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WKU International Student Teaching Program: Professional, Cultural, and Character Impacts on In-Service and Pre-Service Teachers

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WKU INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TEACHING PROGRAM:
PROFESSIONAL, CULTURAL, AND CHARACTER IMPACTS ON IN-
SERVICE AND PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

A Capstone Experience/Thesis Project

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree Bachelor of Science with

Honors College Graduate Distinction at Western Kentucky University

By

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2014

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ABSTRACT

This project focuses on researching the effects of participation in WKU's International Student Teaching Program on in-service and pre-service teachers. The program's effect on teachers' professional decisions made in the classroom and attitudes toward diversity in the classroom were the focus of this research. A mixed method approach of in-service teacher questionnaires and interviews, pre-service teachers interviews, and analysis of blogs/journals from in-service and pre-service teachers while they were abroad was used in this project. The results of the project have illustrated the benefits, as well as the professional, cultural, and character developments of participating in the WKU International Student Program for in-service and pre-service teachers.

Keywords: education, student teaching, international education, professional development, diversity

Dedicated to Mom and Dad
Thank you for always encouraging me to do my best!

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Spring/Summer 2014.....	WKU College of Education and Behavioral Sciences Magazine, Bowling Green, KY

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Elementary Education

Minor Field: History

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Abstract.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Vita.....	v
List of Figures.....	viii
Chapters:	
1. Introduction and Background	1
2. Review of Literature.....	5
3. Research Questions.....	8
4. Methodology.....	9
5. Limitations.....	12
6. Results and Discussion.....	14
7. Significance of Data.....	24
8. Conclusion.....	27
Bibliography.....	28
Appendix A.....	31
Appendix B.....	32
Appendix C.....	33

Appendix D.....	34
Appendix E.....	37
Appendix F.....	40

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
1.1 WKU International Student Teachers Breakdown of Country Placement.....	3
1.2 WKU International Student Teachers Graph Country Placements.....	4
6.1 In-Service Teacher Questionnaire Results.....	20
7.1 Common Themes in Relation to Research Questions.....	25

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The National Center for Educational Statistics recorded that during the 2011-2012 school year (most recent school years the center has recorded) over 49.5 million students were registered in a United States public school. Student populations in American schools have increased by 2.3 million students since 2000. As student population has increased, the dynamics of American classrooms have changed as a result.

Twenty years ago, the norm of student populations in American schools were predominantly Caucasian students. Today, classrooms are full of students from different races and ethnicities. Hundreds of languages and cultures are evident in today's school system. The National Center for Educational Statistics stated in 2011 that 49% of students were of a minority race or ethnicity ("Public School Student Statistics"). In the state of Kentucky, the Department of Education reported that 69,789 students of the total 592,189 students are of a minority race or ethnicity ("School Report Card, 2013-2014"). That is over 20% of the student population. In Warren County and Bowling Green City schools 5,169 of 17,914 students are of a minority race or ethnicity ("Bowling Green and Warren County, School Report Cards, 2013-2014"). Thus, over 28% of the student population that is of a minority race. This increase in diversity in the classroom changes

the dynamics of the classroom, essentially affecting the classroom environment and how educators conduct instruction in their classrooms. Today not all students come from the same cultural background. New languages, traditions, and religions are being introduced into American classrooms.

As the dynamic of student population has changed, the dynamic of the teacher populations have not. The National Center of Education Statistics recorded that 83.1% of teachers are Caucasian (“Teacher Statistics”). The background of the teachers in the classroom is very different from those of the students in the classroom. This difference in diversity does affect the classroom. Teachers must be prepared to teach students of diversity (meaning students of different ethnicities, cultures, and languages). The difference in languages and cultures does affect student learning and achievement. The growing diversity in the classroom in turn affects the teacher and students relationship (Jiang, Coffey, DeVillar, and Bryan, 2010, p. 38).

This new dynamic of diversity in the classroom is something universities are trying to prepare teacher candidates for in the teacher preparation programs. With the increase of diversity in classrooms, universities have looked into adding a supplemental program to their teaching preparation program. These programs have been called Student Teaching Abroad Programs or International Student Teaching Programs. The purpose of these programs is to provide pre-service teachers (those studying to become a teacher, referred to as student teachers) an opportunity to teach abroad in a culture that is different than their own (Cwick and Benton, 2009, p. 37). A number of American universities have begun to incorporate these programs into the teacher preparation curriculum.

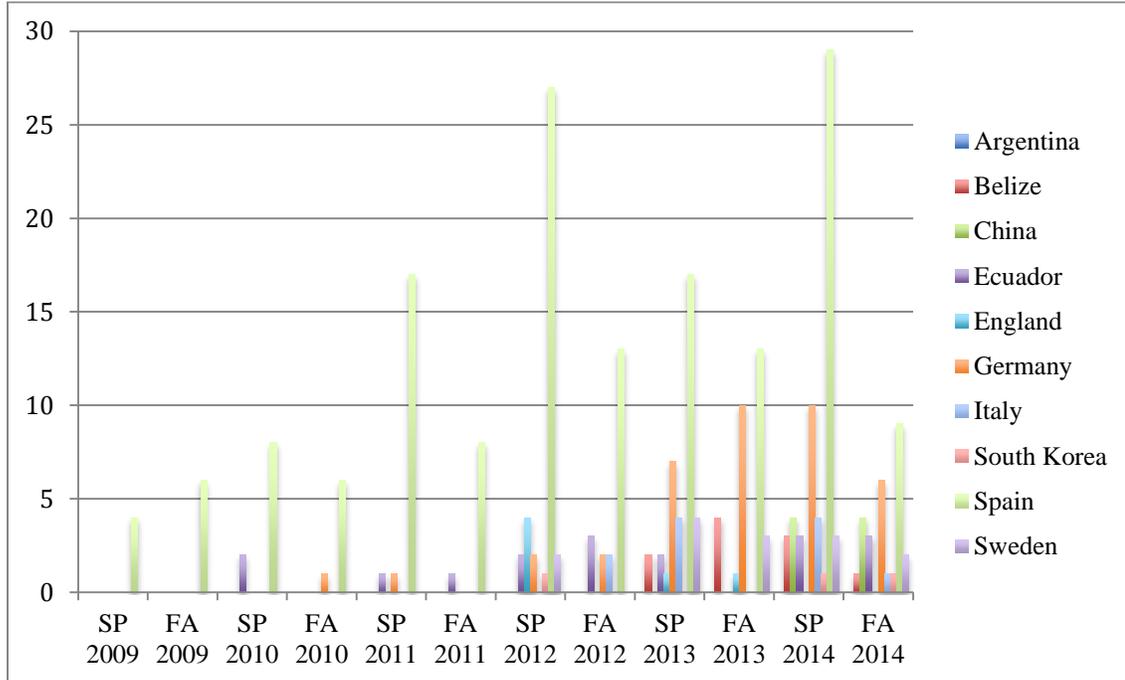
Western Kentucky University is one of these universities incorporating this type of program.

The WKU International Student Teaching Program began during the spring semester of 2009 with four pre-service teachers traveling to Barcelona, Spain. This number has since increased to 57 students traveling abroad during the spring 2014 semester, and has expanded to include ten different countries students may choose to travel to (Argentina, Spain, Germany, Belize, Ecuador, England, Italy, Sweden, South Korea, and China). Pre-service teachers travel abroad for the last four weeks of their student teaching semester. Tables 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate a breakdown of where participants have been placed to teach over the past six years.

Table 1.1 WKU International Student Teachers Breakdown of Country Placement

	SP 2009	FA 2009	SP 2010	FA 2010	SP 2011	FA 2011	SP 2012	FA 2012	SP 2013	FA 2013	SP 2014	FA 2014
Argentina												
Belize									2	4	3	1
China											4	4
Ecuador			2		1	1	2	3	2		3	3
England							4		1	1		
Germany				1	1		2	2	7	10	10	6
Italy								2	4		4	1
South Korea							1				1	1
Spain	4	6	8	6	17	8	27	13	17	13	29	9
Sweden							2		4	3	3	2

Table 1.2 WKU International Student Teacher Country Placements



The mission statement for international efforts is stated on the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences website as “In concordance with the CEBS mission of empowering individuals to lead and serve in our dynamic world, the CEBS International committee develops and facilitates international experiences through programs and activities. These foster cultural and linguistic growth for CEBS students and faculty resulting in a deeper global awareness and appreciation of diversity within our society” (“International Cross-Cultural Initiatives”). This program seeks to fulfill their mission statement by allowing pre-service teachers to live with a host family and in teaching in a culture that is different from their own. The WKU International Student Teaching Program is another example of how universities are working to prepare their students for the growing diversity of American classrooms.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Current teacher preparation programs try to incorporate some type of diversity classes or programs to help prepare pre-service teachers to teach students of diversity (meaning students of different ethnicities, cultures, and languages). These programs educate students on how to teach students of diversity and even provide practicum experience in a classroom. However, these programs have not always been the most effective and long lasting options for teacher preparation. Previous research studies on diversity programs that have been adopted by universities have found themes that participants' beliefs on student diversity and student success were not significantly changed after completion (Reiter and Davis, 2011, p. 44). This lack of change allows for stereotypes and prejudices to stay evident in the minds of pre-service teachers. Research on diversity programs that provide practicum experience found varying results where some participants reverted back to "old stereotypic notions about students" and others kept their "beliefs about equity" of student diversity (Causey, Thomas, and Armento, 2000, 43). The research supports inequality in the overall effectiveness of these programs in preparing future educators for the different types of students they will have in their classroom.

Research has supported that the incorporation of international student teaching programs have been effective programs in teacher preparation for students of diversity. Previous research of international student teaching programs has found common themes in teacher opinions. A common theme found in multiple studies found that pre-service teachers participating in the international student teaching programs had a transformational learning experience, in which the participants' views of diversity were significantly changed, they felt better prepared to work with students of diversity, and grew within their abilities as educators (multiple studies cited here).

International student teaching programs have “enhanced sensitivity to students’ backgrounds and needs” of those who have participated in the programs (Jiang, Coffey, DeVillar, and Bryan, 2010, p. 46). Growth in understanding in how to work with English Language Learner (ELL) students has been another positive effect of these programs on future classroom teachers (Moseley, Reeder, and Armstrong, 2010, p. 66). These programs have also broadened the cultural perspective of participants to be more open-minded to the various cultures their future students may come from (Clement and Outlaw, 2012, p. 182). These programs have also been researched to have long-lasting effects on the views and practices of those that have participated. Current in-service teachers have reported that their experiences abroad are still incorporated into their classroom instruction, own cultural awareness, and beliefs about student diversity (Lupi and Turner, 2013, p. 52).

The research on international student teaching programs supports their effectiveness on teacher preparation for instructing and understanding students of

diversity. This further supports that these programs are more effective than the current programs incorporated in universities today in preparing further classroom teachers.

These studies connect to the results described in this study by how the opinions of both pre-service and in-service teacher on the effects of participating in the WKU International Student Teaching Program are included and analyzed. The participants' own transformational learning is described in how their professional, cultural, and character development changed after participating in this program.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study focuses on researching the effects of participation in WKU's International Student Teaching Program on in-service teachers (certified classroom teachers) and pre-service teachers (also known as student teachers). The research questions focused on in this study are:

- Did the International Student Teaching experience have an effect on teachers' professional decisions made in the classroom (i.e. lessons, student assessment, and classroom environment)?
- Did the International Student Teaching experience have an effect on teacher attitudes toward diversity (i.e. culture, language, and ethnicity) in the classroom?

The data collected from these questions were analyzed through a mixed methods approach to connect to the participants' professional, cultural, and character development.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

The focus of this research was to analyze the professional, cultural, and character effects of student teaching abroad on pre- and in-service teachers in elementary, middle, and high school settings to provide a better understanding of the impact of the program on teacher preparation.

Sixteen in-service teachers that had participated in the program during the 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 school years were contacted to participate in this study. The majority of those that participated in this research are current in-service teachers, teacher aides, or substitute teachers. This group was contacted one of two ways, through an online questionnaire or a face-to-face interview. Online questionnaires were e-mailed to the majority of in-service teachers that traveled during these school years. Five current in-service teachers participated in the face-to-face interviews: two from Warren County Public Schools, two from Bowling Green Public Schools, and one from outside of the state.

The purpose of the research with the in-service teachers through the interviews and questionnaires was to seek common themes (repeated phrases or ideas) to determine how the program has affected their professional, culture, and character development. The questionnaires were anonymous and analyzed through a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures. Quantitatively the results to the questions were totaled to illustrate

how the participants felt the program affected their professional, cultural, and character development. Qualitatively, common themes were noted in the results to the last question to analyze how the participants believe the program will continually influence their career as educators. The results from the interviews were qualitatively analyzed. The participants' answers were coded based on relation to professional, cultural, or character development. The most common themes from the interviews are noted in this study.

The same group of in-service teachers participated in a post-interview with the director of the WKU International Study Teaching Abroad Program, Dr. Fred Carter, when they completed their student teaching experience during their semester of graduation. Questions about the participants overall impressions, challenges, professional development, cultural development, and character development were asked. The notes from these interviews were analyzed qualitatively for common themes on their professional, culture, and character development as well. The participants' answers to these questions were coded based on their connection to professional, cultural, or character development.

The choice of participants from the 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 school years was to research the effects of the international student teaching program on both first year and third year teachers. This was to provide insight on the effects of the program both long term (third year teachers) and short term (first year teachers). In addition, the goal was to find and analyze any long lasting common themes (meaning found in both first year and third year teachers' answers) among the results from the participants during the two school years.

Six pre-service teachers traveling abroad during the spring 2014 semester were contacted as well. These pre-service teachers participated in two interviews. The first interview was conducted before the teachers traveled abroad and the second interview when they returned. The use of the current pre-service teachers was to examine pre and post reflections about how the program has affected the participants. Pre-interviews were conducted to seek the expectations pre-service teachers have of the program. The post-interviews were to analyze how these expectations were met, and any professional, culture, and character developments in the participants. The results were analyzed through similar qualitative measures as the in-service teacher interviews were analyzed.

Evaluations of thirty past and current pre-service teachers' weekly blogs or were also examined during this research. The blogs and e-mails of participants during the Fall 2010, Fall 2012, Spring 2013, and Spring 2014 semesters were analyzed. Common themes about their experience relating to professional, cultural, and character development were focused on in this analysis. Results from the blogs were coded based on relation to professional, cultural, and character development to find these common themes.

CHAPTER 5

LIMITATIONS

As with any research, limitations do occur. For this project, the limitations occurred in the amount of participation in the research. E-mails were sent out to in-service teachers for the questionnaires and interviews. The e-mail addresses on file with the WKU College of Education and Behavioral Sciences were used. The majority of these e-mails were the participants' student e-mail addresses, while a few included personal e-mails. The use of the student e-mails limited the number of responses received as many of the participants' e-mails had changed.

The participation in the in-service teacher interviews provides a limited view of the impacts of the program. These results do not include the views of males, minority participants, those teaching in a middle school setting, or those that participated in any of the other countries besides Spain, Ecuador, and Italy.

The results found from the questionnaires also do not illustrate the views of middle school majors, males, or participants that taught in any of the other countries not included in the questionnaire. The results also include perspectives from participants that are not full-time classroom teachers. The inclusion of non-in-service teachers provides a different perspective from participants that are in a classroom setting everyday.

The interviews with the current pre-service teachers were conducted with only six participants. Three of the participants were elementary education majors, one was a secondary History/Social Studies major, and two were special education majors. The results do not illustrate the views of minority participants and middle grade participants.

In this study, a total of eighty-seven previous pre-service teachers and five current in-service teacher perspectives were analyzed. This provides a limited view of participants who have participated in the program. Over the past six years, about 265 pre-service teachers have participated in the WKU International Student Teaching Program. The views in this research do not provide the viewpoints of every participant in the program.

The results collected are also based on the self-reflections of the participants. The analysis of actual teaching methods/instruction and interaction with students of diversity was not analyzed. These views reflect the opinion of the participants in how they believe this program has affected their development professionally, culturally, and personally.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pre-Service Teachers' Pre Interviews

A total of six pre-service teachers, traveling abroad during the Spring 2014 semester, were interviewed. Five were Caucasian females and one was a Caucasian male. Three were elementary majors, two were special education, and one was Social Studies/History secondary education. The teachers each traveled to a different country including China, Ecuador, Belize, Germany, Sweden, and Spain. Questions were asked about why the students chose to participate in the program, how they expect the program will affect their career as a teacher, and how they will work with students of diversity (refer to Appendix A for full list of questions). Overall, all six pre-service teachers were excited to begin their travels abroad. Only one pre-service teacher had been abroad before and the rest of the participants stated this would be their first time abroad.

The results from the interviews were analyzed through qualitative measures to find common themes. The common themes found as to why the pre-service teachers chose to teach abroad were that the program would help them stand out when applying for jobs, the desire to travel abroad, and their knowledge of the wonderful reviews of the program. The common themes as to how they believed the program would affect their

future career as teacher would be the exposure to different teaching methods and styles, for them to see how adaptable and flexible they can be in the classroom, and preparation to teach students of diversity in their future classrooms. The common themes found on how the pre-service teachers said they expected the program to help prepare them to teach students of diversity by helping them to understand how to communicate with the students, understand what background the students are coming from, and how to connect with these students.

Pre-Service Teachers' Post Interviews

Approximately one to two weeks after the pre-service teachers returned from their time abroad, the pre-service teachers were interviewed once again to reflect on their time abroad. Similar questions were asked to the teachers as from the pre-interview. The questions pertained to their overall impression of the program, how they felt this program helped them grow as a future educator, and helped them to teach students of diversity (refer to Appendix B for full list of questions).

Every pre-service teacher commented that the program went beyond his or her expectations. The participants noticed changes in their views on decisions they will make in their future classrooms and work with students of diversity. These results can then be broken down into the common themes of professional, cultural, and personal development. The common themes of professional development were the reaffirming of the importance of classroom management, the use of visuals and hands-on activities, and more experience with working with students of diversity. The secondary education major participant discussed her professional development while in Germany as, "Students had

more responsibility. In Germany, they would have to lock the door, and bring in materials from home. I think that is great because kids have more responsibility for their learning. This motivated them to do their assignments. I want to incorporate the use of roles and jobs in the my classroom.” She further elaborated on using this technique in her future classroom to help in promoting classroom management.

The themes for cultural development were a growth in cultural awareness and appreciation for different cultures. One pre-service teacher, an elementary major teaching in Ecuador stated, “It is very exciting to have diversity in the classroom! I’m excited about it and not scared like others.” This statement illustrates the opinions of the other pre-service teachers and their attitudes towards diversity in the classroom.

The themes for personal development were in the ability to empathize with ESL students, growth in confidence, and being more open-minded to new cultures and experiences. The participant teaching in China stated that what he learned from the program was, “That it is all about the students... Important to see that wherever you go, students are trying to get better, learn, and succeed. Schools around the world are trying to teach the students as well.” Another participant teaching in Sweden stated her personal development from the program was, “I can do a whole lot more than I think I can do. It inspires me to learn more and to do more things here in the states, education wise. To be more accepting and try to learn where people are coming from.”

Previous Pre-Service Teacher Post Interviews

Through the research collected the results of the previous pre-service teachers a total of 76 post-interviews were analyzed through qualitative measures to find common themes in how the program affected the teachers professionally, character, and culturally. The top two common themes in how the program affected them professionally were it allowed them to gain more experience with diversity, and helped with classroom management. The top themes for the cultural growth of the teachers were gaining an appreciation for cultural differences and open to new experiences. The top character themes found were the teachers found themselves to be more open-minded and gained empathy for ESL students. One comment made by a pre-service teacher who studied during the Spring 2013 semester stated that the program, “confirmed it’s all about the kids! No matter the culture, my job is to teach because every child can learn but it is our job to figure out the best way for them to learn.” Overall the participants had positive comments to share about the program.

In-Service Teacher Interviews

For the in-service teacher interviews, five responded agreeing to an interview. All five of the participants were Caucasian females. Four of the in-service teachers are currently teaching in an elementary school setting and one is in a secondary school setting. One participant studied during the Fall 2010 semester in Spain. She is currently working in a high school as an educational aide in a special education classroom. One participant taught abroad in Spain during the Spring 2011 semester and is currently working as a third and fourth grade teacher in an elementary classroom. Two of the

participants taught abroad during the Fall 2012 semester in Italy and Ecuador. Both teachers teach at the same elementary school, one is a second grade teacher and the other is the school's ESL instructor. One teacher studied abroad during the Spring 2013 semester in Ecuador, and she is currently working as an FMD teacher in a high school. Five interviews were conducted with in-service teachers. Twenty-minute interviews were conducted with the in-service teachers, with questions evaluating the professional, cultural, and character affects the program had on the teachers (refer to Appendix C for full list of interview sample questions).

Among the first year teachers, the common themes of professional development were classroom management and work with students of diversity. One participant currently teaching in a second grade classroom stated that she incorporates the content of Christmas Around the World to teach her student's about other cultures. The common cultural themes were broadening of cultural awareness and an appreciation for other cultures. The common character themes were more confidence, empathy towards ESL students, and being more open-minded to new cultures and experiences.

The professional, cultural, and character themes of the third year teachers were the same as the first year teachers. One comment made by a third year teacher, currently teaching in a third and fourth grade classroom stated that she used her experience abroad a lot during her first year of teaching. She discussed how her experience abroad helped to prepare her for the classroom, especially in developing classroom management and working with students of diversity. She stated that she wished she could go back to her first year of teaching. During her first year she was able to Skype with her former students in Spain with her current students in the states. The teacher elaborated on how

much of the paperwork and other responsibilities that comes with being a teacher today has stopped her from incorporating some of her activities she used during her first year. However, she uses things she learned abroad, even if it is not explicitly discussed or shown. This illustrates how her experiences abroad are ingrained in her and have had a lasting impact.

In-Service Teacher Questionnaire

The in-service teacher questionnaire was sent out to e-mail addresses on file with the WKU College of Education and Behavioral Sciences. Eleven participants responded to the questionnaire. All eleven participants were female, with ten Caucasian and one African American. Six were elementary education majors and five were secondary education majors. Six were first year teachers, one was a second year teacher, one was a third year teacher, and three are not currently in a classroom. Of the three not in a classroom, one notes he/she is a substitute teacher, one is participating in AmeriCorps, and one is a graduate student. A total of seven participants taught in Spain, two taught in Germany, one taught in Belize, and one in Italy.

One question asked in the questionnaire was how the participants would evaluate their experience as part of their teaching preparation experience at WKU on a scale ranging from very poor to very good. Nine responded that the experience was very good and three responded that it was good. Overall, the results from the questionnaires illustrate the benefits of the program on current in-service teachers (refer to Appendix D for full questionnaire).

Other questions specifically asking about professional, cultural, and character development asked participants to rate their agreement or disagreement with a statement on a Likert scale. Table 6.1 maps out the results of the questions posted to in-service participants.

Table 6.1 In-Service Teacher Questionnaire Results

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree on the influence your involvement in the International Student Teaching Program had on the areas listed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teaching methods	0	1	6	4
Lesson Plans	0	5	4	2
Forms of Student Assessment	0	3	6	2
Classroom Environment	0	1	2	8
Classroom Management	0	1	5	5
Involvement in your school's extracurricular activities or organizations outside of school	0	5	4	2
Preparation to teach students of diversity (i.e. culture, language, and ethnicity)	0	1	2	8
Work with ESL/ELL students	0	2	1	8
Empathize more with students of diversity (i.e. culture, language, ethnicity)	0	0	2	9
Broaden your cultural view of the world	0	0	2	9

Teachers were also asked to comment about how they believe this program will be a continuous influence on their career as an educator. The majority of comments related to how the program helped confirm their beliefs about the benefits of having a classroom management plan, opened their eyes to new cultures, showed them how flexible and adaptable they were, and the ability to better relate to students of diversity. A first year secondary teacher responded to this question by stating,

Studying abroad made me realize that teaching is not the same in every country. I was very disheartened after completing my local placement, but the placement abroad encouraged me to stick with teaching. I bring those experiences in to my classroom daily with "real-life chats," informal discussions, and promoting student self-advocacy. Though these aspects are not stressed in the United States, they make learning more accessible for students. I picked up a less structured mentality and a more student-driven focus on learning in Spain.

Another elementary major participant currently working as a substitute commented,

Classroom management is the main thing I learned from teaching in Spain. There is no classroom management at all [and] bad behavior is a result [and] problem in the class I was placed in. This goes to show how a little classroom management goes a LONG way!! This experience also helped me learn how to better interact with ESL students [and] taught me how it feels to be a student who doesn't understand the primary language that is being spoken.

One participant answered this question differently than the others. The participant is currently working with AmeriCorps. She responded to this question by stating,

The trip was so enjoyable and it taught me many things. But it did not change or create many new attitudes or outlooks within me, it simply confirmed beliefs I already had. For example, I was already open to people from new cultures and backgrounds from my volunteer experiences and my time with international students on campus. Barcelona was just a continuation of that passion. As far as classroom management, it simply confirmed what I was taught at WKU--about the necessity of clear structure and procedures. It did give me an idea of how you could create collaborative projects--all the content teachers created one common project for the students. But other than this, it did not really affect my ideas of teaching/planning.

Pre-Service Teacher Blogs and E-mails

The information from the blogs and e-mails illustrates the activities the pre-service teachers participated in. Among the blogs and e-mails evaluated popular themes among the students was the students participated in extra travel both inside their host country and outside of the host country, most were able to learn about the culture through both their host families and travel, and a sharing of cultures also took place. In one blog from the Spring 2013 semester, a pre-service teacher discussed about how in the apartment she was living in in Sweden she was able to share about common American desserts at their Easter dinner. This illustrated her cultural development by learning about Easter in Sweden and in turn teaching her foreign roommates about American Easter traditions.

Further themes in the blogs and e-mails, dictated the participants experiences and day-to-day activities. The blogs show what the participants learned while abroad and the activities in which they partook. These blogs supported the basis of how the participants changed over the course of their four weeks abroad. These blogs illustrated examples and instances of how the pre-service teachers were able to grow as future educators and grow in their work with students in diversity. One particular example of these changes is from an e-mail from a student teaching in Spain during the Fall 2010 semester. She states,

We are definitely learning a lot about discipline and classroom management here. There are some major cultural differences between what we consider to be loud and what they consider to be loud. I have been giving oral exams to my 6th grade boys the past week and it has been nice getting to know the students on an individual basis. I was also given the chance to work with a class of 4th grade girls, so it was good to finally experience the girls' classroom since I'm usually just with the boys.

Another student traveling to Spain in Fall 2010 commented about how the experience has helped in her ESL endorsement. In her e-mail, she briefly discusses about her collaboration with her cooperating teacher in Spain and the English coordinator at the school. She states the “feedback was helpful” when working with the two teachers. Further illustrating, the professional impact the program has on the participants.

CHAPTER 7

SIGNIFICANCE OF RESULTS

Overall, the results of the project have illustrated the benefits of participating in the WKU International Student Program for current and future classroom teachers. This experience broadened teachers' cultural perspective and opinions towards students of diversity. The participants developed a sense of self-awareness on how they have changed and what they can do to help their students through participating in this program. The program illustrated that no matter which country one traveled to, change and development occurred.

The program helps with instructional aspects of future classrooms and provides further application on how to address students of diversity and those of non-diversity. Participants have become aware of the differences in students and now understand how to address these differences in the classroom. The following table relates the common themes found in the study to the research questions. This table helps to illustrate how the research questions were answered in this study.

Table 7.1 Common Themes in Relation to Research Questions

Research Questions	Overall Most Common Themes	Total Number of Participant Answers including Theme
Did the International Student Teaching experience have an effect on teachers' professional decisions made in the classroom (i.e. lessons, student assessment, and classroom environment)?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reaffirming of the importance of classroom management 2. More experience working with students of diversity (those of a different ethnicity, culture, and/or language) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 70 2. 75
Did the International Student Teaching experience have an effect on teacher attitudes toward diversity (i.e. culture, language, and ethnicity) in the classroom?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to empathize with ELL students 2. Better preparation to teach and relate to students of diversity 3. Growth in cultural awareness and appreciation of different cultures 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 72 2. 70 3. 80

The majority of participants said they did not gain new knowledge about teaching methods, lesson planning, or classroom environment. However, this does not mean that the participants did not grow in their professional development. The participants did agree that the program did reaffirm what they had been taught in their regular teacher program curriculum about these topics. The participants agreed that with the lack discipline in many countries, this reaffirmed their belief in an ordered classroom. This supports the WKU International Student Teaching Program's benefits for participants to apply what they have studied during their time at the university to real-life situations.

The most significant changes found among the participants were in their view of

students of diversity and change in cultural awareness. The participants all agreed that they had a new sense of awareness of what students of diversity experience and how to help these students feel included. The participants also discussed their empathy towards ESL students, as they were an ESL student themselves during their time abroad. This understanding and empathy is something that not every teacher has awareness of when they graduate. This change will help these teachers to better connect and communicate with their students, and in turn should help with students' success and development.

The comparisons made between the pre-service teachers and the in-service teachers illustrate how these projected changes do not disappear over time. The ability to empathize with students of diversity was a common theme among every group of participants. While interviewing the participants, one could see the transformation teachers have made. When analyzing previous post-interviews and blogs, the excitement and transformations were also evident. No matter the country traveled too, the participants learned all children are the same in many ways and are different as well. This is an important perspective to obtain as an educator. Many teachers never get this perspective. This is a concept that cannot be taught in the classroom, but gained through experience. This concept is very important in the classroom in making connections with students and will help the students in achievement and learning.

Overall, the WKU International Student Teaching Program is an educational and life changing expansion of the teacher preparation program at Western Kentucky University. Every participant had positive reactions to the program. This in turn, illustrates the significance of the program in helping future educators grow in their abilities and better prepare them for their future careers.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

The overall objective for this research was to analyze the effects of the WKU International Student Teaching Program on those that have participated in the program. The results have illustrated these effects, as the program was a positive experience for those who participated. Through the results described one could conclude that participating in the WKU International Student Teaching is a life changing experience. This program provided participants with new experiences they never dreamed of as well as professional, character, and cultural development.

These results can be used to further research the effects of participating in an international student teaching program. The results described by the participants can now be used to further analyze the effects these opinions have on classroom students, employability rates, and overall effectiveness of the participants in the classroom. These results support the benefits of incorporating an international student teaching program in a university setting. As the world is continuing to grow through globalization, international student teaching programs can help in preparing university students for their future careers as educators.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE PRE-INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

1. What is your major?
2. Where are you traveling to for this program?
3. Why did you choose to participate in the WKU International Student Teaching Program?
4. How do you believe this program will affect your future career as a teacher?
5. How do you believe this program will affect how you teach students of diversity (different ethnicities, languages, cultures, etc.) in your future classroom?
6. What are your expectations of the program?

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE POST-INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

1. How do you believe this program will affect your future career as a teacher?
2. How do you believe this program will affect how you teach students of diversity in your future classroom?
3. How were your expectations of the program realized or unrealized?
4. What was your overall impression of the program?

APPENDIX C

IN-SERVICE TEACHER SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. How many years will you have taught at the end of the 2013-2014 school year?
2. Where did you complete your International Student Teaching experience?
3. What grade level and subjects did you teach while abroad?
4. How long after graduation from WKU were you able to receive a full-time teaching job?
5. How has your participation in the International Student Teaching Program influenced your previous, current, or potential graduate work?
6. How has the program influenced the decisions you make in the classroom (i.e. lessons, assessment, management, etc.)?
7. How has the program prepared you to teach students of diversity?
8. How has the program broadened your cultural view of the world? How is this view reflected in your classroom?
9. How do you expect this experience to be a continuous influence on your teaching methods, lessons, assessment, student engagement, etc.?
10. Additional comments about your experience with the program.

APPENDIX D

IN-SERVICE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

WKU International Student Teaching Program Questionnaire

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

What is your ethnicity?

- Non-Hispanic White or Euro-American
- Black, Afro-Caribbean, or African American
- Latino or Hispanic American
- East Asian or Asian American
- South Asian or Indian American
- Middle Eastern or Arab American
- Native American or Alaskan Native
- Other:

Which grade level do you teach?

- Elementary
- Middle
- Secondary
- Special Education
- Other

How many years will you have taught by the end of the 2013-2014 school year?

Where did you complete your International Student Teaching experience?

What grade level and subjects did you teach while abroad?

How long after graduation from WKU were you able to receive a full-time teaching job?

Having taught for at least a year or more, how would you evaluate the International Student Teaching Program as part of your teaching preparation experience at WKU?

- Very good
- Good
- Poor
- Very poor

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree on the influence your involvement in the International Student Teaching Program had on the areas listed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teaching methods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesson Plans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Forms of Student Assessment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom Environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Involvement in your school's extracurricular activities or organizations out of school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preparation to teach students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

of diversity
(i.e. culture,
language, and
ethnicity)

Work with
ESL/ELL
students

Empathize
more with
students of
diversity (i.e.
culture,
language,
ethnicity)

Broaden your
cultural view
of the world

How do you expect this experience to be a continuous influence on your teaching methods, lessons, assessment, classroom environment, etc.?

APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT FOR IN-SERVICE TEACHERS

Project Title: WKU Student Teaching Abroad Program- Professional, Cultural, and Character Impacts on In-Service and Pre-Service Teachers

Investigator: Meghan Althaus, WKU Student, 859-893-5067

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Western Kentucky University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project.

The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask Meghan any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have.

If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign on the last page of this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. You should be given a copy of this form to keep.

1. Nature and Purpose of the Project:

This project focuses on researching the effects of participating in WKU's International Student Teaching Program on classroom teachers in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms.

I am specifically analyzing teachers' overall cultural, character, and professional development through teaching abroad, and how this experience affects their teaching methods, lessons, and attitudes in addressing diversity in the classroom.

2. Explanation of Procedures:

I will ask you a series of questions regarding your teaching methods, lessons, assessments, and attitudes towards diversity. The answers will be based off the effects of your participation in the WKU International Student Teaching Program. This interview should not take more than 15 to 20 minutes.

3. Discomfort and Risks:

There are no known or anticipated risks to the subjects in the study.

4. **Benefits:**

Your answers will be very beneficial to the university and to the International Student Teaching Program. Your answers will help in analyze the effectiveness of the program on teacher preparation. These results will also be beneficial in advertising the program and encouraging others to participate in the program. I expect to find positive outcomes that show how this experience broadens teachers' knowledge, better prepares them for the classroom, and helps teachers to incorporate cultural integration in the classroom that encourages students to become global citizens.

5. **Confidentiality:**

All data will be coded so that no participant can be identified. Once the data collection process is completed, the data will be analyzed in the principal investigator's classroom following the end of the school day. Once the data have been analyzed, all of the raw data will be stored in a locked file cabinet in faculty sponsor's office on WKU's main campus for a period of at least three years.

6. **Refusal/Withdrawal:**

Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

(consent form continued)

You understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

Signature of Participant

Date

Witness

Date

Or

Your continued cooperation
with the following research
implies your consent.

THE DATED APPROVAL ON THIS CONSENT FORM INDICATES THAT
THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY
THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Paul Mooney, Human Protections Administrator
TELEPHONE: (270) 745-2129

APPENDIX F

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

Project Title: WKU Student Teaching Abroad Program- Professional, Cultural, and Character Impacts on In-Service and Pre-Service Teachers

Investigator: Meghan Althausen, WKU Student, 859-893-5067

Hello, my name is Meghan Althausen (meghan.althausen257@topper.wku.edu) and an undergraduate student at WKU. Along with Dr. Kay Gandy (kay.gandy@wku.edu), I am collecting research regarding your participation in the WKU International Student Teaching Program.

I am asking for 10 minutes of your time to complete a simple interview regarding your attitudes on how you believe the WKU International Student Teaching Program will affect your future work in the classroom and your own personal development. Below I have included more explanation about the project.

If you choose to participate in this research, a second interview will be schedule upon your completion of the International Student Teaching Program. This interview will only take you about 10 minutes as well. Below I have included more information about the project. You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Western Kentucky University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project.

The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask me any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have.

If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign on the last page of this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. You should be given a copy of this form to keep.

1. **Nature and Purpose of the Project:** This project focuses on researching the effects of participating in WKU's International Student Teaching Program on future classroom teachers in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms. I am specifically analyzing teachers' overall cultural, character, and professional development through teaching abroad, and how this experience affects their teaching

2. methods, lessons, and attitudes in addressing diversity in the classroom.
3. **Explanation of Procedures:** I will ask you a series of questions about your attitudes towards the WKU International Student Teaching Program. I will record the interview with your permission, you will not be asked to give your name during the interview.
4. **Discomfort and Risks:** There are no known or anticipated risks to the subjects in the study.
5. **Benefits:** Your answers will be very beneficial to the university, Office of Teacher Education, and to the International Student Teaching Program. Your answers will help in analyze the effectiveness of the program on teacher preparation. These results will also be beneficial in advertising the program and encouraging others to participate in the program. I expect to find positive outcomes that show how this experience broadens teachers' knowledge, better prepares them for the classroom, and helps teachers to incorporate cultural integration in the classroom that encourages students to become global citizens.
6. **Confidentiality:** All data will be confidential. Your name and school will not be released in any publications of this research.
7. **Refusal/Withdrawal:** Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University.

You understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

Signature of Participant Date

Witness Date

I agree to the audio/video recording of the research. (***Initial here***) _____

THE DATED APPROVAL ON THIS CONSENT FORM INDICATES THAT
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