experience and events precipitating learning can become too great, resulting in no learning acquisition. Jarvis provides several other insights, including: 1) while Kolb's study is very important, it is "too neat" (p. 18), and over simplistic; 2) cites Schon's 1983 study to posit that although the learning cycle begins with a concrete experience, stages may occur non-sequentially; 3) Kolb fails to differentiate learning style from cognitive style and learning and cognition are not synonymous; and 4) in the utilization of Kolb's model, Jarvis sometimes found inconsistent results with different individuals (although he does admit this may be expected). Even though Jarvis noted these limitations he simultaneously recognized the immense value of the model, as it provides a base and starting point for expansion.

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) cite other important views indicative of the importance of context in learning, some of which are included in the preceding discussion. Utilizing a model similar to Kolb (1984), Boud, Keough, and Walker (1996) also include the role emotion and reflection on past and current experiences play on learning. Through her work, Bateson (1994) used the examination of learning via

differing cultures. The importance of reflection in experiential learning is demonstrated via the work of Brookfield (1985) and Schon (1983, 1987). Brookfield illustrates the importance of critical reflection to question commonly held beliefs, their origins, and beneficiaries. With regard to critical reflection, Brookfield (2000) seemingly presents a double-edged sword. Being that positivist rationality (a product of the dominant culture) informing critical reflection is needed to analyze injustices surrounding the hegemonic cultural values normalizing inequalities.

### *Transformational Learning*

It does not take long to discover the immense adult education literature base surrounding transformational learning. Case in point, Taylor's (1997, 1998, 2000a, 2000b) completion of four literature reviews since 1997 surrounding just Mezirow's conceptualization. The sheer volume of Taylor's (2000b) most recent analysis (62 pages specifically devoted to Mezirow's frame) demonstrates three issues: 1) this theory's impact adult education; 2) an immense knowledge base surrounding Mezirow's frame, often foreshadows differing frames, concepts, and issues; and 3) the impossibility of providing detailed explanation within the bounds of a 15 page document (only a portion dedicated to the topic). That being said, this discussion on transformational learning will provide an overview of transformative learning specific to adult education via: definition, presentation of differing adult education lenses, explanation of common key concepts, and discussion of transformational learning specifically surrounding Mezirow's framework.

### *Transformational Learning – A Definition*

Possibly due to their interrelatedness, searching for words accurately and succinctly defining transformational learning is similar to defining “the meaning of life.” Both concepts, very personal, continually undergo a restructuring process within contextual surroundings. A “circle of life” metaphor surrounding parent/child relationships is particularly conducive to providing an applicable reference frame for transformational learning. As a child, one travels a journey from total dependence to independence; role transformations sometimes evoking heart wrenching emotional chaos of both parent and child. The child transforms into adulthood, subsequently enacting a continually transforming relationship with parents. The aging process sometimes renders an increasing dependency of parents upon adult children. Consequently, sometimes-difficult transformations occur as one becomes responsible for life-altering decisions (for both parent and child) surrounding the care of a person *they* once totally depended upon for basic life-sustaining needs; sometimes entailing the decision to cease life-sustaining treatments. Learning occurs throughout every life-stage resulting in unalterable changes (visible and invisible) in both parent and child.

The process one undergoes to understand, make meaning, keep order, and sometimes maintain sanity among the chaos is the underlying frame of transformational learning. Similar to the view that all experiences do not educate (Dewey, 1938; Jarvis, 1987; Kolb, 1984), all learning is not transformational (Mezirow, 1991), the differentiating factor between general and transformational learning being impact. Clark (1993) states, “transformational learning *shapes* people, they are different afterward, in ways both they and others can recognize” (p. 47).

*Adult Education Lenses Surrounding Transformational Learning*

Differentiating lenses of transformational learning continually evolve within the adult education literature base. Clark (1993) identified three prominent strands, “Jack Mezirow’s theory of perspective transformation, the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire, and the work of Laurent Daloz in the developmental character of formal education in adulthood” (p. 48). Dirkx (1998) followed with a four-lens approach which uses the above strands with the addition of the spiritual lens. Baumgartner (2001) reiterates these lens, listing them as follows: rationally cognitively-based (Mezirow, 1978, 1999, 2000), critical-emancipatory (Freire, 2000), developmental (Daloz, 1999), and spiritual (Dirkx, 1998; Healy, 2000).

Although different conceptually, Mezirow (2000) and Freire (2000) share some common denominators, a constructivist approach to learning processes and empowerment as a learning outcome. Mezirow’s 1978 study surrounding women’s re-entry programs into community colleges initially posited transformational learning as a theory and provided the catalyst for work surrounding a rational cognitively-based frame. Mezirow’s (2000) description states, “Transformative learning involves participation in constructive discourse to use the experience of others to assess reasons justifying these assumptions, and making an action decision based on the resulting insight” (p. 8). Freire (2000) centers his lens in a social justice emancipatory frame. Although not published in the United States (via English translation) until 1970, Freire began writing and researching long before. Freire promotes a collaborative methodology, utilizing *conscientization*, or creating student awareness of oppressive forces constraining them and their ability to promote individual and social change. This frame, based around work with illiterate Brazilian farm workers, is sometimes labeled as out of context for United

States utilization. His ideological foundations however, remain classic in United States adult education literature.

Daloz (1999) views transformational learning via a developmental lens consisting of an infrastructure of interconnecting relationships. This infrastructure allows student incorporation of all aspects affecting learning experiences (e.g., student/teacher relationships, family dynamics, positionality, and social class) (Baumgartner, 2001). The lens of spirituality has been posited via learning emphasizing feeling, images, (Dirkx, 1998) and self-awareness via meditation (Healy, 2000). Baumgartner sums the concept of spirituality in transformational learning frame as an extrarational process involving integration of various aspects of the Self.

#### *Key Concepts Surrounding Transformational Learning*

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) use transformational learning literature to identify concepts considered key to the frame. Three identified via initial theoretical development (i.e., experience, critical reflection, & development) and four subsequently identified via further theoretical development (i.e., context, rationality, social action, & educator role).

Integration of experiences (old and new), creating order, and understanding are bases for learning (Mezirow, 2000). Transformational learning focuses on a process of identification, deconstruction, evaluation, and reconfiguration of socially constructed experiences. While experience is the key element in catalyzing a learning process, it alone “is not enough to effect transformation”, according to Merriam & Caffarella (1999, p. 327) an examination of underlying beliefs and assumptions affects how we make sense of the experience (i.e., critical reflection) is necessitated in the process.

Development, recognized as necessary in learning, is integral in transformational processes. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) posit development is, “inherent in and an outcome of the process” (p. 330). Context and sociocultural factors (e.g., race, gender, and social, class) surrounding learners were initially addressed in the transformational frame by Clark and Wilson (1991). Critique of Mezirow’s reflection of dominant culture beliefs and failed recognition of contextual and cultural influences, created influential impact and subsequent incorporation (Mezirow, 2000) to the original frame. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) discuss how rationality, a White Eurocentric upper middle class male characteristic, is inherent to both (Mezirow & Freire) frames. Taylor’s (2000b) literature review points to an increasing empirical base supporting an equal importance to “relational ways of knowing” (p. 306).

Social action and the educator’s role in transformational learning have also become issues. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) point to criticism of both Mezirow and Freire for ‘romanticizing the social change process’ (p. 336), citing critics (Baptiste, 1998; Newman, 1994, a, b) who suggest offering marginalized and oppressed learners strategies to deal with oppressors while simultaneously attaining skills to affect social change. Ethical issues surrounding adult educators and personal interests they bring to the table are also relevant. Adult educators must be cognizant of and create effective and applicable strategies surrounding intense emotions, legal, and ethical considerations oftentimes inherent in transformational processes. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) state although an important issue, relatively little research has been completed surrounding it.

*Transformational Learning a la Mezirow – A Closer Look*

Previous discussion provides valuable insight surrounding transformational learning and identifies Mezirow's conceptual frame as the most prominently used and researched, which precipitates and justifies its further exploration. Mezirow (1997) describes the transformational learning process as involving, "...transforming frames of reference through critical reflection of assumptions, validating contested beliefs through discourse, taking action on one's reflective insight, and critically assessing it" (p. 11). A disorienting dilemma provokes the first of a ten stage process with the remaining nine steps including: 1) self examination, 2) critical assessment of assumptions, 3) recognition others have encountered similar situations, 4) compiling action plans, 5) essential information acquisition, 6) provisional role play, 7) competence building, 8) self-confidence building, and finally 9) reintegration into life with new perspectives and roles.

As originally posited, transformational learning was a very linear, rational, acontextual, and acultural process. The process usually precipitated by a crisis ended with integration of new perspectives into one's life (Baumgartner, 2001; Taylor, 2000b). However, Taylor presents subsequent empirical research and critique surrounding these themes research points to a recursive intertwined rather than linear, step-wise process and although most research concurs with the importance of critical reflection, it indicates too much emphasis placed on rationality. Consequently the impact emotions and feelings potentially render is ignored. Taylor further posits that they not only provide impetus for critical reflection, but often the "gist of which to reflect deeply" (p. 305) and address issues of context and culture utilizing research (Clark & Wilson, 1991) previously discussed in this document. Taylor also notes that the catastrophic or acute events initially associated with a crisis or disorienting dilemma, while possible, are generally the

exception rather than rule as catalysts. Generally, subtle sometimes-unconscious events cumulate in triggering process initiation (Clark, 1991, 1993; Taylor).

### P<sup>3</sup> and Learning Environment Dynamics

When an adult education student is first introduced to the concept of transformational learning, it can bring about a sense of great promise and enthusiasm. The potential to affect life altering, positive, immediate, and sometimes epiphinal learner changes may become more salient in the wake of similar learning experiences. However, a more realistic picture forms as one becomes more versed in the theory and contextual factors surrounding the learner and experiences.

Previous discussion provided theoretical background surrounding experiential and transformational learning, indicating the importance of past and present experiences, context, emotion, critical reflection, and process initiation via a concrete event, disorienting dilemma, or integrating circumstances (Clark, 1991, 1993; Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 2000) and their ability to work with and against each other constructing and/or deconstructing learning. However, positionality (conscious or unconscious) effects an individual's conceptualization of every listed element and is recognized as the single most influential factor in knowledge construction (Maher & Tetreault, 2001). Dominant culture positionality is also embedded and surrounded by what McIntosh (1990) refers to as an "an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day" (p. 31). That being said, positional influences surrounding the adult education literature base merit further discussion.

*Maher and Tetreault (1994 & 2001)*

Maher and Tetreault initially explored positionality via their 1994 book, *The Feminist Classroom*. Their aim being provision of relevant pedagogical approaches toward creation of more egalitarian and inclusive knowledge, thereby meeting the changing demographics of higher education. They posit feminist and liberatory pedagogies provide traditionally marginalized groups an effective vehicle to accomplish this. Their substantial theoretical influence in the adult education literature base precipitated the decision to encompass a major portion of this discussion around their work.

Maher and Tetreault (2001) studied classroom dynamics at six higher education institutions consisting of three small liberal arts colleges (including a historically African American women's college), two state colleges, and a research university. Although their approach identifies and centers around four major themes of mastery, voice, authority, and positionality, discussion will be limited to positionality.

*Social dynamics surrounding power, privilege, and positionality.*

Individualism, an important factor providing potential barriers to creating positional pedagogies, provides a basis for “the power of the dominant ideologies of our culture” (Maher & Tetreault, 2001, p. 217), allowing individual equalities of opportunity and rights to mask deep structural inequalities of power, position, and possibility in the lives of many people (Maher & Tetreault, 2001). These embedded and ingrained cultural norms have allowed perpetuation of dominant group social hierarchy reign for generations.

Maher and Tetreault (2001) found that although classrooms provided obvious platforms to observe issues surrounding positionality, they did not always provide an

effective platform for change mechanisms. Key in this inability was the visibility/invisibility of dominant social structures prevalent in society. Construction of invisible markers and identities determine normal and abnormal conditions leading to automatic “othering” of differences. Maher and Tetreault (2001) found this to be similar to a scaffolding process via the following illustration:

Our classroom observations have shown us, moreover, that the process of constructing essentialized “identities” is self-reinforcing and cumulative. Because White men do not mark or position themselves in terms of gender or race, but simply as “people,” women are forced to become “women,” not just “people,” themselves. They must then use gender as a category to describe themselves rather than as a marker for an unequal power relationship. In other words, only women are seen to have gender. Similarly, because White women do not mark themselves in terms of race, but simply as “women,” women of color must carry race as their category alone. In this context, White women have no color. By contrast, positional approaches view race as a marker of relationship, of inequality, in which all are implicated. (pp. 225-226)

While the social factors of race and gender are quite visible and not easily ignored, class and sexuality easily remain invisible, unacknowledged, and ignored. Maher and Tetreault (2001) explain difficulties surrounding social class structures they encountered in the higher education environments studied: 1) most students attending higher education institutions are privileged in some way via class and fail to recognize the less privileged; and 2) institutions studied provided a predominantly White middle class setting. Silence surrounding homosexuality allows heterosexuality to be constructed as the norm, thereby invalidating homosexual beliefs and norms.

Social factors seemingly combine and work separately creating what Maher and Tetreault (2001) coin, an inhibited relational view of positions. The following example demonstrates how an overwhelming presence of Whiteness inhibits a relational view of

racism, “The White students had trouble seeing themselves as White, in seeing racism as part of a social structure in which their own lives were embedded and, therefore, had trouble coping with their own racism except, sometimes, in terms of individual guilt” (p. 221). Further observing this deeply imbedded inhibited relational view resulted in some White students blaming Black people for their own oppression.

Another key component of positionality is individual awareness and willingness to recognize positions of privilege. Maher and Tetreault (2001) posit, “degree of positional awareness itself often reflects societal power relationships” (p. 202), and those occupying positions of greater power are more likely to “resist the awareness that their individual perspectives are shaped by the social positions they occupy” (p. 202). An emergence of positional consciousness was indicative of resistance to subordinated position categorization via dominant groups.

*Institutional and classroom dynamics surrounding power, privilege, and positionality.*

Maher and Tetreault (2001) found positional hierarchies not only within, but between institutions; thereby reflecting “societal inequalities of social class, race, and gender” (p. 214). They found disturbing the increased “intellectual agency” (p. 214) afforded to students in small private liberal arts colleges, as opposed to those attending state institutions. Maher and Tetreault (2001) posit this to be a direct result of higher tuitions and increased social privileges lended those attending private institutions. Ability to pay higher tuitions accorded private institutions creates higher education social class segregation. This segregation leads to decreased student understanding and awareness of positional differences, thus cementing status quo power and ideological views. In other words, you can’t fix a leak if you don’t know where it is.

Maier and Tetreault (2001) state positionalities are at work in all classrooms. Although students and instructors may “directly challenge and undermine the social structures they inhabit” (p. 203), these structures cannot be completely removed and ignored. That being said, Maier and Tetreault (2001) state classrooms can provide valuable environments for students to “understand the workings of positional dynamics in their lives, to see them through their ‘third eye’” (p. 203), thus beginning the process of challenging current structures leading to change. Maier and Tetreault (2001) offer a caveat: dynamics and complexities inherent in higher education are commonly structured around dominant culture ideologies and prove a major barrier to change mechanisms.

Maier and Tetreault (2001) found typically dominant students benefited and obtained greater insight from placement in classes providing subordinating experiences and examination of relational positions. The reverse was true for marginalized students. Therefore, utilization of this technique requires certainty that typically marginalized groups are strong enough in number to explore their own lives on their own terms (Maier & Tetreault, 2001) and are provided adequate teacher support.

#### *Adult Education Research Surrounding P<sup>3</sup> and Learning Environment Dynamics*

The following discussion will focus on the adult education research base surrounding power, privilege, and position in learning environments. This research addresses issues such as creating inclusive learning environments and how instructor/student power differentials affect learning environments.

*Tisdell (1995).*

Creating Inclusive Learning Environments (Tisdell, 1995) is a monograph offering a map rather than prescription to: 1) understand how structures surrounding power and

privilege affect knowledge dissemination; and 2) enable more inclusive learning environments for traditionally marginalized groups, via multicultural and feminist pedagogical lenses. Comparing both standpoints, Tisdell posits although multicultural education theorists address issues surrounding power structures, emotionally charged environments sometimes created around these issues remain unrecognized. Published within one year of Maher and Tetreault's (1994) initial work, Tisdell has also been significantly used in the research base.

Tisdell (1995) posits theoretical underpinnings of society taught from a young age, via the Declaration of Independence (i.e., all men are created equal) provide an illusion of the "American Dream" suggesting equal opportunity for all. However, the reality she presents is a process of knowledge production and dissemination controlled by a dominant power base. This power base allows those privileged by interlocking systems of gender, race, and class to be provided the education required to maintain privileged positions.

Tisdell (1995) posits the following components as key to providing inclusive learning environments: 1) careful consideration of specific contexts surrounding inclusion; 2) cognizance of the effect one's positionality renders on curriculum design; 3) instructors desiring to challenge power structures must adopt effective applicable strategies to that aim; 4) awareness of how one's conscious and unconscious behaviors reproduce dominant societal power structures in learning environments; and 5) utilization of Cervero and Wilson's (1994) framework stressing a democratic and responsible planning process representing and considering all stakeholders (learners, teachers, planners, institutional leadership, and affected public).

*Tisdell (1993) and Tisdell and McLaurin (1994).*

Tisdell (1993) and Tisdell and McLaurin (1994) both examine classroom systems of privilege and oppression. Tisdell (1993) compared manifestation of power differentials in classes led by a male and female professor. Class composition consisted of non-traditionally aged predominately White graduate students and revealed four distinct findings: 1) the male professor tended to exert greater control, using a standing as opposed to the sitting posture the female professor maintained; 2) students benefiting from interlocking systems of privileges held more influence among peers compared to those possessing less privilege; 3) contrary to previous literature women were more vocal, particularly in the male professor's class; and 4) power relations in classrooms and society were only challenged to the degree which teacher and student did so.

Tisdell and McLaurin (1994) examined adult higher education faculty perceptions of the effects gender and/or multicultural course content render on classroom dynamics. All taught at predominantly White institutions and participant demographic make-up consisted of nine White and seven Black (six African American and one Black African) faculty.

Findings indicate faculty members perceived the following: it is difficult to create an environment conducive to student discussion of these issues and students of color and non-traditional-aged women tended to be more vocal. However, while undergraduate level students of color provided minimal participation, graduate level students of color tended to be more vocal and elements of positionality (i.e., race, class, gender, age, ability/disability, and sexual orientation) of both students and faculty affect classroom dynamics and become more salient in courses specifically centered around structural

privilege and oppression. And finally insider/outsider status affected both students and instructors. Tisdell and McLaurin (1995) summarize their findings as follows:

It appears that those who deal very directly with these issues in their classes not only encounter greater awareness levels and interest in dealing with this [sic] issues, they also encounter more conflict and resistance. This may be due in part to the fact that dominant-culture students are used to having insider status in nearly all situations; they are not used to being in marginalized positions and such and experience is unsettling for some. (pp. 58-59)

*Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (1998).*

Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (1998) researched power relations in adult education graduate courses. The study, comparing how classroom dynamics differed between classes led by a White male and Black female faculty member, was framed around Maher and Tetrault's (1994) four themes: mastery, voice, authority, and positionality. Findings correlated Maher and Tetrault (1994), stating professor positionality affected classroom dynamics more than any other factor, with race "the most salient issue" (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998, p. 396). This was demonstrated via student inability to look beyond the Black female professor's race and gender. Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (1998) noted the following most commonplace interactions in the Black female's classroom, not evident in the White male professor's classroom: "1) challenge to knowledge dissemination, 2) teacher/student confrontations, 3) classroom crosstalk, and 4) reinterpretation or disregard of classroom protocol" (p. 396).

Findings indicate the White male professor was viewed as the norm (i.e., competent), and left unchallenged; while the Black female professor was viewed as "other" (i.e.,

operating at a deficit), allowing her abilities to be challenged. Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (1998) posit:

The adult education classroom is not the neutral educational site referred to in the literature. Instead it is a duplication of the existing societal relations of power replete with hierarchies and privileges conferred along lines of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and other status markers. (p. 398)

*Brown, Cervero, and Johnson-Bailey (2000).*

Brown, Cervero, and Johnson-Bailey (2000) examined the effects the social position of African-American women teaching mathematics in a post secondary institution rendered on teaching experiences. They found teacher positionality affected their experiences as follows: “(a) producing a teaching philosophy based on a history of marginalization, (b) raising issues of credibility with students because of the teachers’ race and gender, and (c) directly affecting their classroom interactions and teaching strategies” (p. 273).

Through the adult education literature base, Brown et al. (2000) found an obvious silence regarding the role of teacher positionality in classroom dynamics. This silence alludes to the notion of a universal teacher, leading to the invisibility of African American women’s classroom experience. Brown et al. state:

The key assumptions of the universal teacher myth are that (a) all teachers enter the classroom on equal terms regardless of the social location, (b) teachers’ experiences in the classroom are not connected to their social location, and (c) guidelines for effective teaching are the same regardless of the teacher’s social location. (p. 273)

However, they concluded the theoretical generic teacher is non-existent, and the reality is teacher experiences are positively and negatively affected by societal positionality. Participants drew on their cultural backgrounds using methods other than those

prescribed via universal teaching practices in an effort to reduce marginalization, facilitate positive learning environments, and combat the negative credibility and classroom interactions stemming from their own marginalization.

*Tisdell, Hanley, and Taylor (2000).*

Tisdell, Hanley, and Taylor (2000) provided insight of faculty positionality from differing viewpoints (White female of middle class roots, Black female with working class roots, and White male with upper middle class Southern roots) by sharing the process and dialog encountered during creation of a book chapter focused on positionality. They found despite similar theoretical grounding, individual positionality shaped their interaction and discussion surrounding it, utilizing a continuum to illustrate differences. Taylor (White male) used logic and rationality and “was more comfortable speaking about practice from the text of others somewhat distant from his own experience” (p. 133). Hanley (Black female) and Tisdell (White female) used a format mixing affective and real-life experiences with rationality. Hanley was “rooted in lived experience while informed by theory” (p. 133), and Tisdell “a reflection of both pulled by each end of the continuum” (p. 133).

The authors state their friendship allowed exploration of positionality in ways not possible via researcher/participant or instructor/student relationships. A safe environment provided the means to remove barriers and explore normally hidden and invisible issues. An important insight offered by this work is that although Tisdell, Hanley, and Taylor (2000) approached positionality differently, they shared similar theoretical grounding. These differences illustrate the effect elements of positionality render on knowledge construction and dissemination.

*Johnson-Bailey and Lee (2004).*

Johnson-Bailey and Lee (2004), via a feminist pedagogical lens, provide critical examination of experiences encountered by two women of color college professors in a predominately White higher education environments. Through a professional lens, both illustrate struggles encountered ranging from institutional politics to student classroom dynamics.

Johnson-Bailey and Lee (2004) offer the following recommendations to alleviate prevalent issues: 1) using questioning and group debriefing, thereby calling attention to verbal and non-verbal dynamics enabling students to deconstruct and make meaning of potentially “invisible” processes; 2) technology utilization in sensitive discussion management, creating safe environments for voicing of student opinions (e.g., Web-based learning environments); 3) claiming instructor authority as students may view female instructors of color at a deficit, thereby increasing the significance of establishment of authority and power (possibly a difficult task for female instructors enculturated in subordinate roles); and 4) selection of culturally diverse material to broaden student perspective, worldview, and knowledge base. The overarching theme guiding this work is the importance of creating an inclusive environment for knowledge production allowing recognition of all voices, students as well as instructors.

*P<sup>3</sup> and Learning Environment Dynamics Research – A Comparative Analysis*

Maher and Tetreault (1994, 2001) have seemingly provided the “gold standard” positionality frame in the adult education arena, with subsequent research providing scaffolding rather than concept deconstruction. They also provided a longitudinal view of positionality at individual (instructor/student) and institutional (private vs. public)

levels. Tisdell (1995) however, provided a broad overview of creating inclusive learning environments by compiling feminist and multicultural framed studies.

The previous literature provides a scaffolding and interlocking knowledge base to this very complicated and convoluted concept. Maher and Tetreault (1994, 2001) provided a foundational base, while subsequent works use differing lenses, fine-tuned concepts providing confirmation and increased understanding (e.g., a continued predominance of race as a key determinant in positionality). That being said, the following discussion centers on differences noted.

Tisdell (1995) identified inclusion of emotion as a major difference between multicultural and feminist pedagogical frames. She states while both identify similar structures of power and oppression, multicultural frames failed to consider emotion. This failure is possibly indicative of the extent positivist dominant culture values and power structures continually and invisibly influence society. However, change in this stance has been noted in recent multicultural teacher education literature. Two specific cases, Banks (2001) and Ukpokoku (2003), identify the emotionally draining process students and instructors encounter as a key barrier in effective multicultural teacher education.

Maher and Tetreault (2001) identified and explored instructor/student positionality with a specific focus surrounding feminist pedagogy. Instructors demonstrating successful incorporation of its underlying principals and framework were used to illustrate the concept. Although other discussed researchers used feminist pedagogy, their research was not limited to this specific theoretical frame. This allowed elements of positionality and subsequent effects rendered on instructor/student interactions, classroom dynamics, inclusive environments, teaching methodology, instructor

perceptions, and colleague and institutional interactions to be explored via differing lenses. Specific examples include: 1) direct comparisons of power differentials manifested in classes led by a White male as opposed to a Black female (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998), 2) how teachers of color incorporate personal experiences surrounding marginalization and subordination to create inclusive and safe learning environments (Brown et al., 2000; Johnson-Bailey & Lee, 2004), and 3) observation of faculty perceptions surrounding the affect power differentials and course content render on classroom dynamics (Tisdell & McLaurin, 1994; Tisdell et al., 2000).

#### Piecing the Puzzle Together: How P<sup>3</sup> Affects Knowledge Construction

The following discussion centers on practical application of previously presented themes to create inclusive learning environments for K-12 teachers via consideration of their social position. An important factor in this discussion is the demographic make-up of the current teaching cadre, overwhelmingly White, monolingual, middle-class, and female (Melnick & Zeichner, 1998). Maher & Tetreault's (2001) scaffolding of invisible markers and identities illustrates a typical member of the current cadre (i.e., White, female, & middle class) to be positionally invisible. Their positionality, reinforced at the societal level, may render them unconscious of their relational positions relative to student populations they teach (Maher & Tetreault 2001). Left unaltered, this perpetuates and allows proliferation of the current cycle: subordination and marginalization through ineffective education of diverse children, limiting their socioeconomic potential.

A current snapshot of the United States educational system demonstrates that the 1949 the Tylerian Model of curriculum design has been used and provides a simplistic apolitical approach to curriculum design and fosters continued belief of the universal

teacher myth, assuming the capability of all teachers to teach all students (Brown et al., 2000). This combination alludes to a perfect classroom similar to one possibly found in the movie, *The Stepford Wives*.

However, as *The Stepford Wives* demonstrated, all is not what it seems. Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (1998), Brown et al. (2000), and other previously listed scholars have deconstructed the myths of neutral classrooms, universal teachers, and demonstrated fallacies surrounding such. Although Tyler's (1949) curriculum design may be considered neutral and value-free, political structures and realities surrounding curriculum design and implementation are not. These factors combine to create a learning environment conducive only to dominant culture children.

In an effort to increase the United States' capacity to provide effective, applicable, and inclusive learning environments for all children, specific needs and possible solutions surrounding positionalities of dominant culture teachers are identified via the previous discussion. All discussed literature somehow demonstrates the importance of dominant culture teachers gaining understanding of how student/teacher positionality affects classroom and learning environments. However, Brown et al. (2000) clearly demonstrated traditionally marginalized teachers incorporate their experiences in efforts to create inclusive learning environments. This study demonstrates that increasing traditionally marginalized teacher numbers may provide improved environments for marginalized students, while simultaneously creating a platform by which dominant culture teachers can observe positional differences discussed by Maher and Tetreault (2001).

Maier and Tetreault's (2001) finding that dominant culture students benefited by being placed in subordinating positions supports the concept of cultural immersion as a method for developing increased positional awareness. Lastly, the literature overwhelmingly indicates a need for inclusion of traditionally marginalized groups in teacher education faculties. Essentially not only providing positional insight and awareness in dominant culture teachers, but also creating a higher education teaching academy representative of its constituency's demographic make-up.

Although positionality and learning are very complicated issues, Dewey's (1938) work provides insight to this quagmire. Dewey combined two key learning elements, continuity and interaction. These combined with necessary characteristics speaking to willingness, readiness, ability, and the learner seeking an answer to a disconnect are key to the experiential learning process. However, the issue of power, privilege, and positionality and their roles in knowledge construction is not addressed, directly that is. The following discussion, utilizing Bateson (1994), Anzaldua (1990), and Hart (2001) seeks to provide insight into the interrelatedness of learning and power, privilege, and positionality.

Bateson (1994) speaks to our evolutionary need for continuity and the necessity to maintain some dimension of it to make change bearable. Because positional characteristics define us and are affected through a long slow overarching process, change will also be slow to enable a continuing sense of self. Jarvis (1987) addresses this by maintaining that a balance between the gap of experience and unknown events precipitating learning must be kept to prevent a disconnect and subsequent failure to learn. Bateson (1994) also addresses the interactive process through her double helix

metaphor illustrating the entire learning process entailing time, interaction, and continuity stating:

To get outside of the imprisoning framework of assumptions learned within a single tradition, habits of attention and interpretation need to be stretched and pulled and folded back upon themselves, life lived along a Mobius strip. These are lessons too complex for a single encounter, achieved by garnering doubled and often contradictory visions rather than by replacing one set of ideas with another. When the strange becomes familiar, what was once obvious may become obscure. The goal is to build a complex structure in which both sets of ideas are intelligible, a double helix of tradition and personal growth. (pp. 43-44)

Anzaldúa (1990) states, “Theory produces effects that change people and the way they perceive the world” (p. xxv). However, dominant culture academic theory which dictates academic knowledge construction fails to take race, gender, and ethnicity differences into account. Because of this, Anzaldúa posits the need for “*Necesitamos teorías* that will rewrite history using race, class, gender and ethnicity as categories of analysis, theories that cross borders, that blur boundaries—new kinds of theories with new theorizing methods” (p. xxv). *Teorías* will allow inclusive knowledge construction based on individual experiences, rather than prescribed dominant culture norms.

Hart’s (2001) frame, *la mestiza*, “cultural, political, and epistemological border crossing” (p. 165), also addresses interaction and continuity. Utilizing the metaphor, “topography of power” (p. 166), Hart posits the need to enlarge and remap worlds by finding common ground. According to Hart (2001), all learners (i.e., educators & students) “live” in differing places of the topography moving about, some more than others. Those who do so as “border dwellers” (p. 166) rather than tourists are more resistant to homogenous dominant norms. Illustrating the role both continuity and

interaction can affect seeing one's positionality, experiencing differences, and learning along the way.

Although difficult to attain, Hart (2001) feels the experience of standing in the Other's shoes, thereby viewing the world from their perspective is valuable stating, "The Other is no longer othered by the logic of control, but she, or at least some aspects of her, are also seen and felt in one's own self, and thereby become parts of one's curdled self" (p. 179). Curdling allows separation of power systems that are dependent on a complex matrix. This separation allows learners to view the "complex and ambiguous reality of the Other" (p. 179). This process allows the learner to experience commonality found via interaction indicative of the experience. Hart posits once that initial step is taken, the process will continue and other steps are "bound to follow" (p. 179).

Successful cross-cultural learning experiences, specifically experiential immersion programs, can facilitate the above elements. Becoming positionally conscious and experiencing otherness are two key objectives of cross-cultural learning. Immersion programs have proven effective vehicles for such (Mahan, 1982; Roose, 2001; Rymes, 2002). However criticism has been raised for their sometime failure to effect long-term results and limitations associated with the degree to which dominant culture members can feel "Othered" via these experiences (Cahnmann, 2004; Suarez, 2002).

That being said, the work of Bateson (1994), Anzaldua (1990), and Hart (2001) indicate the existing quagmire may stem from expectations of cross-cultural situations rendering immediate societal changes rather than the ability to view the slow evolutionary and permanent changes to which they allude. This logic is similar to ideologies

rationalizing the labeling of Latinos as a “problem minority” for their failure to assimilate on a dominant culture determined timeline.

*Summary - Adult Education Foundational Base*

Examination of theoretical models surrounding experiential and transformational learning provided a journey from Dewey’s (1938) basic work through the complexity surrounding Mezirow’s (2000) transformational learning. However, understanding the importance and role of learner positionality required a recursive journey back to the basic elements, continuity and interaction. The previous discussion’s aim was to demonstrate that while learning models and theories, clipboards, learning objectives, and methodologies are essential to the process, two additional elements also exist, patience and persistence. Societal change is a slow unending process and experiences affect learning in differing ways and degrees. Therefore, success or failure should be determined not by degree of learning or perspective transformation, but evidentiary basis of *any* learning or perspective change. As members of a result-driven immediate gratification society, we must learn to use tools offered us via theory and methodology, practice patience and persistence and look for long-term solutions rather than short-term results.

Chapter Summary

The overarching goal of the previous literature review was to not only identify effective multicultural teacher education programming strategies, but to critically review societal issues that have created and continue to perpetuate the problem. The literature demonstrates that although immigration is not new to the U.S. and is perpetuated by a demand-driven labor need, society views the predominantly Spanish language speaking

Latino immigrant population as a “problem.” This population’s failure to assimilate, or adopt acceptable dominant culture behaviors, values, and specifically language at a rapid enough pace is key to Latinos being labeled a “problem minority.”

The U.S. has always used Mexican labor, however historically this labor force has been predominately located in U.S./Mexico border towns and states. Migration patterns were more circular in nature, with no permanent labor relocations to the U.S. Currently, the U.S. economic engine is creating nationwide demand for a low wage work force. Latino immigrants filling this void (predominately originating from Mexico) are creating chain migratory patterns characterized by relocation. Although the U.S. economic structure demands this work force, society remains unwilling to accept this new workforce’s differing linguistic and cultural norms.

Education, schools, and consequently teachers have traditionally been a front-line mechanism for diverse population assimilation and Americanization. Historical relationships of colonial dominance between the U.S. and Mexico continue to influence this population’s social standing and education. White privilege and invisible guidelines of normalcy continue to structure the U.S. educational arena. These guidelines determine who teaches our children, acceptable and essential knowledge, conditions of education delivery, and key to a non-English dominant population, discourses and languages used for delivery. This process results in a demographic divide, its continuation perpetuating a top-heavy growth pattern of educational opportunities, resources, and achievement. Consequently, only dominant culture members will reap economic and power-related benefits generally accorded via increased educational levels. To maintain current U.S.

economic standards this cycle must be broken, allowing education of this emerging population.

Teachers play a key role in this process. However the current overwhelming White, middle class, and monolingual teaching cadre is ill prepared to serve this population. The current reality of educating like-minded individuals in familiar cultural and linguistic methodologies continues proliferation of an ill prepared professional cadre. The literature posits multicultural teacher education an applicable methodology to offset this process and meet needs surrounding this growing population. To that end, multicultural teacher education is mandated by accrediting agencies and could potentially provide a powerful impact. However, implementation and clear-cut guidelines are not uniform and a limited research base stems from government disinterest and lack of funding.

The literature simultaneously indicates the value and need for critical multicultural teacher education and the difficulties created as dominant culture members face the realities encompassing acknowledgement of the negative impact their values and norms potentially render. Critical multicultural teacher education potentially creates difficult classroom environments, low course evaluations, and faculty promotion and tenure risks (which most are unwilling to gamble without institutional support and backing).

Teacher societal power, privilege, and positionality and their affect on knowledge construction and learning must be addressed to provide effective multicultural teacher education curriculum and program development. The adult learning theories, experiential and transformational, can be used as a frame in providing inclusive environments to assist dominant culture educators identify and cross borders leading to increased cognizance of

underlying social structures, effective change mechanisms, and environments conducive for diverse learners.

Cultural immersion programs allow participants to experience feelings of disequilibria. This disequilibrium creates learning allowing short-term problem resolution potentially leading to long-term change, or transformational learning. Immersion programs allow dominant culture participants to cross previously uncharted borders and boundaries, forever changing personal topographies and geographies. The lack of research base this literature review indicated and the potential benefits gained via increased cognizance of learning processes immersion participants encounter demonstrates the significance and value this study may render to multicultural teacher education research.

The previous discussion only serves to touch the surface of a very complicated, multi-layered, and convoluted concept. Perhaps the most disturbing factor being, positionality so negatively impacting the majority of society, remains embedded and interwoven in our culture and is rendered invisible.

The question perpetuating this discussion: the role this group's positionality affects in knowledge construction specifically surrounding cross-cultural learning environments could effortlessly be addressed from a critical stance, with page after page reflecting on limiting factors their positionality could render on learning. However, I sought a positive point with which to embark, and it has not arrived directly. My thought process directed me to self-examination and reflection. Although not a teacher, I am demographically representative of this cadre. How would my positionality as a White woman affect

learning in this situation? This required a recursive journey similar to Bateson's (1994) double helix analogy, spiraling through and revisiting my own experiences and learning.

My three-year journey through the adult education program beginning with a multicultural course, spiraling through a study abroad to Africa, a master's project, and my current location of completing my dissertation, has through experience and learning reconfigured and as Clark (1993) states, shaped me into a different person in ways recognizable to myself and others. Of course, factors outside the adult education program have significantly changed me. However the learning process this program provided played the most influential role in creating a conscious awareness of my positionality and its subsequent effect on others and myself. There I had it, an answer to my question albeit indirect; until a dominant culture member develops an awareness and willingness to recognize their societal positions and how they shape perspectives and behavior, or positional consciousness, their positionality will only inhibit cross-cultural learning (Maher & Tetreault, 2001).

What can we do to affect change? My ongoing journey began three years ago indicating the necessity to view learning of this magnitude as a long-term recursive process (not an easy concept in the results driven, bottom line environment surrounding hegemonic cultural values inherent in society), rather than linear or cyclical as models often present. These models lend an impression that all educators need to effect learning is a: student, checklist with clipboard, learning objectives, and methodology.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact an international multicultural immersion program rendered on beliefs and practices of K-12 educational personnel participants. Research questions guiding this study included: 1) What are the representative experiences of the K-12 educator international multicultural immersion program participants? 2) In what ways did the international multicultural immersion program affect K-12 educator participant beliefs? and 3) In what ways did the international multicultural immersion program affect K-12 educator participant practice and programs?

#### Study Design

The previously stated research questions are addressed using a qualitative research design via case study of K-12 educational personnel participants in an international multicultural immersion program. The program was funded by a grant obtained by a center at a research extensive institution located in the Southeastern U.S. This center was specifically designed to provide multicultural professional development to K-12 educational personnel. The acronym LAS will be used to identify this center. The current culture and dynamics surrounding the K-12 educational arena is a bottom-line, result driven mentality with preferred program evaluation consisting of quantitative statistical methodologies. However, statistics oftentimes fail to show the full picture, only offering a snapshot of experiences and their meanings for a single moment of time.

This statistical snapshot fails to demonstrate the context and surrounding issues leading to and following it.

Every aspect of the human species is complicated, and growth and development processes are no exception. Bee (2000) characterizes the growth and development process as a journey. Bee states no two humans are alike and every journey is unique, “traveling, moving through the years and through the changes and transformations that come with the years” (p. 3). Objectives of this study focus on how international multicultural immersion program experiences impact the beliefs and practices of educational personnel. This involves understanding learning processes and contextual realities participants use to construct their individual journeys. To reach this in-depth understanding, this study used qualitative research methodology. Merriam and Simpson (2000) state although numerous qualitative research methodologies exist, “The key philosophical assumption upon which all types of qualitative research are based, is the view that reality is constructed by individuals in interaction with their social worlds” (p. 97). The existence of multiple “realities” as opposed to one, “observable, measurable reality” (Merriam & Simpson, p. 97), renders it impossible to use statistically-based research methodologies of traditional positivist paradigms.

Overarching objectives of this study include improving the environment and education for Latino students in the U.S. K-12 educational arena. Currently used methodologies include educational training programs, support, and resources to K-12 personnel to increase their capacity to address needs and issues the emerging Latino population faces. A key component to reach these objectives is improving the practice of K-12 educators.

To improve practices of these educators, it is necessary to understand their experiences and learning processes. A qualitative research case study methodology was chosen for this study because of overarching philosophical stances including: understanding how people make sense of their lives, delineating the process (rather than outcomes) of meaning-making, and describing how people interpret their experiences (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). A case study is defined as an intensive description of a social unit (i.e., individual, group, institution, or community). Rather than focusing on a few variables of many units, the case study views all variables of a single unit, its goal being holistic description and interpretation (Merriam & Simpson, 2000; Stake, 1995). Merriam and Simpson provide three essential properties of qualitative case studies:

1. Particularistic. Case studies focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon.
2. Descriptive. The end product of a case study is a rich description of the phenomenon under study.
3. Heuristic. Case studies illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study. They can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader's experience, or confirm what is known. (p. 109)

In addition to philosophical considerations, qualitative research is composed of the following characteristics rendering it useful for this study's methodology. As previously stated, qualitative research seeks to understand how individuals make sense of their own realities. To obtain understanding, it is necessary to consider contextual components of the experience. This requires an instrument that is adaptive, responsive, and involved in the process (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). That being said, qualitative research uses the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection (Merriam & Simpson, 2000; Patton, 2002).

Another common characteristic of qualitative research is the involvement of field work. Field work requires researchers to physically go to the research site for data collection. This process allows and requires researcher familiarity with the phenomena under study. The result is an increased understanding of surrounding contextual issues, rather than experiencing isolation and separation often present in positivistically-based quantitative research methodology.

Qualitative research requires the use of inductive, rather than deductive research strategies. The researcher does not enter the study with a preconceived meaning or context. Utilizing phenomenology and symbolic interaction allows qualitative researchers increased understanding of how participants construct meanings and understand the realities they experience.

An overarching goal of this study is to further understand the learning processes and impact of an international multicultural immersion program to beliefs and practices of K-12 educational personnel participants. The word, “understand,” provides the key to answer the question of appropriate methodological strategies. There are many common themes included in previous descriptions of human growth and development, qualitative, quantitative research methodologies, and case study analysis. However, the most prevalent message is the importance of understanding the meanings, realities, and contexts surrounding human behavior and learning. Because of this, I feel a qualitative case study methodology will provide the best tools to unlock the participants’ learning experiences.

Crotty (1998) describes theoretical perspective as “the philosophical stance lying behind a methodology” (p. 66) and continues to say, “different ways of viewing the world shape different ways of researching the world” (p. 66). Crotty offers two phrases concisely describing my epistemological stance, “meaning is not discovered but constructed” (p. 42) and “according to constructivism, we do not create meaning, we construct meaning” (p. 43-44). I feel cultural and sociological constructs allow and constrict one’s worldview, however world constructs remain individually unique. This study uses a constructivist theoretical frame analyzing experiences, learning processes, and impact constructed by 12 individual participants of an international multicultural immersion program in Costa Rica.

#### *Contextual Background of Study*

LAS is a grant-funded pilot project housed in a research extensive institution located in the Southeastern United States. This project was funded in response to K-12 educational personnel professional development needs arising from the increasing Latino population. Current dominant culture educational personnel are ill equipped to meet their cultural and linguistically diverse student and parent needs. LAS uses a multi-pronged approach to their multicultural professional development programming. This approach allows participants differing learning environments, methodologies, and strategies, thereby optimizing the ability to address multiple learning styles. In addition, this approach includes long-term follow-through support, as opposed to one-shot programs that provide brilliant ideas and strategies with no support or realistic contextual applicability.

### *The Summer Institute*

Although many programs are offered throughout the year, the locus of LAS programming is team-based professional development model, entitled the Summer Institute. This one-week intensive multicultural professional development program is comprised of K-12 educator (school or district-wide) teams conducted each June in a retreat environment. Teams must apply and be selected for the program. Teams from locations with high density or emerging Latino population are selected using the following criteria: 1) a team-compiled proposal describing current school/district needs based on current Latino population, 2) qualifications and roles of each team member, 3) past school/district accomplishments, and 4) future goals surrounding Latino students and parents in their community.

The Summer Institute provides support, resources, and a framework for participants to increase their understanding of culture, economic, and other issues and barriers Latino students and families face as they navigate unfamiliar U.S. educational systems. Although the overarching goal of the Summer Institute is to facilitate the creation and implementation of a team-based strategic plan; individual participant goals and objectives are also addressed. The primary goal behind the team-based strategic plans and/or individual goals and objectives is improvement of the educational quality Latino students in their schools/districts and/or classrooms experience.

The Summer Institute accomplishes this by providing participants tools and access to resources enabling this process. To that end it provides: 1) access to top-notch experts and leaders in the field of K-12 Latino education; 2) formation of a community of practice within the school/district (the team being the first members who will upon return

encourage and recruit colleague and community involvement); 3) establishment of state-wide networks creating communities of practices for teachers throughout the state to share expertise and effective strategies and methodologies to increase the level of success surrounding culturally and linguistically diverse students and their families; 4) facilitation of creation and implementation of the team's strategic plan; and 5) follow-up sessions and site visits throughout the year by the team facilitator to assist with the ongoing process, provide support and resources for plan implementation, and assist with the resolution of arising issues.

The Summer Institute is interspersed with discussions from national experts and sponsoring institution faculty, break out sessions allowing team interaction and strategic plan development, and discussion surrounding topics relevant to successful and applicable plan development and implementation. Break out sessions are spearheaded by previous LAS team members and LAS staff with expertise in issues surrounding resource allocation, classroom challenges (and at the administrative level), and successful strategies incorporated to overcome them.

The facilitator's role in the strategic planning process is providing assistance to team members in common goal recognition and creation of applicable and achievable programs, which lead to improved school and learning environments for Latino students and parents. The facilitator follows their team through the year, offers assistance, identifies possible resources, and keeps the team focused on strategic plan implementation.

LAS support does not end at the Summer Institute. Throughout the school year teams meet on a regular basis with their facilitator discussing challenges, successes, requesting

resources, and assistance when required. Teams may also apply for small seed grants to assist in the implementation of sustainable and applicable projects and programs outlined in their strategic plan. In addition, two “renewal” conferences are conducted (Spring and Fall) with a keynote speaker possessing nationally recognized expertise surrounding Latino educational issues. This meeting also allows participants to come together as a group once again, sharing experiences, successes, and challenges they face.

In an effort to further enhance the mission, objectives, and goals of LAS an international experience, Culture and Content in Latin America (CCLA) has been designed and implemented. CCLA has been designed to allow K-12 educators in their second or third year of involvement in LAS programs the opportunity to experience Latin American culture and increase science content knowledge in a Spanish language intensive environment in Costa Rica. CCLA is partially funded program which only requires participants to pay for their air transportation to Costa Rica, selected activity fees in Costa Rica, and some meals. Funding was available for 12 participants and all available slots were filled.

The overarching programmatic aim is providing K-12 educators with experiences leading to increased understanding and cognizance of cultural and language barriers Latino (and other cultural and linguistically diverse) students face. An additional goal is increased science content knowledge in the Costa Rican context. This allows educators to provide a more contextually relevant frame to science-based content material, thereby increasing the potential for academic success. This case study examines experiences, learning processes, and subsequent impact to K-12 educator beliefs and practices through the lenses of critical social theory and adult learning theory of participants of a 14-day

Spanish language intensive multicultural immersion program in Costa Rica conducted June 2005.

CCLA used the following selection criteria for the program: K-12 school personnel (applicants who participated or were currently participating on a LAS team were given first priority) and demonstrate ongoing commitment to serving culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. In addition, priority for the Costa Rica program was given to educators working in science-related content areas and those who were working in conjunction with other educators in their school/district also applying for the immersion program.

Potential participants completed an application which identified current school affiliation, educational and teaching experience, programmatic involvement goals, contributions to Latino education, accomplishments made via LAS participation, description of their proposed “inquiry project” (including how it would contribute to improving Latino education), and identification of other participants applying for the program with whom a team would be formed. Participants were selected based on the above criteria.

All CCLA program staff traveled with the group and consisted of a program director (White male), program coordinator (White female), and graduate student (White female). Although not a component of this study, the educator group intermittently (during the initial seven-day stay in San Luis and the last afternoon and evening of the trip in San Jose) traveled with another group sponsored by the same university. This group consisted of 12 Extension agents (11 male and 1 female) and was lead by a White male. The CCLA program in Costa Rica was comprised of the following components: 1) a

seven-day stay at an ecolodge and research station in San Luis (with a two-day homestay), 2) a three-day program at a Costa Rican absolute reserve (Cabo Blanco) to observe marine life, and 3) a one-day program at the Center for Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education (CATIE), a post secondary agricultural institution located in Turrialba, Costa Rica.

For seven days participants resided in a university-run ecolodge located in San Luis, Costa Rica, near the Montverde Cloud Forest reserve. While at the ecolodge participants completed a two-night (three-day) homestay with a local farming family who spoke only Spanish. Participants observed the Costa Rican K-12 educational system through local school (one high school and two elementary) visits. To enhance acquisition of applicable science-based content materials, participants visit the Montverde Cloud Forest, attended seminars on indigenous plants (agricultural and forest related), and toured a local farming project.

The group then traveled to the Cabo Blanco Absolute Reserve located on the Pacific coast. This allowed educators to obtain information and science-based marine content for classroom activities. The final leg of the journey was to visit, CATIE in Turrialba, Costa Rica. While in Turrialba, participants were given the opportunity to visit two additional schools, a coffee processing plant, and an institute of higher education.

Facilitated learning activities were integrated throughout the program to infuse learning surrounding cross-cultural communication and specific details of Costa Rican history, culture, and people, exercises. Specific exercises allowed participant conceptualization of differing contexts and perspectives. The book, *Culture Shock! Costa Rica* (2003) provided content knowledge surrounding Costa Rican culture and

history. At initial orientation the group was divided into four groups of three, and assigned chapters to read with provide group presentations during the trip. This allowed participants the role of teacher surrounding Costa Rican culture and history.

The design of the CCLA Costa Rican program is physically and mentally rigorous, requiring participants to leave their familiar surroundings and comfort zones, precipitating experiential learning to resolve unforeseen problems and circumstances.

#### Description of the Population

Qualitative methodology was chosen for this study because of its ability to provide a complete picture of learning processes participants underwent in a cross-cultural training program. Patton (2002) states differences between qualitative and quantitative methodologies are demonstrated vividly and distinctly in the "...strategies, logics, and purposes that distinguish statistical probability sampling from purposeful sampling" (p. 46). Quantitative methodology uses a strategy of larger samples to obtain generalizability and obtain an accurate population sample. Qualitative methodology on the other hand, uses small samples providing the most "information-rich" (p. 46) data. Merriam and Simpson (2000) state logic and reasoning behind this strategy lies in the fact that researchers are, "...interested in the in-depth understanding of those who know the most (rather than the average opinion of the many)" (p. 100).

To obtain an accurate picture requires an effective sample selection methodology. Merriam and Simpson (2000) and Patton (2002) provide excellent descriptors for such. Merriam and Simpson (2000) state, because the researcher's overarching objective is collection of in-depth information, selection of a purposeful sample is key. Patton describes a purposeful sample as, "*Information-rich cases for study in depth.*

Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (p. 46, emphasis in the original). To that end, the study of a group of K-12 educators participating in an international multicultural immersion program was identified as an effective methodology to obtain an accurate contextual picture of learning processes precipitated by a program of this nature.

Participant selection consisted of the following criteria: K-12 educators selected to participate in the LAS sponsored CCLA cross-cultural immersion program conducted in Costa Rica, June 2005. Although participation in this study was not a criterion for program selection, all 12 participants agreed to participate (individual profiles are provided in Chapter Four), allowing the entire population to be studied. Study participants were representative of the current teaching cadre: all female, 9 of 12 participants were White U.S. citizens of European decent, and possessing intermediate to no Spanish language ability. Entrance to participant schools was made possible by school and district level agreements obtained before teams participated in LAS activities. The researcher was a graduate assistant with LAS and access is granted under this agreement.

#### Data Collection

Page and Thomas (1977) define research as “systematic investigation to increase knowledge and or understanding” (p. 290). Data are the lifeblood of any research methodology, qualitative or quantitative. Without data there is no information to analyze, measure, and/or understand. Although key to any study, data has no specific standardized definition. Patton (2002) states, “qualitative data describe” (p. 47). By that he means they allow another’s experience to be told and provide a window to the event.

In an effort to providing an in-depth inquiry, data were collected via interviews, observation, and document analysis.

### *Interviews*

Shank (2002) discusses differences crucial for researchers to recognize between conversations and interviews. Normal conversations result in a reciprocal transfer of information with a “symmetry of disclosure” (p. 42). Interviews on the other hand, are asymmetrical, with only one party revealing information, sometimes at a very intimate level. Patton (2002) states the purpose of interviewing is to gain another’s perspective and carries the assumption this perspective will be meaningful. For this study, learning experiences, emotions, and feelings were key to understanding participant learning experiences, interviews being a key component to achieve this end.

Patton (2002) and Merriam (1998) discuss interviewing processes and categorize them three ways: unstructured, semi-structured, and highly structured. The unstructured interview is spontaneous with no preset questions. Patton (2002) states participants may even be unaware they are being interviewed. Semi-structured interviews are characterized by flexible questions covering areas of interest with no particular order assigned and contain a guide that serves as a checklist (Merriam, 1998). A highly structured interview contains a specific set of questions to be asked in a specific order to each participant (Patton, 2002). This form of interview allows only minimal flexibility.

For this study, a semi-structured general interview guide approach (Patton, 2002) was used. Each participant was interviewed at three programmatic stages (before, during, and after) with programmatic stage specific interview guides (Appendix A, B, & C). Interviews were between 30 and 60 minutes in duration. All interviews were conducted

in person, tape recorded, and transcribed verbatim by the researcher to preserve all dialog. Pre- and postimmersion interviews were conducted during regular work hours on school campuses (with the exception of one preimmersion interview conducted at the participants' home). Immersion interviews were conducted throughout the trip as time and activities allowed, beginning after the homestay experience. Any questions arising from the transcription process or surrounding journal entries were clarified with the participant. Participants were provided transcripts of their interviews, allowing them the opportunity to make comments, voice concerns, request changes, and clarify meanings.

At the initial trip orientation goals of the research study and participant requirements were explained. Participants were provided a consent form (Appendix D) explaining the research intent, confidentiality issues, participant rights, explanation of interview recording procedures, use of pictures, and how data would be handled after study completion.

### *Documents*

Documents can include, but are not limited to diaries, journals, private letters, logs, and photographs. Documents allow another avenue to obtain data surrounding participant experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives (Merriam, 1998). Taylor (1993) used documents in an effort to strengthen research design stating, "no single method exclusively captures the subjects perspective" (p. 88). For this study documents provided an integral link into participant learning experiences and were obtained from: 1) participant journals completed during the program; 2) photographs taken during the program; 3) participant program applications; 4) written program evaluations completed by participants; 5) journal observations completed by researcher throughout the study.

During the orientation session all participants were provided with a notebook for journaling and a journaling guide (Appendix E) to assist in daily journaling. Participants were asked to journal preimmersion trip expectations, immersion experiences, and one reflective journaling entry on the plane back to the U.S. To assist and encourage participant journaling, blocks of time were specifically designated. Journals were collected from participants on the plane before landing. Original journals were photocopied and returned to participants.

Photographs were used to stimulate postimmersion interview discussion in the exploration of points of view reflected in the photograph subject and the connection to learning processes. According to Taylor (1993), photographs can become a third party allowing interviewer and subject to discover and explore hidden interpretations through the interview. Participants were given disposable cameras to record significant learning experiences during the program. Instructions were given to participants (Appendix F). Participants were asked to bring ten pictures they wished to discuss to the post immersion interview.

Programmatic documents completed by participants were used in this study. Participants were required to complete program applications containing information regarding participant statement of purpose, contributions to Latino education, proposed inquiry project, and how this project will contribute to Latino education. These documents will provide another avenue to gain information regarding participant goals and background. Program and learning activity evaluations completed by participants before leaving Costa Rica provided information on the role of activities in learning experiences.

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) discuss the importance of recording personal reflections and comments throughout data collection and analysis. They state this process not only allows recording important insights and observations that may be forgotten, but also allows researcher to work through problems they may encounter. Bogdin and Bilken also recognize that while these notes and memo may be key components for data collection, analysis, and interpretation, they may only make sense to the researcher. All notes and observations recorded by researcher (during and after interviews and while journaling) were used in this study.

### Data Analysis

If one were completing an experiment on how many blue as opposed to red cars were in a certain city, the researcher would design the experiment methodology, conduct it, and simply report the findings. This is an easily quantifiable positivistically-based study comparing the ratio of blue to red cars. One does not measure emotional and contextual factors, such as if the cars are happy, being marginalized, or if dominant culture norms affect their ability to be educated or make life choices. The data analyzed is numerical and concrete, requiring no analytical insights and interpretations.

This study surrounds human beings and their experiences and learning processes, a phenomenon that cannot be quantified by methodologies similar to counting red and blue cars. Although a survey instrument utilizing a Likert Scale could have been compiled for quantifiable numbers, the validity and reliability of the results would have been questionable based on many factors (i.e., sample size and generalizability, identification of applicable questions to identify participant learning experiences, etc.). With this in mind, a qualitatively-based methodology was selected for this study.

Many resources were tapped to formulate the data analysis methodology for this study (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998; Bogden & Biklen, 2003; Denzin, 2001; Merriam, 2001; Merriam & Simpson, 2002; Patton, 2002; Shank, 2002). The overarching messages these resources provided indicates qualitative research fluid, emergent, contextual, and requiring much interpretation. The very nature and fluidity of qualitative research renders it to be a shifting and interwoven process that is difficult to delineate and document through a step-by-step procedural manual providing clear cut instruction on the research process with specific boundaries and timelines of each phase, allowing the research to complete one phase and begin another.

In qualitative research, data analysis does not begin after all data are collected and compiled. Data analysis begins in the field, during the process of data collection (Patton, 2002). Merriam (1998) describes the data analysis process as, “Moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation” (p. 178), the end product of this process being a meaningful interpretation of the data.

A major hurdle qualitative researchers face is taking enormous amounts of information and synthesizing it into meaningful knowledge, with numerous qualitative research methodologies and existing approaches (e.g., narrative analysis, ethnographic analysis, phenomenological analysis, heuristic analysis, constant comparative analysis) (Patton, 2002; Shank, 2002). A constant comparative methodology was chosen for this study. Although constant comparative methodology is often identified as a cornerstone of grounded theory (Patton, 2002; Shank, 2002), Merriam (2001) recognizes its value to those not seeking “to build substantive theory” (p. 159). Constant comparative

methodology allows a “continuous comparison of incidents, respondents’ remarks, and so on, with each other” (Merriam, 2001, p. 179).

This comparison is made possible through a process that can be compared to a water filtration process. Massive amounts of data are analyzed and synthesized through categorical coding, with non-relevant information being filtered out. Categories are then compared and analyzed for interactions and similarities, narrowing the focus, and continuing the filtration process. As this process progresses, data are further analyzed for emerging themes. Themes are defined as organized patterns seemingly occurring throughout all data aspects. Although resources available on qualitative research methodology may give the impression themes seemingly magically emerge, Shank (2002) states a theme is a result of “much hard work and creative thought, is an awareness in the mind of the researcher that there are patterns of order that seem to cut across various aspects of the data” (p. 129). Two factors, data quantity and analytical processes, played a key role in the decision to use a constant comparative methodological approach in theme identification for data analysis. Effective dissemination and analysis of data to identify relevant themes required the systemic analytical process of filtration provided by constant comparative methodology.

A perfect world would have enabled immediate transcription of each interview and reading of the transcript before the next participant interview, allowing necessary adjustments and fine tuning. What makes life interesting is reality’s ability to intersect and define its own course. Most interviews were transcribed after the completion of all interviews. I personally transcribed each interview in programmatic sequential order, starting with initial interviews and progressing through postimmersion interviews.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and transcripts were double spaced, numerically lined and allotted with wide margins for coding notes. Two copies of participant journals were made and originals were returned to participants, one copy a working copy for coding and the second a clean copy back up.

Study data comprised 545 pages of interview transcripts (pre-, immersion, and postimmersion), 548 journal entry pages, 44 pages of participant completed applications, and 36 pages of participant completed evaluations. The process of data analysis was initiated during transcription. Interviews completed during the immersion contained background sound evoking the contextual frame of the experience. After transcription I printed and read each interview. I read immersion journals immediately after returning from Costa Rica as well as during data analysis.

After the transcription process was completed I grouped interviews in programmatic stages and read each interview, beginning the coding process. Immersion journals were read and coded in conjunction with immersion interviews. Although thematic development was completed with study objectives and research questions in mind, I intentionally allowed the coding of all emerging themes. This process was repeated to further refine and validate initial codes. To track and define significant themes I developed three spreadsheets (one for each programmatic stage) and categorized coded data to identify significant themes. Individual programmatic stage themes were then collapsed to identify themes encompassing the entire study. Themes emerged as follows, 60 initial themes were collapsed to 22 which were further collapsed and resulted in identification of the four major themes relevant to this study.

A key component of this study is observation of the unique individual journey of each participant. To that aim, data was grouped by participant and included program applications, interview transcripts, immersion journals, and postimmersion evaluations. I read this data in sequential order and made research notes. This process allowed me to travel through individual learning processes and development and enhanced data analysis. Participant data documenting representative group experiences is sequentially presented to illustrate this journey.

### Validity and Reliability

Validity (internal and external) and reliability, a cornerstone of any research study, determine its value and contribution and are closely linked. Merriam and Simpson (2000) state internal validity asks, “How congruent are one’s findings with reality?” (p. 101) while external validity refers to the ability to generalize study findings to other situations. Reliability on the other hand, is determined by asking if the results of the study coincide with the data collected.

#### *Validity*

To determine congruence between research findings and reality, an awareness of reality must exist. Qualitative research premises regarding reality include: reality is constructed by individuals, can change, be contextual, and multiple realities can exist (Crotty, 1998; Merriam & Simpson, 2000; Patton, 2002). The primary instrument in qualitative data collection is the researcher (Patton, 2002); and as the primary instrument is integrally involved in the process, Bentz and Shapiro (1998) state:

Research is always carried out by an individual with a life and a *lifeworld*, a personality, a social context, and various personal and practical challenges and conflicts, all of which affect the research,

from the choice of a research question or topic, through the method used, to the reporting of the project's outcome. (p. 4)

This relationship and close proximity between the researcher and the subject of research create a strong mechanism to create internal validity, "internal validity is considered a strength of qualitative research" (Merriam & Simpson, 2000, p. 102).

Quantitative methodology accomplishes external validity, or generalizability of study findings, via large samples utilization providing population generalizability. The contextual and emerging quality of qualitative research necessitates utilization of differing methods of external validity determination. Merriam and Simpson (2000) posit, "*reader or user generalizability*" (author inserted italics, p. 103) as the most common conception of generalizability in qualitative research. This allows research consumers, rather than the researcher, to determine applicability to other situations.

### *Reliability*

Reliability refers to the ability to replicate research findings. Qualitative research surrounds human behaviors and human interpretations of those behaviors. Because of this, the results of such studies will never be exactly the same. Determination of reliability must be based on other factors. Accuracy and consistency in data collection and analysis are considered to be the foremost procedures to create reliability (Merriam & Simpson, 2000; Patton, 2002; Shank, 2002).

### *Study Validity and Reliability Procedures*

The following methods and procedures were incorporated to insure study validity and reliability: triangulation, peer examination, audit trail, member checks, identification of researcher bias and assumptions, and thick rich description. Patton (2002) describes triangulation as utilizing multiple data collection methods and posits it effective for

strengthening study design. In an effort to triangulate this study, data will be comprised from many sources (i.e., interviews, journals, programmatic documents, and observations).

Member checks provided another strategy to strengthen study results. Participants were asked to read interview transcripts to confirm accurate representation of the thoughts and feelings. After the interviews were transcribed, I emailed them to participants and requested they contact me with any concerns, changes, or additional information they would like to provide. Five participants responded with minor changes (such as school demographic information and concerns of grammatical speech patterns) and the seven remaining participants responded stating that the transcripts accurately captured their experiences and feelings.

My major professor provided peer examination to confirm my findings and analysis at multiple stages of the data analysis process. An audit trail documented data collection procedures, coding and categorical formulation, and other decision making processes.

#### Researcher Bias and Assumptions

Benz and Shapiro (1998) posit the researcher brings their life to the study, which consequently affects all aspects. In an effort to identify and allow study consumers to determine applicability, I provide a statement of subjectivities I may bring to this study. Merriam and Simpson (2000) state, “In qualitative research it is the rich, thick descriptions, the words (not numbers) that persuade the reader of the trustworthiness of your findings” (p. 101). To that end, thick rich description will be provided to document and support study findings.

Although not a teacher, I am demographically representative of this cadre, I am a 45-year old heterosexual white female of Western European descent living in Georgia. Although not a Georgian since birth, I have lived in the state 12 years and the South or Southeastern United States for 21 years, providing me identity with program participants. In dealing with the study's multicultural aspects, although a dominant culture member, I have been exposed to differing cultural situations. I was raised in a working class military home with extensive travel, providing exposure to different cultures as well as feelings of otherness associated with moving frequently. Although moving did not involve learning a new language, it did involve making new friends, finding new resources, and disorientation similar to what new immigrants can experience.

As an adult I have traveled to different cultures, including those in Latin America, experiencing feelings of culture shock and disorientation. I have worked with Latino issues through my positions at a major southeastern research university, my research at the masters and doctoral level, and an assistantship with a center specifically focusing on K-12 educational personnel multicultural professional development at a research extensive university located in the Southeastern U.S. I bring to the study my ability to identify with participants and a knowledge base providing an understanding of the current conditions Latino's immigrating to Georgia encounter.

Another aspect for consideration is my participation in this international multicultural immersion program, perhaps provided the effect of a double-edged sword. I was there with them experiencing the same situations. While this provides me with the insight, it also provides the opportunity to bring with it subjectivities and biases. After spending 14 days with the participants, I now know a great deal about each participant, including traits

I find good and bad. This must be taken into consideration as I compile and analyze the data.

Other weaknesses I may bring could include my lack of experience as a classroom teacher and having never been a Latino immigrating to America with no English skills. However, I feel my experiences have sensitized me to the importance of cultural awareness and competency necessary to achieve a more balanced global society.

#### Chapter Summary

The goal of this chapter was to provide the methodological framework for this study through description of its design, context, analysis, theoretical frame, validity, reliability, and possible researcher subjectivities. This study was specifically designed to provide an in-depth multi-layered view of participant experiences, learning processes, and subsequent impact to beliefs and practices resulting from this international multicultural immersion program and implications future programs may render to multicultural teacher education and professional development.

## CHAPTER 4

### PARTICIPANT PROFILES

This chapter presents individual profiles of study participants. This information was obtained through participant reports, program application packets, and interview data. Each profile provides demographic information surrounding age, race/ethnicity, educational level, previous international experiences, language ability, current and past responsibilities in the K-12 educational arena, and participant identified needs and goals. Table 4.1 provides a demographic summary including: age, race/ethnicity, educational level, Spanish language ability, previous international experience, and current K-12 educational responsibilities.

Table 4.1

#### *Participant Demographic Summary*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Race/ Ethnicity/ Nationality</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Spanish Language Ability</b>	<b>Previous International Experience</b>	<b>Current K-12 Position</b>
<b>Kim</b>	41	White/ U.S.	Bachelors	None	Tourist travel	ESOL Teacher (High School)
<b>Michelle</b>	39	White/ Mexican Ancestry/ U.S.	Bachelors	Native Fluency	*Tourist travel *Lived in Mexico (14 yrs) & Germany (2 yrs)	System- wide International Center

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Race/ Ethnicity/ Nationality</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Spanish Language Ability</b>	<b>Previous International Experience</b>	<b>Current K-12 Position</b>
<b>Lisa</b>	41	White/ U.S.	Masters	None	None	Special Education Teacher & Department Head (Elementary)
<b>Beth</b>	34	White/ U.S.	Masters	Intermediate	*Long-term stays in rural Honduras (two)	High School Counselor
<b>Joyce</b>	49	White/ Mexican Ancestry/ U.S.	Masters	Native Fluency	*Tourist travel *Lived in Mexico (14 years) & Puerto Rico (12 years)	ESOL Teacher (Elementary)
<b>Tina</b>	57	White/ U.S.	Masters	Intermediate	*Tourist travel *Immersion program- Mexico	High School Teacher (students w/no formal education)
<b>Cindy</b>	53	White/ U.S.	Specialist	None	*Tourist travel *Immersion program- Mexico	ESOL Teacher (Elementary)
<b>Rachel</b>	50	White/ U.S.	Doctorate	None	*Tourist travel *Africa (Peace Corp- 4 years)	High School Assistant Principal
<b>Joyce</b>	42	White/ European National	Bachelors	Fluent	*Lived in Switzerland *Tourist travel	Bilingual Parent Liaison (Elementary)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Race/ Ethnicity/ Nationality</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Spanish Language Ability</b>	<b>Previous International Experience</b>	<b>Current K-12 Position</b>
<b>Sandy</b>	60	White/ U.S.	Bachelors	Elementary	*Tourist travel *3 Immersion programs - Mexico	Director - System- wide ESOL Programs & International Center
<b>Paulina</b>	55	White/ U.S.	Masters	Intermediate	Tourist travel	International Academy & Counselor (Middle School)

All 12 program participants agreed to participate in this research study. All participants were female and were from 34 to 60-years of age. Nine participants were White U.S. citizens, one White Swiss National, and two of Latin American decent. Both Latina participants were U.S. citizens, however had lived a significant portion of their lives in Latin America (Mexico & Puerto Rico). All participants were college graduates (three bachelor's level, eight masters level, & one doctoral level). Three participants were fluent in Spanish language and five could speak and understand some Spanish at varying levels, and four only understood some Spanish words.

Of the 12 participants, six have participated in LAS's Summer Institute or on a LAS team (usually joining the team after the institute). Breakdown of positions held in their school is as follows: one high school assistant principal, one administrator of a city-wide district international center and ESOL programs, one high school counselor, two teachers assigned to school district international centers, one bilingual parent liaison (elementary

school), five ESOL instructors (three high school and two elementary school), and one elementary school special education teacher (also a department head). To ensure participant confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned and any identifying factors (i.e., school, district, towns) were changed.

#### Kim

Kim is a 41-year old Caucasian female with three children and has lived in Georgia for 13 years. She holds a Master's Degree and currently teaches high school ESOL. Previous K-12 experience includes teaching Pre-K for five years and middle school ESOL for two years. International travel experience prior to the Costa Rica immersion program was limited to short term tourist travel to the Caribbean and her only language is English. Kim lives and teaches in a community experiencing rapid growth, and a subsequent increase of Latino students.

In her program application form she identified the following reasons for program participation: 1) feels immersion will help her better identify with previous experiences, bringing relevance and understanding to the classroom, and 2) increase teacher awareness of the need to provide increased educational opportunities to Latino children. The goal of her inquiry project is facilitating teacher/student communication through increased understanding of Latino backgrounds.

#### Michelle

Michelle is a 39-year old Latina female of Mexican decent with no children. Although born in Texas, she lived in Mexico until age 14 and returned to Texas until 1987. As a result she is bilingual, a native Spanish speaker also fluent in English. In 1987, she lived six months in North Georgia before moving to Europe for two years. She

has been employed by the same school district, since returning to North Georgia in 1989. This community is currently experiencing rapid growth, and a subsequent increase of Latino students. She holds a bachelors degree and currently works in an administrative position at the school district's International Center. Michelle began her career as a paraprofessional (three years) followed by eleven years as an ESOL teacher.

Her program application identified several reasons for participation, the most prevalent surrounding increased understanding of the culture and educational system of a Latin American country other than Mexico. Living in Mexico as a child provided knowledge of Mexican culture; however she identified a need to increase her limited hands-on knowledge of other Latino cultures. She stated this knowledge will allow her to more effectively meet the needs of her students and allow smoother transitions into their new surroundings.

#### Lisa

Lisa is a 41-year old White female with 2 children. She has lived in the same North Georgia town her entire life and has never traveled internationally. English is her only language. This community is currently experiencing rapid growth, and a subsequent increase of Latino students. She holds a Master's Degree and works in elementary special education, is grade and department chair, and is a certified ESOL trainer. She has worked in two different school systems and has been at her current school for five years.

Recently becoming ESOL certified, Lisa stated that the training enhanced her teaching skills, but did not allow her to experience the culture. As an ESOL trainer, Lisa wants to gain the first hand knowledge of Latino culture and a perspective of what new Latino students face as they adapt to a new culture. Stating she would like to “bring to

light the biases and assumptions that we are so often unaware exist. I could bring to life from experience, pictures, and reflective journaling, to enhance the information given in the pages of the books, teaching not just the how, but the why.” Lisa posits the Costa Rica immersion program will provide her this ability by “hands-on, experiential learning.”

### Tammy

Tammy is a 43-year old White female with 3 children. She was born and has lived in Georgia her entire life with the exception of a one year move to the West. Her husband is native to a Middle Eastern Country. Tammy’s Spanish ability is limited, and she expressed the desire to improve her language skills during the program. Previous international travel experience was a short-term undergraduate study abroad program to Europe not involving a homestay. She currently lives and teaches in a community experiencing rapid growth, and subsequent increase of Latino students. Her teaching expertise is in social studies and she has been a high school ESOL teacher in this school district for five years. For four years she taught high school social studies in a major Southeastern metropolitan school. As an ESOL teacher, Tammy interacts daily with Latino students and parents stating:

I have been teaching ESOL for four years and truly love my students. I think having this experience will help me understand their culture and language better. I want to have a frame of reference that will help me identify with them as I continue my work with this special group.

In addition to using this program as a vehicle to increase her understanding of Latino cultural and linguistic roots, she identified a desire to conduct professional development activities and provide classroom resources to further disseminate her experiences.

## Beth

Beth is a 34-year old White female with no children. Previously married to a Honduran national, she had visited his family in rural Honduras for extended stays in the past. Leslie can speak and understand Spanish. She has lived in the South since she was two and moved to Georgia at the age of 22. Leslie holds a Master's Degree and has been a counselor at a large affluent high school in a major Southeastern metropolitan suburb for three years. She was an ESOL counselor for five years at another high school.

In her application statement of purpose, she stated her goals were to increase her language skills and acquire an understanding of the Costa Rican culture. In reference to previous Honduran experiences she states, "I don't think there is any better way to understand a culture than to try and survive in that culture." The "hit or miss" effectiveness and "highest failure rate" of school activities aimed at the Latino students has provided the catalyst for her desire to participate in the Costa Rica program. Beth stated that she hoped this experience would increase her ability to better meet the needs of the Latino community so "...we can stop working so hard and enjoy these student for who they are."

## Joyce

Joyce is a 49-year old Latina female with 3 children. She was born and lived in Mexico until age 14. At the age of 14 she moved to a large Midwestern city for 9 years, followed by 6 years in the Southwest, 12 years in Puerto Rico, and has lived in Georgia for 8 years. She is a native Spanish speaker with French and English fluency. She currently lives and teaches in a community experiencing rapid growth, and subsequent increase of Latino students and has worked at the same school since moving to Georgia.

She holds a Master's Degree and at her current school has taught elementary ESOL (four years), elementary school Spanish (three years), and French (one year). She taught ESOL at the elementary and middle school levels for six years in Puerto Rico.

Her desire to participate in the programs stems from her "desire to understand a different spectrum about Latin America and share it with my colleagues." She will be teaching ESOL endorsement courses to the school staff and feels this experience in combination with previous Latin American knowledge will provide a strong foundation from which to draw. Her overarching goal remains providing a bridge to communication barriers between the Latino community and school personnel.

#### Tina

Tina is a 57-year old White female with grown children no longer living at home. Previous international experience other than tourist travel included a one-month immersion program for educators to Mexico which did not include a homestay. She holds a Master's Degree and can speak and understand Spanish. She teaches in a school system that has been undergoing a large Latino influx for over a decade, and is working in a new program designed for students with limited or no formal schooling.

Tina has been active in many school district initiatives and programs surrounding Latino education and her upcoming endeavor involves training district teachers the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), allowing increased content and language delivery to English language learners. Increasing language fluency and her knowledge base surrounding culture and science concepts are Tina's participation goals. Her statement, "Thus these experiences would help us bring an authentic voice to the rationales indicated in the strategies for teaching language learners through the SIOP

model and to be compelling advocates of this teaching model”, reflects her commitment to improving service delivery to the Latino community by increasing her knowledge base.

#### Cindy

Cindy is a 53-year old White female with 3 children, has lived in Georgia her entire life, and she speaks no Spanish. Previous international experience includes tourist travel to the Caribbean and an immersion program to Mexico involving a homestay. She is an elementary school teacher in a school system that has been undergoing a large Latino influx for over a decade. Holding an education specialist degree, this is her second year to teach ESOL.

Participation in the Costa Rica program is an extension of her long-term commitment to professional development surrounding the needs of her Latino students and parents.

Cindy’s statement:

I went to Xalapa for 19 days in the summer of 1999. It was a life changing experience. The main objective of the trip was for us to experience cultural shock as many immigrants do upon entering the US. **Mission Accomplished!** I’m sure Costa Rica will be just as rewarding and life changing.

illustrates how previous experiences have enhanced her life and professional development, and her desire to build upon that knowledge base.

#### Rachel

Rachel is a 50-year old White female with 2 children, and is married to a West African national. Born in the Northeastern United States, she has lived in Georgia since the age of 12, and English is her only language. Previous international experience includes tourist travel and serving four years as a Peace Corp volunteer in Africa.

Holding a Doctoral Degree, she has been an administrator for six years, the past two years as an assistant principal at an affluent suburban Atlanta high school. Previous teaching experience includes teaching high school science (seven years), college level human resource development and computer courses, and secondary math and science abroad during her Peace Corp tenure.

As an administrator, Rachel is responsible for improving school-wide Latino student achievement and supervises the ESOL program. On the program application she states, “Travel to Costa Rica would enable me to experience, if only briefly, what my newly arrived Latino students face in the USA – being in a country without knowing the language or the culture”, to illustrate the integral role she feels gaining knowledge first hand through immersion experiences render.

#### Hannah

Hannah is a 42-year old Swiss National with no children. Born and raised in Switzerland, Hannah has traveled extensively and is fluent in English, Spanish, and German. She holds a Bachelor’s Degree and has worked as a bilingual parent liaison at a North Georgia elementary school since 2004.

The focus of her position centers on facilitating communication between school personnel and parents. Her participation in the immersion program stems from a desire to better understand Latino culture and educational systems:

I would like to see how children are taught in Costa Rica in order to understand better what kind of experience our families bring to the school system of the United States. A home stay in a Costa Rican family would give me an important insight into the life of a Latino family.

According to Hannah, a key component in keeping communication lines open is by creating a comfortable and welcoming environment. The first hand experiences only gleaned by living in a family unit and visiting actual classrooms will help her develop relevant strategies and programs to accomplish this.

#### Sandy

Sandy is a 60-year old white female with 2 grown children. She has traveled internationally as a tourist, participated in three immersion programs to Mexico (leading two) with homestay experiences, and speaks Spanish. She holds a Bachelor's Degree and she is an administrator for a school system undergoing a large Latino influx since the late 1980s. Beginning her career with international students as a middle school ESOL teacher, she established and directed the districts International Center, ultimately becoming the system-wide ESOL Director. Her next project involves spearheading a program to train system teachers the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), allowing increased content and language delivery to English language learners.

Although she believes her previous immersion experiences were invaluable, she feels visiting a different Latin American country will add to her knowledge base and provide differing perspectives. In addition to the cultural and educational system perspectives, she feels the science focus surrounding the Costa Rica experience will provide a base from which to better contextualize science concepts to Latino students.

#### Paulina

Paulina is a 55-year old White female with grown children. Born and raised in the Midwestern United States, she has lived in Georgia for several years. She holds a Master's Degree and is a middle school counselor working in an international academy of

a major metropolitan school district. She is a Spanish speaker and her only previous international experience was through short-term tourist travel.

Through her role in the international center, she has made making Latino families feel welcome a priority. A lack of parental involvement has become a major barrier to providing effective student services. Stating Spanish language proficiency has assisted in communication, her desire is to acquire increased understanding of Latino family dynamics and educational structures. Paulina states homestay and school visits in Costa Rica, allowing one-on-one discussions with families and educators will provide her unique insight to issues faced by Latinos new to the U.S.

#### Chapter Summary

Although participation in this study was not a programmatic requirement, all 12 participants readily agreed to participate. These educators all live and work in high-density Latino communities. While some areas are only recently encountering this emerging population, other areas have been dealing with these issues for over a decade. Regardless, the common thread linking all participants is their stated drive and dedication to provide the best possible educational services to the Latino community. This resulted in a participant pool willing to go above and beyond to provide data for this study, not only making themselves available for three individual interviews (two of which were during extremely busy times during the school year), but also providing in-depth journaling of their thoughts during the journey.

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact an international multicultural immersion program rendered on beliefs and practices of K-12 educational personnel participants. Research questions guiding this study included: 1) What are the representative experiences of the K-12 educator international multicultural immersion program participants? 2) In what ways did the international multicultural immersion program affect K-12 educator participant beliefs? and 3) In what ways did the international multicultural immersion program affect K-12 educator participant practice and programs?

Each participant was interviewed before, during, and after the immersion experience. Additionally, each participant recorded thoughts, feelings, insight, experiences, and learning in an immersion journal. This discussion surrounds four major themes emerging from data analysis: 1) growth through disequilibrium, 2) utilization of prior knowledge to create meaning and connections, 3) growth through critical reflection, and 4) effective transfer of learning from an international (cross-cultural learning experience) to a domestic (cross-cultural) context.

#### Growth through Disequilibrium: Concrete, Psychological, and Hegemonic Dimensions

The following discussion surrounds the first of four major study findings, growth through disequilibrium. Data indicate that participants encountered disequilibrium which subsequently initiated a process of growth and learning. Participant identified factors

illustrating disequilibrium include removal from normal routines, responsibilities, comfort zones, and programmatic physical rigor. The following describes experiences and accounts reported by three of 12 participants, Michelle, Paulina, and Tina. The encounters and incidents they describe provide good representation of other participant experiences. Interview data are presented sequentially (pre-, during, postimmersion, with journal entries inserted as they occurred and in tandem with immersion interviews) to illustrate emerging changes and consistencies within the learning processes. Participant immersion interviews were conducted throughout the immersion program as time allowed. To provide context and clarity, individual interview sequences are provided.

The following data illustrates Michelle's disequilibrium and subsequent learning during the immersion program. Michelle, a 39-year old Latina female, is an administrator at a district-wide international center in a community currently experiencing rapid growth and subsequent increase in Latino population. Born in Texas, her family moved to Mexico when she was a small child and returned to the U.S in 1987 (at age 14). Additional international experience includes a short-term visit to Brazil (staying with a Brazilian family) and two years in Germany. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview, and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. The immersion interview was conducted in Turrialba two nights before departure to Atlanta, allowing inclusion of homestay, Cabo Blanco, and the Cafetal stay experiences. In her preimmersion interview, Michelle anticipated and welcomed feelings of disequilibrium to better understand situations that new might immigrants encounter:

...to be just with a family, dropped off with a family that I don't know, um, and that I have to make it feel like my family. It's a little bit, an

adventure, and it's exciting because now that you have told us the things, many things to take with me. I just want to be able to see what it feels to be in another place with another family. Like many of our families come here and they have to move in with somebody else they don't even know. They have to be there because they got no choice and I think that's an opportunity that I have never had. I've always been with relatives or you know with the other family that I stayed in Brazil, it was one of the persons I knew. But this time we are going somewhere that we, totally new to us, and I think we need to experience that so I can understand, you know, they way they live. Because I don't think nobody really knows what it is like to live with people, or what it's like to live a life and then somebody opens the doors for you and lets you stay there. I think we really need to experience that in order to have um, to open our hearts a little bit better and to be able to say, I want to help and I want to put my little piece, my little rock, or my little heart so I can help the Latino community.

During the immersion, Michelle's journal entries and immersion interview indicate disequilibrium surrounding homestay experiences. Michelle initially believed her Spanish fluency and ethnic background would ease transition into the home. However, the following journal and immersion interview excerpts illustrate reality of cultural differences and subsequent feelings of disequilibrium upon arrival. This interview was conducted the day before returning to the U.S., nine days post homestay:

With the homestay, at first I thought it was, because I speak Spanish I guess, I thought it was going to be very..., the Spanish made it easier to communicate. But when I got to my homestay, it was a shock for me and for Xenia at the same time, because we both speak Spanish. But there was this wall I guess that I felt because she was not talking very much when we first arrived. When we arrived she said, she kind of like, "Oh, you speak Spanish." [Michelle is laughing] And I said yes and she asked me where I was from and I said from Mexico. There was this [Michelle sighs], you know she was expecting somebody that was American and instead she got me. So I didn't know how to take that. I didn't know how to fit in. Eileen was the one that started talking, and I didn't know how to come in. I've never had that problem, because they always come to me, and so I help them. I'm always in that situation that I reach out to them. And this time, even though I wanted to, but I was in their home, I felt like I was intruding. Not that I didn't feel welcome. But it was, I guess a shock to me and her and we both felt that, yeah, it was strange. Until she

kind of, because we have to build the trust among us, it's worse than it is with an American and not Hispanic. Because she's so used to working with American people, and so she has no problem. But I guess when it comes to another culture, it was different to her. It was an experience for her. So we had to make some little bit adjustment, because I didn't know how affectionate she could be or she didn't know. We didn't know each other's boundaries and I'm the type of person that I want to be helpful. If I go to somebody's home I want to be able to help them and not just be there. And you know when I asked if I could help, she kind of said, no you're tired. So which I took that as, I don't want you to help.

Michelle elaborates similar recollections of the experience during the postimmersion interview:

At first, since we were coming from the same culture it was like, you know a shock for her and a shock for me, but then how it took a little bit of trusting for us to just kind of get to know each other, so. It was a little bit uncomfortable I can tell you at the beginning. But then as we left it was nice. It was, we spoke the same language and not only that, but we were able to communicate and I guess. We understood each other. We didn't have to say words.

Michelle discussed her perceptions surrounding initial homestay difficulties:

She expected somebody that spoke English, so when we first arrived she was speaking English and then when she saw me. You know, "You speak Spanish?" [Michelle is laughing] I said yes and she went into the kitchen and she was really quite. So there was like a wall all of a sudden and I didn't know what to say. We were both quiet.

Michelle also discussed the differing reception the homestay mother provided to Eileen (Spanish speaking roommate) stating, "It was different because I guess she expected somebody who was learning Spanish and so she didn't feel threatened by that.

The previous data consistently indicate disequilibrium Michelle experienced resulting from the homestay. Michelle described the disequilibrium as it occurred (journal entry), through reflections during the immersion interview, and postimmersion (several months post experience). When asked what she was learning most from the experience during

the immersion interview, Michelle described how disequilibrium resulting from the program was leading to growth:

I'm learning lots of things about science, about culture. I'm dealing with many things that I didn't know were there. Just like going back to those days when we went to milk the cows. It brought out these memories. I used to milk cows for this man, he was a neighbor. I used to wash the jars for him and um one day I was there he came from behind me and he started touching me [Michelle is crying]. Um, this time in the stable [in Costa Rica], the whole thing was, it just, it just you know created emotion, lots of emotions. Um, and um just the fact that, you know the thing about, it's brought back for me, a lot of things personal and I came for educational purposes. I guess they both interact at the same time. And I did come, um, the fact that um, I've always wanted to give myself as, but always I feel like that girl and it's strange because I, you know, I was so ready for so many things and um, I think I've been having to hash some things out.

Michelle's final journal entry also discusses the role disequilibrium rendered on learning:

This trip has been a wonderful and enlightening experience for me! One which I will cherish for life. I have been taken back to my childhood in many ways. I know that I have many things to work on as a person and as an educator. I feel more confident about traveling on my own and not afraid to be me. I have discovered that it is not necessary to change who I am to be accepted by others that are around me. I can be Ms. Smith and Michelle at the same time. At this time I am so tired my brain is dead. I can't think anymore. I just want to go home and be Ms. Smith too.

During her postimmersion interview, Michelle described how leaving familiar environments and routines lead to learning:

I felt very energized. I felt I could keep going. I guess the fact that I feel that I have more pressure here because I have to deal with more paperwork, more of the things that require more mental fatigue than I did over there. Because it was basically, you set us out to be free and we felt, I felt free. I didn't have to worry about telephone, I didn't have to worry about checking my email, I didn't have to worry, I had no worries. Just concentrate on what we were doing, the things we were seeing, the people that we were meeting. We were paying attention to details, which is something we don't do here. I mean

when I drive, I don't know the streets. Maybe they put something new, I don't really notice it because we're so used to just go. And this time we had the opportunity to explore, to see other things, to notice every detail. Because it was new to us and um, I just. Honestly, I just felt free for the first time in a long time. I just felt that I had to take care of me and the group. We were part of a group. We were part of a team and I never had that feeling before.

During her preimmersion interview (previously excerpted), Michelle expressed a desire to encounter feelings of disequilibrium stating, "...I just want to be able to see what it feels to be in another place with another family like many of our families..."

When asked postimmersion if this had occurred, she described her experiences as follows:

It worked because you know I guess for a long time I kind of felt secure here in my circle. And I have been debating to go back to school for the longest time. I've been here 14 years and even though I went to massage school, that is a little different. But, um, in seeing all that, and especially when I went through the schools and how much they, how much we have and what they don't have. But then I notice I come back and I say, what else do we need? What am I not doing, that I need to be doing? And I have the resources, what else can I do?

So one of the things that I did is when I got here, um, I decided that I was going to teach my parents computers, how to use the computers. Because it's a shame that we have a lab there, they're not, they're there and many of our parents don't know technology. And here we have it. So I talked to my supervisor and I told her that these people, if she would be willing for us to use the computers. That the parents need to learn to use email, they need to learn to use that. And she agreed with that. So, that, but I needed also myself, to prepare myself to teach that, to teach them. So I put myself in school. So I started school, which was kind of very scary because it's technology and I'm not good with technology.

So, I guess it gave me the push to push myself in different situations that might not be comfortable for me, but I need to do it because it will give me a further step. So, I feel I have moved a little bit forward.

The previous data illustrated Michelle's recognition of the potential role disequilibrium could render in learning. In addition, Michelle illustrated throughout journal entries, immersion and postimmersion interviews the subsequent learning processes initiated via disequilibrium. Although anticipating disequilibrium preimmersion, it was generated through unexpected sources and situations. Postimmersion, Michelle stated programmatic experiences and subsequent growth provided the impetus for continued participation in similar experiences.

The following data illustrates Paulina's disequilibrium and subsequent learning during the immersion program. Paulina, a 55-year old White female, is a middle school counselor working in an international academy of a large urban school district. Previous international experience was through short-term tourist travel. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. Paulina's immersion interview was conducted in Cabo Blanco, allowing her reflections to include experiences from the homestay and Cabo Blanco. In the preimmersion interview, Paulina expressed a desire to increase her understanding of life in Latin America. She stated immersion experiences would allow her "to put myself in their shoes."

I hope to get quite a bit of experience as well as how to work better with these people, how to work better with the parents, with the population. With people from other cultures because I think it's such a different experience for them come in, usually it's totally different. It's very, it's just that would be overwhelming to me. I always try to put myself in their shoes, and would be really really difficult, so I'm trying to think of things that would make it easier for them and how they feel. You know, we could make it a little bit easier. It's always humbling to see how other people live, because we take for granted I think a lot things that we have everyday, and um, a lot of people don't have access to those resources.

During the program orientation, participants were notified of the trip's rigor and advised to physically prepare. In her preimmersion interview Paulina described her preparation methods, "I've been doing a lot of walking and hiking and things like, I've been trying to get together with friends who know a lot about that and um also planning how I'm going to work with everything and what I'm going to do." However, Paulina's initial journal entry indicates disequilibrium associated with physical activity and safety during the first day in Costa Rica:

Hotel Amistad was small and very rustic. I shared a room the first night with Cindy. Unfortunately the room was extremely musty with mildew, but they didn't have another one. It was tiring to meet with the group before we went to bed. We walked through the streets and went to the marketplace, which was so crowded—it was overwhelming (too many people) and our group was so large. The local people were staring at us.

In the same journal entry she later discussed safety concerns, "There were many poor parts of San Jose and many bars on windows (apparently for protection), gates that locked and barbed wire on top of the gates and fences. Although I had heard that the people were friendly, it made me somewhat apprehensive about my safety."

As the trip progressed, Paulina continued to struggle with disequilibrium from the program's physical rigor. The following data demonstrates her learning processes through journal entries, immersion, and postimmersion interview transcripts. Journal entries provide the greatest insight to her disequilibrium. In addition to indicating disequilibrium, Paulina illustrates the subsequent growth processes via the immersion interview. Paulina's reflections during the postimmersion interview provide further evidence of growth resulting from her disequilibrium. The following journal entry describes her initial reaction to the Cabo Blanco Reserve:

I was ravenous, so I ate as soon as we got there. The others (who had walked with Milton) got there just a few minutes later. The others went on to their rooms after we ate and Cindy and I carried our backpacks and sheets, etc. to our rooms in the lab (past the other quarters). There was a big thing on the mattress and Diana said it was a fine specimen of a tailless lipped scorpion. Who cared? We were exhausted. Cindy's eyes got real big. Diana said the scorpion was harmless and brushed it off. We walked through the jungle and water to get to our "rooms." Mine had a bunch of materials stored in it and was so musty and moldy – it smelled terrible. Like they never used it or opened it, but it had a plug for my machine and I was THANKFUL! It was kind of spooky though. There were spiders and cobwebs. I slept with my flashlight on and had difficulty sleeping. I had to go to the bathroom so badly during the night but couldn't remember how to get to the restrooms which were down the path in another building. I thought I would die! The pillow and mattress they gave me was old and dirty, but the sheets were clean. They put the mattresses on top of this high wood table and I had to climb up using a bench. The plug was right next to the bed and I knocked it out in the middle of the night. I woke up cuz my machine wasn't working and had a terrible night's sleep. I was exhausted the next day and had to take a nap. How can these people live like this?

Paulina's immersion interview (completed while at Cabo Blanco) illustrates how her disequilibrium was resulting in growth:

Because we've certainly done some pretty, I don't want to say death defying, but we we've done some (laughing) pretty involved activities. Like you know the zip lines in the rain forest and things like that, and I think we've kind of cheered each other on. I know I need a lot, needed a lot of support because it was difficult for me. I thought it was really scary. Really dangerous and it was quite a challenge and it has been kind of good that I think I've challenged myself a lot on this trip.

Further elaborating on her experiences and subsequent growth Paulina states:

You know, because I think you can't take away those memories of some of the things that we've done together that have been pretty incredible experiences. I think that there will just be things that I'll always remember, because this is the type of trip that you don't forget. I mean, you really come away from it with such, I think a different attitude toward life and looking at your own life differently and much more appreciative of what I have at home and you know, how luxurious I live compared to this.

Paulina's final journal entry reflects the disequilibrium resulting from the trip:

I was very surprised at what I found. I anticipated the country to be much more beautiful and the people to be almost overwhelmingly friendly, which I did not find at all. Many of the people in the towns especially San Jose and Puenterranus were rude to tourists and acted like we were stupid and easily taken advantage of (all the street hawkers, etc.).

I'm not so sure these people really look forward to having Americans in their country – it's very difficult to get money changed. They act like they don't care if we spend money there or not and I'm pretty sure that's not the case. The life is poor. The towns are very dirty. There is a great mixture of races here. I used to find those things interesting – I don't anymore.

During the postimmersion interview Paulina reflected upon experiences. At times she expresses surprise at her differing view upon reflection for example, “A little bit difficult when I was, I'm trying to think of what I was, it's funny, now it doesn't seem difficult at all (laughing).” Paulina also discussed preconceived ideas surrounding Costa Rica compared to the reality encountered:

Now I have a friend who went there. She absolutely adored it and she said, oh it's so great, it's incredibly cheap and they stayed. We went right through where they stayed, but they were right where the mountains meet the ocean and she said, oh it was great because they had all of that. But they stayed, I know some other people who went at the same time and they all stayed in villas with a maid and you know, they really liked it. (laughing) They were waited on and had these great foods, you know and everything. I just, I probably wouldn't have, I definitely wouldn't have gotten as much out of it or learned as much about the culture or the people had I done that type of trip.

The previous excerpt illustrates Paulina's recognition of differences between the immersion program and her friend's tourist experience; additionally acknowledging growth rendered via disequilibrium. As the interview progresses she reiterates this, “But I think that the experiential part of it is so important, that it's kind of difficult to convey

that experience.” In discussion surrounding journaling, Paulina stated it provided a means to record experiences and perceptions as they were occurring:

Oh that was fine. I probably wouldn't have done it unless I was required to do it. So, it probably was a good thing for me and I'm not. I'm sure at the time there were some bad days and I was pretty discouraged (laughing). I think I got a little bit depressed because I don't know, I mean I was pretty tired and we had done quite a bit of traveling and quite a bit of stuff. It was a little grueling you know, so I don't know what I actually, what I really wrote in there (laughing). Just trying to write my experiences and what I perceived and everything.

When asked if she had any further comments surrounding the experience, Paulina stated:

Well, I'm surprised that I'm thinking of such good things now. Because I didn't remember it as being such a great experience, but now that I think back about it, there are a lot of good points. There are some times that I can really see the benefit of it, I can really see some good things that happened.

Preimmersion Paulina expressed a desire to increase her understanding of Latino parent and student backgrounds by putting herself in their shoes. Upon arrival in Costa Rica, Paulina's physical condition instigated disequilibrium. Paulina discussed her disequilibrium and indicated subsequent growth in the immersion interview; however journal entries provided deeper insight to disequilibrium. During the postimmersion interview Paulina reflected on experiences and growth, several times indicating surprise in positive reflections of experiences. Paulina indicated utilizing the journal to record actual perceptions as they occurred.

The following data illustrates Tina's disequilibrium and subsequent learning during the immersion program. Tina, a 57-year old White female, teaches high school students with limited or no formal schooling in a district that has experienced a Latino influx for over a decade. Previous international experience included a one-month immersion

program to Mexico with no homestay experience. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview, and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. Tina's immersion interview was conducted at the Ecolodge after the homestay and before the Cabo Blanco stay. Preimmersion interview indicates her anticipation of returning from Costa Rica changed:

I'm not exactly sure what but I know I will be different and I will bring back that experience and it will reflect in my practices in here. That's just how I am and what I do, you know. I can't stay stagnant and in one place. Too ADD I guess. I don't know, but I'm going with the attitude that I will be changed; I will meet people that I will never forget and ill come back and it will come through me.

A day-two journal entry indicates disequilibrium surrounding anticipated homestay experiences, group travel, and the effects of exhaustion and missing family:

I am somewhat nervous about the homestay. So far I haven't really had to do much Spanish speaking and when I do I get nervous and somewhat intimidated. I know it will all be fine. I just get apprehensive about being in someone else's home. Fear of the unknown. Also, sometimes I just want to pull into myself and be quiet and have solitude and space to/for myself when so many people are chatting around me. I get tired from all of it then begin to feel like something must be wrong with me – ah these low self esteem issues. Oh well, things will seem much better in the a.m. when I've had my sleep.

I hear many night sounds, people talking and laughing – many insects and critters – I love hearing the bugs chirping – reminds me of sleeping out on the back porch some nights back at home – I miss my family – tomorrow I'll call them.

Immersion interview discussion surrounding experiences included description of leaving comfort zones indicating disequilibrium:

Very busy, just lots of new experiences. Sights, sounds, thoughts, people, it's been intimidating at times, but usually it's very short lived and um, I move right on through it. Um, and it's just been an incredible experience so far, but every day is new, different, exciting. I get up and I'm like okay, here we go. So I've pushed myself beyond

my bounds of comfort, comfort level sometimes. And um it's just so beautiful and different from what I'm used to that it's been just packed and wonderful.

Discussion surrounding homestay experiences indicated acknowledgement of the positive role disequilibrium rendered in her learning processes:

Oh definitely the homestay, um I think that to me that's been in any trip I'd ever taken, that has been one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences, because I was very nervous about it and, once I was there, once I've pushed on through the fear and got there, it was phenomenal. I truly feel like now I can say even though, you know it wasn't a long term thing, but there's really a difference in being in someone's home, being part of their family, just kind of being one of them and their surroundings, for three days, two nights. I feel like I know this culture more than I would if I just read a book or saw a PowerPoint or video or had people tell me about it. It's just one of the most remarkable learning experiences and the people were phenomenal. I had been told that by other people who have come and done this trip, but now I know it myself. I know that I have their faces in my memory, their home, their food, their, what was going on with them, just a little piece of their lives. That's just remarkable to me. And I think it's the way to do it, you know, homestay's should be a part of any experience I think.

During the immersion interview Tina provided the following descriptions surrounding gratifying experiences:

That's been very gratifying and being in a different culture and getting to see the way other people live. Um, meeting my family and feeling like I'm part of them now and they are part of me. I want to keep in contact, like I want to send them copies of my pictures. That was very gratifying, and on a real personal level, just, just being able to do something like this. Not being so stuck inside the box. That I can step out of it and actually take the plunge to do a trip that's, you know, I wouldn't normally be doing these types of things: hiking, walking through the woods at night, going on the skywalk [Sky Trek], viewing the cloud forest, just a whole different country, a whole different world. So on a lot of levels its just very gratifying, and I don't know that I can pick just one. I think just pushing myself, growing. I feel like I'm growing and that's very gratifying to me.

Additional discussion surrounded difficult experiences.

I think for me one of the most difficult experiences is having to reorient out of my own environment into another environment. Sometimes I find myself feeling kind of outside of everything. It's like I'm not a big social person. I just don't just go up and be chatty real easily, I like my solitude. I like being alone and at first I was just trying to keep up with everything and everybody. I felt like it had to fit in and I finally thought, "Oh my God, you know, you can walk back to your room and sit there on the porch for a while and get your alone time."

In the previous excerpt, Tina's description of gratifying and difficult experiences indicates them similar in nature. The following immersion interview excerpt illustrates her incorporation of experiences into learning processes:

Well by giving myself permission first of all. It takes a long time to walk by myself, to just kind of get off to myself and not feel. A lot of times I put that self- pressure, that umm, you know, why can't you just this. I do a lot of self-beating behavior, self esteem, "what's wrong with me? Why can't I interact?" But giving myself permission to be involved and when I know I need to, pull back.

Surrounding learning during the immersion Tina stated, "Well I'm learning obviously a lot about the history and culture. Just a lot about this country, this culture, and I'm also learning that I'm not as limited as I think I make myself feel like."

Tina's final journal entry provides insight to disequilibrium and subsequent learning rendered via immersion experiences:

On the plane now returning to my life. When I first began this journey I had many preconceived ideas about how it would be. I pictured what I thought CR would look like, and how the activities would go – I felt insecure and nervous about it (the activities). CR looked very different from how I pictured it. I wasn't expecting so much mountainous beauty – rain, clouds, greener, coffee plants, the way the houses looked. Also, there was nothing intimidating in any of the activities –

I managed everything I attempted. I was pushed beyond my boundaries – like on the homestay, or at Cabo Blanco – or so many hours of sitting on the bus, or being part of a group...and I came through. I feel stronger to know that I can handle situations as they

come to me. I also feel confident in my ability to make myself understood in Spanish and to understand a lot of what is said to me.

I know this experience will help with my students, their parents, and how I teach. Even though I have no Costa Rican students, mostly El Salvadorans, this is probably the closest I'll come to being in their part of the world. This gives me new insight into how they probably lived in their country. I feel like I know them better-their backgrounds, etc. Also, I reconnected to a more "natural" way of life and I think as I teach more science-based themes this year, this will help me lead my student in more hands-on, out in the "field" activities. I plan to do some gardening activities with them as well as ecology lessons. I know I will have a good perspective when I do my teaching. This has been an extremely rich experience for me.

In the postimmersion interview, Tina discussed disequilibrium and subsequent learning resulting from immersion challenges. When asked if she experienced change and growth anticipated preimmersion Tina stated, "So for me I think it's stepping out of my, the norm, what I'm used to and knowing I can survive and even flourish. And then when I come back that just gives me a feeling of accomplishment and I'm more self-assured." Tina also described her most difficult experience:

Well, my hardest time was the march through the jungle at night time (laughing). At Cabo, that was the only, if I had to say the worst part of the trip, and even it, once I was there, it changed. It shifted. But that night I was so tired and so not into marching through, and it was just dark.

Postimmersion, Tina described the role her actual experiences rendered to learning:

Well it certainly gives you a whole different perspective when you're back working with your students and their achievement because you or I, I get to feel I think how they must feel and it makes me more aware of how I'm going to instruct or present things to them. Because, you know, I'm not going to just take it for granted that everybody knows and we're all the same. No, it's like, it's just sort of on a cellular level, you know how they must feel.

So it changes your approach and how you present things or how you experience their culture or what they're bringing to you. And then you've had that experience and you can take it back to them, it's kind

of I don't know how to say it. Like culture shock, or you know when you go there you think you know a little something and then all of a sudden it's like, I don't know jack and oh my God I'm going to die here on this trail. I mean you have all these out of your, you're out of your, to me its being out of my comfort zone and being something that is foreign. Like, you know, that's not my language, it's not my culture, it's not set up with the structures that I'm used to. You know nothing is the same.

Further discussion surrounded the role experience rendered in learning processes:

You can't until you're feeling it, I don't think. I mean for me, I couldn't just you know say, oh I think it would feel like blah, blah. No, I have to feel it and then it becomes real. It's just more of the experience of the immersion, just being there. You know, having to go up that mountain to those people's house and not know what you're going to find. Or you know, do they even know I'm coming, or what and it's to me, you have to live it. I mean you have to, I have to experience, I had to experience. I don't think I would have known otherwise, no.

Tina's journey indicated a conscious awareness of disequilibrium and subsequent growth rendered via immersion experiences. Postimmersion, Tina's perception and reflection of disequilibrium and growth remained consistent with those identified during immersion interviews and journal entries. Tina recognized growth and subsequent learning at both the personal and professional level.

*Summary – Growth through Disequilibrium: Concrete, Psychological, and Hegemonic Dimensions*

Previous data illustrates the process of growth and learning resulting from disequilibrium rendered via immersion experiences. Factors initiating disequilibrium varied based on individual background, experiences, and physical condition. Participant identified examples included removal from normal routines, responsibilities, comfort zones, and programmatic physical rigor. Although participant interview responses were

candid, journal entries often provided a more in-depth view to actual feelings and experiences as they occurred.

Before leaving the airport in San Jose participants were keenly aware they had left the familiarity of the U.S. and their normal comfort zones. When a person leaves comfort zones, familiar power bases and realities shift. Participants in this study reported an abrupt awareness of becoming the “other.” Suddenly language barriers, different currencies, and unfamiliar roads precipitated gaps in current knowledge bases rendering the knapsack of unearned assets (e.g., special provisions, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks) useless (McIntosh, 1990).

Traveling through Costa Rica, participating in homestays, and school visits allowed participants a first hand view of the lives most immigrants lead before coming to the U.S. For many, this was their first encounter with the abject poverty prevalent in developing nations and the disparity of resource allocation. This new first-hand knowledge created disequilibrium and precipitated shifting realities, as well as the questioning of previously believed “truths.” As the immersion progressed the physical challenges increasingly tired participants and created further disequilibrium.

Disequilibrium precipitated growth and learning in all participants and not all participants specifically identified disequilibrium as a key learning component. However, those who specifically identified disequilibrium as a key learning component preimmersion consistently recognized and referred to its role throughout journal entries, immersion, and postimmersion interviews. This is specifically illustrated by experiences reported by Michelle and Tina.

Participants who did not specifically identify disequilibrium as a key learning component varied in their recognition and response to it. Some participants encountered and described learning through disequilibrium in immersion interview and journal entries, but did not specifically identify and recognize its role in growth and learning until postimmersion. For example, Paulina's disequilibrium stemmed from physical rigor of the trip and conflicts surrounding preconceptions of Costa Rica based on a friend's tourist experience. Although she described and acknowledged these perceptions during the experience, it was not until postimmersion reflection did she specifically identify and recognize their role in growth and learning.

#### Prior Knowledge to Create Meaning and Connections

The following discussion surrounds the second of four themes, using prior knowledge to create meanings and connections. In the process of bridging gaps and constructing new meanings, participants used prior experience and knowledge. This process was identified in all stages of the experience (preimmersion anticipation through postimmersion applications of experiences) and regardless of previous international travel experience. The following data illustrates the process used by five of twelve participants: two with extensive international experience (Tina and Beth), two with limited or no international experience (Lisa and Tammy), and one of Mexican descent with extensive international experience (Michelle). These data document experiences representative of all study participants.

Interview data are presented sequentially (pre, during, postimmersion, and journal entries presented as they occurred and in tandem with immersion interviews) to illustrate changes and consistencies within the learning processes to emerge. Participant

immersion interviews were conducted throughout the immersion program as time allowed. To provide context and clarity identification of individual interview sequence will be provided.

The following data illustrates Tina's experiences using prior knowledge to create meaning and make connections. Tina, a 57-year old White female, teaches high school students with limited or no formal schooling in a district that has experienced a Latino influx for over a decade. Previous international experience included a one-month immersion program to Mexico with no homestay experience. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. Tina's immersion interview was conducted at the Ecolodge after the homestay and before the Cabo Blanco stay.

Tina, used previous Mexican immersion program experiences as a reference in anticipation of the Costa Rica program stating, "I expect I will be changed because I know the summer I went to Mexico for a month I was changed. I was different you know. I don't know quite how to explain it, but it changed me. I think I will be changed." She also recalled her experiences surrounding culture shock in Mexico and how she draws from this in her practice:

That time I was in Mexico I would just break down in the streets and cry like a baby because I got to the point of thinking, I am intelligent, I know I'm an intelligent woman and I can't let anyone know. I was just going around like, I'm dumb, like I can't even express myself. So that gave me a lot of empathy for what these kids feel when all day they hear this other language and they can't let you know how smart the really are, and they really are. That changed me, it really did, oh my God, so I'm sure I'll be one of the ones that has a breakdown at some point, but it's okay.

During the Costa Rican immersion Tina compared her experiences as an American and how they related to her immersion experiences and observations:

I mean just the whole mind shift of this is right to the world community and everyone deserves fair treatment, fair trade, fair advantages, you know and it just really makes me feel like we live a very wasteful kind of. When I see people like my home stay family who have, who make do with everything; they recycle they are resourceful, they don't waste anything. It makes me just feel like I'm gonna be sick when I go back home and see how much my own family wastes, and we you know, we live a less traditional lifestyle. We try to live simply and our motto is, live simply so others simply may live. We recycle, we try not to, you know we try not to take more than our share, we try to do the right thing and still it comes in. We waste so much stuff and I don't quite know how to..

As the interview progressed, Tina's discussion of incorporating agriculture to her practice illustrates her use of past experiences to construct new knowledge:

In my particular program most of them are El Salvadorian and Honduran, and it may not be exactly like Costa Rica, but it's a different part you know. The Mexicans, I visited Mexico and I don't know everything I don't mean it to sound like that, but I kind of have a little glimpse of their, but now I feel like I have um, you know, and even though my kids haven't been in school, the ones I'm teaching now, I can see them living in something like this. This environment, they know so much about agriculture. Most of my Salvadorian kids come from agricultural families, and um, I really want to take back with me something because I've been trying, this whole past year I've planted a garden, I want to focus on agriculture.

In her journal, Tina compared past experiences to schools visited in Costa Rica, "The school seemed more well equipped than some I saw in Mexico." In her postimmersion interview, she described how she draws from her Costa Rican experiences in working with and better understanding her students:

And here although I know it wasn't the same as the country, most of my kids come from El Salvador, Mexico, and Honduras and I wasn't in one of those three countries, but I do feel like from seeing the things I saw there in Costa Rica, that I have a little bit more of an idea of how it might be like for those Central American kids. Because I have a

feeling, maybe it's, I mean I don't think it's exact, but I think I was more in their range of experience than I would have been before. Because I think maybe some of the houses might have looked the same or some of the customs.

For some reason I think that's the closest I'll get, I don't know that I'll ever get to El Salvador or Honduras, maybe but, you know I really value that because I feel like, because some of the things I've talked about, they know. And they'll say oh yeah, yeah, yeah in Honduras we have blah, blah, blah or in El Salvador, nah, nah, nah. So it's a little more common or like being contextualized (laughing). So I think that's helped me just in relating to my students.

Previous discussion illustrates Tina's use of prior knowledge and experiences to facilitate meaning and connection making via previous immersion and classroom teaching experiences. In addition, she demonstrated drawing from Costa Rican immersion experiences as the program progressed.

The following data illustrates Beth's experiences utilizing prior knowledge to create meaning and make connections and is presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. Beth's immersion interview was conducted during the Cabo Blanco stay and after the homestay. Beth, a 34-year old White female, is a counselor at an affluent suburban Atlanta high school. Previously married to a Honduran National, she had visited his family in rural Honduras for extended stays in the past. Beth used these experiences as references for anticipated and actual immersion experiences. In her preimmersion interview she identifies her previous experiences, their impact to her practice, and how she anticipates utilizing those to build her knowledge base:

I think just it's an eye opening experience to travel and to go into other schools and other countries. I mean I got the chance to go into my nieces and nephews school in Honduras and just what an eye opening experience that was. Just how much they do with so little that they have and I think it's really important to know where these kids come

from and to understand that. Even though we don't have a lot of Costa Rican children here, just where they come from and how their schools look like will be a tremendous experience and then anymore experience in Spanish I can get is helpful and I bring that back here and um. Anymore of just that renewal of understanding of you know, of how we live in our daily lives and how anyone else lives in their daily lives is so important to come back with that perspective of other countries. So that just really encompasses why I want to do the Costa Rican trip.

In a preimmersion journal entry Beth describes how her previous experiences in Honduras are impacting her feelings toward the Costa Rica immersion:

As I write this I am mostly thinking – Lord I hope this isn't as rough as Honduras! I have been there twice with my now ex-husband. We traveled to be with his family on rather extended stays. Actually living in their home (all 15 of us) in very rough conditions for 5-6 weeks made me appreciate living in the U.S. like nothing else!! Honduras is truly 3rd world and the worst part is that it is dangerous. I could never go out on my own since I can't hide my "Gringanness!"

She further elaborates that because of her past experiences, "I am not so worried about staying in a home. I have done this before." Upon arrival in Costa Rica Beth used past experiences to orient herself:

Ok – we arrived safely in San Jose!! First impression – are we really out of the US? How many fast food outlets can there be in an airport?? We get out and finally get our first glance. We are definitely in Central America, but the bus is great. The hotel is much more than I expected.

The bus ride to the Ecolodge proved challenging for many due to road conditions and weather. During this trip Beth used previous experiences as references:

Things get very bumpy after we leave the paved road. One of our riders gets a little car sick. I hope she will make it. I have done similar drives in Honduras and they are nerve racking!! Glad I am not driving – although is 285 in Atlanta any safer?

Her journal indicates the value of utilizing past experiences to bridge gaps when recalling her hike to the homestay:

Very frustrating walk with the pack. Of course the staff says it a short walk, but they have no packs and are used to these hills!! It's also hard when you don't know the area so you don't have an idea of how much further you have to walk!

Another indicator of her use of previous experiences to bridge gaps is a journal entry on day two of the homestay stating, "...and we are feeling more comfortable since we know the rhythm of the family."

During her immersion interview she indicates utilizing previous experiences to bridge knowledge gaps occurring during the experience:

I think one of the biggest things you learn when you come into these countries and something I forget every time that I go back, is just how we tend to worry about so much stuff and just you know its letting go of the little things sometimes that will tend to drive you crazy. You just get here and it becomes just not very important anymore. So that's one of the biggest things, just to learn that, and just to understand, having a deeper understanding of the culture, and be able to bring that back to school and you know.

During school visits Beth used her knowledge of Honduran and U.S. schools to contextualize her observations:

I'd visited a school in Honduras and this was very similar. Very interesting how we worry so much that our school buildings are safe everywhere. This school would have never passed "code" in the U.S., but the kids seem to do fine and look very happy.

Beth also indicated how she was able to use experiences during the immersion to fill a knowledge gap surrounding a current issue her school is encountering:

Because we have had an issue with toilet paper being thrown on the floor and I didn't understand that that was a possibility of being that if they were coming from other countries where they didn't flush it. In Honduras we didn't have that issue. So, but to now understand that it makes a lot more sense. So..(laughing). For us that's....even the littlest detail like that will make a difference when we get back to school and....

In her postimmersion interview, Beth illustrates the role her experiences render in her practice:

I think it's so valuable to be on the other side of that fence. Especially if you have people that have never experienced that before, to experience that culture and the language and food and the challenges of being in that culture and looking at the schools and you know trying to buy something and you know everything that goes along with it. Just, you come back with such a sense, a sensitivity towards that culture and just knowing where those kids from. I would love to see especially more administrators going down and people that work on curriculum and things like that, just so they would have just a much greater understanding of where these kids come from and how it is such a big deal that their even in the building. You know, it just changes your outlook if know and understand just a little bit about the culture and you know and understand a little bit about the school system it can really profoundly change how you do things in a school.

Previous discussion illustrates Beth's incorporation of prior knowledge and experiences to facilitate meaning and connection making via previous experiences in rural Honduras. Throughout progression of the immersion she also drew from Costa Rican experiences in an effort to make meaning and connections.

The following data illustrates Lisa's experiences utilizing prior knowledge to create meaning and make connections. Lisa, a 41-year old White female, holds administrative (certified ESOL trainer, grade and department chair) and teaching responsibilities (special education) at an elementary school in a community currently experiencing rapid growth, and a subsequent increase of Latino students. She has no previous international experience. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. Lisa's immersion interview was conducted during the Cabo Blanco stay following the homestay.

Although Lisa had no previous international experience, she drew from her experiences and knowledge base in an effort to connect gaps and construct meaning. Attempting to connect with prior experiences, Lisa compared experiences she encountered in Costa Rica to childhood memories on several occasions. Responding to the rural area in San Luis she stated, "I relate it back to being a little girl and going to visit my grandmother's farm forty years ago." While reflecting on the current migration of young adults into cities she stated, "Many children are leaving traditional farm life for 'the big city.' Much of what I see reminds me of life where I live, only about 50-60 years ago." In her postimmersion interview, Lisa still attempted to link prior experiences to connect with Costa Rican experiences stating, "The biggest difference I noticed was it reminds me of my town, my hometown here, but like 60 years ago, from what I've heard my grandparents saying about it." In San Jose she used American inner cities as a frame of reference:

The streets are very littered, we are used to public areas being very "manicured." Here, broken limbs lie and grass grows. The city for the most part looks like a run down older inner city we are familiar with, complete with the rust and graffiti.

In her journal, Lisa described the process she used for converting money, utilizing her knowledge base of U.S. currency, "Colones [Costa Rican currency] are currently about ½ the value of a dollar. Ex: 10,000 Colones - \$20, 160 - \$3.20. Most things appear to be about ½ price of what you would expect to pay at home for equal value." An additional journal entry illustrates Lisa utilizing previous experiences to process Lorena's (homestay mother) incomprehension of not cooking large meals every night:

We offered to assist in supper preparation. Lorena wielded a large sharp knife like an experienced chef at Benihana (Cutting toward her hand which really scared me). Christa and I who do not cook much,

were very awkward. She asked if we cooked much and when we said “no,” she asked if our husbands cooked. Again we replied, “no.” It was incomprehensible to her how we survived with no one cooking. They may have only seen fast food in commercials on TV, which led me to think of the reasons we eat out so much. She doesn’t work outside the home 12 hours a day and then run children to social events and organized sports! No wonder it was hard for her to fathom. Lorena was a great cook, taking care of her home was her job.

During the initial school visit, the only point of reference Lisa had was the U.S. educational system:

We left for San Luis school. It is small and bare by our standards. Dogs roam freely on campus. Laundry is washed and dried openly. Broken glass lays on the ground. Wooden stakes were left broken off in the ground at varying heights. We complain when we run out of copy paper! Parents Joyce over anything! We can’t get PTO volunteers and they keep the school running with community fundraising.

During subsequent school visits, Lisa used experiences and knowledge from each school as comparison, “We visited Santa Elena (K-8) & Colegio Technologico de Santa Elena (tech H.S.). The elementary is much larger and nicer, relatively speaking, than San Luis.” Continually attempting to connect prior and current experiences, Lisa begins to make comparisons to how she thinks things may be in the U.S. stating, “It just looks so much worn down and dirty than what we are used to. I’ve never been to one, but it may be like an extremely rural or inner city school in the states.” Surrounding the final two school visits she commented, “The schools were nicer than San Luis and Santa Elena, but very similar in structure.”

Postimmersion Lisa identified using her experiences in Costa Rica as an ESOL certification instructor, “What I brought back was teaching my peers as part of this ESOL certification for the school and I can share a different viewpoint or I can bring

experiences in for whatever we are working on at the time.” Further elaborating utilization of experiences she states:

Because it would be hard to try to lead you know, you can't teach what you do not know, you cannot lead where you do not go. It would be hard to speak in a, I don't know if well they call it teacher leader, it's a leadership position, but it would be real hard to try to present things if you've never been there, if you've never done that.

Lisa identified a process of linking past knowledge with new experiences to make sense through journal and photography stating:

I guess I was trying to capture what the pictures wouldn't capture. The pictures helped start the memory, but I was just trying to relate it back so making a tie between what I knew or felt and what was new. I just expanded on it, just I get really deep.

Previous discussion illustrates that although Lisa had no previous international experience, she compared childhood experiences and knowledge base in an effort to connect gaps and construct meaning. Throughout progression of the immersion Lisa also identified a process of utilizing Costa Rican experiences in an effort to make meaning and connections.

The following data illustrates Tammy's experiences utilizing prior knowledge to create meaning and make connections. Tammy, a 43-year old White female, teaches high school ESOL in a community experiencing rapid growth and subsequent increase in Latino students. Tammy, whose previous international experiences encompassed a church mission trip to Haiti as a teenager and a short-term undergraduate study abroad program to Europe. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. Tammy's immersion interview was conducted during the Ecologie stay following the homestay.

In a preimmersion journal entry Tammy discusses her lack of previous experiences to link with, “My preconceptions of Costa Rica are really limited. My only point of reference is the contact I have had with one of our students who is Costa Rican.” She also discusses wanting the experience of observing classrooms and describes her lack of a reference point stating, “I’m anxious to compare materials, technology, methods, etc. I imagine the rural schools don’t have many resources and have always been curious how teachers would teach in that situation. How do students do “hands-on” activities if they don’t have resources?” Tammy also summarized anticipated utilization of Costa Rican experiences, “I am very hopeful that it will be an enriching experience that I will cherish forever and be able to use in my teaching, to better understand my students’ situations, as well as have new content that I can share with others.”

Upon arrival at the San Jose, Tammy uses previous knowledge to contextualize current experiences, “The airport was very nice and similar I thought to ours, security, immigration, customs, baggage claim all seem to operate like home. Driving the streets of San Jose again more tin than home, but sadly lots of familiar places, Burger King, Texaco...”

Discussing the long and somewhat treacherous ride to the Ecolodge Tammy reflects that although there was danger, she (and perhaps others) did not worry because of a lack of reference point, or prior experience:

All went pretty well until we came to a big bus that was trying to pass – we had to backup. Then, as we went forward, we saw another very big bus, empty, that was off the road and leaning down. We all laughed. I don’t think I really thought about the possibility of danger or mishap on these roads. It really never happens in Cumming unless there’s an ice storm or something!

Tammy's journal indicated processes used during the homestay linking her knowledge base to current experiences, for example establishing commonalities and navigating unfamiliar surroundings through children:

I felt like part of the family. Initially very uncomfortable, didn't know what to say, didn't know what to do, I didn't want to step on toes. But gosh, children can make you feel a lot warmer, faster. So I, by the time we were leaving I felt like I was leaving my family you know. A lot of similarities between me and the mother that I lived with.

Tammy's journal also indicates utilizing previous day homestay experiences to negotiate day two, "Things were so much more comfortable this time. We immediately jumped back into talking about cooking and laundering."

In the postimmersion interview Tammy identified utilizing Costa Rican experiences to help understand her students:

I have been able to relate better to my students. I kind of have a better idea of ways that they're coming from. I do have a Costa Rican student too, and to be able to say, Oh yeah, I saw that in Costa Rica or whatever, we make a much better connection because of that.

In addition, she describes drawing from experiences of communicating in Spanish, a second language for her. An immersion journal entry described anticipated utilization of experiences, "I'm also more aware of what my students go through. I'll definitely know that those beginners in ESOL catch about ¼ of what's being said, but can generally get the gist of what's going on – my experience in Spanish."

Postimmersion Tammy illustrated actual utilization of Costa Rican experiences to make connections within her practice:

The language aspect, you know I think I brought back more confidence. I think that's helped me certainly and just the knowledge of what it feels like to try to learn a language and what is important. What do they need, what did I need to be able to get by, and so therefore, what do they need?

Her postimmersion interview indicates a desire to further expand knowledge bases by participating in a Mexican immersion program:

I really think I should go to Mexico, since the majority of my students are Mexican. I think that would help because they tell me every now and then, you ought to see the schools in Mexico, and I thought, I really should. I would like to know where they're coming from and what exactly they give them, before they get here, because they are lacking in so many ways. I think I might be able to identify with them better, knowing what I know about Costa Rica, and how I came to see. I know what kind of schools they went to because I've been there. That would help me I think.

Previous discussion illustrates that although Tammy had little international experience, she compared experiences and knowledge base in an effort to connect gaps and construct meaning. Throughout progression of the immersion she also identified a process of utilizing Costa Rican experiences in an effort to make meaning and connections.

The following data illustrates Michelle's experiences utilizing prior knowledge to create meaning and make connections. Michelle, a 39-year old Latina female, is an administrator at a district-wide international center in a community currently experiencing rapid growth and subsequent increase in Latino population. Born in Texas, her family moved to Mexico when she was a small child and returned to the U.S in 1987 (at age 14). Additional international experience includes a short-term visit to Brazil (staying with a Brazilian family) and two years in Germany. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. The immersion interview was conducted in Turrialba two nights before departure to Atlanta, allowing inclusion of homestay, Cabo

Blanco, and the Cafetal stay experiences. In her preimmersion interview Michelle used prior experiences to identify their value to her practice:

Since I deal with all of kinds of cultures here, I deal with Chinese, everywhere, from Bosnia, I think because of the fact that I am different, it helps me. I have been in so many places that they have been. I have come through where they come from and that's, I think that's the first thing they, especially the language, first of all. It's the first thing that attracts them.

But the second thing is that they understand that I share some of the culture, some of the same things that they do. It might differ a little bit, but I feel that the fact that I am Latino, I'm Hispanic, and I am able to identify with some of the things that they do and the way they dress, they way we, I don't, and it deals also with personality, and just traveling has given me a different perspective of, of who I am and how I respond to other people that come from other countries.

As the preimmersion interview continued, Michelle used her prior experience and knowledge to identify ways in which her Costa Rican experiences would expand her knowledge base. She indicated the necessity of revisiting past childhood experiences as a means to reconnect and renew her understanding of issues new immigrants face:

And too another thing that is important is sometimes we get so wrapped up in and sometimes we complain of not having you know the things that we want or that we need. Sometimes we just forget what it is really like not to have. So I'd like to feel that experience again, because I lived with it before, but that was many years ago. I think we need to refresh ourselves and put ourselves in that situation to understand really what it is not have, and to come back. I think when you come back you appreciate them more and you tend to want to do more for that student. I think we need to do that often because we are so wrapped up in what we do and we very easily forget how hard it is for these families to come here and just blend in and be blended into American culture.

Upon arrival in Costa Rica, Michelle journaled the process of using prior experiences from her life in Mexico to connect to current experiences, "It reminded me so much of back home in Juarez, Mexico; the busy streets, the fast cars driving by, so similar to what

I grew up with. As we got close to the Mercado Central I could smell the baked pineapple bread miles away.” After arriving at the Ecolodge, Michelle assisted in milking cows. Her journal entry surrounding this indicates utilizing prior knowledge and experiences as the activity progressed:

Finally we saw the cow stable! A little man met us, his name was Mr. Otoniel. We watched him milk the cow with such an art that no one thought about how hard it really was. When it was my turn, it brought me so many memories from home, when I milked the cows for Senor Don Mariano and washed the jars for \$3.00 then.

During the initial school visit (San Luis) Michelle used her prior experience and knowledge base in an effort to make connections and construct meaning. One such example, a journal entry in which she connected her observations to previous experiences and created new meaning:

I noticed that some parents come and pick up their children and many of the kids stop to buy something at the pulperia. If this happens everyday, they do spend some money. This reminds me, it is the reason why our children bring money to school when they first arrive. I need to make sure I add in our guide that it is not necessary to give them extra money, only what is needed for lunch, if any.

In subsequent school visits, Michelle used experiences from the San Luis school to connect and increase her knowledge base. The following entry describes comparisons made when visiting Santa Elena schools:

We found the same problems, no textbooks, but they do teach English in this school 45 minutes a day every day. School goes 7:00-11:30 and 2:00-6:00. This school has physical activities and music. Their lunchroom is much larger than San Luis and has more personnel. They also have a “soda,” a small snack shop where kids can buy a snack during recess. We went into their classrooms and they were getting ready for their social studies test. Their facility is much larger and by all means much better—parents collaborate raising funds!

When describing the schools in Turrialba, Michelle journals:

We visited the bilingual schools today. This area seems to have more money than all the areas we've been. I was more impressed with the schools in Santa Elena. The students seemed more pleasant and more welcoming. They stood up when we came into their classrooms. The students at this institute didn't even want to talk or make eye contact, with a few exceptions.

In her immersion interview Michelle illustrates connecting prior knowledge and experience to Costa Rican experiences to construct meaning:

I think there are similarities and differences. I think parents are very involved in the United States. You know, there are some, just like everywhere else. There are some that are not involved, just like ours. We have some urban areas, we have some rural areas. Some areas that have a lot of technology, that have all the means and how other schools, that are not there yet. They're still struggling. We have xxx County, and several other schools that are still in the process of changing. Their curriculum, I mean we follow our curriculum, they follow a curriculum, it might not be the same. I mean it's like today they were saying that you know people have, we all have literacy problems, I mean our problems. Not everybody you know this country is not more literate than the other. I think we all have different standards of literacy.

In her postimmersion interview, Michelle continued to describe the process of connecting experiences to make meaning. Observation of the Costa Rican classroom environment provided connections to Latino student behaviors in U.S. schools:

Just to be able to interact with the kids, being in the classroom setting, being able to see the students from the same culture, really see them in their environment. When I got to see the high school students interacting with the teacher, how it's not, you know, it's okay to be sitting on the teachers desk. It's okay to be touching the teachers without many of the restraint that we have as teachers. That it's okay to be personal with the kids, and that was good to see.

As the interview progressed, Michelle revisited connections she used to construct meaning to experiences encountered in U.S. classrooms:

And how the environment is at their schools, they do most of the things on their own. But they are able to mingle, and it's okay, and that's one of the things that many of the ESOL teachers when it comes to Hispanics they don't understand, they like to mingle.

Previous discussion illustrates Michelle's use of prior knowledge and experiences to facilitate meaning and connection making through experiences surrounding her childhood in Mexico, previous international travel, and practice related experiences. She additionally indicated the use of Costa Rican immersion experiences as reference points throughout program progression.

*Summary – Using Prior Knowledge to Create Meaning and Connections*

Previous data illustrates the process participants underwent to construct meaning through prior experience and knowledge. Data indicates an ongoing continual process. Preimmersion, participants used prior experiences to anticipate experiences they would encounter and as a mechanism to evaluate and to understand their need to increase current knowledge bases. Throughout the immersion participants accessed both prior and newly acquired experiences and knowledge to construct knowledge. As the program progressed, participant began constructing meaning by connecting earlier Costa Rican experiences and knowledge to new situations arising. For example, participants initially compared schools visited with U.S. schools and/or schools visited in other countries. However, as more schools were visited their knowledge base of Costa Rican schools increased, allowing subsequent comparisons to include experiences at other Costa Rican schools. Upon return, postimmersion interviews indicate a continued use of this process

as participants illustrate utilization of their Costa Rican experiences to construct meaning in their practices.

### Growth through Critical Reflection

The following discussion surrounds the third of four themes, Growth through Critical Reflection. Data indicate participant growth and learning precipitated by reflecting previous knowledge and/or experiences in differing contexts and realities encountered during the immersion program. The following discussion surrounds experiences and accounts reported by four of 12 participants, Joyce, Cindy, Sandy, and Lisa. The encounters and incidents they describe provide good representation of other participant experiences. Interview data are presented sequentially (pre-, during, postimmersion, and journal entries are presented as they occurred and in tandem with immersion interviews) to illustrate changes and consistencies within the learning processes to emerge. Participant immersion interviews were conducted throughout the immersion program as time allowed. To provide context and clarity identification of individual interview sequence will be provided.

The following data illustrates Joyce's critical reflection and subsequent learning processes resulting from immersion experiences. Joyce, a 49-year old Latina female, teaches elementary school ESOL in a community experiencing rapid growth and subsequent increase in Latino students. She was born and lived in Mexico until age 14. At 14 she moved to a large Midwestern city for nine years, followed by six years in the Southwest, 12 years in Puerto Rico, and has lived in Georgia for eight years. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. Joyce's

immersion interview was conducted at the Ecolodge after the homestay. In her preimmersion interview, Joyce discussed how the Costa Rica program would compliment knowledge of educational systems in Puerto Rico and Mexico. Discussing perceptions surrounding Costa Rican educational systems:

I have been in Puerto Rico, I worked there as a teacher, so I have seen education somewhat there. I was born in Mexico, raised there, and I had been part of the education system there but in a private school. So I got a sense of both different educational systems and I said it would be wonderful to participate in something different and I know that people from Costa Rica value education a lot and I had also known about the culture that, like how they work together. You know and they try to, for being a country in Central America, how they have distinguished themselves from the rest of Central America. And I said that would be wonderful to go and see this implemented in their education system. The possibility was there, so you know.

As the preimmersion interview progressed, Joyce elaborated on importance placed on better understanding through personal experience:

I would really like to see, you know, the system that, their system their educational systems. I know that we all act different and we have comfort and that sort of thing, but you can sense a lot of what's going on just by being there. You can see how it is, the real deal.

She also identified the value of context and reflection in her final preimmersion interview statement:

Right now my challenge is not so much the physical is the unknown. Okay I'm going to a place where I can read about it, but I've never been there, and that's the challenge in itself. Plus, you can talk to me after our two weeks are over and I will have more answers, or you know the gaps or questions that I might have in my mind will be there; and at the same time I will have more answers and its like look at this, I have learned so much. I will feel that I will get a lot out of it, you know in all aspects of learning.

Joyce was born in Mexico and spoke fluent Spanish, which eased homestay communication and increased interactions. Interview and journal data illustrate critical

reflection and subsequent growth surrounding her perceptions that American tourists were taken advantage of because of their alleged wealth. Journal entries describing homestay experiences are presented first, followed by immersion interview data. A journal entry completed homestay day one states:

Later on we went to meet her best friend, not without missing her cousin and his family...We went on to visit her family – best friend. Towards the end of two minutes of conversation we realized that we were in to buy merchandise. Her friend's daughter-in-law has a little empire and apparently she (Virginia) brings in the customers!

A journal entry discusses an incident occurring homestay day two:

After a while Virginia wanted to know if we wanted to walk around the neighborhood, we agreed! We visited a relative nearby (down the road) where we found Kim and Tammy. We all ended up walking through someone's property and went to her best friend's house, Dona Monchita. She was an elderly lady (80's) who welcomed us into her house. They made some small talk and something gave me a feeling that something secretive was going on! Sure enough, the ladies from the community had embroidered some stuff and they were making it available for us to buy!

We looked and felt compelled to help the poor families of the community so that they could send their children to school (buy them their uniforms and school supplies) – Some children attend the school in San Luis, but other have to travel about two hours each way. The stuff was pricey but bearing in mind that these women are needy we bit the bullet and paid!!

Joyce discussed perceptions precipitated via the homestay during the immersion interview:

I feel, very strongly about this. I feel that they are taking advantage of tourism. As a tourist I have been to places where the economy has been kind of bad, but they offer what they have to offer without really taking advantage and in this trip I have been like whoa, wait a second now. They know that they can make the money and you have no other place to go, you will pay whatever they ask you to pay and it's a little bit overwhelming I think.

Further discussion surrounds the impact tourism has rendered on how Americans are perceived:

Just about everywhere, right from the start they know that for people like us, tipping a dollar or two is no big deal back in the states. Well a dollar goes a long way here. So it's like, wait a second here, you know it's like wait a second. But no they know exactly what's going on. They know, you know, I don't know. The pulperia, I just bought something and it was like that was over \$4.00 and I didn't bring back hardly anything. It was just like okay cookies and I thought; oh my this is something else. When we went to visit this lady she went on and on and on and on what her plans are, what she would like to do with the house. What she would like to do with the things that are not working well and in a way she, she went at it so much, I actually had to slip right and say, I'm going out for a walk, because she was getting on my nerves. Because in a way they sense, okay, Americans have money, they can help us, and I don't have that money.

The following immersion interview illustrates reflections surrounding context and perceptions of being taken advantage of:

The experience of you know, being with other people from the United States and going through it together, that's been, because we all had our expectations and we in a sense knew what we were heading to, but being here and seeing it from the inside out is very, sometimes you feel like you can shake your head and go just a minute, like what I had just described. Because it is a sad feeling when someone, when you get the feeling, you yourself, I'm talking me; but you are taken advantage just because they see the dollars on you. It's like no, we all work very hard for what we have and just because we live in a different country, that things have come easier to us; is assuming that we are just streaming in money. One of the saddest things that I think about human nature is when somebody can benefit from somebody else, just because. I think that is sad.

Immersion discussion surrounding a school visit indicates reflection and initiation of the process creating new perspectives:

Somebody here had said well lets divide the stuff that you all had brought to the students among different schools, because this school gets a lot. So I had a perception of what a lot was, (laughing), but when we walked in I was, how sad, they don't have anything, and this is the school that has the most. I cannot imagine what it will be. I

have never, ever been in a similar situation. I have never been to a public school in Mexico, I worked the public school system in Puerto Rico, but we were one of the better off in the state. I had never really visited a rural school.

During the Cabo Blanco stay Joyce escorted a sick group member to the doctor (to translate). The following journal entry surrounds this experience:

We then called a taxi and were dropped off at Emergencia. In our minds were walking into an emergency clinic so we expected to see quite a few people and doctors, a lab – you know- we saw a man sitting behind a desk and I said this lady needs to see a doctor.

They asked what was wrong and I stated the symptoms...he listened and said come in let's fill out the paperwork and take your vital signs. It turned out that he was the doctor! At the end Kim was given a shot, a prescription, and a bill for \$60.00. –I don't know!...I think that people's ethics have different standards. One for Tico's and one for tourists.

Later on I questioned the bill and the doctor and his secretary were nervous about answering. They both got nervous and couldn't specify in detail how much was the doctor's fee and the shot!

Conducted during the first week of the program, and immediately following the homestay, Joyce's immersion interview illustrated her perceptions at that time.

Immersion interview reflections surrounding a school visit illustrate an initiation of growth through incorporation of new perspectives. Journal entries are consistent with immersion interview data during that timeframe. Although the journal entry describing the Cabo Blanco doctor visit continues to indicate a perception of being taken advantage of, there are no further references to such. In addition, her final journal entry further indicates a changing perspective:

Even though most of us were strangers we know that through this trip we have gained experience, endurance, perseverance, knowledge, growth, and friends.

I learned from our Costa Ricans that they are well-mannered and very courteous. I also was able to appreciate their level of education (not schooling) through their conversations or presentations. Even the people who worked as farmers had a beautiful and extensive language domain.

They are quite eloquent in their conversations and I enjoyed their customs throughout our trip. I feel that I am more knowledgeable and enriched throughout this great experience.

The following postimmersion interview excerpts illustrate Joyce's process of critical reflection and subsequent growth. Joyce discussed reactions to perceptual contrasts (based on her prior experience and knowledge) to realities of Costa Rican life and her experiences:

It was okay. I had never been in a humble house like that before in my life, ever. I had seen houses like that from a distance and I had maybe visited a house or two when I was in Puerto Rico, but that was maybe 30 years ago and when I compare this, it's like oh yeah, I remember visiting somebody 30 years ago and their house is no longer like that. They actually built a new house. So, in a way I got a sense that these were a little bit pushed back because they don't have the economics to actually get ahead in life.

I felt overwhelmed because the lady that I stayed with maybe saw in me a way to communicate; you know because we could speak, both of us could speak the same language. She had many needs and desires and she was just like pouring her heart out to me and I thought, "My gosh, I am not here to solve her problems, you know." In that sense I felt overwhelmed. She was very nice, very nice, very welcoming. I mean anything and everything that she had, she wanted to make sure that we knew that we could feel at home and she tried her best to do that.

When asked to describe gratifying experiences in Costa Rica, Joyce described her journey of critical reflection and obtaining a new perspective:

I think that we, I had many. I enjoyed being there. I noticed how people were so loving and welcoming, but at the same time they had a need for money so they were very resourceful. I mean this is their way of making money. If they don't make it that way, they won't have any money. So I realized many things as I was, as they days went by,

related to the way they live and how important it was for them to make money out of the tourists. Because like for instance, this lady lived off her land; well by the time harvest came around she had to wait a long time. And in fact when we had breakfast, no at night, dinner, she had visited one of her friends who was selling the embroidery stuff and the lady gave her three eggs and that was our dinner. It was like, that's all she had. That was just an experience that we don't go through, you know a situation like that.

Gratifying? I enjoyed the stay. I missed my family, that was a setback for me. I missed my family. The area, the scenery there looked very much like Puerto Rico and my son at the time was in Iraq. So I kept thinking of him and realizing, you know, maybe this was not the best time for me to leave. Because you know, "what if" type of situation. But overall I think that in every area as we were walking the two weeks were going by, I realized many things and that was gratifying in itself.

Joyce elaborated on a differing perspective surrounding educational systems post immersion, "I mean I can appreciate a lot of the things that we have, not that I never did before. Because I taught in Puerto Rico and we didn't have things like we do here."

Additionally she illustrated new perspectives obtained via critically reflecting previous knowledge and experience with the inclusion of contextual information obtained via Costa Rican experiences:

Like many Spanish countries and I've seen that a lot. Not that I have been there, but I know about students that come from rural areas of Mexico. They come here to the states and then we assess them in some ways to see how much they know. Sometimes they don't know as much. Why? Because the teacher who they had while in the rural area was also the principal, and the something else and the something else and that's pretty much what happened here. The principal was teaching a class, but at the same time when they need a report or they need something else he needs cover other things and they have to you know, they have to do what they can.

So in many ways I could compare and contrast and see some of the... They were very proud of what they had and you could see progress in the making. And I'm sure since the Ecolodge has been there, some money has been coming in and when they do their, they raise money on their campuses.

Each interview was concluded by asking if there was anything not asked or covered during that the participant wished to discuss and Joyce responded as follows:

The trip was very well organized. The people in charge they knew what they wanted to do and they followed through. The teaching and learning was structured. The teaching and learning that we experienced because of the things that were happening as we went along. The people were nice, you know related to the country itself. People were needy. They needed a lot, had to make money. In general I think that we have talked about the experience, the whole trip itself.

This response illustrates a change of perspective resulting from reflection of experience and context, or growth through reflection.

The previous data illustrate Joyce's growth through critical reflection. Preimmersion she identified a desire to better understand Costa Rican educational systems through personal experience, and recognized utilizing critical reflection in learning processes. Immersion interview and journal entry data provides insight to her perception of being taken advantage of as an American tourist. In addition, journal entries indicate a changing perspective throughout the program's progression.

Joyce further illustrated her process of growth via critical reflection during the postimmersion interview; specifically describing her journey of critical reflection and subsequent new perspective her most gratifying experience. Joyce's demonstration of growth via critical reflection culminates in her final statement, "The people were nice, you know related to the country itself. People were needy. They needed a lot, had to make money." This statement illustrates a new perspective surrounding Costa Rican's taking advantage of American tourists.

The following data illustrates Cindy's critical reflection and subsequent learning processes resulting from immersion experiences. Cindy, a 53-year old White female is an elementary school ESOL teacher in a district that has experienced a Latino influx for over a decade. Previous immersion experience includes tourist travel to the Caribbean and an immersion program to Mexico involving a homestay. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. Cindy's immersion interview was conducted at Cabo Blanco, allowing reflection of Ecolodge and homestay experiences. In the preimmersion interview Cindy discussed previous immersion experiences in Mexico and their potential impact on Costa Rican experiences, "I experienced anxiety in Mexico, big time, I don't feel like I'll experience that. I think I'll be very comfortable in Costa Rica even though I'm kind of by myself." Describing anticipated expectations, similarities, and differences between Costa Rican and Mexican experiences:

Well, it's going to be different in one, in the way that we spend almost every, every night with the homestay family and this time it will only be two nights. That's hardly anything compared to [Mexico]. Our whole trip revolved around the homestay. This trip's not revolving around homestay. It's going to be, the food is going to be hard for me. I don't like beans and rice, I haven't figured out what I'm going to do. My homestay family in Mexico just knew that, just fix me a cheese quesadilla and that's about all I ate. So the food, I'm worried about the food just because I don't know. I looked at all that food they showed in the slide show and it didn't look good to me. The rain, you know gray skies, rain, makes you kind of depressed some, so I'm a little anxious about that. Maybe a little anxious about how strenuous it's going to be. A little anxiety about things like that are very little, you know, I'll make it through it, so...

Responding to the concluding interview question allowing participant final comments:

Well I'm just so excited to be able to have this experience. I am thrilled to death, I can't wait till this part moves up to the top of my list and I can start, you know getting everything that I need, um packing. I have heard so many wonderful things about this country. I'm just thrilled to be able to experience it and this is not experiencing it like a tourist. It's going to be a little bit a tourist, you know I think probably have a day or so like that. But just experiencing it the way we're going to be doing it. It's like living there, you know so I'm just excited.

Similar to many participants, Cindy's journal entries provided the most insight to her learning and perceptions. A preimmersion journal entry describes expectations:

I know the schools in the rural areas will lack supplies and I expect to see teachers teaching multi-ages and levels. I expect to see poor people and people who lack luxuries that we have in America. I fear the physical challenge. Will I be able to keep up? Will I have enough to eat (foods that I like)? I am excited to be entering a country that I have never been to before. I hope this will be a life-changing experience. I am apprehensive about whether I've packed the right things.

Immersion journal entries provide insight to critical reflection and subsequent growth processes:

Sunday, June 19, 2005 – We walked the Camino Real. It was the first big test of stamina. It was so hard. I had tried to prepare myself for the trip by walking a lot and going to the gym, but it was tough. ...In the afternoon I attended a dance class. It was fun. Dancing is such good exercise. Again, it took a lot of stamina to finish a whole song...

Monday, June 20, 2005 – Woke up early and went to milk cows. I didn't know that I had to hike up another big mountain to get there. But, after slipping and sliding along the way, I finally arrived at the barn. It was remarkable. I'm so glad I am open to all the lodge has to offer. I want this to be an experience that makes me grow and be stronger in all aspects of my life. MY GOAL: Be strong. OBJECTIVE: Be open to all aspects of the trip.

Wednesday, June 22, 2005 - I have always been afraid of horses. But, I pretended I'd ridden all my life. I relaxed and I had the time of my life. I keep doing things that I shy away from. I can't believe what I've been missing because I'm always afraid. I am really surprised at myself. I am looking forward to my next horseback ride.

Throughout the trip Cindy consistently journaled reflections and learning processes surrounding fear; for example a Cabo Blanco entry (one of many while there) reads:

I am so afraid of the ocean. I let go of my fear, relaxed, and enjoyed the experience. We hold back so many times because we let fear rule our lives. Letting go of the fear on this trip has really been an incredible experience for me.

The previous data indicate utilizing the journal to critically reflect on experiences, subsequent learning, and their relationship with goals and objectives. Cindy reflected on daily life in Costa Rica during the immersion interview (conducted in Cabo Blanco):

Well, I'm living without air conditioning. I'm living without hot water the last couple of days. It's like things that I've always taken for granted has been taken away from me, and makes me appreciate the things I have at home. You know in one aspect it's supposedly the simple life here and the way I look at it, it's just so difficult because we, we just have so many more, well we have some many things to make our life easier and I miss those things.

Further discussion illustrates critical reflection and new perspective surrounding materialism:

Well, I like my culture, I like the conveniences and all the things that we have. It's made me appreciate things that I didn't even, you know all I do is, oh I need this, I need that. I need nothing! I mean I could live for a year and never buy one thing and I would be plenty happy. It's made me see that you can be happy with less.

The following illustrates new perspectives surrounding immigrant Americanization:

But, it's made me just think, wow, there are certain things about people that are the same. But the way you're brought up and the way that culture should always remain with you, and even though these people that are migrating to the United States, it's so important that they keep that culture. Even though they can be Americanized, which I see

every day, and I see things that they do that makes me think that they are being more Americanized. They still need to really make sure that they don't lose their culture, because that's what's so important.

The subsequent interview (immersion and postimmersion) and journal excerpts are demonstrative of her identification of an increased knowledge base via reflection of Mexican and Costa Rican experiences:

This culture is a little different from Mexico, but what it had done for me is to be able to talk with the, you know to be able to be with parents, more comfortable with parents. More understanding of what it's like to go to a country. More understanding of what it's like to not be able to speak the language. More understanding of just the situation that they are in, that's what it has helped me with the most. Putting me someplace so that I can see the situation of where they are when they come to America. That's the biggest impact.

Previous data illustrated Cindy's preimmersion anticipation of less stress in Costa Rica than previous immersion experiences (Mexico), primarily from a shorter homestay (in Costa Rica) was false. Immersion comments indicate a different reality, instigating reflection and new perspectives:

Just that this is a really tough trip. I mean comparing this and I was in Mexico for 19 days and stayed with a host family that long, it's a piece of cake compared to this. This is the toughest, I mean, toughest thing I've ever done, and it really has brought out some things I didn't know I had.

Final journal reflections provide additional insight to reflective processes leading to growth and new perspectives:

This trip has indeed made me grow both in independence and in maturity. I feel so much more capable to tackle things that I have always felt might be unattainable. I have definitely grown in my ability to handle stress and interacting with others.

...Yes, this trip will increase my ability in teaching diverse students and working with the parents of those students. In my opinion, immersion in another culture always makes our inter-personal skills stronger.

Cindy's postimmersion interview indicated continued reflection and growth from Costa Rican experiences:

Well, there were times that I was there that I thought, I thought I can't believe I'm doing this. I can't believe that I'm going through this. I can't believe I'm here. And then, when I get back and I reflect, it's so much different. It's like, it couldn't have been the way I thought was at the time, because it's absolutely incredible. You know, when I look back I think, I just cannot believe I did the things that I did. Met the people that I met, experienced so much stuff, it was just great.

Cindy was asked to discuss what she gained from her Costa Rican experience. Initial description of material items was redirected, with subsequent focus surrounding her new perspectives:

Okay, well the things that, actually the things that I brought back, material things was very little. I brought back jewelry and some handmade things that my, the person that I stayed with, I mean that the homestay lady made. Some eyeglass cases and then at the airport I thought, I've got to have something for me. So I brought back a real pretty little piece of pottery that's in my bathroom. It always reminds me everyday of Costa Rica. But that was my, that was, you know, not the big thing. The big thing was probably what I carry with me every day. The memories of, I was just looking at these pictures today. You know, going back through, wow it was just so neat. And it gave me an opportunity to do something like that. That I would never do without having this experience.

Cindy's postimmersion interview illustrated growth and learning by critically reflecting combined experiences of immersions (Mexican and Costa Rican) and teaching practices. Although unable to specifically pinpoint experience incorporation, she discusses immersion as follows:

There are no words to describe it. I mean, it's THE WAY TO LEARN. I yeah, I'm telling you, it's just, there's no way to describe going, being, doing, seeing. You can't, it's just hard to, it's just unbelievable. I mean I just feel so fortunate that I have had the chance to do this. It's hard for me like I say to pinpoint, but there's nothing, there is nothing. It's the greatest fieldtrip in the world. It's the

greatest. It was so organized, so I don't know exactly how to say it. But I just look at it as the greatest fieldtrip, the greatest experience and it just... What I'm trying to say is, the things I'm doing now just come naturally from what all I've learned and experienced.

The previous data illustrate Cindy's learning and growth processes involving critical reflection of past (Mexican) and Costa Rican immersion experiences. Although her journal provides the most compelling illustration of critical reflection and growth processes (particular insight surrounding personal obstacles, e.g., fear), consistent interview data verify findings.

Throughout the program Cindy explored, developed, and recognized differing perspectives surrounding personal growth (e.g., fear & physical ability), materialism (e.g., "I need nothing"), cultural (e.g., Americanizing immigrants), and increased understanding of immigrant experiences (e.g., walking in their shoes). Two postimmersion statements: "But that was my, that was, you know, not the big thing. The big thing was probably what I carry with me every day," and "What I'm trying to say is, the things I'm doing now just come naturally from what all I've learned and experienced," vividly illustrate continued critical reflection and growth specifically surrounding Costa Rica immersion experiences.

The following data illustrates Sandy's use of critical reflection as a means to process and learn from immersion experiences. Sandy, a 60-year old White female is a district-level administrator in a system experiencing that has experienced a Latino influx for over a decade. She has traveled internationally as a tourist, participated in three immersion programs to Mexico (leading two) involving homestay experiences. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. Sandy's immersion interview

was conducted at Cabo Blanco, allowing reflection of Ecolodge and homestay experiences. Previously participating in four immersion experiences to Mexico (one as participant, three as group facilitator), she stated Costa Rica program participation stemmed from a desire to gain a Central American perspective. Previous experience provided Sandy a rich knowledge base for assessing growth and learning potential via immersion. Preimmersion she illustrated reflection as a means to affect learning via immersion experiences:

So you can mix it with prior knowledge which is one of the keys, and the other thing is, I don't think you can ever have too much cultural immersion. I don't know that you ever get used to it. Each time just brings a better and clearer understanding of what our children go through.

The following data illustrates Sandy's use of journaling to reflect, expand, and make meaning of experiences. For clarity journal excerpts are presented in four categories: preimmersion, facilitated learning activities, and physical challenges. Her preimmersion entry reads:

Anticipation: beautiful country; stable society; diverse ecologies; educated population; wildlife. Interesting experiences varied activities; exercise; stretching myself both physically and intellectually.

Anxiety: hoping I can keep up the pace and "whether" the wet weather will be unbearable. Will I contribute to the group and be able to do "my part?" Can I handle primitive camping conditions? Will I learn enough to make a difference in what I see? Will I be able to communicate with my "homestay" family?

...I am mostly looking forward to new experiences that will (good or bad) enrich my life.

Subsequent data from Sandy surrounds facilitated learning:

6/21/05: Debriefing of day one, homestay. Interesting activity with the horse. Good way to make “el punto,” we might all see the same thing differently, but none is really “wrong.”

6/22/05: Debriefing: good cultural exercise to share. Interesting choice of word: reflection. Made everyone aware of what they should be doing with our experiences.

6/26/05: After dinner we had our fourth presentation. It was good, three parts: religion education & culture, and soccer. The think-pair-share was great for discussing a question that had no right or wrong. The soccer game (I didn’t see how it could happen) was fun and even got a bit rough.

The following data illustrates Sandy’s continual reflection in response to physical activity and challenges:

6/22/05: I miss having the waterfall hike. I’m not the best hiker, but I like it and need it. It was lots of rain last evening and the river is high. I wouldn’t want to be swept away, but I’ve come to rely on the exercise; my body doesn’t like to do it either, but it will be glad it did.

Downtime for journaling, I don’t do downtime really well unless I’m napping. That’s the best “downtime” for me. I don’t just sit and do nothing – reflect – too well. I have to be reading or writing or watching something. What does that say about me? I don’t relax well, but what more? I am glad to have some time to sit on the balcony and listen to the sounds: the river, the birds, and now the insects are beginning.

6/26/05: My knee seems to be in too bad of shape to do the waterfall hike. On the one hand, I hate that. On the other, I’m ready to rest. My knee is swollen up and feels as though it could be drained. We’re on day 10, I think everyone is wearing down. Cabo Blanco is beautiful but difficult. Especially if you’re not used to or don’t like roughing it. But I think it’s very good for all of us to stretch ourselves this way. We’ll be happy we did it once we’re done☺. I’ve really enjoyed the classes here: fish, shells, forest walk. I like Diane as a teacher. She is so knowledgeable.

A very lovely nap this afternoon. The rains came, chilled the air and made the nap seem even nicer. My knee, physically I should have been in much better shape. Work made that virtually impossible. Just could

not do it. But I'm paying for that and I hate it. I'd like to think my age doesn't have as much to do with it.

6/27/05: Reflections on Cabo Blanco Absolute Reserve. So glad it's here, but I couldn't spend lots of time here. Ordeal to shower, even go to the bathroom (Don't mind the creatures anywhere! If you do, too bad for you). But I loved the activities here: snorkeling, identifying the fish, shells, plankton.

I do think this experience began to separate "the men from the boys." But all in all, everyone did amazingly well considering. I know there are groups where tempers would flare in these circumstances. Part of it is that I think everyone pretty much knew what they were getting into. Still a bit of a shock for some though. Actually, it was better than what I'd thought it would be (I had very low expectations ☺).

Following are excerpts of final reflections Sandy wrote during the return flight to Atlanta:

...I was able to keep up physically, which was very gratifying since I've done so little exercise lately. But I did hurt – all over – from the "effort." My Spanish improved a bit. What I did find out is that I think with some serious study I can learn to speak Spanish reasonably well.

...The experience was very enriching. I found the Costa Rican (Tico) culture very similar but exceedingly different from the Mexican culture that I've experienced (my only other Latino culture I've been immersed in).

...This trip did produce greater self confidence and a different (deeper) perspective of Latinos. The science aspect really enriched my experience on this trip. It was an intense experience that I know I'll always treasure.

Previous data demonstrate Sandy's process of critical reflection and learning in which she defined the experience, reflected on it, and followed through with a description of subsequent learning. Preimmersion and postimmersion reflections provide an overall frame, while selected entries provide concrete examples. Consistent immersion and postimmersion interview data provides further indication of reflective and learning processes. During the immersion interview (conducted in Cabo Blanco) Sandy described

daily experiences in Costa Rica, “It’s been very interesting. It’s been very very full. It’s been very active. It’s been lots of learning and it’s been using coping skills and it’s been really good. I’ve liked it. I like to go and learn, so it’s been really good.” Describing typical experiences she stated:

Well I think an awful lot of the outdoors in the woods looking at things; both plants, animals, that kind of thing, soils, agriculture. I’ve really enjoyed seeing different and hearing about it. The coffee and thinking about that, that I’ve never thought of before. Here in Cabo Blanco a lot of marine classes. Experiences and then classes; kind of classes in the best sense of the word, where you just interact and think and about what you did. Look at what you did, look at what you collected. Find out about it. And of course in our homestay, which is what I guess was looking at culture, fully immersing yourself in culture. That didn’t take as many coping skills as this does, right here in Cabo Blanco.

Her description of learning through combining experience, classes, observation, interaction, and reflection (thinking) demonstrates use of critical reflection in learning processes. Postimmersion interview data illustrates continued critical reflection and growth:

Yeah, I don’t think an immersion experience can help but change you and I think everybody ought to do a few of them. It’s very different to visit and to be immersed; I guess for me, I have done some experiences in Mexico. I had done the other UGA Xalapa trip and I’ve gone to, I’ve actually taken teachers and administrators to Puernavaca, which is a language school. So, I’ve had immersion experiences. I really liked having this one in a place different from Mexico and even though I thought it would be so much the same, it was so different. Which was very interesting and educational for me to see different. I mean there was a common language and sort of a common climate, you know and terrain and in some ways, not nearly the richness of Costa Rica in Mexico. But I thought the schools were so much the same, for instance and I didn’t expect that. I expected the schools to be so much better in Costa Rica. I didn’t think that their educational system was as good as they make it out to be. Because I think they have some of the same difficulties and lack of resources and all kinds of things that I saw in Mexico. Pretty dedicated teachers in most cases.

Through her description of perceptual changes the Costa Rican program precipitated, Sandy used a continual reflective process by including Mexican experiences. She also discussed the positive impact of participation in multiple immersion programs and role reflection renders:

I think you're so hyped up and so excited the first time you go, that you don't see it all when you go once. When you go again you kind of know things to look for and then you have a basis of comparison. It's just broadening. Yeah, I went more than once. You know I would just be happy if everybody could go once, but I think as many times as you can go it's great.

Postimmersion Sandy identified journaling as a key component in critical reflection and subsequent growth via immersion experiences:

The journaling makes you insightful. It makes you think back on what happened that day and write down your reactions and everything to it. So I think that kind of forces reflection, and that's a good thing. Also you forget, so you've got it written down. That's a really good thing. So I think journaling is very valuable, it's just that I certainly don't take the time to do that.

Sandy explained mitigating factors surrounding journaling activities:

Well it was for the project (laughing) and I didn't want to let down anybody. But I think other than that too, there was so much going on that; so it was such a rich experience in every way. I can't detail that, but it was rich in everything that you saw and ate. It was rich in being with people, and it was rich in the learning and it was rich in discomfort and comfort. It was rich in challenging your body on the hikes and things like, or getting up really early to go see the bird watching. You had to really make an effort to do that (laughing). I think on a trip like that it's so rich that you sort have got to funnel and a journal is a good mechanism to do that with.

Data indicates Sandy's consistent use of critical reflection in growth and learning. Journal entries specifically demonstrate conscious reflective processes surrounding facilitated learning activities and physical challenges. Throughout the process she used

previous and current immersion experiences to reflect, evaluate, and gain new perspectives. Postimmersion data indicates continued reflection and learning resulting from Costa Rican experiences.

The following data illustrates Lisa's critical reflection and subsequent learning processes resulting from immersion experiences. Lisa, a 41-year old White female, holds administrative (certified ESOL trainer, grade and department chair) and teaching responsibilities (special education) at an elementary school in a community currently experiencing rapid growth, and a subsequent increase of Latino students. She has no previous international experience. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. Her immersion interview was conducted at Cabo Blanco, allowing reflection of Ecolodge and homestay experiences.

Preimmersion data identifies foundational components Lisa used in critical reflection and subsequent growth surrounding immersion experiences. Description of trip anticipations includes discussion surrounding the current immigrant influx to her county:

I'm excited, but I have a lot of reservations about understanding the language. I even went this weekend to Barnes & Noble and bought this Spanish and workbook so I could try to start educating myself, but since I've lived in Forsyth County all my life there has been a huge influx of Hispanics here. So if I go to WalMart on the weekend, I can stand around and still feel like I don't belong here; because the language is so heavy in Spanish, that I don't understand what people around me are saying. At least I have the advantage of understanding the market, the money, and I'm nervous about that.

Lisa identified an increased knowledge base to assist in working with parents and instructing ESOL endorsement courses to other teachers, as well as interest in the science-based trip focus as key to Costa Rica program participation:

Of course working with the parents and doing the instruction [ESOL certification]. I think it would be difficult to teach what it's like to understand a student from another culture if you've never experienced it yourself. I've noticed that I've felt that way when I took the ESOL course myself. I guess another thing that I'm interested in is a lot the science in the tropical rain forest.

Lisa additionally identified leaving comfort zones and experiencing different perspectives a valuable learning tool:

I guess just to put yourself in another person's shoes. Like I said, I've been native here all my life, never traveled outside the country. It's kind of, it would be very difficult to understand where that was coming from when you've always been the White middle class in your own comfortable zone, in your own place. I expect that it's going to be uncomfortable and I will probably have a melt-down day when I miss my family the most and am frustrated. I think that is something that you just have to experience. Like having your children, you know, you just have to experience it yourself.

Lisa began the reflective process in her initial journal entry enroute to San Jose.

If I didn't know better, I would think it was "love." I can't eat, sleep, think. My stomach has butterflies that occasionally concentrate in unison in the pit of my stomach. I know it is more from anxiety and fear of the unknown. This will be a lot of "firsts" for me.

--The first time away from the comforting shelter of my own country and in my cocoon-like status that I take for granted and rarely give a second thought.

...--The first time my philosophy of "when in Rome..." is being personally put to the test. I only know a few words of Spanish, probably not even enough to ask for food or a bathroom. On local shopping trips I listen to the cacophony of the Spanish language being spoken all around me and I go about my business thinking, "English is spoken here and that's all I need to know. I don't have to go to another country, it came to me." I find myself trying to recall even the simplest of words and phrases in Spanish and is as if my brain sets itself in a tailspin. Upon hearing, or better yet, seeing Spanish, I can usually gather enough association to its English equivalent to obtain a general gist of understanding (my receptive is better than my expressive). Of all the overt and creative gestures I can try to continue to communicate, I hope a smile is universal.

--This will be a first to exchange currency and ask for directions, feeling as if I am at someone else's mercy. Mustering faith and trust in strangers, something I don't do readily or easily.

This entry illustrates reflection of prior experience and knowledge, their influence, as well as her anticipated and desired growth from experiences. As the immersion progressed, Lisa continued documenting reflections and growth in her journal. For clarity, journal excerpts are presented in two categories, leaving comfort zones and facilitated learning activities. The following surrounds leaving comfort zones:

6/20/05 – Living outside of one's comfort zone is challenging, in any place, for everybody. I like the feeling of accomplishment I get when I step outside of mine.

6/23/05 – The others did the zip line. I am deathly afraid of heights, so walking the bridges was thrilling enough for me. I like that I am pushing myself "outside of the box," even if only in inches.

...I crossed the bridges that hung above the different layers of the tress. It was very unique to see a tree from the top down instead of bottom up (Kinda like our immersion into this culture – from the inside looking out, instead of outside looking in).

6/24/05 – We load our luggage on top of the tour bus and carry backpacks filled with that we will need to survive the "Absolute Reserve" for three days. Kinda makes me nervous to think that everything of most importance to me here has been condensed into a backpack. Just goes to prove that we really can live on less than we thought.

6/25/05 – Ahhh, the Reserve in the daylight (not much different than at night)! We still walk to the "cafeteria" although it is flat and probably not as far. We walk to showers and bathrooms (not too bad), this is probably as step above tent camping. Prior to this, "roughing it" to me was not having enough washcloths at the Holiday Inn!

...I walked back by myself in the rain. Remember the "scardy cat?" Now here I am walking in the "jungle" in the dark rain and by myself. One little beam of light guides my steps.

I think this part of the trip, at the pinnacle of our time here (mid-term) has become the lowest point for most people. Like the Bell Curve,

some thrive on this lifestyle and don't complain. At the other extreme, others are miserably wet and homesick. In the middle are those who don't care for it, but recognize the high points, are grateful for the experiences, but are counting the time down to leave. (Great place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live here!)

6/26/05 – Between physical exhaustion, exhausting mental/emotional strain, and sleepless tense nights, my body actually hurts and moves slowly, like I am dragging a big weight in a fog.

6/27/05 – This is the happiest bunch of campers I've ever seen. Even though we were up an hour earlier and have about six hours of traveling - most of which is on a bumpy winding road – we can't wait! All in all, everyone is thankful they made it! The scenery was tropical and beautiful by the sea, but just a little too "rustic" for most of us. It really made me appreciate many things. Among my blessings are: hot water, washing machines, dryers, my own bed and bath, camaraderie, dry shoes and McDonald's! (Never thought I'd day that one!)

...We are not as talkative as usual. I think from exhaustion and the reflection of our experiences.

7/1/05 – Going home – can't wait to get there! I really miss my family – countdown is over. I am too exhausted and overloaded (literally and figuratively) to reflect right now. Costa Rica is a good place to visit, but as Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz said, "There is no place like home!"

Lisa's journal entries demonstrate her process of reflection and growth in which she: discussed incidents specific to leaving comfort zones, reflected on experiences, and identified subsequent growth and learning. Additional journal entries surrounding facilitated learning activities and other encounters prompting reflection and growth provide further illustration:

6/20/05 – We got to see Tico attitude of non-confrontation in action. The roads are very narrow and rough. Our vehicle met head-on with another, but one would have to back down and pull over to the side to allow the other to pass. Both drivers motioned with a "shoo-ing" wave for the other to back-up. The other driver (presumable non-native, fair-skinned) "won out" and our native driver backed down. As they passed, our driver, instead of yelling obscenities yelled, "thank you

very much, you are so kind.” At least in this instance, “non-confrontation” was masked sarcasm.

6/22/05 – I tried to catch up on journaling. I am taking in so much, so fast I forget things in the blur!

6/21/05 – Breakfast at Ecolodge. Everybody shared similar stories and we did an activity with drawing a horse that’s central meaning was basically that even though we are all looking at the same thing, we concentrate on and remember different parts and varying degrees of detail. I would love to share journals to see other’s views of the same thing I see.

6/25/05 – Diana explained that this was a relatively young forest and that 40 years ago it was mostly poor farmland. She made a point that stuck with me. She said that our perspectives come from a base point of view from our initial imprint. In other words, even though we are at the same place at the same time doing the same thing, we all are taking in and assimilating it differently based on our past impressions.

6/29/05 – The teachers and administration from the bilingual school was the most open. I was able to ask specific special ed. related questions to Anna and I found out later that Teresa (from CATIE) had a special ed. son. It was great to get both perspectives!

Anna said that providing services was required by law but – (just like in our state) not enough funds or other resources were available to meet the requirements. Teresa said (as did Anna) that there are not enough special ed. programs or teachers to meet the demands of the special ed. population. Even special ed. “certified” teachers often appeared to either not know or not care about what to do.

I took pictures of the “special ed. room” at Santa Elena. It had one table and two chairs. No special equipment, no curriculum, nothing. I see why the teachers may be apathetic, trying to make something out of nothing, trying to meet unrealistic demands, and more than likely never receiving current or extensive training. Even though education is a priority for most families, it is not a financing priority for the government as funds dwindle.

From appearances – kids come and go on campuses, classes are cancelled if teachers can’t attend (no substitutes), and being considered literate is writing your name. I think by working with teachers and students we would get a clearer picture between what is said and what is done.

6/30/05 – I hope I get a lot of these facts straight. I tend to lose a lot of information in translation overload. I didn't even know what city I was in much of the time!

Further discussion also identified reflection and growth directly resulting from immersion experiences:

I can see where they think that we are wasteful, and we are to a large degree. It all depends on where you go in our United States, in our own culture. I think Diana made a really good point the other day; that everything comes from your own bias and your own perspective. And then we're such a mobile society, so that could be anything anywhere. I mean, you know our perspectives change based on what we started out with and then we are very mobile so we still take that with us even within our own culture.

Directly applying learning surrounding this concept to practice, Lisa stated:

I'm probably one of the few teachers here that is not an ESOL teacher, but I'm ESOL certified and I'll be working primarily with my peers in trying to bring them to ESOL certification. I think the best thing I can do is to just try to paint the picture. Try to take them from where their background is to what it's like here. What we've seen here or done here that they can associate, make those associations and remember it when they're working with the students. So that they can take the students from where they are, not from their expectations of where they think they should be.

Lisa's postimmersion interview remains consistent with immersion journal and interview data indicating reflection and growth during the immersion, as well as continued learning through reflection. Discussion surrounding Costa Rican school conditions demonstrate continued reflection and growth on previously documented (immersion data) growth:

I made it a point in our PowerPoint presentation to show the special ed. classroom. I look around at our thousands and thousands of dollars worth of special equipment, adaptive equipment and what we consider that we have to provide in our school system to meet our children's needs, what we are legally bound to. And then I see the pictures of what they had. They have nothing. They have no materials; they have very few tables and chairs. They have broken glass on the ground.

They have water pipes and stubs sticking up from the ground. They grow their own food, brush their teeth outside and I see you know; both they wash their laundry and hang it outside at the school, the teachers did. I see that and I'm going, wow. And nobody's thinking about lawsuits and you know, what's mine and what are my rights and they're just glad to have an education. More appreciative of, you know. So the fact that they try to do so much with so little and seem to appreciate more than what we have in plenty.

The subsequent excerpt illustrates additional ongoing critical reflection and growth utilizing new perspectives directly related to immersion experiences:

Just a new appreciation. I never thought of myself as very, I don't know if the word is trendy; very have to have the best of this. I've always been a person to you know; the whole, reuse, reduce, recycle, and make the most of. But I think they take it to a whole new level and when I start to whine I can really appreciate what I've got. You know, I complain about; our health insurance is changing, and then I think about how Kim had to travel a whole day and many miles and you know many different connections just to get to a doctor. You know, sometimes I don't get that. The things that I whine about don't seem so big anymore.

The following postimmersion data surrounds Lisa's facilitation of ESOL endorsement certification classes. Her response surrounding participant queries to benefits participation in this program (which appeared difficult) rendered is consistent with immersion data surrounding reflection and growth resulting from leaving comfort zones:

You know they asked us too, when we did our PowerPoint presentation, and they said we made it sound like it was so hard. Life there was so hard and would we do it again and why did we do it, and I had to explain I wouldn't want to live that way. Would I do a trip like that again, in a heartbeat because of where it puts you. Where it pushes you and you get experience that you can't get another way. Not out of a book, not out of talking to some body else, you just have to live it. So would I discourage anybody from doing it, no not at all.

Taking you out of your comfort zone and that's what it was all about, you know. Luckily for me the physical wasn't that bad, but you know if you're not ready for backpacks and roughing it and hikes and things like that; that in itself could be another challenge. On top of being away from your family and your securities and the emotional side of it

and then trying to learn new things the academic side, the language, the money; so you're getting it from all sides. All of your comfort zones.

The previous data presents Lisa's reflective processes and subsequent growth. Preimmersion discussion identified foundational components she anticipated using in immersion reflection and growth processes: an increased knowledge base to work with Latino parents and facilitate ESOL endorsement courses, and desire to leave comfort zones and experience different perspectives.

Immersion journal entries document her process of reflection and growth surrounding preimmersion identified learning goals. Consistent immersion and postimmersion interview data further illustrates these processes. In addition, postimmersion data identifies continued reflection and growth stemming directly from immersion experiences.

#### *Summary – Growth through Critical Reflection*

Data simultaneously demonstrates participant use of reflection and the highly individualized nature encompassed via this learning process. Some participant used the critical reflection process to consider and reconcile their perceptions of being preyed upon as allegedly rich American tourists generated by worldwide perceptions surrounding American wealth. Through reflection, other participants explored, developed, and recognized differing perspectives surrounding personal growth (e.g., fear & physical ability), materialism (e.g., "I need nothing"), cultural (e.g., Americanizing immigrants), and increased understanding of immigrant experiences (e.g., walking in their shoes). And a third set of participants described learning through combining experience, classes, observation, interaction, and reflection (thinking) demonstrates

utilizing critical reflection in learning processes. Additionally, continued inclusion of Mexican immersion to Costa Rican experiences further illustrates reflection in learning.

Previous discussion illustrates participant growth and learning precipitated by reflecting previous knowledge and/or experiences in differing contexts and realities encountered during the immersion program. Although interview data are candid and correlates with journal data, journal data provides greater insight and detail as reflective processes were recorded shortly after occurring. The following journal entry surrounding the Sky Trek activity provides an example of such experiences:

I crossed the bridges that hung above the different layers of the tress. It was very unique to see a tree from the top down instead of bottom up (Kinda like our immersion into this culture – from the inside looking out, instead of outside looking in). -- Lisa

Her perceptions surrounding a seemingly unrelated activity provide a clear, concise, and vivid illustration of participant growth through reflection rendered via immersion experiences.

#### Transfer of Learning from an International to a Domestic Context

The following discussion surrounds the fourth of four themes, transfer of learning. The data presented in this theme is comprised of participant self-reported learning and impact to practice as a result of participation in the Costa Rica immersion program. Eleven of 12 participants specifically illustrated direct incorporation of immersion-linked learning to practice. The following discussion surrounds experiences and accounts reported by five of 12 participants: Rachel, Kim, Hannah, Beth, and Tammy. The encounters and incidents they describe provide good representation of other participant experiences. Interview data are presented sequentially (pre-, during, postimmersion, and journal entries are presented as they occurred and in tandem with immersion interviews)

to illustrate changes and consistencies within the learning processes to emerge.

Participant immersion interviews were conducted throughout the immersion program as time allowed. To provide context and clarity identification of individual interview sequence will be provided.

The following data illustrates Rachel's transfer of immersion related experiences and learning to her practice. Rachel, a 50-year old White female, is an assistant principal at an affluent suburban Atlanta high school. Previous international experience includes tourist travel and serving four years as a Peace Corp volunteer in the African Nation of Ghana. The Costa Rica immersion program is her first experience in Latin America. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. Rachel's immersion interview was conducted at the Ecolodge after the homestay.

Rachel used immersion journaling to document learning, experiences, and techniques potentially relevant to her practice. The following journal entries provide illustration:

6/18/05 - We drove to Café Britt. The tour in the coffee plantation was so well done, if a little "touristy." I would love to use that style of teaching with our 9<sup>th</sup> grade Biology students. Maybe the humor would take away the barriers to the 9<sup>th</sup> graders level of motivation/lack of motivation. Maybe the story telling and multimedia presentation would help.

6/19/05 – One thing that I'll take back is the rope tied along the trail, us being blindfolded and told to walk slowly and listen. You really hear the wind and water – it's more like hiking alone. I'd like to use this in a biology class.

6/27/05 – It's clear I need to do more communicating with Hispanic students. To do that I must learn Spanish. The other key from this trip is getting to know the Spanish speaking educators. They have a unique experience and know better than I how to interact with Latino students. I will stay in communication with them and hope to be able to learn from them.

7/1/05 – Teaching Latino (diverse) students/parent interaction. I go back with a renewed commitment to RHS students. It was wonderful to see the motivation and focus on education in Costa Rica. That's what can happen at RHS.

My focus will be on communication with students and parents. First I want to be sure that our registration form, student profile form, and survey form compliment each other. Then I want to examine how and what data we will track. I hope that we can get support for a newcomers group and really focus on that group of students/families. My job next week is to interview for the part-time parent liaison position.

Previous data are indicative of Rachel's ability to transfer experiences and learning to her practice. The journal provided a tool to immediately document significant teaching methodologies, personal learning needs assessments (Spanish language), and specific tasks to implement upon return.

Postimmersion Rachel identified specific ways she transferred immersion experiences and learning, for example sharing Latin American travel experiences provides common ground and decreases barriers:

We have several people from Costa Rica and you say you've been there. It's great because then you can relate; oh yeah you went to Monteverde, I lived in this area and you know. I think that Latino kids just appreciate that you're interested in where they're from. Even if they're from Honduras or Mexico and they're not from Costa Rica, they still appreciate that you went to look at their country and their culture and have maybe a little insight into what their life was like before they moved here. I mean I've never been there before so I didn't know how people lived or what the schools were like and then it turned out they were similar to places I've been before. But when you're talking to someone from Costa Rica, they're interested in Costa Rica. You take a group of kids on a field trip and you have some understanding of where they're from, yeah, it's helpful.

Costa Rican school visits provided insight surrounding educational resources and their relationship to teaching and learning:

How amazing that with very little resources, learning is such an interesting thing, it doesn't require all the resources that we most certainly have here. We're always saying if we had more resources we would do X, Y, and Z. We just need to do X, Y, and Z. I mean it's nice to have resources, but we don't really need all these resources. We say that with our ESOL program too, well we don't have the right funding so we don't have enough teachers. They didn't either you know, but that doesn't stop kids from learning. Those schools we went to where they had gifts; those schools had nothing and they were making gifts for us, you know the food and the bookmark. We get caught up in what we have to have in order to learn.

Rachel also reported immersion experiences precipitated increased energy levels and incorporation of differing perspectives into her practice:

I'm just sitting here looking at the discipline of the Hispanic kids that I'm working with and you just kind of get in a rut of doing it. You give them the rules, you enforce the rules, and then you're thinking; what, why am I here? Why am I doing this? To do a trip like that, it gives you a boost of energy to come back and say, wait a minute I can find a different way to do something. So it wasn't something specific that I learned on the trip, it was that kind of that energy you get from getting away and looking at a different perspective.

Further discussion focused on utilization of new perspectives:

Just to step back from it and look at it from somebody else's eyes, you know it just gives you, it refreshes you. To not come back and do rote, the same thing again. To try to be creative, you know getting your team together and talking about; okay how can we motivate this one student to be successful in the way they want to be successful. Maybe our goals aren't what it's all about. Certainly I wasn't there long enough to say I'm any kind of expert on Latin American culture, but it does make you look at the goals. Certainly the culture is different enough that maybe all my goals for kids coming here and going straight through to college are not really what it's all about.

Rachel identified postimmersion grant fund acquisition to hire an additional Spanish speaking parent liaison and anticipated impact:

I was able to interview and hire somebody and certainly having been on the trip; well hopefully being able to talk about experiences that I've had, I can relate better to them so that we can work together better as a team. And if I have a discipline issue I can take it to them and say; can you call the parents, can we work with the parent, what are the goals for this student, what do we want for this student?

Rachel identified an increased knowledge base surrounding Latin America (culture and educational systems), insight to different teaching methodologies, and personal learning needs stemming from immersion experiences. Journal entries and interview data (immersion and postimmersion) illustrate her transfer of knowledge to practice.

Immersion journal entries provided documentation of methodologies and specific tasks to complete upon return. Postimmersion Rachel identified specifically linked transfer of learning through grant fund procurement and increased ability to effectively provide relevant services for Latino students at both individual student and school-wide levels.

The following data illustrates Kim's transfer of immersion experiences and learning to her practice. Kim, a 41-year old White female, teaches high school ESOL in a community experiencing rapid growth and subsequent increase in Latino students. Previous international experience includes short term tourist travel to the Caribbean. The Costa Rica immersion program is her first experience in Latin America. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. Kim's immersion interview was conducted in San Jose on the evening before departure home.

During the immersion interview Kim identified an increased understanding to the role language renders in communication barriers:

I can see how language can be a major barrier. Even if you felt something for someone you knew, oh my gosh they could be a real friend, but if you don't have the language its hard to you know to delve into it personally. Like our homestay mother she had problems, but we couldn't communicate with her.

Discussing anticipated means by which immersion experiences and learning would be translated to practice, Kim stated:

Of course sharing and hoping they [her colleagues] can share in this experience, try to encourage them to come. Maybe focus more on agriculture and how important it is to treat your environment and you know try to get the kids to recycle. We haven't really done that, although there is a program like that. And just knowing how the kids feel. I teach the more advanced ones so they already know English. But you know just smiling, I mean I smile anyway, but just knowing how they feel is the way that I felt. Knowing that you want to say something and you can't say it. Maybe taking, you know have them to write it down and just be more proactive about really trying to know what they say.

She also discussed practice in the immersion journal:

Teaching Practice: I believe this experience will change my practices concerning the parents. I would like to involve the parents more and let them know what is going on at school. Tammy and I talked and we want to visit the students and their families in their homes. Really get to know them. Also, have more programs for the parents, so they can become part of the school.

Postimmersion Kim discussed specific transfer of learning to her practice:

The one thing that I brought back was that when I looked at the schools, is learning can take place in any environment. You know that we have some of the latest technology and they didn't, but yet they seemed to be maybe a little bit further ahead than some of the things that I see at our school. So some of things are just go back to the

basics, memorization, more hands-on activities, and just really go back to the basics is something that I've tried to go back to. Because that's what sticks, the things that you remember are to me what you memorize and for some reason it just sticks in your mind. And trying to get these kids to make it stick in their mind.

Postimmersion she also indicated efforts to increase parent contact, a goal stated during the immersion:

We did have a good meeting and we didn't have one last year, so this year we did, and we had a good response. We had a lot of parents and it was a good experience. We got a lot of them signed up on the computer to check their kids' grades and I've done a little bit more parent contact but that definitely always needs to improve. We're planning on doing a big thing in April for the parents.

Kim identified increased cognizance of the role language renders in communication barriers and insight to Latin American teaching methodologies resulting from immersion experiences. Immersion interview and journal entries and postimmersion interview data illustrates her transfer of this knowledge to her practice via increased proactivity to understand Latino student and parent needs. Postimmersion Kim identified conducting parent informational meetings and modification of classroom teaching methodologies as specifically linked to transfer of learning.

The following data illustrates Hannah's transfer of immersion related experiences and learning to her practice. Hannah, a 42-year old Swiss National female, is a bilingual parent liaison at a North Georgia elementary school. Born and raised in Switzerland Hannah has traveled extensively, however the Costa Rica immersion is her first trip to Latin America. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. Hannah's immersion interview was conducted at the Cafetal Inn in Grecia directly following the Cabo Blanco stay.

Immersion interview discussion illustrated Hannah's anticipated transfer of learning, "I guess having the opportunity to talk a lot to the native people here will make me even more comfortable to talk to the parents. Even though they're not from Costa Rica, it was good practice for me to talk in Spanish with natives here." Postimmersion Hannah identified additional learning transfer through increased cultural sensitivity:

I would say definitely to even be more careful about culture. Even if I don't know exactly that culture to not blurt out or be extra polite, you know sometimes being, not to be judgmental. Sometimes we are a little bit easy to judge others and the parents and just go ranting and say, oh they just don't care and this and that and sometimes I don't really know what is going on. I need to read my notes or this and that.

Hannah identified increased Spanish language ability and knowledge of Latin American culture resulting from immersion experiences. Immersion and postimmersion interviews illustrate her transfer of this knowledge to practice via increased confidence and sensitivity surrounding the Latino parents with whom she works.

Beth, a 34-year old White female, is a counselor at an affluent high school located in a major metropolitan suburb. Previously married to a Honduran National, she had visited his family in rural Honduras for extended stays in the past. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. Beth's immersion interview was conducted during the Cabo Blanco stay and after the homestay.

Beth identified transferability of immersion experiences during the immersion interview through deeper cultural understanding:

So that's one of the biggest things, just to learn that, and just to understand, having a deeper understanding of the culture, and be able to bring that back to school and you know. Because we have had an issue with toilet paper being thrown on the floor and I didn't understand that that was a possibility of being that if they were coming

from other countries where they didn't flush it. In Honduras we didn't have that issue. So, but to now understand that it makes a lot more sense. So..(laughing). For us that's....even the littlest detail like that will make a difference when we get back to school.

In further discussion she identified the role increased understanding would render to practice, specifically identifying a family survey:

One of the biggest things is we wanted to put together a survey for families, and I think one of the biggest impacts will be how to ask the questions in the right way and to have an understanding of....have a deeper understanding of the culture... so I think that we get more authentic answers in the survey.

Postimmersion Beth provided specific examples citing immersion experience transferability to practice:

I tell you in counseling I am much more aware of just not being as wasteful with things because we tend to go through just massive amounts of paper and supplies here in the guidance office. So I try to not do that as much. With that I think going on these particular trips also either try's your patience or makes you a more patient person, and it has made me a more patient person. I've gotten back to school and just helping kids out with working through particular steps and things like that. So I think that has helped and just you know, building up kids self esteem that they can do it. They just, they've got to put one foot in front of the other and they can make changes in whether they want to study differently or if there is a situation going on in their lives. So I think that's kind of the biggest ways I've kind of helped.

In addition she demonstrated an ability to transfer and expand the scope of immersion learning beyond Latino students:

In fact, we have a lot of the Katrina refugees here and I grew up in New Orleans so I have kids here. I was able to get up in front of the faculty and describe those school conditions, because they are so much more different than schools here in the Atlanta area. So that's also you know, being able to sort of relate to different people. And they [school faculty] come and ask about kids and where they're coming from. It's like, yeah, they're just coming from a completely different culture, being here.

Beth identified increased understanding and sensitivity of cultural differences within Latin America resulting from immersion experiences. Immersion and postimmersion interviews illustrate transfer of knowledge to practice by increasing personal cognizance of resource utilization, increased proactivity in student assistance, and expanding the scope of immersion learning to differing situations.

The following data illustrates Tammy's transfer of immersion related experiences and learning to her practice. Tammy, a 43-year old White female, teaches high school ESOL in a community experiencing rapid growth and subsequent increase in Latino students. Previous international experiences include a church mission trip to Haiti as a teenager and a short-term undergraduate study abroad program to Europe not involving a homestay. Data are presented in the following sequence: preimmersion interview responses, immersion interview and journal entries, and postimmersion interview responses. Tammy's immersion interview was conducted during the Ecolodge stay following the homestay.

Tammy identified transferability of immersion experiences during the immersion interview through an increased confidence to communicate in Spanish and incorporation of experiences in her classroom teaching:

I've always been apprehensive because I don't know the language. You know, I certainly cannot speak it with good grammar. That kind of bothers me but I haven't time to take a class. But I do feel like I can at least get my point across now, so I think I'll really be more inclined to try and communicate with the parents and students. I'll probably be able to use more with them. You know everything I have experienced I think I will use in the classroom, I'm like that. I talk about everything I've done.

Immersion journal entries also indicate a transfer of experiences to practice. The following describes the visit to Café Britt coffee plantation:

It was great! Very educational in a fun way. I thought how that is really the way to teach. They had a story line, had costumes, music, dancing, video, jokes, and audience participation. All this kept me really entertained at the same time giving me pertinent information about the coffee industry as well as the culture! Super!

Her final journal entry summarizes anticipated transfer of learning to practice:

I know that I will use my experiences in different ways in teaching. First, I'll be more confident using Spanish, maybe even visit some homes this year. I'm also more aware of what my students go through. I'll definitely know that those beginners in ESOL catch about ¼ of what's being said, but can generally get the gist of what's going on – my experience in Spanish. I'm sure I can bring in some of the coffee stuff and experiences from the schools and homestay in my teaching and interactions. I'll be excited to share my experiences with other teachers and my students – it's been great!

Postimmersion Tammy discussed transferring personal language learning experiences to practice:

The language aspect, you know I think I brought back more confidence. I think that's helped me certainly and just the knowledge of what it feels like to try to learn a language and what is most important. What do they need, what did I need to be able to get by and so therefore, what do they need?

She also identified including journaling activities to classroom teaching, as directly linked to immersion experiences:

I just wanted to remember everything that happened and my thoughts and feelings. So I think it's a great exercise. In fact, I've started doing that with my students. Now, I don't say just tell me everything that happened, I give them some directions. But, it does a lot I think, especially with their language. It forces them to just try to write even though they might not have all the language right. In fact, I've started,

I do journal myself but in Spanish and I think that's helping me just develop. I'll read it to them every now and then and they'll be like that's not good grammar. I don't know Spanish grammar or anything like that. They understand what I'm saying and I get what they're doing too. It's a good thing.

Tammy reported the ability to directly transfer immersion experiences and learning to practice, specifically identifying acquisition of new teaching methods, increased confidence speaking Spanish, as well as knowledge of language acquisition. Journal entries and interview data (immersion and postimmersion) illustrate her transfer of knowledge to practice. Postimmersion identification of teaching methodologies specifically linked to immersion experiences further indicates learning transferability.

*Summary – Transfer of Learning from an International to a Domestic Context*

The previous data illustrates participant ability to transfer immersion linked learning to practice. Immersion journal entries and interview data illustrate participant knowledge transfer process initiation during the immersion. Postimmersion data indicates the methods participants used in actual transference to practice. Self-reported examples include alteration of teaching methodologies (e.g., including the practice of journaling into high school ESOL classes, incorporation of agricultural based content into high school sciences classes), becoming an information resource within the school, alteration of school administrative policies, providing professional development program within the school or district (e.g., teaching ESOL endorsement classes, developing sheltered instruction training programs for teachers).

Study participant job responsibilities were wide-ranging, encompassing classroom teaching, administration (school and district-wide levels), and specialists at all grade levels (elementary, middle, and high school). In addition, participant ethnicity,

international experience, and language ability also varied. Regardless of individual differences, all participants reported learning and impact to practice resulting from the immersion, with 11 of 12 providing specific illustration of immersion-linked learning transfer to practice.

### Additional Findings

Although not specifically addressed by this study, data provides longitudinal insight to the impact rendered by both international immersion experiences and multi-pronged approaches multicultural professional development. Participants who participated in previous international immersion experiences and other forms of multicultural professional development used these prior experiences and knowledge before, during, and after the Costa Rican immersion program. Prior knowledge to anticipate Costa Rican experiences preimmersion, to make connections in knowledge construction during the immersion, and postimmersion experiences were combined in continued growth as well as, practice and programming modifications.

### Chapter Summary

Previous discussion surrounds findings of an investigation of the impact a multicultural immersion program rendered on the beliefs and practices of K-12 educational personnel. Four major themes emerging through data analysis included: 1) growth through disequilibrium, 2) utilization of prior knowledge to create meaning and connections, 3) growth through critical reflection, and 4) transfer of learning from an international to a domestic context. Each theme was illustrated through participant reported experiences and accounts encompassing representative group experiences. Data from each participant was included in at least one theme in an effort to include all voices.

The four themes identified in study data indicate the potential value of immersion programs to multicultural teacher education and professional development by documenting participant learning processes and impact to practice. Disequilibrium rendered by immersion experiences precipitated positional awareness by shifting power bases, contexts, and realities. This led to critical reflection and questioning of previously held values and “truths.” These factors combined with increased knowledge bases surrounding relevant content and cultural awareness precipitating transfer of learning through modified or new teaching methods and other programming.

Initiating factors and recognition of disequilibrium varied. Participant identified examples included removal from normal routines, responsibilities, comfort zones, and programmatic physical rigor. Before leaving the airport in San Jose participants were keenly aware they had left the familiarity of the U.S. and their normal comfort zones. When a person leaves comfort zones, familiar power bases and realities shift. Study participants reported an abrupt awareness of becoming the “other.” Suddenly language barriers, different currencies, and unfamiliar roads precipitated gaps in current knowledge bases rendering the knapsack of unearned assets.

Traveling through Costa Rica, participating in homestays, and school visits allowed participants a first hand view of the lives most immigrants lead before coming to the U.S. For many, this was their first encounter with the abject poverty prevalent in developing nations and the disparity of resource allocation. This new first-hand knowledge created disequilibrium and precipitated shifting realities, as well as the questioning of previously believed “truths.” As the immersion progressed the physical challenges increasingly tired participants and created further disequilibrium.

Participants used prior knowledge to bridge gaps and construct new meanings. Five participants illustrate the process: two with extensive international experience, two with limited or no international experience, and one of Mexican decent with extensive international experience. Data indicates an ongoing continual process was identified in all stages of the experience (preimmersion anticipation through postimmersion applications of experiences) and regardless of previous international travel experience.

Study data are indicative of participant growth and learning precipitated by reflecting on previous knowledge and/or experiences in differing contexts and realities encountered during the immersion program. The journeys described provide vivid representation of group experiences. Accounts document individual processes used in perspective change by combining experience, classes, observation, interaction, and reflection.

All participants reported learning and impact to practice resultant of Costa Rica immersion program participation. All participants, regardless of job responsibilities, ethnicity, international experience, and language ability reported learning and impact to practice directly linked to immersion experiences. Eleven of 12 participants specifically illustrated direct incorporation of immersion-linked learning to practice. Self-reported examples include alteration of teaching methodologies (e.g., including the practice of journaling into high school ESOL classes, incorporation of agricultural based content into high school sciences classes), becoming an information resource within the school, alteration of school administrative policies, and providing professional development program within the school or district (e.g., teaching ESOL endorsement classes, developing sheltered instruction training programs for teachers).

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact a multicultural immersion program rendered on beliefs and practices of K-12 educational personnel. Research questions guiding this study included: 1) What are the representative experiences of the K-12 educator multicultural immersion program participants? 2) In what ways did the multicultural immersion program affect K-12 educator participant beliefs? and 3) In what ways did the multicultural immersion program affect K-12 educator participant practice and programs? Five sections encompass this chapter: a brief study summary; discussion of conclusions incorporating study findings and literature, relevance of study to the literature, research and practice implications, and future research recommendations.

#### Study Summary

This qualitative case study examines the experiences surrounding 12 K-12 educators participating in a international multicultural immersion program located in Costa Rica. All program participants agreed to participate in this study, allowing the entire population to be included. All participants were female and seasoned educators working with Latino students for many years. Individual multicultural professional development experiences encompassed a wide range, some participated solely in US-based programs and others held extensive previous immersion experience (ranging from 15 days to four years duration). All participants were White and nine participants were White Americans, two Latina (who spent a portion of their childhood in Latin America), and one a European

National. International travel experience varied and only one participant was without previous international travel.

Primary study data included semi-structured interviews conducted at three programmatic stages (before, during, and after) of the immersion experience, and participant completed immersion journals recording experiences and learning. A constant comparative methodology was utilized in data analysis. Four major themes emerged through data analysis 1) growth through disequilibrium, 2) utilization of prior knowledge to create meaning and connections, 3) growth through critical reflection, and 4) transfer of learning from an international to a domestic context. This chapter presents conclusions, discussion, and recommendations for future research.

### Conclusions

Study findings resulted in three major conclusions. First, this international multicultural immersion program resulted in experiential learning: immersion experiences created knowledge gaps resulting in a cycle including disequilibrium, efforts to create understanding through prior knowledge connection, and subsequent growth. Second, the international cultural immersion program affected participant beliefs: immersion experiences catalyzed critical reflection, and perspective shifts which resulted in growth and affected previous belief systems. Finally, the international cultural immersion program experiences and subsequent growth impacted all levels of practices and programming.

#### What are the Representative Experiences of K-12 Educator Multicultural Immersion Program Participants?

The representative experiences of K-12 educator multicultural immersion program participants included disequilibrium and knowledge gaps resulting in experiential

learning processes. Study participants reported programmatic experiences precipitated knowledge gaps creating a cyclical process involving disequilibrium, efforts to create understanding through prior knowledge connection, and subsequent growth. Learning of this nature typifies experiential processes.

Learning is the process catalyzed by a disjuncture of prior knowledge and current experiences. Experiences rendering growth characterize experiential learning (Dewey 1938). Two elements key to this process, interaction and continuity, were identifiable in study findings. Participant reported disequilibrium illustrates interaction. Although individually unique, precipitating factors included removal from normal routines, responsibilities, comfort zones, and physical rigor. Continuity was demonstrated through participant reported ongoing efforts to create understanding through prior knowledge connection.

Scholars posit that traditional multicultural professional development is not working. They identify an immediate need to close the chasm surrounding school and life experiences existing between the current educator cohort and their diverse students (Banks, 2004; Cochran-Smith et. al, 2004; Garcia, 1999; Sleeter, 2001; Zeichner, 2003). Although a variety of delivery methods exist (e.g., stand-alone classroom-based course delivery, cultural immersion programs, and processes combining both), the most prevalently used is stand alone classroom-based lecture courses and workshops. Studies indicate the need for multi-pronged and ongoing approaches to multicultural education (Brown, 2004; Cahnmann, 2004; Roose, 2001; Rymes, 2002; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998; Suarez 2001; Yawkey et al., 2003).

A major obstacle encompassing stand-alone course delivery is the often emotionally draining process students and instructors undergo as learners face critical analysis that challenges deeply embedded cultural values and norms. Multicultural teacher education theorists posit immersion programs as an effective alternative to stand alone course delivery. By design they allow learners an opportunity to step outside the box encompassing traditional classroom dynamics and power bases to unfamiliar realities, experiences, and understandings (Banks, 2001; Mahan, 1982; Melnick & Zeichner, 1998; Rymes, 2002; Sleeter, 2001). Participant reports which indicated leaving comfort zones and subsequent growth correlate with the literature.

When a person leaves comfort zones, familiar power bases and realities shift. Critical theorists such as Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2000) and Maher and Tetreault (2001) posit positionality is perhaps the single most influential factor in knowledge construction. Positionality is one's hierarchical social location defined by gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and or disability. It is solvent and constantly in flux, with classroom positionality mirroring society (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000; Maher & Tetreault, 2001).

Participants in this study reported an abrupt awareness of becoming the "other." Suddenly language barriers, different currencies, and unfamiliar roads precipitated gaps in current knowledge bases rendering the knapsack of unearned assets (e.g., special provisions, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks) useless. The findings from this study indicate immersion experiences precipitated growth surrounding power and position and their role in knowledge construction and immigrant experiences.

Perpetuation of positionality depends on invisibility, which is why awareness is a key component of multicultural learning. McIntosh (1990) provides excellent illustration in her invisible knapsack of privileges accompanying whiteness.

Study findings indicate participant reported experiences and growth create patterns coinciding with the works of Anzaldua (1990), Bateson (1994), and Hart (2001). Tangible reference points such as borders and topographies of power are often used to metaphorically characterize the interrelationship of learning with power, privilege, and positionality. Positing traditional assumptions too complex for single isolated encounters, Bateson uses a double helix metaphor to address the importance time, interaction, and continuity render to learning. Anzaldua, Bateson, and Hart illustrate learning's potential to blur existing demarcations, separate power systems, make the strange familiar thereby allowing cognizance of previously unrecognized commonalities via continuity and interaction.

This study indicates the ability of immersion programs to affect experiential learning, providing a catalyst to disrupt the bubble of comfortable complacency surrounding dominant culture Americans (Anzaldua, 1990). In addition, participants of previous immersions identified continued growth resulting from renewal, the ability to scaffold, and entwine prior and current experiences. This correlates with previous research speaking to the need for a multi-pronged continual approach, allowing experiences to be stretched, pulled, and folded back upon another. Learning results from processes initiated to close gaps and make meaning. Immersion programs remove learners from comfort zones. The inability to problem solve with current knowledge instigates disequilibrium and subsequent efforts to connect prior knowledge to current situations.

## In What Ways did the Multicultural Immersion Program Affect K-12 Educator Participant Beliefs?

The international multicultural immersion program affected the beliefs of K-12 educator participants by creating perspective shifts. Growth encompassing beliefs, individually unique and often indiscernible, extend beyond experience and require a perspective shift. Key to affecting change of perspective in one's beliefs, their origin, and beneficiaries is critical reflection (Brookfield, 1985). Because affecting a perspective shift requires cognizance, these characteristics can create a quagmire in learning processes encompassing beliefs. Study findings indicate immersion activities precipitated growth and learning by reflecting previous knowledge and/or experiences in differing contexts and realities, or critical reflection.

Study participants reported experiences and growth encompassing elements characteristic to transformational learning. Categorized within the realm of constructivist experiential learning transformational learning focuses on a process of identification, deconstruction, evaluation, and reconfiguration of socially constructed experiences. That being said, just as all experiences do not educate, not all learning is transformational. While experience is the key element in catalyzing a learning process, it alone does not effect transformation. The process necessitates examination of the underlying beliefs and assumptions which affect how we make sense of the experience (i.e., critical reflection). Differentiated by impact, transformational learning renders a perceptual shift identifiable by oneself and others (Clark, 1991; Dewey, 1938; Jarvis, 1987; Kolb, 1984; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Mezirow, 1991).

To contextualize the role perspective change renders to K-12 educators requires understanding societal frameworks encompassing the current cohort. The literature base

discusses dominant culture influence on education. Rationality and recognition of hegemonic cultural dominance and superiority perpetuates “alleged truths.” Rendered as “common sense” or “logical,” truths are seldom rejected or questioned and are subsequently ingrained in the U.S. educational system. Schools have historically provided a frontline defense mechanism to maintain status quo hegemonic cultural dominance. Government and school policy accomplish this by attempting to make Latino students relinquish cultural beliefs, values, traditions, and language to become American (Darder, 1991; Gee, 1996; Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 1988; Noel, 2000; Ruiz, 1998).

The previous factors provide impetus for the call rendered by multicultural teacher education theorists urging programs designed to allow current and future educational personnel to examine current beliefs and attitudes surrounding difference, privilege, diversity, and culture. While recognizing its singular inability to affect complete change to American education or societal norms, they posit teachers committed to and cognizant of multiculturalism as frontline societal change mechanisms (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Cochran-Smith et al., 2004; Earley, 2000; Garcia, 1999; Weiner, 1990, 1993, 2000; Yeo, 1997).

Study findings indicate immersion experiences shift and blur boundaries as dominant culture educators become aware that differing realities render previous logic useless and that new knowledge construction processes uncovers alternative truths. Participants reported that immersion experiences and the resulting growth were integral to precipitating new meaning. Subsequently, this provides increased capacity in relevant

needs assessment and service delivery surrounding educational programming for diverse students and parents.

### In What Ways did the Multicultural Immersion Program Affect K-12 Educator Participant Practice and Programs?

International multicultural immersion program experiences and subsequent growth affected all levels of practices and programming of K-12 educator participants, and it helped the participants expand their teaching through increased content knowledge and new methods. Their increased cultural awareness increased teaching/facilitation skills and capacity to provide relevant connections and content for Latino students.

Despite a wide-range of backgrounds, experiences, and professional roles, study data indicated immersion experiences directly impacted participant practice. Knowledge transfer is a key indicator of success in adult education program planning theory. Multicultural teacher education research indicates that passive learning activities may deliver an understandable message, but still fail to provide applicable and transferable connections to the real-life situations learners' encounter (Brown, 2004; Roose, 2001; Rymes, 2002).

Educational professional development literature indicates the propensity for teachers to become entrenched in the territorial confines encompassing classrooms and specializations, potentially inhibiting learning alternative teaching methodologies. Immersion programs are viewed as vehicles allowing learners to step outside the box encompassing traditional classroom dynamics and power bases to unfamiliar realities, experiences, and understandings (Banks, 2001; Grossman et al., 2000; Mahan, 1982; Melnick & Zeichner, 1998; Rymes, 2002; Sleeter, 2001).

Study findings indicate the immersion program took educators away from their comfort zones and decreased barriers. Participants reported the immersion to be a valuable learning experience and reported it directly resulted in the acquisition of teaching methodologies, increased knowledge of Latin America; increased confidence and ability to serve as a resource (school and district level), and facilitated professional development activities. This data correlates with the findings of Roose (2001).

Participants of this study reported immersion experiences facilitated this need and illustrate successful knowledge transfer to all levels of practices and programming despite wide-ranging backgrounds, experiences, and professional roles. The non-traditional format characterizing immersion programs allows individual tailoring of knowledge construction surrounding theoretical concepts and teaching methodologies. The ability to meet a wide-range of unique needs facilitates knowledge construction and transfer to practice. The current teaching cadre continues the use of a dominant culture teaching model used in the U.S. for generations. Georgia educators do not need statistical data to inform them of the State's impressively low Latino graduation rate or exponential population increase; they observe it in everyday practice. What these professionals need is programmatic knowledge easily applicable to individual practices.

K-12 bicultural education scholars speak to the difficulties diverse students encounter when their discourses conflict with majority culture educational discourses. These conflicts result in misinterpretation of student behaviors, inconsistent expectations, and potential school failure. The message sent to diverse students is that their culture and knowledge bases are inferior and should be replaced with "normal" or dominant culture

ideologies. This phenomenon has been dubbed “subtractive schooling” (Darder, 1991; Noel 2000; Valenzuela, 1999).

While this study demonstrates the role connections rendered to participant immersion learning processes, it also identified the role these experiences and learning rendered to their practices and programs. Learning processes are instigated by disjuncture in knowledge and require connections. However a gap too large results in an inability to construct knowledge (Jarvis, 1987). Oftentimes the gap diverse student’s encounter becomes too large to facilitate connections needed for knowledge construction. Participants reported the ability to facilitate Latino student learning processes by their ability to connect immersion related personal experiences and knowledge to Latino student knowledge bases.

This discussion illustrates participant ability to transfer knowledge to all levels of programming and practice. The primary aim of any professional development program is enhancing job performance. The presentation order facilitated broad to specific dissemination of findings. Study findings indicate experiences provided events catalyzing critical reflection and perspective shifts affecting beliefs, experiences and belief changes combined and transferred to practice and programming changes, potentially manifesting enhanced job performance. While an absence of concrete examples in traditional classroom-based lectures may leave learners unable to conceptualize theory to practice translation, the experiential frame surrounding immersion programs provides a vehicle.

## Relevance of Study Findings to the Literature

This study's literature review clearly identifies the immediate need for multicultural teacher education research. Teacher education scholars heartily acknowledge the tremendous chasm encompassing multicultural research and effective methodologies to educate current and future teachers, administrators, and support personnel. The findings of this study render implications to the multicultural teacher education and adult education literature bases at both theoretical and practical levels.

This study is one of the first multicultural teacher education studies which provide data to this depth. Data used in this study includes in-depth interviews conducted at three programmatic stages (before, during, and after); participant immersion journals; and researcher observations. No studies identified via literature review provided pre-programmatic data collection, with most investigating only one programmatic stage (during or after). Suarez (2002) was the only study indicating the use of journaling during immersion. Study data were identified as postimmersion participant reflective papers, with no indication the study incorporated journal data. Participants of this study provided additional depth as they represented a broad range of backgrounds and experiences such as; professional roles and responsibilities, ethnicities, previous travel experience, and Spanish language ability.

A common thread to all reviewed research encompassing this study is the recognition that immersion experiences (community and international) hold the potential to precipitate perspective shifts and alter belief systems. A major flaw recognized by scholars is an absence of data evaluating immersion program ability to affect long-term transformational learning and methods of knowledge transfer to practice. Brown (2004)

provided the only study specifically investigating the effect an undergraduate international immersion program rendered to their teaching practices. Findings of this study provide insight to the long-term effects immersion programs render. Although this study only extended five months postimmersion, the inclusion of participants with previous international experience provides rich data on potential long-term effects resulting from perspective shifts and transformation learning process.

Study findings indicate previous international experience affected all aspects of participant experiences. Those with previous international experience manifested differing expectations, reactions, and learning at all programmatic stages. This supports findings reported by Rymes (2002) in a study surrounding a community immersion course. Rymes found students without international experience reported a transformation encompassing pre-programmatic dread leading to enlightenment as the program progressed. Additionally, those with international experience focused on learning experiences surrounding teaching, lesson preparation, and fitting in with the household they taught.

Findings of this study confirm the literature which emphasizes the importance of providing an integrated multi-pronged multicultural curriculum. Initiated in the first stages of teacher education, multicultural education should become a required component of ongoing professional development. All study participants reported growth from this experience. However, those with previous international experience specifically identified scaffolding knowledge and the exponential value multi-pronged approaches and continual professional development rendered to practice.

## Implications for Research and Practice

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role immersion experiences rendered to participant learning processes. Study findings provide implications to the research and practice knowledge bases of adult education, critical social theory, and multicultural teacher education. This study also indicates the ability of immersion programs to elicit experiential and transformational learning processes. In addition, individual immersion journal data provided insight to these learning processes and illustrated the uniqueness of each individual's journey.

This study implicitly provides evidence that immersion programs provide knowledge and insight only available through experienced-based learning. The nature of immersion requires learners to assume an active role, creating increased potential for meaningful contextualization, connection, and application of learning. Study participant reports indicate that immersion experiences are key to knowledge construction because the only way to true "knowing" was through "living it." This provides correlation of the value of immersions experienced-based learning to multicultural education.

This study provides further validation to critics of Mezirow's (1991) original positivistic rationally centered transformational learning frame. Findings indicate critical reflection and perspective shifts are individually unique and encompass contextual factors such as emotion, physical condition, and previous experiences. This study clearly indicates transformational learning processes are recursive and entwined as opposed to linear and step-wise. In addition, this study gives support that it is possible for subtle cumulative unconscious learning to trigger the process of transformation, proving that it does not have to be a single disorienting crisis or dilemma.

This study offers insight to the role that differing forms of data can contribute to understanding the learning processes. This study investigated the learning process utilizing interviews (conducted at three programmatic stages) and immersion journals. Although interview data was essential, participant journals provided an intimate real-time look at learning processes. The open, honest, and prolific journaling of study participants provided in-depth insight surrounding immersion learning through experience, critical reflection, and knowledge transfer methods.

This study's relevance stems from the fact that Latino students, who now comprise the largest U.S. minority, are being educated by a teaching cadre using one-sided dominant culture perspectives and methodologies. Findings specifically indicated that immersion experiences catalyzed questioning of dominant culture truths, critical reflection, and perspective shifts. Also demonstrated was how shifting power bases led to boundary redefinition and effectively resulted in topographical remapping of participant worlds. This knowledge furthers critical social theory research on the roles that power, privilege, and positionality play in educational experiences. It also shows how the positional consciousness and alternative perspective cognizance of teachers can lead to change.

This study serves to contribute to the multicultural teacher education practice literature. In addition to implicating immersion programs as an effective multicultural education methodology, findings provide evidentiary support to the worth of multi-pronged approaches. Learning acquired from previous multicultural professional development was often used as connectors in knowledge construction.

This study finds that immersion experiences changed teacher practices, impacted all programming levels, and facilitated the ability of individuals as change mechanisms. Experiences and growth directly resulting from the immersion were carried to classrooms, professional development of other educators, and affected school administrative policy and programming. As teachers acquire alternative teaching methods and increased cultural and contextual understanding of Latin America. Study findings suggest the potential of immersion programs to directly influence the educational quality of Latino students. Participants also return with increased confidence and ability to serve as a school and/or district resource surrounding diverse student needs.

The inclusion of administrators in immersion programs creates buy-in for programs and policies applicable to diverse students. Findings indicate that day-to-day administrative responsibilities could create a propensity that leads to lack a cognizance of the needs of diverse students and parents. Multicultural teacher education and specifically immersion experiences remove traditional school structures and power bases and facilitates the ability for administrators to create new connections and understanding of relevant policy and programming for diverse students, and their teachers.

Through this study increased insight was gained into how participants incorporated previous multicultural education into practices before this immersion program, how these experiences were combined during the immersion, and how these experiences were incorporated into practices postimmersion. My study adds to the literature through identification of methods educators used to incorporate multicultural education into their practices.

Although the focus of the study surrounded educator multicultural professional development, the learning processes and findings this study encompasses are relevant to any discipline. Study findings validate the importance of providing continual and multi-pronged multicultural education. This study provides further research on the ongoing nature encompassing learning processes which require the connection and entwining of prior experience and knowledge, as well as the potential to elicit alternative responses and learning through contextual variations. This provides much needed information to the practice of providing effective multicultural education delivery methods.

#### Future Research Recommendations

The lack of educator multicultural professional development research speaks to the immediate need of further research on any level. The results of this study provide impetus for my recommendation of duplicate studies. Consistent findings will further validate the findings of this study and provide greater insight to applicable methodologies. The participants of this study were all women. This is demographically consistent with the current teaching cadre and is not considered a study limitation. In addition the need for longitudinal studies illustrating long-term affects immersion experiences and continual multicultural professional development has on the beliefs, practices, and programs of practicing teachers is needed.

It is my suggestion that comparative studies of different immersion programs be conducted. This was not the first immersion program or international experience for many study participants. The data surrounding participant reaction to experiences based on previous international experiences provided interesting comparisons and a basis for further research on the types of activities and programming that is useful and applicable.

Although not included in this study, a group of agricultural Extension agents traveled with this educator group. The educator study participants overwhelmingly identified the value this interdisciplinary group rendered to their learning processes. Because of this I recommend further study on the potential impact of interdisciplinary immersion programs.

A study to evaluate the affect integrated multicultural pre-service teacher education programming has on belief systems and practice is also recommended. The aim of this study would be to analyze changes to belief systems throughout undergraduate training, the effect on basic pedagogical and curricular values, and how these factors translate to their ability to serve diverse students.

This study identifies the reluctance of teacher education faculty to provide much needed critical multicultural teacher education. Lack of institutional support creates an atmosphere in which faculty are not risking poor course evaluations, student resistance, or promotion and tenure opportunities. Because of this, I recommend a study evaluating the role institutional commitment can have on program graduates' ability to change their practices in order to teach diverse students.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter presented three conclusions based on findings in Chapter Five. First, the representative experiences of K-12 educator multicultural immersion programs participants included disequilibrium and knowledge gaps resulting in experiential learning processes. Second, the multicultural immersion program affected the beliefs of K-12 educator participants by creating perspective shifts. Third, multicultural immersion program experiences and subsequent growth affected all levels of practices and

programming of K-12 educator participants, as it helped them to expand their teaching through increased content knowledge and new methods. Their increased cultural awareness increased teaching/facilitation skills and their capacity to provide relevant connections and content for Latino students. Each conclusion was supported through discussion presenting evidence rendered via this study's findings and the current literature base. In addition, this chapter presented discussion surrounding relevance of study findings to the literature, implications for research and practice, as well as future research recommendations.

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## APPENDIX A

### Preimmersion Interview Question Guide

The first portion of the interview will surround you experiences at the summer institute held in June 2003 or 2004.

1. Have you ever traveled outside the United States?
  - a. If yes, where and what types of experiences were they?
  - b. If no, what types of feelings do you have in anticipation of this experience?
2. Please discuss your current position and responsibilities.  
Possible probes: What school  
What grade level  
What subject  
Demographic make-up of student body and individual class.
3. Why did you decide to participate in the summer institute?
4. Are there any experiences that were key to this decision?
5. Please describe your concept of culture and/or cultural differences before the institute.
6. Please describe any changes of understanding of cultural differences as a result of the institute. (WILL USE THIS IF I DON'T GET ENOUGH FROM 4)
7. Let's switch gears, please describe the institute to me.
8. What are the similarities/differences in approaches you use since attending the institute?
9. How is this lesson different than one you would have prepared before the institute?
10. Please walk me through a typical day in your class.
11. Tell me about your interactions and relationships with Latino parents.
12. Have your relationships changed since attending the institute?
13. As a result of the institute your school/district now has a team in place to address needs/issues surrounding the Latino students in your school/district. Please describe the experiences encountered via the team-based approach you have encountered.  
Possible probes: Helped/hindered the process  
Better working relationships  
Increased attitudinal awareness in school/district  
Support from colleagues

Let's focus on the immersion program to Costa Rica/Mexico you will participate in.

14. What experiences can you identify as key to your decision to participate in the cultural immersion program?
15. Please describe to me ways in which you are preparing for the experience?
  - a. Special classes
  - b. Reading
  - c. Mental preparation
16. What do you hope to learn from the experience?
  - a. On a personal level
  - b. On a professional level
17. Do you have any preconceived expectations regarding the experience?
18. What are your thoughts of Costa Rica as a country and of its people prior to this immersion experience?

## APPENDIX B

### Immersion Interview Question Guide

You have been participating in the immersion program for 1 week, I would like to get some insights as to your experiences thus far.

1. What is your daily life like in Costa Rica?
2. Describe some typical experiences.
3. Describe the kinds of personal attributes and skills you have that contribute to your experience.
4. What are some of the relationships you have developed?
5. What will be the future of these relationships?
6. What is the nature of your interactions with the Costa Rican people?
7. What is the relationship with your host family?
8. What are some of the most gratifying experiences you have encountered?
  - a. How were you feeling during this experience?
  - b. What were your feelings for the Costa Rica/Mexican People, culture, your own culture?
  - c. Can you remember what you thought about mostly during these times?
  - d. When did you do most of your thinking?
9. What are some of the most difficult experiences you have encountered?
  - a. How were you feeling during this experience?
  - b. What were your feelings for the Costa Rica/Mexican People, culture, your own culture?
  - c. Can you remember what you thought about mostly during these difficult times?
  - d. When did you do most of your thinking?
  - e. How did you change things, make things less difficult?
  - f. What were your reasons for those decisions?
  - g. Did you consciously think about doing things to make it easier or did it just happen unconsciously?
    - i. Tell me how you thought through problems.
10. What do you think you are learning the most from this experience?
11. How has living in this culture made you think about the United States culture?
12. What experiences will most impact your practice?

## APPENDIX C

### Postimmersion Interview Question Guide

1. What was your daily life like in Costa Rica?
2. Describe some typical experiences.
3. Describe the kinds of personal attributes and skills you have that contribute to your experience.
4. How do you feel about the people you encountered in Costa Rica?
5. Describe the relationships you have developed with the others in your group and with the Costa Rica people.
6. What was the relationship with your host family, do you intend to continue that relationship?
7. What are some of the most gratifying experiences you encountered?
  - a. How were you feeling during this experience?
  - b. What were your feelings for the Costa Rica/Mexican People, culture, your own culture?
  - c. Can you remember what you thought about mostly during these times?
  - d. When did you do most of your thinking?
8. Think of one of your most difficult experiences while in Costa Rica and describe it.
  - a. How were you feeling during this experience?
  - b. What were your feelings for the Costa Rica/Mexican People, culture, your own culture?
  - c. Can you remember what you thought about mostly during these difficult times?
  - d. When did you do most of your thinking?
  - e. How did you change things, make things less difficult?
  - f. What were your reasons for those decisions?
  - g. Did you consciously think about doing things to make it easier or did it just happen unconsciously?
    - i. If so, tell me how you thought through problems.
9. What did you think of Costa Rica as a country and people prior to the immersion experience?
10. How have your perceptions changed since your experience?
11. Were there significant others of the host culture or your group who were influential in your learning the ways of the Costa Rica/Mexican culture? If so, who were they and how were they helpful?
12. What is different in your life because of your time in Costa Rica?
13. What is different in your teaching practice because of your time in Costa Rica?
14. Since your experience in Costa Rica have your perspective changed regarding:
  - a. Costa Rica/Latino cultures
  - b. United States
  - c. Yourself
15. What are some experiences that you have encountered that you perceive as affecting your teaching practices upon return?
16. Please discuss differences/similarities between the summer institute and the immersion programs.
17. How they affected your practice.
18. How do these programs working together?
19. What experiences and learning were you able to achieve at one that would not have been possible at the other? Can one replace the other?

## APPENDIX D

### Participant Consent Form

I agree to take part in a research study titled Application of Adult Learning Theories to Cross-Cultural Training Programs of In-service K-12 Educators being conducted Christa Hofacre, Graduate Student, Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy, 706-XXX-XXXX, [hofacrec@uga.edu](mailto:hofacrec@uga.edu), under the direction of Dr. Juanita Johnson-Bailey, Associate Professor, Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy, 706-542-6660. My participation is voluntary; I can stop taking part at any time without giving any reason and without penalty. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The following points have been explained to me:

1. The reason for the research is to discover how K-12 educators and/or school personnel learn cross-cultural strategies and how cross-cultural training can affect their worldview and practice.
2. I may enjoy sharing my experiences, but otherwise I will not benefit directly from this research.
3. The procedures are as follows. I will make an appointment for an interview prior to the immersion experience at a time and place convenient to me. The topics of the interview are my previous cross-cultural experiences and views, my experience at the Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education (CLASE) in Summer 2003 or 2004, my current teaching practice, my experience during and after participation in the cultural immersion trip to Costa Rica Summer 2005. In addition to the interviews I will be asked to participate in group discussions with all participants before, during, and after the immersion program. I will also be asked to journal and take photographs during the immersion experience. The journal, camera, and film development will be provided at Ms. Hofacre's expense.
4. No discomforts or stresses are foreseen. However, if I am bothered by any questions posed, I may skip them.
5. No risks are foreseen. The tapes will be transcribed by Ms. Hofacre with all personally identifying information replaced by pseudonyms. The transcripts will be checked for accuracy by Ms. Hofacre.
6. Any information obtained in this study that can be connected with me will remain confidential, unless otherwise required by law. My name as a participant will be stored separately from the transcript of my interview; only my interviewer will know the transcript is mine. Audio and videotapes and photographs will be stored securely. Videotapes will only be used for aiding transcription of group discussion and data analysis and will be destroyed no later than December 31, 2007. Audio recordings will be kept indefinitely for future research. Photographs taken by participants will also be used for data analysis purposes and will not be utilized in publication without participant permission. Any identifying features would be removed before use to preserve participant confidentiality. (Researcher has my permission to publish photographs I have taken. I understand any identifiable features will be blurred to maintain confidentiality YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ (participant initial's).
7. The researchers will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached at the contact locations listed above.
8. I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.
9. PLEASE SIGN BOTH COPIES OF THIS FORM. KEEP ONE AND RETURN THE OTHER TO MS. HOFACRE.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Data Collector Name                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Name                              Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Data Collector Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature                              Date

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***Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.***

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## APPENDIX E

### Journaling Guide

1. Before arriving everyone must complete this entry. What are you anticipating? Write about your expected learning experience, your host family and the experience of living with them, the cities you will see, conditions, transportation, travel, and schools. Record in detail your preconceptions, expectations, fears, excitements, and hopes. Think in terms of what you expect to see, feel, smell, taste, and touch.
2. Beauty-Describe in detail what you find beautiful around you, include descriptions of indoors, outdoors, daytime and nighttime scenes, persons, places, things, and what you have experienced with your five senses.
3. Language-Reflect on language strategies you are using and that you see your host family and other using as they attempt to communicate with you. Describe each strategy and discuss its benefits or drawbacks.
4. Frustrating-Have you experienced any anger or frustration? What caused it, and what did you do about it? If you have not, why do you think things are going so smoothly for you?
5. Amusing or Embarrassing-What have you found amusing or embarrassing? If you were directly involved, how did you handle it?
6. Condition-How are you? Consider our physical emotional, and mental state. Describe these in detail and talk about your responsive or reaction to each condition.
7. Surprise-What has surprised you most?
8. Change-If you could change something about Costa Rica, what would it be and why? Do not limit yourself. Pretend anything is possible.
9. Gift-If you could give a gift to your host family, the children, or someone else you have met, what would it be and why? No limits here. Everything is possible.
10. Return-How soon would you like to return to Costa Rica/Mexico? Why?
11. Teaching Practice—How do you see this experience affecting your teaching practice and interactions with Latino students and their parents.
12. Final Entry-Compare your anticipation entry to your actual experience. How accurate were your preconceptions? Why do you think your experience compares as it does to your anticipation?

APPENDIX F  
Photograph Question Guide

1. Tell me about this picture.
2. Tell me how you were feeling at the time you took the picture.
3. Possible probes
  - a. Please describe this picture.
  - b. Why is this picture important to you?
  - c. Please describe why you chose to take a picture of this particular subject.
  - d. How were you feeling about your intercultural experience during the time this picture was taken?
  - e. What kinds of feelings did you have towards the host country and towards your own country?
  - f. What memories does this photograph bring back?

**Instructions for Participants While Taking Photos:**

Please take photos of anything that you feel is relevant to your learning experiences or feelings during the program.