

LIVING OUTSIDE THE MARGINS: RACE, POWER  
DYNAMICS AND IMPLICATIONS OF A SHORT-  
TERM STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM ON IN-SERVICE  
TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By

JASON K. JOHNSON

Bachelor of Science in Health  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, Oklahoma  
2003

Master of Science in Education  
Langston University  
Langston, Oklahoma  
2006

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
May, 2018

LIVING OUTSIDE THE MARGINS: RACE, POWER  
DYNAMICS AND IMPLICATIONS OF A SHORT-  
TERM STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM ON IN-SERVICE  
TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Dissertation Approved by:

Lucy E. Bailey, Ph.D.

---

Dissertation Adviser

Jennifer Sanders, Ph.D.

---

Guoping Zhao, Ph.D.

---

Jason F. Kirksey, Ph.D.

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for blessing me beyond measure to complete this journey. Many times, I wanted to quit and God gave me the strength to continue on this path. I pray the Lord will continue to order my steps so that I may be used for His Glory.

To my committee, Dr. Jason Kirksey, Dr. Jenn Sanders and Dr. Gouping Zhao, thank you for your support, suggestions and assistance in this process. To my advisor, Dr. Lucy Bailey, thank you for your guidance, support, and mentorship throughout this process.

I wish I could say this journey was my doing but so many others sacrificed their time to ensure my success that I would be selfish to say this is my accomplishment alone.

I would like to thank my grandparents, Julius and Zelema Allen, Henrietta Jackson and Marvin Chaffin for their unconditional love during my childhood. My grandparents showed me the true value of hard work and that life's most precious things cannot be bought. They had to be lived and felt. I learned so much sitting at your feet.

I would like to thank my parents, James and Lee Ola Chaffin for their support, dedication, and love. I was a curious, misunderstood, and just a bad child at times but you two nourished the curiosity in me while keeping that mischievous side in check. I know that I was the cause of some of your hardest moments as parents but thank you for always supporting, loving, and encouraging me. Thank you for your sacrifice. Thank you for allowing me to be me and grow. There is nothing I could say or do to ever show you my appreciation for all that you have done for me but I hope I've made you both proud...

To my siblings, Sharon, Mia, Melissa, Eva, Renita, Stacy, Brent, Vickie, and Latasha, I want to thank you all for your sacrifices in protecting, supporting and loving your baby brother. You have all taught me so much throughout my life, such as being dependable, staying accountable, standing for my beliefs, speaking confidently, continuing to fight through life's ups and downs. You all have been my biggest supporters, number #1 fan and kept me grounded. Everyday I'm thankful for "Being Just a Kid from Honey Grove, Texas" and having you all as siblings

To my nieces and nephews, thank you all for motivating me to do better and be better. The potential you all possess is unparalleled. I thank you for the conversations and questions but most importantly, for showing me how influential our youth can be. I pray that you all find your wings and fly.

To the following: Big Bodies (Juice, Teddy, Talley, C Tate, Miles, Stump, Mitch, D Bro, Mack, House, Am, Lo, Pettis, Rob Ware, JoJo, T Howard, Marcus, Ed), O State crew (Shanae, Tiff, Neicy, Junior, Denisha, Chris), Deez Nuts (Tiece and Tamyra), Wolfpack (Janelle and Janee), The Click (Jeremy and Tiff B), Dr. A, Renata, and Derrick Roberts. Thank you for your support, your love, your understanding and your advice. I consider you all indispensable parts of my life. You all have been there for me through some of the toughest times in my life such as the deaths of my mother, sister and niece, when I needed advice on love, work or life issues or during the many times that I made mistakes. Although we aren't "blood" family, we've bonded by love and solidarity. Thank you.

I would also like to thank the following families: The Toure/Wares, Talleys, Carters, Roberts, and Barretts. Years ago, this uncouth kid from Honey Grove, Texas came into you all's lives and you all accepted him as one of your own. You have all shown me love, support and understanding, I am deeply appreciative of you all for accepting me into your family. Thank you for being a part of my village.

To Aiden and Ashlyn, I thank you two for being my inspiration. Every day I am amazed by the innocence, beauty, and talents you both share with me. I look forward to watching you all grow and see how you all influence the world. My hope is that I can be the blessing to you that you have been to me.

Lastly, I would like to thank my wife, Courtney. Thank you for your love, your patience, and your support throughout this journey. You have been my strength, my confidant, my supporter, my inspiration, my strength, and my friend while I traveled this path. I'm forever grateful for you.

In addition, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the numerous black men and women who have lost their lives to extrajudicial actions of law enforcement, vigilantes, and a society who devalued their very existence: Terence Crutcher, Michael Brown, Rekia Boyd, Trayvon Martin, Oscar Grant, Eric Garner, Alton Sterling, Amadou Diallo, Sean Bell, Kendra James, Philando Castille, Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, Korrine Gaines, Sandra Bland, Akiel Denkins, Gregory Gunn, Samuel DuBose, Brendon Glenn, Natasha McKenna, Walter Scott, Christian Taylor, Ezell Ford, Akai Gurley, Laquan McDonald, Yvette Smith, Shereese Francis, Ramarley Graham, Jamar Clark, LaTanya Haggerty and hundreds of others whose lives, potential and talents were cut short. #Sayhername  
#Sayhisname

**All we ever did was be black.**

Name: JASON K. JOHNSON

Date of Degree: MAY, 2018

Title of Study: LIVING OUTSIDE THE MARGINS: RACE, POWER DYNAMICS  
AND IMPLICATIONS OF A SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD  
PROGRAM ON IN-SERVICE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT

Major Field: SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION

This study examined how graduate students, who are also teachers, make meaning of their Belize Service Learning project experience and explicitly interrogate the social, cultural, and power dynamics at work in those interactions. This course was unique in the sense that it was a co-teaching short-term service-learning project housed in the USU College of Education. Participants were assigned Belizean classes to teach while abroad. In addition, this study questioned how graduate students, who are teachers, make meaning of their Belize Service Learning project experience. Four themes developed in all or most participant cases in this study, which were the major takeaways from this study. The themes presented some overlap such as the struggles with the language diversity and the ability to perform well as teachers in Belize while grappling with the language. Overall, all the participants expressed this course was a life altering experience that will last with them for a lifetime despite short-term study abroad scholarship pointing to changes being short-lived. Furthermore, the participants' discomfort presents a type of embodied learning of the "other." The experiential experiences of "otherness" offered glimmers of learning for the possibilities of short-term study abroad and the service learning focus.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of Problem.....	3
Background of Study .....	5
Purpose.....	12
Overview of Study Design.....	13
Theoretical Framework.....	15
Study Site .....	17
Participants and Sample.....	19
Methodology.....	20
Summary.....	25
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	27
Literature Search.....	31
Predominantly White Institutions .....	32
Diversity on Campus.....	32
Race.....	36
Privilege .....	38
Implications of the Browning of America .....	39
History of Teacher Education Programs in the U.S.....	41
Teacher Education Faculty .....	44
Preparation for Diverse Populations .....	45
Teacher Education Programs and Cultural Immersion.....	47
Study Abroad .....	49
Service Learning.....	53
Chapter Summary .....	57
III. METHODOLOGY .....	59
Epistemological Approach.....	60
Critical Inquiry.....	60
Critical Race Theory.....	62
Research Questions.....	67
Case Study Approach.....	68
Delimitations and Participants .....	69
Researcher Reflections.....	81



Chapter	Page
Data Analysis .....	83
Positionality Statement .....	85
Study Sites .....	88
Ethical Considerations .....	95
Chapter Summary .....	101
IV. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS .....	102
Background .....	104
Marketing Efforts for the Course .....	106
Course Overview .....	110
In-Country Expectations for the Course .....	117
Course Assignments .....	120
Chapter Summary .....	123
V. PARTICIPANT PROFILES .....	125
Participant Narratives .....	126
Participant Demographics .....	127
Group One: Mpya .....	128
Asha .....	129
Iniko .....	131
Maha .....	133
Zane .....	135
Group Two: Usafiri .....	138
Jamila .....	138
Group Three: Kamili .....	140
Imani .....	141
Nailah .....	144
Sabra .....	146
Group Four: Kurudi .....	149
Nia .....	150
Zola .....	154
Chapter Summary .....	159
VI. RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	160

Theme #1 – Teachers Struggled with Language Differences .....	166
Theme #2 – Avoiding that heavy “stuff” .....	180
Theme #3 – “Things are Just Different” .....	197
Theme #4 - Experiential Knowledge of the “Other” .....	215
Chapter Summary .....	228
VII. SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS .....	229
Summary of Study Design .....	229
Discussion of the Research Questions .....	233
Question #1 .....	233
Question #2 .....	242
Question #3 .....	252
Significance of Study .....	255
Recommendation .....	258
Future Research .....	262
Final Thoughts .....	264
REFERENCES .....	266
APPENDICES .....	299

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
Participant Demographics .....	127

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.....	61
2.....	73
3.....	74
4.....	88
5.....	108
6.....	108
7.....	109
8.....	129
9.....	131
10.....	134
11.....	136
12.....	139
13.....	142
14.....	145
15.....	148
16.....	152
17.....	156

## *Living Outside the Margins*

Race, Power Dynamics and Implications of a Short-term Service Learning Project on In-Service Teacher Professional Development

*As we drive from our hotel toward the south side of town, the scenery changes. Brightly colored homes and buildings give way to a duller, discolored landscape. The quiet peace of neighborhoods turns to noise, overcrowding and busyness. It's early morning but people are moving about hurriedly.*

*Many consider the south side to be the ghetto, the hood, a very rough environment. The gloomy day only adds to a seemingly desolate environment. As we approach the school, the streets become more ragged and riddled with potholes. Some of the streets have flooded due to the recent rain and poor drainage. Brown, weathered houses with boarded up windows surround the school. A police station is across the street, facing the school. One teacher said it is needed due to the area.*

*As we exit our vans and approach the school, two dark-skinned men creep by in a small sedan, with the thumping beat of hip-hop*

*blasting through the speakers. The men stare at us with cold steely eyes and sweaty furrowed brows, their faces suggesting curiosity about strangers in this foreign land. As the rusted red Nissan Civic continues to roll past, the lyrics of Kendrick Lamar slowly fade away ...” Every time I write these words they become a taboo, Making sure my punctuation curve, every letter is true, Living my life in the margin...”*

## **Introduction**

This study investigated a short-term service-learning program to Belize offered in the college of education at a Midwestern four-year university that focused on literacy along with a critical cultural competency development component. This study examined the experiences of graduate students, who were also teachers, while teaching abroad in Belize a country that is primarily African and Hispanic descent. Due to the historical connection of Africa to Belize, I use primarily African pseudonyms for the participants’ names, study sites, and any additional information to protect the anonymity of those involved in this study. In addition, this study questioned how graduate students, who are teachers, make meaning of their Belize Service Learning project experience. As the researcher, I served as a participant-observer and traveled to Belize with a group of students from Ubuntu State University (here after, USU), a pseudonym for the institution

that refers to the Nguni word for humanity. The word conveys that individuals are who they are because of the village that raises them. In this naturalistic qualitative case study, I used a variety of methods including observations, interviews (see Appendix A) and document analysis to examine how students gained meaning from their experiences in Belize. In addition, this study examined how students' backgrounds and the course design influenced participant learning while in Belize.

### **Statement of Problem**

Over the last 20 years, the United States has seen a change in its public education system and its student demographics now sitting in the classroom seats. By 2020, Students of color will make up close to 50% of America's public education population, and more than 75% of the largest 50 public school districts in the U.S. will be students of color. In contrast, America's public school teachers are primarily White, middle class and women. According to Christine Sleeter (2001), a majority of "White preservice students" expect to work with culturally diverse student groups, however, universities and colleges have reacted quickly to address the widening "cultural gap" (p. 95).

In addition, a large proportion of preservice teachers have no or limited experience or knowledge of other cultural groups (Shultz, Neyhart, & Reck, 1996; Su, 1996, 1997; Valli, 1995). Many of these White preservice teachers carry with them beliefs that run counter to effective teaching such as believing cultural stereotypes and a general misunderstanding of discrimination and racism (King, 1991; Su, 1996, 1997).

Furthermore, teachers sometimes also view social change, structural inequalities and affirmative action programs as “reverse racism” or discriminatory toward Whites (Su 1996, 1997). As a coping mechanism, White preservice teachers can also use colorblindness to navigate the diverse cultural landscape. These beliefs carry over into the classroom.

Education majors make up a very small portion of the students that participate in study abroad programs, less than 5% of the 293,766 students, for example, in 2015 (IIE, 2015). However, previous research suggests the influence study abroad can have on students. Studies have shown positive impacts on students’ development and academic performance (Paige, Cohen & Shively, 2004; Savicki, Wilde & Binder, 2008).

Increasingly, the experience of teaching abroad and immersion in a new culture is seen as more valuable and teacher education programs are encouraging short term study abroad programs (Lupi, Batey, & Turner, 2012). According to Cushner (2007), teachers “gain a significant amount of self-knowledge, develop personal confidence and professional competence” while developing an “understanding of both global and domestic diversity (p. 30).

Additionally, these study abroad experiences allow future teachers to learn new instructional approaches to teaching and develop more confidence and independence in their decision-making within their native classrooms (Cross, 1998; Grossman and Sands, 2008). Furthermore, international study abroad provides opportunities to develop global and cross cultural awareness which has potential to impact pre-service teachers’ own

lives, educational experiences, and professional experiences (Cross, 1998; Cushner, 2007; Jarchow et al, 1996). Despite the educational promise of study abroad programs for educators, very few studies examine the impact that studying abroad can have on teacher education programs and the experience of the teachers. Moreover, institutions interested in asking critical questions about power relations have to move past promoting study abroad programs framed only as tourism trips.

### **Background of the Study**

Studying abroad is not a new concept for those with the financial means to do so. As early as the 1800s, young aristocratic males went on the “Grand Tour,” being exposed to different cultures as they traveled through various countries (Gibson, 1998). During American colonization, churches established higher education institutions to prepare wealthy affluent male children to continue the religious beliefs and prepare for their place in high society. Colleges, predominantly denominational, were constructing these men to be of high character; however, little educational preparation was occurring. Therefore, many affluent families thought their children would benefit greatly from opportunities to receive education in Europe. According to noted study abroad historian William Hoffa (2007), “seeing the Old World from the perspective of the new became an obsession for those with the means to travel” (p. 26).

Until the mid-Nineteenth century, study abroad was an opportunity only available for the privileged - families that could afford to send their male lineage to study at the



more prestigious colleges in Europe. However, as educational reform started, noted by historian Fred Rudolph (1990), teachers were developing new curriculum and skills that would eventually establish America as a superpower. As education became available more widely, middle class families and women were able to attend school and the curriculum continued to evolve. This change did not affect the wealthy, as the affluent continued to send their children to the more prestigious institutions in Europe for a superior education (Rudolph, 1990). Despite the privileged having access, the change that sparked study abroad programs as permanent part of the institutional curriculum began with Harvard establishing a class elective system in coursework in the early 1900s (Hoffa, 2007). This allowed students to choose their courses and ultimately determine their degree.

In response to these changes in an increasingly globalized world and to better prepare students for a multicultural society, higher education has emphasized and implemented such diversity initiatives as increased recruitment of students and faculty of color, multicultural offices, and study abroad programs. In addition, institutions host programs that acknowledge and celebrate ethnic affinity months and multicultural speakers who address inequality, self-reliance and activism. An important aspect of higher education curriculum is increasing diversity course selections and including diversity course requirements as a requisite for graduation. In addition, higher education institutions have placed more focus on hiring and developing faculty and staff of color in order to address the need for a diverse campus environment.

Among these initiatives, higher education administrators believe study abroad offers students the benefits of culture immersion and experiences with various ethnic groups that traditional classrooms cannot. Higher education advocates for study abroad see it as a way to enhance four critical areas for student development. Research shows that studying abroad increases the students' academic and intellectual capacity, increases the students' professional networks, increases personal confidence and awareness, and fosters students' intercultural awareness and acceptance of diverse perspectives (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006). These experiences and resulting perspectives will likely be critical elements of preparation for teaching in diverse classrooms.

The development of intercultural sensitivity, cultural awareness, and self-awareness for American College of Education students from a predominantly White institution is perhaps particularly important and potentially challenging. A common argument for such initiatives is they help prepare students for a global workforce. However, more importantly, the changing demographics in America necessitate broader awareness of local and global diversity. It is potentially challenging because of the belief that traditional American values are lost due to immigration and internalization. Higher education institutions are "constantly in a dilemma between maintaining cultural traditions and stability on the one hand, and on the other facing the necessity to adapt and change according to global cultural change" (Otten, 2000, p. 16).

At USU, the Belize Service Learning Program is a unique, recurring, short-term service-learning experience offered through the college of education, which provided pre-service and in-service teachers, among others, the opportunity to work with Belizean teachers and children. In addition, university students assisted with developing effective literacy practices for the designated school. The main goals of the program were for participants to collaborate and co-teach with the Belizean teachers while providing professional development in literacy instruction and to learn about the Belizean education system and culture from the teachers and students with who program participants interacted. Another unique feature of this course is its hybrid nature with service learning components. The participants experienced traditional study abroad immersion and learning a culture while teaching literacy foundation fundamentals to the Belizean students and teachers.

In addition to working with the Belizean people, program participants for this study abroad service-learning course attended “global agents of change” workshops presented by Peacework ([www.peacework.org](http://www.peacework.org)). Peacework is a global nonprofit organization that works with universities and communities to use their students’ skills and talents to develop sustainable solutions that impact underserved populations. Peacework operates with the inherently social-justice oriented philosophy that everyone possesses a change agent within them; therefore, through diverse groups that are

community-led, innovative and engaging, social change can take place. As the mission statement of Peacework states:

We believe that everyone can be an agent of change. For us, social change is not just an end in itself, but a deeply personal process that activates the potential in all of us to make an impact -- this is what we call the Peacework “aha” moment. The moment you realize the power of your inherent genius, the potency of collaboration and that lasting change only happens if we are all engaged. ([www.peacework.org](http://www.peacework.org))

The idea to conduct research with study abroad participants emerged during the 2015 Belize Service Learning Program in which I participated as a student as part of my doctoral coursework. After one of the Peacework diversity workshops, other students and I were discussing racism and other “isms” that we observed on our college campus and in American society. Of course, the discussion was tense and heated at times but, during the conversation, it seemed that the dialogue moved from surface level, colorblind and post-racial ideas to attempts to recognize and appreciate an array of cultural differences (Neville, Worthington & Spanierman, 2001). The terms post-racial and colorblind, in this case, refer to the dominant and problematic idea that we are all human and American, so neither race nor color should factor into our conversations. Yet, in an age in which racism and discrimination are rampant, the idea of “colorblindness” has been heavily critiqued (Apfelbaum, Sommers, and Norton, 2008). As these conversations grew more

frequent on the 2015 trip, I mentioned to the professor how students from this predominantly White institution in the Midwest seem to be contextualizing race, ethnicity, poverty, and other diversity issues in productive ways. It seemed as if students were engaging in deep reflection of their experience in this country and how racial issues are embedded American culture, moving beyond colorblindness.

After engaging in more discussions over the course of the trip, the professor and I agreed that a study focused on student perspectives of and experiences in Belize could provide new knowledge on how students in a PWI, particularly majority students, experience race, ethnicity, poverty, and other forms diversity as the ‘new minority’ (although temporary) in developing countries. In addition, discussions centered on the possibilities and limitations of short-term study abroad programs. According to an Open Doors (2015) report, short-term study abroad trips (eight weeks or less) make up over 60% of all trips taken by college students. Over the past three decades, study abroad has proven to positively affect participants’ tolerance, comfort, and empathy for other cultural groups (Black & Duhon, 2006; Hadis, 2005). In addition, students have shown more confidence, independence, and a better understanding of other countries’ sociopolitical issues (Black & Duhon, 2006; Hadis, 2005; Hutchins, 1996). Despite the limited research, short-term study abroad programs have shown similar possibilities for students compared to those who remained on their campus (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Neppel, 2005).

However, short-term study abroad is not without its limitations. The literature suggests that despite being the most popular international experience, short-term study abroad programs and their effectiveness have very limited research (Rowan-Kenyon & Niehaus, 2011). Many study abroad professionals suggest the limited literature on short-term study abroad program is problematic in marketing and describing the potential benefits to participants (Kehl & Morris, 2008). Often times, universities market these programs as beautiful, tourist type vacations that lack the rigor of traditional courses (Goldoni, 2013).

In addition, faculty who instruct study abroad programs potentially limit short-term study abroad programs through course design. The faculty member and pedagogical views provide a unique experience for the participants. Therefore, the program requires plans that include academic rigor, teambuilding while engaging students on the sociopolitical aspects of the host country (Döring et al, 2010 Scoffham & Barnes, 2009). According to Gordon, Heischmidt, Sterrett, and McMillan, (2009), faculty must create “a careful balance between recreation and learning” (p. 134). Overall, short-term study abroad programs provide intriguing possibilities for teacher education programs given the changing demographics within the United States.

## **Purpose**

This study examined examine how graduate students, who are also teachers, make meaning of their Belize Service Learning project experience and explicitly interrogate the social, cultural, and power dynamics at work in those interactions. This course was unique in the sense that it was a co-teaching short-term service-learning project housed in the USU College of Education. Participants were assigned Belizean classes to teach while abroad. In addition, this study questioned how graduate students, who are teachers, make meaning of their Belize Service Learning project experience. Furthermore, the study offers implications that a short-term study abroad may have on teacher education programs.

The motivation for this study was my general curiosity about the experiences of students as they participated in a study abroad program in Belize. Initially, this conversation began after numerous lunch table discussions and evolved into a research discussion with the faculty host. As Agee (2009) states, “Good questions can grow out of initial curiosity or ideas for a qualitative study, but at the early stages, most questions are rough drafts” (p. 433). Patton (2002) also suggests a significant amount of flexibility is required in the initial research design and entering the field in qualitative studies. The nature of qualitative research, this particular study and the participants involved required flexibility because of the travel that is necessary and the various experiences each

participant encountered during this study abroad. As such, I developed a broad set of questions to establish that which I am studying and data collection.

The questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What meaning do in-service teachers, who participate in a short-term, co-teaching, international service-learning course, make of their Belizean experience?
2. How do the in-service teachers perceive the race, language, and poverty issues in Belize during the service-learning courses?
3. How does Critical Race Theory help render racial dynamics visible in the Belize service-learning course?

### **Overview of Study Design**

This study relied on case study qualitative methodology and methods to collect and gather data. “Qualitative methodology is useful in exploring and describing the experiences of college students, especially when little is known about the phenomenon under study” (Brown, Stevens, Troiano, & Schneider, 2002, p. 1), such as students’ experiences while studying abroad and interacting with diverse cultures. The case study approach allows for a collection of data that does not necessarily fit into pre-determined surveys or data collection methods. I provide a brief overview of the research approach below and a more detailed description in Chapter 3.



This study takes a constructionist epistemological approach and adopts a critical race theory framework to analyze data. Constructionism, which holds that individuals construct their own knowledge of reality, best guides this work. As students from a predominantly White institution in the Midwest come to understand race, poverty, privilege and other diversity issues while studying abroad in a developing country, I proceeded with the belief that this research sought to understand and to challenge power dynamics in education. This study intended to “read it in terms of conflict and oppression” and “seeks to bring change” (Crotty, 1998, p. 113). Patti Lather (1992) states critical inquiry “takes into account how our lives are mediated by systems of inequity such as classism, racism and sexism” (p. 87). I approached this study with the understanding that systems of inequity would be present in the field and participants would experience disorienting moments during this study abroad program.

The researcher’s theoretical perspective, according to Crotty (1998) grounds the study and provides context for the research process. Crotty (1998) states that theoretical perspective is “the assumptions [the researcher brings] to the research task and [is] reflected in the methodology as we understand and employ it” (p. 7). Power dynamics are central to critical theory. In this theoretical vision, the process of generating knowledge cannot be neutral. Crotty states (1998), “critical inquiry keeps the spotlight on power relationships within society so as to expose the forces of hegemony and injustice” (p. 157). In the service learning program, Peacework offers students diversity lessons that

engage students in critical discussions on race, poverty, and global issues. Furthermore, critical theory is a continuous process of challenging and analyzing power dynamics that requires reflection and action. According to Crotty (1998), inquiries that proceed in a critical theoretical perspective offer possibilities for challenging the discourse and what people consider to be the norm, dominant discourse and allows researchers to “open themselves to new ways of understanding, and take effective action for change” (p. 157).

Critical Race Theory is the critical lens used to ground this study. This study examined the experiences of graduate students, who were also teachers, while teaching abroad in Belize a country that is primarily African and Hispanic descent. In addition, this study questioned how graduate students, who are teachers, make meaning of their Belize Service Learning project experience. Furthermore, the study searches for implications that a short-term study abroad may have on teacher education programs.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Critical Race Theory (CRT) has its roots in Critical Legal Studies (CLS), which emerged during the Civil Rights era in the 1960s. Critical Legal Studies argued that power dynamics continued to suppress people of color and women and the laws reflecting racial beliefs and racism “advanced established power relationship in society” (Taylor, 2009, p. 2). Critical Race Theory emerged from legal scholars who grew increasingly frustrated with the slow pace of racial change in America. CRT maintains that racism is embedded in American society and “appears both normal and natural for

people in this culture” (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 21). As one of the tenets, CRT often uses stories of oppression to analyze and critique the power relations in society. Critical Race theorists attempt to insert the perspectives of historically marginalized groups into the mainstream discourse to challenge racial hegemony (Barnes, 1990). According to Crotty (1998), Critical inquiry is a constant process of challenging what individuals consider the norm, dominant discourse, and it allows researchers to “open themselves to new ways of understanding, and take effective action for change” (p. 157). The principles of CRT are similar to Crotty’s arguments for critical inquiry, sharing the goals of “the just society, freedom, equity” while believing the “work is worthwhile” (Crotty, 1998, p. 157).

Critical Race Theory questions the role of race and racism in preserving social inequalities between dominant and marginalized racial groups (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings 1994; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Critical Race Theory’s purpose is to unearth what is taken for granted when analyzing race and privilege, as well as the subtle patterns of exclusion that exist in U.S. society (Parker & Villalpando, 2007). Additionally, researchers are studying how critical theory influences and shifts consciousness and impacts study abroad programs, tourism and volunteer travel courses (Pritchard, Morgan, & Ateljevic, 2011; Ross, 2010).

Study abroad participation, mostly a Western pedagogical practice, is overwhelmingly White and female, so it is inherently gendered and racial. Using a CRT

analytic lens, this study adds to the dearth of literature on how race and gender are at work in study abroad programs. This study adds to the limited body of literature on the experiences of graduate students, who were also teachers; make meaning of their service learning experience. Lastly, the study searches for implications that a short-term study abroad may have on teacher education programs.

### **Study Site**

The study site (USU and Belize) involved two different settings. The first setting was a land grant institution with satellite campuses that enrolled about 25,000 students located in the Midwestern city, which I call Salihah. The student population at this university is also primarily from the Midwest and includes many first-generation students from small rural communities. It includes mainly residential, undergraduate students, and graduate students. Of the 25,594 students attending the institution as of the Fall 2016 semester, only 7,822 or 28.43% were students of color; students of color were defined as students of African American, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander descent. Graduate and professional students made up roughly 17% of enrollment of the institution. The number of students of color grew substantially from 2010 when the total number was under 6,000 or less than 25%. However, this demographic change could be due in part to institutional changes in available demographic designations and national reporting requirements

(IRIM, 2016). The number of international students has continued to grow as well. In the fall of 2015, over 2000 students representing over 102 different countries attended USU.

Despite the growth of students of color on campus, Black and Hispanic students made up roughly 10% of the enrollment in undergraduate and graduate programs at USU in 2015. Cultural diversity among both faculty and students remains a developing and challenging issue at the institution. For these reasons, the Belize Service Learning project offered a unique opportunity for participants attending this primarily White institution.

In addition, Belize was a site for this study. Belize is a culturally diverse country located in Central America. According to Medina (1997), “the Belizean nation is defined as a multi-ethnic ‘haven of cultural pluralism’, characterized both by its particular configuration of cultural diversity and its embrace of that diversity” (p. 757). Belize became an independent nation in the early 1980s and Guatemala, which claimed the land as a territory, officially recognized Belize as such in the 1990s. The country of Belize was home to several Mayan cities before their demise in the early part of the first millennium. However, Mayan culture still influences the country presently. Belize City, with a population of over 57,000, is the largest city in Belize. Salihah, Ubuntu State’s location, and Belize City are roughly the same size. Salihah was part of the land runs during the late 1800s, which lead to numerous disputes over the area.

Belize City was home to thousands of African slaves while under British rule and has cultural aspects like other Caribbean countries. During the 1600s and 1700s, The British and Spanish fought over the country, and it was formally named British Honduras in 1854. These disputes would continue between the British and Guatemala, which delayed providing independence to Belize until 1981. Due to its history and location, Belize has a large population of Black and brown people. Latino, Creole, Maya, and Garifuna are the four largest ethnic groups in Belize, making up close to 90% of the population.

Denominational churches in conjunction with the Ministry of Education primarily control the Belizean education system, while both entities maintain their independence. In 2007, the Ministry of Education developed a program designed to increase the number of trained teachers by more than 40% before the year 2000 (Van der Eyken, Goulden, & Crossley, 1995).

### **Participants and Sample**

The ten participants were graduate students who were enrolled in an education-related field at Ubuntu State University. Some were former teachers in public schools; some were active public K12 school teachers. The sample was purposive: Participants were students who self-selected to participate in the Belize Service Learning Program and who consented (see Appendix B) to participate in the study. The demographics of the class consisted of all female students. They appeared to be majority White, consistent

with university demographics. The class enrollees reflected age and discipline diversity. This study gathered information on how students identify racially.

### **Methodology**

This study used a qualitative case study methodology. Case studies provide an extensive examination of one or more phenomena, groups, or bounded systems, and “we enter the scene with a sincere interest in learning how [participants or cases] function in ordinary pursuits and milieus and with a willingness to put aside many presumptions while we learn” (Stake, 2005, p. 443). I used a collective case study approach to this study due to the multiple participants (cases) who experienced the phenomenon of navigating a developing country on the same service learning study abroad trip while maintaining various forms of privilege.

As a former attendee of the program, I was already familiar with the program and the university and study abroad setting. As a researcher, I used various methods to obtain data for this study, including three sets of audio-recorded and transcribed interviews, reflective journal writings, and observations and field notes related to various activities that occurred on the service learning trip over ten days. I collected data both in Salihah over the course of eight months and in Belize during the ten-day trip. In addition, I kept reflective researcher notes about my experiences, thoughts, and feelings while observing and working with students and the Belizean people. Each of these methods provided

different pieces of data that bolstered my understanding of the cases and supported the overall study outlined below.

### **Interviews**

For this study, I conducted one 15-minute phone interview before the ten participants traveled to Belize. Two 30 minute phone interviews were conducted with the six remaining participants after they returned from Belize. There were also informal opportunities to discuss experiences during the trip. I chose to use a general semi-structured interview guide approach for three sets of interviews. Patton (2002) states that the general interview guide approach has a basic list of questions that guide the inquiry but allows the interviewer to probe for information on each topic.

### **Reflective Journaling**

According to Connor-Greene (2000) and Kolb (1984), journal writing is a powerful instructional strategy that encourages understanding and exploring the concepts of diversity such as race, privilege, and poverty. The use of journaling gives participants “the opportunity to reflect on and articulate their perceptions of their learning processes and achievements” (Dunlap, 2006, p. 25) and allows participants time to integrate the new information they received with previously held beliefs and knowledge. Additionally, journal writing strengthens critical thinking and captures changes in students’ perceptions. The participants were required to journal during the course. The faculty lead held “free-writing” sessions before the participants traveled to Belize. While in Belize,



the faculty lead provided questions for the participants to address. In addition, I provided a set of guided journal questions for each day (see Appendix C) to encourage students to share their perceptions of the environment and experience.

### **Participant Observations**

As a researcher, I served as a participant observer during the class before the group traveled to Belize. While in Belize, I continued my role as participant observer. The participant as observer role provided richer details and more insight to what the participants were experiencing. In the participant as observer role, I participated in activities and recorded my observations. I became an “insider” to the study in the sense that I was a student who had studied abroad in this program, was familiar with the Belizean context, and attended the program along with the students throughout the trip. These circumstances allowed me to immerse myself quickly and provided richer and deeper data.

### **Limitations**

First, this study deals with power dynamics that include race, gender, class, and global power; students may not have wanted to participate due to the perception of bias or judgments. Secondly, the willingness and ability of students to openly share their experiences and feelings while outside of their university and home environments could have influenced the study. The experience produced cognitive dissonance for some students and that may have hindered their ability to share their feelings and experiences

as they continued to process the trip. Thirdly, I received final approval to conduct research only the week before the travel to Belize. Due to participants' travel plans and previous commitments, I altered my plans to have face-to-face interviews and held phone interviews. Phone interviews miss the opportunity for visual and bodily cues. Additionally, I reduced the interview length. Lastly, the time sensitive nature of the study presented a limitation. The study abroad took place over the course of spring break; so therefore, some field data is limited to the time spent in Belize. In addition, teachers are limited by their work schedules and in some cases, personal obligations to participate as fully in the research as I had planned.

### **Significance of the Study**

There is little critical research on study abroad programs and how they influence American students' experiences and their critique of topics such as race, poverty, ethnicity, and power dynamics after participating in study abroad programs. Most of the research focuses on the increased intercultural awareness students develop post-trip. For this study, the Belize Service Learning Program was a unique, recurring, short-term service-learning experience offered through the USU College of Education, which provided pre-service and in-service teachers, among others, the opportunity to work with Belizean teachers and children. The outcomes of this case study have significance for two major areas: research and practice.

Research on study abroad participation and its influence on college students' intercultural sensitivity and self-awareness are mostly quantitative studies. Increasingly there is a call for more research to explore the incidental learning experiences of students who choose to study abroad (Younes & Asay, 2003); a qualitative approach can provide richer, deeper data and context-specific understanding of the new knowledge that it generates. This study extends current knowledge by using qualitative case study methods, primarily participant observations, in-depth interviews, and field observations, to examine the experiences of public school teachers as they participated in this unique study abroad in a culturally diverse developing country, Belize.

Only a small percentage of college students ever participate in study abroad programs while in college. In addition, most of those students who do study abroad are White and female that major in non-education fields, whom have limited experience with students of color, students that do not speak English as a first language and immigrants. As previously mentioned, this study was unique because the participants were previous or current teachers. Furthermore, participants in this study assisted with developing effective literacy practices for the designated school. The participants collaborated and co-taught with the Belizean teachers while providing them with professional development in literacy instruction. In addition, the participants learned about the Belizean education system and culture from the teachers and students with who program participants interacted.

This study also addressed the limited research that speak to the components of transformation (Ross, 2010) as well as investigated the diversity of students (race, cultural identity, gender, socioeconomic) who participated and the relationship of those characteristics to study abroad (Pritchard, Morgan, & Ateljevic, 2011). This study adds practical knowledge about study abroad trips focused on students in colleges of education, therefore people who are current or future educators in some form, using a “critical and global perspective” (Reilly & Senders, 2009).

By providing a more thorough understanding of the teachers’ experiences while studying abroad in a developing country, this study addressed how short-term study abroad programs foster critical insights into power dynamics that extend beyond surface level. Lastly, the researcher discovered ways to improve teacher education programs. Through the teachers’ experiences, this study addressed how they come to understand race, poverty, privilege and other diversity issues and empowered them to challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). The teacher narratives aided in the development of practice and policies recommendations, which I provide in a later chapter, that can higher education institutions work toward becoming more diverse and inclusive.

### **Summary**

The demographics of college students in the United States continue to change. As new diversity initiatives develop, they significantly affect a majority of students at these

institutions of higher education. Underlying these initiatives and objectives are assumptions regarding student interaction and development. Rowe et al. (1994) states, “members of visible racial/ethnic minority groups have little choice concerning their awareness of racial identity; White Americans have the option of minimizing the impact of racial awareness by dismissing the issue in various ways” (p. 138).

Through a critical qualitative analysis of interviews, observations and documents, this study considered cultural student learning in the study abroad experience and the meaning of the service-learning experience has for students who participate. In this chapter, I have provided the problem statement, a background on the study, an overview of the methodology, key terms, and limitations. Discussion in the next chapter, Chapter 2, the Literature Review, provides a brief history of teacher education, service-learning, and diversity issues relevant to colleges and universities.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Historically, the United States as a country was founded with laws, policies, and practices infused with racial tenets that privilege White people over those of color (Haney-Lopez, 2006). That foundation remains engrained in the U.S. American institutions. No place is this more evident than in higher education. With technological advances, the world has become increasingly interconnected. Higher education leaders continue to advocate for college students developing the capability to work across racial, ethnic, and cultural differences to become successful in our global economy (Bikson, Treverton, Moini & Lindstrom, 2003; Durbin, 2006). However, this educational rhetoric focuses on political and economic gains while ignoring societal ills such as racism, sexism, and classism that saturate education, particularly higher education and teacher preparation programs.

As the demographics in the United States continue to change, diversity education on college campuses and in teacher education programs is a priority. It is a priority that educators move beyond surface-level views of students. Instead, they need a more critical understanding of how issues such as race, poverty, social class, and privilege influence the experiences and perspectives of students who enter their classrooms. In addition, educators need a more nuanced understanding of their own positionality on these issues.

Education remains a field where discussing these topics has potential to address historical discriminatory practices. In his study of educational inequality, Rumburger (2010) captured this belief when he expressed,

To the extent to which there is equal educational opportunity – all children have an equal opportunity to acquire the amount and type of schooling based on their interests and effort – then education serves to break the link between the transmission of economic privilege from one generation to the next (p. 246).

To support this belief, many educational institutions have devoted resources to increasing student diversity and initiatives on campus. Higher education has emphasized and implemented such diversity initiatives as increasing recruitment of students and faculty of color, establishing multicultural offices, and promoting study abroad programs. International travel proponents see many values to studying abroad. They argue that students with international experience even in short durations will increase their capacity to communicate effectively with diverse groups (Green, Luu, & Burris, 2008; NAFSA, 2003). They also suggest that students who participate in short-term and long-term study abroad programs where they are immersed in other cultures will experience growth in intercultural awareness and cultural sensitivity.

There remains insufficient scholarship on service learning, teacher education, and in-service teachers who participate in short-term study abroad programs. Very few studies focus on teachers studying abroad, or courses in which service learning is part of

their study abroad practice. I could find no literature that focuses on service learning in literacy through a critical Peacework lens. Moreover, I was unable to locate any naturalistic qualitative studies focused on American teachers who are also graduate students studying abroad, whether short or long term, or any studies focused on teachers attending a PWI studying literacy practices in a developing country. In my literature review, I discuss select scholarship on predominantly White institutions that refer to integration, diversity policies on college campuses and changing demographics at higher education institutions. The first section reviews literature on race, socioeconomic status, gender, and White privilege. Many predominantly White colleges and institutions have listed diversity and inclusiveness as a value they promote; however, despite these beliefs, privilege, oppression, and racism are present in American postsecondary education (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2006; Waters, 2007). Critical race scholars argue that education, like other social institutions, is shaped by racial ideas and practices and should become an equalizing force that allows someone to overcome undesirable circumstances such as poverty. In this view, education as a process and practice should be emancipatory and critical of power structures.

Next, I discuss the changing cultural and demographic context in the United States. The American public education system has changed drastically over the last 20 years as national demographics shift and more students of color enter the public education system. Despite this shift, the racial and gender demographics of those teaching the students are still consistently White middle-class women (Morrell, 2010). I



then discuss the history of teacher education programs, and how these programs have changed to accommodate a changing demographic of students, and the efforts made to better prepare teachers for diverse classrooms.

In the section that follows, I then briefly discuss service, experiential learning, and study abroad programs. I divided my review of these areas and their impact on college students' intercultural competence into the following three sections: (1) the history and prior research on service learning (2) prior research on experiential learning, and (3) prior research on the effects of study abroad. During my review of literature, I searched for service learning projects and study abroad programs that focused on in-service teachers that yielded very few results. This gap in the literature points to limited research on teachers that participate in study abroad courses as well as co-teaching service-service learning programs.

Lastly, to comprehend and accomplish visions of inclusiveness, higher education practitioners working with students must examine and recognize how students make meaning of their own race as well as their cultural positioning as Americans and the racial differences of others. This study utilized a critical race theory (CRT) lens to examine how graduate students, who are also teachers, make meaning of their Belize Service Learning project experience and explicitly interrogate the social, cultural, and power dynamics at work in those interactions. This course is unique in the sense that it is a co-teaching short-term service-learning project housed in the USU College of

Education that serves children and teachers in Belize. Participants are assigned Belizean classes to teach while abroad.

### **Literature Search**

In my literature search, I used the BOSS library system. Proquest, World Cat, and JSTOR were three of my primary search databases. Before proposing the study, I started my literature search by conducting some background reading on study abroad programs, students and race, and intercultural sensitivity. I continued searching for new literature when the study and analysis were underway. I sought to grasp the concept of the topic and searched for new terminology that was unfamiliar.

Next, I identified key authors, terms, and concepts related to my study. I also searched many key terms in various combinations: teacher education and study abroad, diversity, college campus, study abroad, intercultural sensitivity, othering, teacher education and diversity, in-service teachers and service-learning, co-teaching and short-term study abroad. After searching these key items, I focused on the title of this study to capture the study setting, research participants, and duration. I spent some time thinking about the title of this study; however, my previous experience with this program allowed the process to determine a title.

## **Predominantly White Institutions**

Over the last 50 years, the United States slowly made social progress regarding racial progress and segregation due to the legislation passed during the Civil Rights Era. Education, often considered the great equalizer, has experienced significant change during this time especially at predominantly White institutions (PWIs), higher education institutions with greater than fifty percent of the student body being White. Initially, African American students sought to challenge segregation to gain access to PWIs, breaking the original vision of higher education in the United States being exclusively for White men and eventually White women. The legal cases, *Gaines vs. Missouri* (1938) and *Sweatt vs. Painter* (1950) sought to challenge segregated higher education on constitutional grounds. Higher education leadership started recognizing their potential role, and perhaps even their responsibility, to advance social progress in the late 1960s (Bowen, 1977). The movement grew stronger by the 1990s and, as Hirabayashi (1997) explains, sought to “make education more equitable, diverse, and inclusive’ and “offer students and practitioners a set of alternative, oppositional perspectives, and resources” (p 25).

## **Diversity on Campus**

As Chang (2002) suggests, “the concept of diversity has evolved until it now encompasses a wide range of issues related to democratizing nearly every aspect of

higher education” (p. 129). Initially, the view of what constituted diversity was racial and ethnic differences; however, the definition has expanded to include gender as well as disability, sexuality, religious, and cultural identities (Youdell, 2006).

Many colleges and universities use this all-encompassing view of diversity. Presently, U.S. College’s diversity programs and plans often center on the previous work in psychology that focus on group interactions (Allport, 1954). Desegregation and social justice initiatives resulted in an increased presence of minority students on traditionally White campuses, which later enhanced gender equity on college campuses (Chang, 2002; Tierney, 1997; Trent, 1991). The increased presence of students of color on predominantly White campuses shows the creation of “ethnic-themed houses, cultural clubs, separate orientation programs, graduation celebrations for different ethnic/racial groups, and ethnic studies and women’s studies courses” (Gurin, 2005, p. 21). Programmatic initiatives differ in vision and in impact, but all students benefit from substantial encounters with diverse students, instructors, speakers, and community members. In fact, Hurtado (2007) suggests the arguments surrounding diversity demands scholars to assess and interrogate educating diverse students more holistically.

Diversity has become all-encompassing in academic and civic life. Universities and colleges have expanded their practices to reflect the importance of institutional diversity. Without a more detailed or sophisticated curriculum, most educators seem to miss the mark and inadvertently dismiss the level of change and commitment needed. Even with over 25 years of scholarship and initiatives on college campuses, these levels

are misunderstood and very underestimated (Chang, 2002). Chang (2002) suggested that institutions do not capitalize on the benefits by tying diversity with the increased students of color on campus. Moreover, Hurtado (2007) found that current data links theoretical and empirical studies that suggest ideal situations to maximize benefits for diverse student groups.

Hurtado (2007) found that casual positive interactions amongst diverse groups were shown to increase scores on test measures in areas of critical thinking and intercultural awareness, and these students showed increased ability to view situations from other students' perspectives. Moreover, interaction with diverse peers inside and outside the classroom is a crucial way in which diversity produces educational benefits for students. Some researchers argued that cross-racial contact will produce more tolerant attitudes when members of different groups interact with each other under specified conditions. The conditions they describe include having equal status in the situation, getting to know each other well, cooperating with each other toward common goals, and having the support of relevant authorities. Most research on the impact of intergroup contact supports its efficacy in reducing prejudice and intergroup bias (Gurin, 2005). However, Evelyn Hu-DeHart (2000) argued that current campus diversity initiatives and programs continue to promote Whiteness and perpetuate White supremacy historically found on PWIs.

In addition, institutions have shifted focus by employing executive level professionals who serve multifaceted roles in relation to university diversity initiatives,

however, these further complicates administrative structures (Clark, 1986). Because many diversity advocates seek to rethink and change existing ideals and practices in higher education, a set of campus initiatives and policies became closely linked with its agenda (Chang, 2002). As university stakeholders continue to draft action plans that acknowledged and incorporated the experiences of people of color, which altered, how diversity is viewed and written about on campuses. Who has the power to shape diversity action plans is an important consideration as well as the ways institutional practices and knowledge tends to reproduce racial inequalities (Villalpando & Delgado Bernal, 2002).

Students who participate in extensive diversity discussions have shown an increased in multicultural orientation, social justice interests, empathy-based skills, and a general sense that disagreements do not hinder democratic ideals (Hurtado, 2007). However, Edwards (2014) found White supremacy influenced student's lives and discussions of race, sexism, homophobia, and classism. Although she believed class space was an area for resistance, White students maintained their beliefs of this imaginary "other" world that allowed them to, subconsciously or consciously, ignore those issues. Furthermore, in that study, students of color were just as unobservant of race. African American feminist theorist bell hooks (1992) argued that:

the commodification of difference promotes paradigms of consumption wherein whatever difference the Other inhabits is eradicated, via exchange, by a consumer cannibalism that not only displaces the Other but denies the significance of that Other's history through a process of decontextualization" (p.26).

In brief, White supremacy accepts differences in small manageable portions that ultimately are lost in the dominant culture and eventually the history dies out.

## **Race**

Since the 1960s, the fight for racial equality and equity has influenced the United States. In higher education, the field has gone from entirely White faculty and students to more representatives of other races but more work is needed. For many, race is absolute idea and unbridgeable difference among people. In the United States, for example, people of European descent have been considered more intelligent and superior to those having darker skin. Marvin Harris (1964) stated the following:

the mechanism employed is the rule of hypo-descent. This descent rule requires Americans to believe that anyone who is known to have had a Negro ancestor is a Negro... The rule of hypo-descent is, therefore, an invention, which we in the United States have in order to keep biological facts from intruding into our collective racist fantasies. (p. 56)

Race has been the subject of legal and personal action. Over time, categories of race continually form and evolve. These racial formations lead to determining the importance of each racial group is and the social, economic, and political power each amass (Omi & Winant, 2004). In the U.S., discussions of race tends to center on the binary of “Whiteness” and the “other.” Classification as White is equated to economic, social, and political security. Critical race scholar Derrick Bell (2009) stated:

Becoming White meant gaining access to a whole set of public and private privileges that materially and permanently guaranteed basic needs and, therefore, survival. Becoming White increased the possibility of controlling critical aspects of one's life rather than being the object of others' domination (p. 45).

According to hooks (1994), there is a “difference between attacking the institutionalized structures of White supremacy and individual White people” (p. 158). White supremacy, thereby Whiteness, is a pervasive system of power that seeks to maintain its power and control over resources such as land, property, and money. In contrast, individual White people within that system benefit from the power and control that Whiteness provides. Furthermore, critical education reform scholar Zeus Leonardo (2002) argues that Whiteness is “a collection of everyday strategies characterized by the unwillingness to name the contours of racism, the avoidance of identifying with a racial experience or group, the minimization of racist legacy, and other similar evasions” (p. 32). Due to this ideology, social, educational, and political systems that perpetuate a hegemonic society encapsulate Whiteness (Leonardo, 2009).

As mentioned in the opening to this chapter, the U.S. was founded on a racist system that benefited property owners, primarily White middle-class men, at the detriment of people of color such as Blacks, who were considered property before ever becoming citizens (Ladson-Billings, 2009). However, Whiteness is implicitly linked to hegemonic ideology in the U.S. (Lopez, 2006) and those beliefs reconstruct Whiteness at



the detriment of others (Yancy, 2017). This is important to consider when viewing international service learning projects forged in American PWIs through a CRT lens.

### **Privilege**

In discussing privilege, the primary focus in this analysis is on White privilege; however, other privileges exist, and I present these in this study. McIntosh (1990) describes White privilege as the accepted and unmerited powers, rights, and judgments that Whites received solely due to their skin color. In fact, Whites may or may not be aware that they received these privileges due to the normalcy of their everyday experience. A now classic essay and heavily critiqued article (Lensmire, McManimon, Tierney, Lee-Nichols, Case, Lensmire & Davis, 2013), McIntosh's (1990) *Unpacking the Knapsack* highlighted how those in the privileged class take their daily lives for granted. When dealing with privilege, most people participate, either knowingly or unknowingly, without acknowledging the benefits they receive. This is even true for those who do not identify as White, and White privilege continues to thrive through "an unearned position in society" (Leonardo, 2009, p. 273). Whiteness, and, therefore, White privilege, has been protected and virtually hidden by the belief, or refusal to discuss, that America is a colorblind, post-racial meritocracy.

Furthermore, Leonardo (2009) suggested the United States constitution is designed with White male property owners in mind while intentionally creating a system of domination through slavery (race), patriarchy (gender), and class (socioeconomic) that

is woven into the document. Through Whiteness, people who identify as White or presumed as White have gained social and political rights through unearned privileges (Bell, 2009; McIntosh, 1990). Additionally, Leonard (2009) stated that Whites “set up a system that benefits the group, mystifies the system, removes the agents of action from discourse, and when interrogated about it, stifles the discussion with inane comments about the ‘reality’ of the charges being made” (p. 272).

Critical race theory holds that racism embeds American culture. Therefore, racist ideology surrounds our daily lives, and “people do not generally see the ways in which they are privileged” (Brah & Phoenix, 2009, p. 253). Conversely, the interactions and critical reflection that occur in international settings such as Belize may help in-service teachers see their privilege and understand their role in creating a more just, equitable society.

### **Implications of the Browning of America for Teachers**

By 2020, students of color will make up close to 50% of America’s public education population, and more than 75% of the largest 50 public school districts in the United States will consist of students of color (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010). Cultural and linguistic differences in American public schools are becoming more prevalent today. Demographer James Johnson (1997) called this the “browning” of America, a situation that calls for greater emphasis on teacher training in our education programs. Baldwin, Buchanan, and Rudisill (2007) suggested that teacher education

programs have the power to close the educational gaps and minimize cultural differences that exists between traditionally marginalized populations and the dominant culture in the United States.

Teachers must be prepared to address the serious implications of the shifting demographics in America. Therefore, a serious task facing teacher education programs is how to prepare future teachers for global awareness and cross-cultural teaching that is sensitive to the histories and experiences of students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Malweski, Sharma, & Phillion, 2012). Many educators have called for multicultural curriculum, White identity development, and practical opportunities such as international service learning and study abroad to address this issue.

Wade (2000) recommended three key items in teacher education programs. First, Wade advocates that field experiences and goals collaboratively develop to minimize the asymmetry between the “server” and the “served.” Second, he suggests that community experiences ought to vary to provide multiple perspectives on societal issues. Lastly, Wade (2000) recommends planning critical reflective papers and discussions so that teachers confront preconceived biases and beliefs. The Belize service-learning course that is the focus of this study reflects Wade’s recommended items for teacher education programs.

## **History of Teacher Education Programs in the United States**

Teacher education programs have gradually moved from normal schools and teacher institutes to the university setting in the United States. In the early 1900s, teacher education was rare, and when it did occur, it was held in various settings until the emergence of the normal school (Labaree, 2008). In the 1820s, America saw the arrival of the normal school to provide training in teacher education for graduates of grade school (Labaree, 2008; Sadker & Sadker, 2007). Graduates were potential teachers for newly-created grammar schools and high schools. Teacher education went through a rapid change, where teachers were prepared through the normal schools and then eventually to state-sponsored colleges and regional universities. Teacher education programs became a primary resident of the university setting in the 1970s.

Teaching is an old profession, far outdating teacher education as a professional field. Before the emergence of normal schools, teachers entered the classroom through various means. Often, simply completing certain educational levels allowed individuals to teach particular subject areas. Teaching did not require special training or certificates (Altenbaugh & Underwood, 1990; Labaree, 2008; Sadker & Sadker, 2007). Although formal preparation was infrequent before the last century, teacher preparation generally involved the idea “take the class, teach the class” (Labaree, 2008, p. 291).

In the early 1800s, children learned basic subjects (literacy and math skills) in the home while the churches taught students additional areas. Apprenticeships taught

students a craft, and women used their homes as dame schools to teach fundamental skills to students (Labaree, 2008; Sadker & Sadker, 2007). Since there was no formal process for teachers to receive an education for their profession, the requirements for becoming a teacher depended on setting. Any number of people could teach in the classroom. The qualifications for teachers included their ability to maintain order in the classroom, their ability to complete the assigned classes, and their local availability and willingness to teach (Labaree, 2008; Sedlak, 1989). As standards changed, teaching requirements changed as well.

Later, the common school movement, championed by Horace Mann, was developed. The common school movement pushed for more teachers as school districts continually adopted a more structured standard model. As teaching moved away from an informal model, teaching became more a “public trust” requiring that teachers be held to a higher standard in order to teach American children (Labaree, 2008). In these schools, teacher training included a program that delivered teaching lectures and courses in pedagogy (Labaree, 2008). Potential teachers received formal on-the-job training that was previously unavailable. Typically, school administrators led these programs during the summer, and they lasted anywhere from one to eight weeks (Mattingly, 1975).

In doing so, the common school transformed normal schools into regional state universities to satisfy the demand for educated and professionally-trained teachers (Labaree, 2008). As educators began realizing the benefits of providing teachers with curriculum and skills training, other states created their own normal schools. The impact

of normal schools was substantial; however, such educational efforts gradually moved to higher education institutions.

During the early 19th century, it was uncommon for women to work in formal education. Horace Mann, along with other education reformers, believed that women were a better fit for teaching due to the perception they possessed a natural maternal, nurturing instinct and high moral character (Labaree, 2008). In the United States, over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, teaching gradually became a female-dominated field. Women had always taught dame schools from their homes (Sadker & Sadker, 2007). Although dame school teachers were not highly educated, they provided proof that women could teach, and eventually, women became more educated. In addition, a common argument at the time for hiring female educators was that communities could pay women substantially less to teach than men. As more women moved from rural areas to more urban communities searching for employment, teaching became a respectable field for them. Education reformers viewed women's femininity and nurturing tendencies as their "best qualification" because it reflected children's experiences in the home (Urban and Wagoner, 2014).

Education experienced drastic changes in the twenty-first century, that have shaped teaching and teacher education. Ladson-Billings (2001) stated the following:

More career options, particularly for females, are available; women can more easily enter other career paths. For another, beginning teachers may not even see teaching as a life career but as a first career, possibly a first step toward other

kinds of jobs such as an administrator, curriculum developer, or college-level teacher. (p. 5)

Teacher education programs have not experienced much change in recent decades.

Teacher education programs have been relatively consistent in their resistance to change “because [their] current configuration allows them access to the perks and privileges the academy has to offer” (Ladson-Billings, 2001, p. 6). Teacher education programs face the task of educating potential teachers in a changing world while facing decreased state and federal funding. Teachers must understand various learning styles and how to address each style differently that includes “pedagogical content knowledge that incorporate language, culture, and community contexts for learning” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 300).

### **Teacher Education Faculty**

The majority the teachers in our public schools are White, middle-class women (Banks & Banks, 2009). They are tasked with teaching students from cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds unfamiliar to them (Grant & Secada, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1999). There is a lack of literature on teacher education faculty, many of whom are White (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Educators are tasked with promoting a commitment to diversity while often living far removed from the everyday life of communities of color (Grant & Gillette, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1999).

Due to the dominance of White students, teachers and faculty in teacher education programs, the needs of students of color are placed in one group rather than combined within individual cultural, ethnic, or racial groups (Banks, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2005). Therefore, most teachers suggest that the preservice teaching provided limited help in preparing them for the actual classroom demographics and cultural makeup (Ladson-Billings, 2005, Ladson-Billings, 1994).

One of the many problems is insufficient teacher preparation in relation to the changing demographics and increasing diversity in our schools (Howard, 1999). Most preservice teachers participate in field experiences in communities that are, like them, White, monolingual, and middle class. These experiences differ from the inner-city communities and other multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and immigrant communities. Teachers often experience culture shock when transitioning across environments (Ladson-Billings, 2005). B

### **Preparation for Diverse Populations**

The literature on preparing teachers for diverse populations is continually growing. As Kumashiro (2000) stated, “Educators should create safe spaces based on what they see is needed right now, but they should also constantly re-create the spaces” (p. 31). In doing so, educators should question how this space provides safety to all students. If some students feel unsafe, teachers should ask why they feel unsafe. Anyon (1997) found that the current system was particularly harmful to marginalized



populations, largely due to the decisions of others. By asking such questions about safety, teachers would be addressing the entire student population and not overlooking some students.

Several studies suggest that various complexities exist in teacher education despite recent strides to include culturally relevant pedagogy in response to the changing demographics of the field. O'Connor, Hill and Robinson (2009) argued that historical factors continue to influence education due to individual choices to segregate through social mobility, as communities maintain historical class and race lines. The failures to address deep-seated inequities and the inability or unwillingness to understand how (marginalized) populations experience these problems have hindered the development of quality schools (Kantor & Lowe, 2004).

Historical disparities continue to alter the existing educational environment and influence school demographics (Collins, 2009). Over five decades after *Brown vs. Board of Education*, Ladson-Billings (1994) argued that Black students still attend schools that are racially segregated and drastically unequal. Farkas (2008) argued, "African American students begin school with lower basic skills and lower evaluations on attentiveness and effort. Their families have much lower SES, and they typically go to lower quality schools" (p. 118). Additionally, researchers have found that larger school districts are still segregating along racial and class lines. Inner city schools are predominantly Black and poor while suburban schools are typically affluent with majority White students that

have far reaching implications to their lives (Wilson, 2009). In the United States, race and poverty continue to overlap in public education.

In my review of literature, most studies focused on African American students and approached teacher preparation as ridding the African American students of their cultural identity (Ladson-Billings, 2000). These findings have led scholars to advocate for more critical approaches and culturally-relevant pedagogy in teacher education. Teacher education takes on a more “psychologized” approach to development of pre-service teachers while perspectives from anthropology and other social sciences seldom appear (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Howard (2003) argued that an important aspect of culturally relevant pedagogy involves personal reflection to understand our own biases to know what it means to “teach students who come from different racial and cultural backgrounds than [our] own” (p. 198). Often, teachers want to teach in culturally appropriate and relevant ways. They believe that all students can learn; however, they remain under-prepared and fail to push students to analyze policies that may affect them in their daily lives (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

### **Teacher Education Programs and Cultural Immersion**

Far too often, White teachers work in areas that do not match their own life experiences, worldviews, and level of racial development (Alba, 1990, Sleeter, 1994). Teacher education programs expect students to demonstrate cultural awareness and competence despite lacking the training, practice, and life experience to do so (Howard,

1999). As Malcolm X stated, “We can’t teach what we don’t know, and we can’t lead where we won’t go” (as cited in Howard, 2006, p. 6). The contrasting beliefs between students of color and White middle class teachers result in cultural mismatches (Delpit, 1995) and cultural gaps (Sleeter, 2001).

A study by Hackett, Summers, Coppage, and Handy (2015) argued that the development of alternative teacher certification processes, such as Teach for America, caused a shift in the focus of teacher education preparation. Many alternative certification organizations focus on training teachers who are committed to a social justice and culturally relevant framework. However, these programs are often inconsistent in their course requirements, duration of training, and assessment of student work to obtain alternative certification (Zeichner, 2010). According to Hackett et al. (2015), marginalized populations and communities have become the “explicit targets of many alternative and traditional teacher certification programs” while they continually blame traditional teacher education programs for student performance (p. 3).

To provide diverse experiences that will help strengthen teachers’ cultural competence and experiences, some institutions require some parts of the teacher education programs to occur in “diverse” populations (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, Zeichner, 2010). Such programs immerse potential teachers in communities characterized by high populations of students of color and lower socioeconomic status (Nahan, 1982; Noordhoff & Kleinfeld, 1991). These programs stress the importance of immersion in helping future teachers understand the community in which they will work.

With experiential experience outside of their classroom, preservice and in-service teachers may come to understand the child's environment, lack of resources, and public service access affect a child's desire to partake in school activities (Ladson-Billings, 2005). This approach to teacher education also provides a rationale for study abroad experiences.

### **Study Abroad**

Studying abroad is not a new concept for those with the financial means to travel. As early as the 1800s, young aristocratic males went on the "Grand Tour," being exposed to different cultures as they traveled across countries (Gibson, 1998). During American colonization, the effects of which still shape the country today, churches established institutions of higher education to allow wealthy affluent males to study religion and prepare for their place in high society. Because these denominational colleges taught religious studies, many affluent American families wanted their children to receive a European education.

Until the mid-Nineteenth century, study abroad in the United States was for privileged families who could send their White male children to study at prestigious European colleges. However, with continued educational reform, the United States developed a curriculum to empower students with a new set of knowledge and skills that

would eventually establish the United States as a the only global superpower in key categories such as economics, education and political influence (Rudolph, 1990). The curriculum continued to evolve as education became more accessible to middle class families and women, which eventually saw the first study abroad program in higher education at the University of Delaware in 1923 ([www.udel.edu](http://www.udel.edu)). Curricular changes did not affect the wealthy; affluent families continued to send their children to prestigious institutions in Europe for a superior education (Rudolph, 1990). Study abroad programs underwent an important change when Harvard established a class elective system in the early 1900s (Hoffa, 2007). This change allowed students to choose their courses and ultimately determine their degree paths.

The early 1900s, World War I influenced college enrollment, and the number of students attending college decreased. World War I affected study abroad programs, as fewer students traveled. Despite this, the United States maintained a strong relationship with European nations, and “many Americans still thought they needed to live and learn in Europe in order to be fully educated” (Hoffa, 2007, p. 62). The 1920s saw a substantial change in American study abroad. Many institutions began developing programs to start “combining academic and experiential learning modes in a foreign setting,” letting students use study abroad experiences to reach degree requirements (Hoffa, 2007, p. 70).

## **Study Abroad Participants**

A broad concern in study abroad programs in recent years has been the need to both increase participation and focus on greater diversity in participation. The United States Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics stated the following:

The number of U.S. students studying abroad for credit during the 2013-2014 academic year grew 5.2 percent from 289,408 students to 304,467 students - this represents less than 1.5 percent of all U.S. students enrolled at institutions of higher education in the United States and about 10 percent of U.S. graduates.

(<http://www.nafsa.org>)

Of the study abroad participants, White students make up over 70% of the students who participate, despite being less than 60% of the entire higher education student population. White students often take advantage of opportunities to interact with other cultural groups through experiential learning opportunities. Study abroad/experiential learning offers students the opportunity to develop cultural awareness while being the minority in a new world. “It serves as a vehicle through which to examine in depth personal bias and racism and to better understand the meaning of diversity” (Baldwin et al., 2007, p. 315).

At the same time, some scholars have pointed out that study abroad, international travel courses and service-learning programs can implicitly perpetuate these racial dynamics as well. Often the marketing for these courses include benign wording that is

preparing mostly White students for the potential threats, diseases, or safety concerns (Shannon-Baker & Talbot, 2016). Research suggests that PWIs create hostile environments and potentially long lasting psychological impact on students of color. According to sociologist Allison Sinanan (2016), students of color, primarily African American, experienced extreme hostility:

When African Americans initially attend PWI's, the hostility was quite blatant and overt, now though individual and institutional racism does exist, one may experience more experiences of micro aggressions which contribute to the attrition rates; micro aggressions includes verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. (p. 157)

In brief, PWIs are overrun with students that benefited from Whiteness and the presence of Black students threatens the normalcy of those institutions during the Civil Rights era. Therefore, student of color had to adapt to these institutions that harbored Whiteness ideology and privileged White students (Bennett and Benton, 2001). However, study abroad seems to increase the cultural competency of White students who participate and these interactions suggest the possibility they can improve campus climate.

## **Experiential Learning**

According to Jaoko (2010), experiential learning theory posits effective learning must involve actions or active participation. This research suggests that effective learning takes place when students engage one another during the lesson. Related to experiential learning, students incorporate new experiences and prior experiences to process the entire situation. This process allows students to process both new and prior knowledge into new more relevant knowledge.

## **Service Learning**

According to the literature, John Dewey's educational philosophies laid the foundation for service learning (Ash & Clayton, 2004). Giles and Eyler (1994) suggests that Dewey's focus on the importance of the community as a learning instrument allowed many scholars to connect his beliefs with service learning literature and use the discipline as an instructional method.

Dewey's early work on School as Social Centre has been essential in advancing the service learning discipline (Dewey, 1902). In this work, he suggested that learning can take place when our experiences parallel our reality. Dewey (1902) was a pragmatist and believed that education should address immediate problems. Later in his life, Dewey's (1938) stance changed slightly on learning experiences, and he emphasized that some learning experiences are not as educational as others based on students'



experiences. That is, if students had a bad experience, they would be less likely to delve deeper into the subject matter or work through the issues of a problem.

Some scholars believe Dewey never developed a complete plan for service learning (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999). However, William Kilpatrick, who studied under Dewey, was cited in the book *Youth Serves the Community*. This book is often considered the first formal proposal for service learning (Hanna, 1936; Stanton et al., 1999). In fact, Hanna's (1936) work is the basis of service learning as he detailed how educators could expand the curriculum by moving outside the classroom into the community.

Service learning did not take the form we see today until the early 20th century (Reiman, 1992). The National Youth Administration, established by Franklin D. Roosevelt, was an early example of the service learning we see today (Tyack, Lowe, & Hansot, 1984). This program is the model for his Emergency Conservation Work Act of 1933, which established the Civilian Conservation Corps (Black, 1996; Emergency Conservation Work Act, 1933). The belief that educators of all types should combine learning with real-world skills to, in turn, contribute to society was at the foundations of this program (Roberts & Edwards, 2015; Titlebaum, Williamson, Daprano, Baer, & Brahler, 2004). The program helped more than one million youths survive during the Great Depression (Speck & Hoppe, 2004). Beginning with Roosevelt Administration's support in the 1930s, service learning began to see legislative support that increased its adoption in classrooms across the nation.

In the 1950s, several key legislative acts laid the foundation for important developmental pieces (Kraft, 1996). These policies helped push educational approaches forward, such as service learning. In the 1990s, federal support for service learning continued with the passage of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (McHue, 2000). As a result of this bill, two important organizations were created: the Corporation for National and Community Service and AmeriCorps (National and Community Service Trust Act, 1993). In addition, the belief was that service would become a fundamental part of American classrooms across the nation (Stanton, Giles Jr, & Cruz, 1999).

In the 1990s, the W.H. Kellogg Foundation became one of the first non-profit organizations to embrace service learning. The foundation developed grant opportunities for K-12 education (McHue, 2000). The Kellogg Foundation sought to develop leadership in students to increase their sense of social responsibility (McHue, 2000). With this curriculum, millions of students developed a deeper empathy for individuals less fortunate than themselves. In addition, the Kellogg Foundation established the Learning in Deed program (McHue, 2000). This program paired high school students with struggling elementary students to improve their academic achievement. Romano and Cushner (2007) argued that international experiences for teachers promoted deeper understanding and helped them develop stronger relationships as they learned from the differences of others, who differ from them. Study abroad programs provide immersion in foreign countries and offer pre-service teachers another avenue to develop intercultural

competence in preparation for diverse student groups (Cushner & Brennan, 2007; Heyl & McCarthy, 2003). Marx and Moss (2011) found that study abroad programs increased pre-service teachers' intercultural competence and prompted them to start thinking more critically about the influence of culture on teaching and learning.

Furthermore, international service learning can provide experiential experience of "otherness", challenge stereotypes, and influence cultural understandings for in-service teachers (Walters, Garii & Walters, 2009). Students are required to deal with real world issues as they occur (Buchanan, Baldwin & Rudisill, 2002), benefitting in-service teachers when dealing with diverse student groups. Scholars refer to intercultural competence in multiple ways. Cross-cultural competence, multicultural awareness, and intercultural sensitivity are interchangeable with intercultural competence (Bennett, 1993; Byram, 1997; Chen & Sarosta, 1996). According to Hanvey (1976), intercultural competence has five dimensions encompassing the awareness and appreciation of cultures, nature, and events, all shaping issues that affect various communities. Alvarez (2001) argued courses that immerse students in cross-cultural learning activities has resulted in students' deeper appreciation for difference. Jaoko (2010) stated that cultural immersion has proven to be one of the more impactful methods of increasing acceptance for differences in others.

According to Lustig and Koester (2003), intercultural competence consists of three parts: interpersonal and situational context, the degree of appropriateness and effectiveness in interaction, and sufficient knowledge, motivations, and actions. They

believe that competence exists through “the relationship and situations within the communications which the communication occurs” (p. 65). This study adds to the growing body of literature on study abroad, service learning with teachers, and intercultural competence.

### **Chapter Summary**

Racism, segregation, and discriminatory practices have influenced the United States’ institutions such as banks, schools, and government since the inception of this country. No place is this more evident than in higher education. With technological advances, the world has become increasingly interconnected. Due to this development and the increase of students of color entering our educational system, researchers advocate for college students developing the capability to work across racial, ethnic, and cultural differences to be successful in our global economy (Bikson, Treverton, Moini & Lindstrom, 2003; Lincoln Commission, 2005). In addition, the “browning” of America affects preservice and in-service teachers, who may lack the intercultural sensitivity or training to address the changing cultural and linguistic demographics in their classroom.

By 2020, students of color will make up close to 50% of America’s public education population, and more than 75% of the largest 50 public school districts in the United States will be students of color. Baldwin, Buchanan, and Rudisill (2007) suggested that teacher education programs have the power to close the educational gaps and minimize cultural differences that exists between traditionally marginalized

populations and the dominant culture in the United States. Therefore, a serious task facing teacher education programs is how to prepare future teachers for global awareness and cross-cultural teaching that is sensitive to the histories and experiences of students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Malweski, Sharma, & Phillion, 2012). Many educators have called for practical opportunities such as international service learning and study abroad to address this issue.

To provide diverse experiences that will help strengthen teachers' cultural competence and experiences, some institutions require some parts of the teacher education programs to occur in "diverse" populations (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Zeichner, 2010). As shared previously, international service learning can provide experiential experience of "otherness", challenge stereotypes, and influence cultural understandings for in-service teachers (Walters, Garii & Walters, 2009). It offers opportunities, in this case, for American teachers who are also graduate students to immerse themselves in new contexts and gain new skills. Students are required to deal with real world issues as they occur (Buchanan, Baldwin & Rudisill, 2002), which is especially beneficial to in-service teachers when dealing with diverse student groups. This chapter provided a review of literature in areas relevant to this study. This chapter identified gaps in the literature and proved justification for the current study. The next chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research design and methods I employed in this unique naturalistic qualitative case study.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

For this study, I chose a qualitative research design because it situates the researcher in the world of the participants. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) stated, “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena regarding the meaning people bring to them” (p.3). In addition, researchers highlight the significance of analysis and how meaning develops from experiences. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) also stated, “qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (p. 10).

Qualitative research provides benefits for studying the experiences of groups. This is especially true for college students traveling to developing countries. “Qualitative methodology is useful in exploring and describing the experiences of college student especially when little is known about the phenomenon under study” (Brown, Stevens, Troiano, & Schneider, 2002, p. 1). This is true of students’ experiences while studying abroad and interacting with diverse cultures.

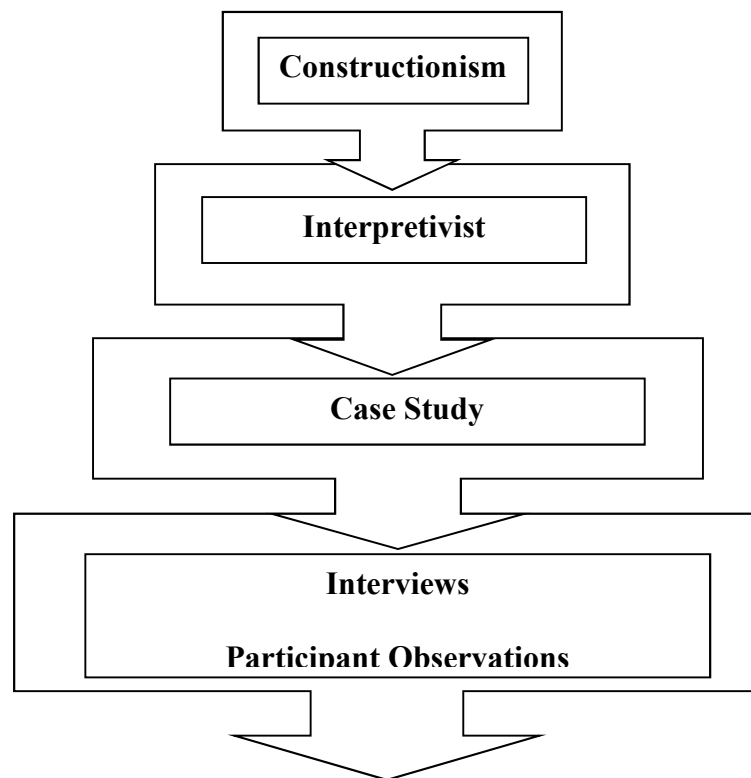
## **Epistemological Approach**

According to Crotty (1998), “Epistemology is concerned with providing philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate” (p. 8). Although there are other approaches to grounding my conceptual understanding of “knowledge,” this study takes a constructionism approach. Crotty (1998) explained constructionism as “truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world” (p.8). Constructionism is appropriate for this study as I accept that there are multiple understandings of lived experience, and in this study, examine how graduate students, who are teachers, make meaning of their Belize Service Learning project experience. Although the students experienced the same phenomenon, the way in which everyone constructed meaning of the experience was drastically different.

## **Critical Inquiry**

A researcher brings certain assumptions to a study before ever beginning the data collection. Crotty (1998) defined theoretical perspectives as a “statement of the assumptions brought to the research task and reflected in the methodology as we understand and employ it” (p. 7). The researcher’s theoretical perspective grounds the study in logic and provides context for the research process. Crotty’s (1998) theoretical perspective, and the one I use in this study, is depicted in Figure 1 below.

I use Critical Inquiry to ground the data, research design, data collection, and analysis. According to Crotty (1998), Critical Inquiry is a constant process of challenging what individuals consider the norm and allows researchers to “open themselves to new ways of understanding and take effective action for change” (p. 157). According to Crotty (1998), “Critical inquiry keeps the spotlight on power relationships within society so as to expose the forces of hegemony and injustice” (p. 157).



**Figure 1:** Theoretical Framework based on Crotty, 1998, p.4.



## **Critical Race Theory**

Race and privilege are central themes in this study, so I used Critical Race Theory (CRT) as an analytical tool for examining the broader discourse on the causes, consequences, and manifestations of race and racism within the United States and in relation to this service learning educational trip to Belize. Taylor (2009) stated that critical race theory:

comes from a long tradition of resistance to the unequal and unjust distribution of power and resources along political, economic, racial and gendered lines in America, and across the globe, with the support and legitimacy of the legal system which makes possible the perpetuation of the established power relationships of society. (p. 1)

Critical race theory recognizes that race is a dominant social construction that shapes peoples' lives. Derrick A. Bell, considered one of the founders, established a scholarly agenda for CRT that positioned race, racism, and colonialism in legal discourse.

Theorists such as Bell (1980) and Delgado (1995) go beyond social structures and biological factors by forcing themselves (thereby others) to scrutinize the severe impact of racism on American society.

Critical race theory is rooted in Critical Legal Studies (CLS) that emerged in the Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam War era. CRT has its derived from the 1970s critical legal studies and Civil Rights' era legislation. For example, Harris (1994) stated

that CRT gained from “CLS a commitment to being ‘critical,’ which in this sense means also to be ‘radical’ [White].” In addition, the framework also “inherits from the traditional civil rights scholarship a commitment to a vision of liberation from racism through the right reason” (p. 741, 743).

Furthermore, these scholars advocated CRT’s purpose as emancipating the United States institutions of its’ historically racist roots. This body of theory developed after advances in the 1950s and 1960s sought to eliminate discriminatory practices in education, housing, and employment, but resentment arose that drastically slowed or reversed this policy. As Bell (1995) stated, “a majority of whose members [critical race theorists] are both existentially people of color and ideologically committed to the struggle against racism, particularly as institutionalized in and by law” (p. xx).

Critical race theory has basic interdisciplinary tenets that guide its framework. First, CRT posits that racism is a part of daily life, deeply-rooted in American society, in institutions, in law, and in every day practices. Delgado (1997) suggested that White superiority is so entrenched in American structures that it is almost unrecognizable. However, critical analysis of this dominant framework rarely appears in textbooks, which is not an accident. According to Mills (2014), “Racism is a global White supremacy and is itself a political system, a particular power structure of formal and informal rule, privilege, socioeconomic advantages, and wealth and power opportunities” (p.3). Critical race theory suggests that this structure is so pervasive it has rendered itself invisible to Whites. Therefore, many find it difficult to see racism and understand the experiences of

people of color. Prominent cultural researchers supported the idea of invisibility of long embedded cultural assumptions. In addition, critical theorists add that invisible and unacknowledged culturally embedded assumptions, determine “much of the group’s behavior. Rules and norms are taught to newcomers in a “socialization process,” even in large organizations “if there has been enough of a history of shared experience” (Schein, 2010, p. 22). Certainly, racism has been a part of the shared experience of the United States (as an organization).

Another tenet of CRT is interest convergence. Bell’s (1980) theory of interest convergence suggests that the benefit of Blacks (a term used interchangeably in this study with African American) in gaining racial equality only occurs when they converge with the interest of influential Whites. Therefore, White people resist any changes or advance that benefit people of color unless it helps the White power structure. The desegregation of American public schools during the 1950s is an example of interest convergence. Despite unequal and inferior schools for African Americans, the United States government was hesitant to strike down the separate but equal doctrine. Dudziak (1988) found evidence suggesting that desegregation was more likely motivated by foreign policy concerns such as promoting democracy and containing communism. At this time, shortly after World War II, the nation had positioned itself to be the global leader in democracy after defeating a racist Nazi regime while denouncing communist Russia and China. However, international news continually reported horrible conditions and treatments of Blacks, which potentially could have undermined the American image and

cause complications with foreign countries. “Thus, the U.S. Justice Department filed an amicus brief asserting that, because of foreign policy concerns, desegregation was in the national interest” (Taylor, 2009, p. 6). In this instance and others, progress for people of color came only when it converged with the interest of Whites.

Another tenet of CRT is that it emphasizes the historical context of Whites having inalienable rights to property and capital. The U.S. political, legal, and educational systems highlight this premise. Critical race theory suggests that society avoids discussing the historical significance of the separate and unequal educations that Whites and people of color have received and its long reaching implications. Taylor (2009) stated the following:

What this gains is a release from the complexities of historical and political understanding whereby problems such as academic achievement gap between Whites and children of color, or of immigrants, or the poor, can be rendered as new challenges, rather than the expected outcomes of intentional policies and practices. It thus inhibits the formulation of new strategies (p. 7).

Unfortunately, this pattern led to few American schoolchildren and their teachers having knowledge of some of the horrors in American history.

Finally, the narrative, the account of events, people or places, plays an important part of CRT. Counter-narratives are central to the experiences of people of color as these stories challenge White Supremacy and debunk the notions of meritocracy and

colorblindness. According to Delgado (1994), “Most critical race theorists consider the majoritarian mindset – the bundle of presuppositions, received wisdom, and shared a cultural understanding of persons in the dominant group – to be a principal obstacle to racial reform” (p. 161). This is a significant theme for the participants traveling to a developing country that is predominantly people of African and Hispanic descent.

Narratives provide voices to those historically silenced by the current power structure - this is central to preserving the history of people of color and marginalized groups whose delegitimized experiences are within the master narrative. Critical race theorists use counter-storytelling and narratives to expose and challenge racism by referencing what Crenshaw (1998) calls “the actual conditions of Black people” (p. 1937). With narratives as a tenet, CRT embraces the subjective nature of perspective and acknowledges that individuals’ mindsets determine truth, fairness, and justice. Delgado (1995) points out an important distinction between the viewpoints of Whites and people of color: Whites do not see their view as one perspective, but instead as the truth.

I used CRT as an analytical frame and tool in this study because it attempts to foreground race and racism that shape the institution such as a PWI (an influence on the student) while challenging the traditional narrative on how these social constructs affect communities of color. This ideology ultimately affects majoritarian students as they navigate spaces occupied by people of color. As such, it has influenced my thinking about design for this study, as well as methods.

## **Research Questions**

I designed research questions that reflected the purpose of the study. These research questions started as a rough draft and evolved as the purpose became clearer. As Agee (2009) stated, “Good questions can grow out of initial curiosity or ideas for a qualitative study, but at the early stages, most questions are rough drafts” (p. 433). As is true of qualitative approaches, my study required a certain amount of flexibility given the travel schedules and unique experiences of the participants in the study. With this flexibility in mind, I developed a broad set of draft research questions to guide my focus and data collection techniques. However, during the process of completing data collection and analyzing data, I revised the research questions to get closer to the purpose of the study and the data:

1. What meaning do in-service teachers, who participate in a short-term, co-teaching, international service-learning course, make of their Belizean experience?
2. How do the in-service teachers perceive the race, language, and poverty issues during the Belizean service-learning courses?
3. How does Critical Race Theory help render racial dynamics visible in the Belize service-learning course?

4.

## **Methodology**

### **Case Study Approach**

I chose to use case study as my methodology. Case studies provide an extensive examination of one or more phenomena, groups, or bounded systems. Researchers “enter the scene with a sincere interest in learning how [participants or cases] function in ordinary pursuits and milieus and with a willingness to put aside many presumptions while we learn” (Stake, 2005, p. 1). Creswell (2007) described a case as a “bounded system’ (for one case) or ‘multiple bounded systems’ (for more than one)” (p. 443). By using multi-case study as the methodology, and by functioning as a participant researcher (further explained in my researcher statement below), I studied the phenomenon within its natural context, which means collecting data where and while the phenomenon was actually occurring.

Stake (1995) made distinctions between different types of case studies including a collective case study. Collective case studies are concerned about representation, which allows the study of several cases to explore one phenomenon. I used a collective case study approach due to the multiple participants (cases) who experienced the phenomenon of navigating and teaching in a developing country during an international service-learning trip. Stake (1994) stated about collective case studies, “They may be similar or

dissimilar, redundancy and variety each having voice. They are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing (sic), about a still larger collection of cases” (p. 89).

### **Delimitations and Participants**

By intentionally delimiting the parameters of this study, one can focus on the scope (Field, 2000). Each case was naturally bound by the place (Ubuntu State University and Belize) and activity (Belize Service Learning course and trip). In addition, cases were bound by group (graduate students who were teachers) who attended the class and went on the trip. This bounded system maintained the focus of the study on the experiences of graduate students participating in the Belize Service Learning Program and navigating a culturally diverse, developing country.

This study examines American students from a predominantly White institution who enrolled in the Belize Service Learning course, and, in turn, selected to participate in the study. The participants were 10 graduate students enrolled in an education-related field at USU. Participants were all female students. Eight of the students in the course appeared to be visually White, consistent with university demographics. One participant identified as Black, one identified as White and Iraqi, and another participant identified as Hispanic. All were current or former public school teachers.

The participants’ years of teaching experience ranged from four years to 25 years. Seven of the participants were in their mid-20s, two participants were in their 30s and one



participant was in her 50s. Nine participants were enrolled in a Master's program and one was in a doctoral program. The participants all expressed varying views on education and the Belize trip.

After analyzing the data, I grouped the participants into four groups. I present information on each participant and group analysis in later chapters. The first group is called *Mpya*, the Swahili word for *new*. It includes the participants who completed the first interview, provided all documents (journals, master narratives, reflective paper), and completed a final presentation. The second group is called *Usafiri*, the Swahili word for *travel*. It includes the participants who completed two interviews, provided all documents (journals, master narratives, reflective paper), and completed a final presentation.

The third group is called *Kamili*, the Swahili word for *complete*. It includes the participants who completed three interviews, provided all documents (journals, master narratives, reflection paper), and completed a final presentation. Lastly, two participants previously enrolled and traveled to Belize for the course in 2015, and they comprise the fourth group, *Kurudi*, the Swahili word for *return*. They completed three interviews, provided all documents (journals, master narratives, reflective paper), and completed a final presentation. They also provided journal entries from their previous experiences to frame their views on the current course.

## **Methods**

I used a variety of methods to collect data for this study. These methods included three sets of audio-recorded and transcribed interviews, reflective journal writings, photographs, observation, and field notes. In addition, I kept reflective researcher notes about my experiences, thoughts, and feelings while observing and working with students and the Belizean people. Each of these methods provided different pieces of data that supported the overall study, and I discuss each method in the following paragraphs.

### **Data Collection Timeline**

Students participating in the Belize Service Learning Program attended five in-class meetings before the spring trip on January 15 and 29, February 12 and 26, and March 4. These meetings consisted of in-class preparation for literacy lessons that were taught in Belize and selected readings on multicultural education, co-teaching, and literacy education. Due to timing, I facilitated a class discussion; however, I did not attend another course until after I received IRB (institutional research board) approval to conduct research for my study with human subjects.

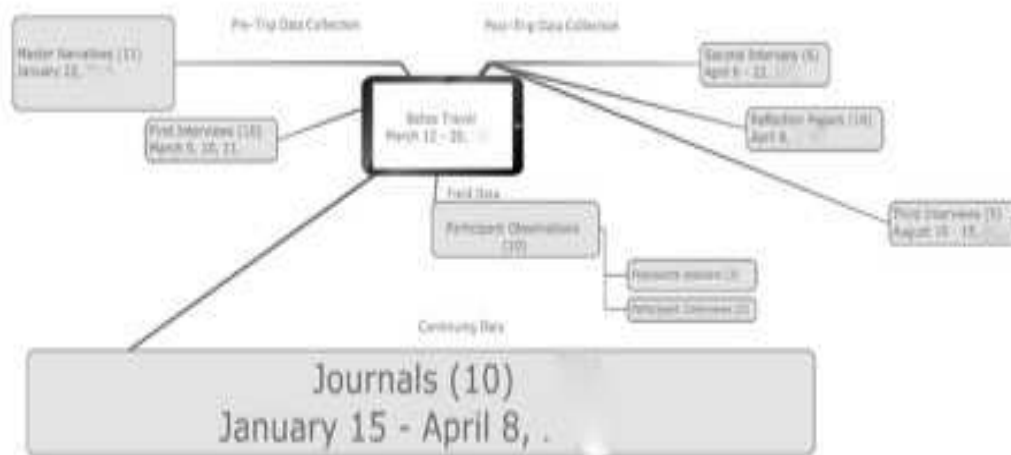
Student participants departed for Belize in mid-March and spent 8 total days in Belize, and 5 days working with Belizean teachers and students. Upon their return to USU, the students had a final class meeting in April. At the last meeting, students presented short reflections and a final reflection paper on their experiences while in Belize.

Due to the nature of the study, the data collection process timeline in the spring semester was as follows:

- January 15
  - Identified participants
  - Participants began freewriting in journals
- February 26
  - Submitted proposal to Ubuntu State University's Institutional Review Board
- March 4
  - Received approval from Ubuntu State University's Institutional Review Board to begin data collection
- March 9 – 11
  - Conducted pre-trip interviews with student participants (first interviews)
- March 12 – 20
  - Belize travel
  - Participant observations
  - Peacework sessions
  - Participant interviews
- March 31 - April 5
  - Transcribed first interviews
- April 8
  - Participant reflection presentations
  - Collection of participants' journals
  - Collection of participants' reflective papers
  - Collection of participants' master narratives
- April 9
  - Emailed participants about post-trip interviews
- April 10 - 22

- Conducted post-trip interviews with student participants (second interview)
  -
- April 30 – June 3
  - Transcribed second interviews
- July 31
  - Emailed student participants about second post-trip interview (third interview)
- August 10 – 15
  - Conducted second post-trip interviews with student participants (third interview)
- August 31 – September 21

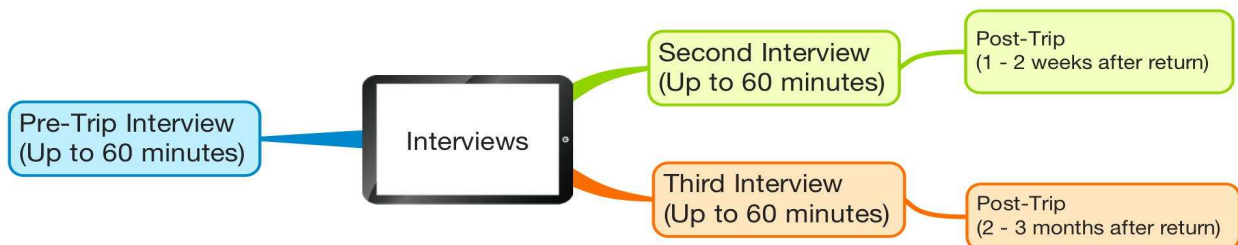
For reference purposes, Figure 2 provides a visual overview of data collection sources and timing.



**Figure 2:** Data Collection Sources and Timing

## Interviews

In this study, I conducted three sets of interviews. The interview timeline is shown below in Figure 3. I conducted the first interview before participants traveled to Belize. I conducted subsequent interviews after participants returned home. The second interview took place two weeks after we returned, and the third interview took place after five months. This section discusses my procedures for each interview.



**Figure 3:** Interview Timeline

To conduct the three sets of individual interviews, I used a general interview guide approach. Patton (2002) stated that the general interview guide approach has a basic list of questions that guide the inquiry but allows the interviewer to probe for information on each topic. Thus, for this study, I developed a list of questions that guided the direction of the interviews. I wanted to consider each individual's responses within the context of previous interview(s).

Before any interviews were conducted, I submitted a human subject's research form to the USU Institutional Review Board (IRB). I conducted all interviews by phone. Initially, I wanted to conduct each interview face to face at a location of the participants' choosing. Beforehand, I emailed all the participants who agreed to the study a copy of the consent form (see Appendix B). Before the interviews, I explained the consent form and asked the participants if they had any questions. If there were no questions, I asked the participants to sign the form, scan it and email it back to me. Once I received their signed consent form, I scheduled a time to conduct the interview. In addition, I did interview some of the participants while in Belize after they had a significant experience at the school or with a student.

In cases where a participant's response deterred from the intended focus, I allowed the participant to continue, noted the occurrence, and then redirected him or her back to the original question. In some cases, I asked the participant to clarify statements during the interview. I also asked follow up questions if the participant was vague or brief in a response. This ensured the participant's answers were clear. Even though the questions changed due to pre-trip and post-trip interviews, clarifying and probing questions varied across interviews with each participant and across participants depending upon the direction and responses of the participant. Due to the nature of this study, I modified the order or flow to best accommodate participants' responses and the evolving direction of the research. Patton (2002) refers to this flexible practice in qualitative research as "emergent flexible design."

### *First interview*

I went over the consent form in detail, explaining how the audio recording will take place, and I gave the ten participants an opportunity to ask questions. I asked participants to select a pseudonym before signing the consent form, but they each declined. I assigned pseudonyms to them. In addition, I informed participants that they may end the interview if they felt uncomfortable or uneasy. Although there were tense moments during our conversations, no participant ended the interview prematurely. I kept all consent forms under the pseudonym in a separate locked file cabinet in a secure location.

Following each participant's consent, I asked questions included in the interview script provided in Appendix A. I expected each interview to last up to 60 minutes. However, the times varied between 10 and 57 minutes. I asked participants questions such as "why did you enroll in the course?" "What do you hope to gain from the experience?" and "how does race affect you?" During the interview, I wrote notes and jottings in my researcher notebook. After completing all first interviews, I reviewed and transcribed the audio recordings upon return from Belize. I determined what follow-up questions I needed to extend my understanding and prepared those questions for the second interviews. I determined follow up questions based on significant statements that participants made, such as what they hoped to learn during the trip or if they expressed anxiety about certain situations.

### ***Second interview***

The second interview occurred approximately two - three weeks after participants had returned from the study abroad experience. The second interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. I purposely scheduled second interviews close to the final class meeting to coincide with the final presentations and capture the thoughts after reflecting on their experience. I used a process similar to the first interviews. I used the first interview question guide to begin the second interviews, and I added new questions based on the first interview transcriptions and observations from the trip. These questions centered on their experiences in Belize such as initial reactions to the school, community, and Peacework sessions. Only six of the ten initial participants responded to my request for a second interview. Despite being contacted multiple times, four participants did not respond to the solicitation for continuing to participate in the study. .

### ***Third interview***

I conducted the third interview approximately five months after the participants returned from Belize. The third interview lasted between 30 to 60 minutes. I used the same interview guide as the previous two interviews, and I followed the same processes as the previous interviews. In addition, I added new questions based on the previous interview transcriptions and observations from the trip. I asked questions about the things that they still remember about their experience in Belize and if they had used any of their



Belize takeaways in their own class. Five of the six continuing participants responded to my request for a third interview. Despite being contacted multiple times, one participant did not respond to the solicitation for continuing to participate in the study.

### ***Race and positionality in interviewing***

Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) suggested an interviewer's race could influence the interviewee's responses. Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) found in a study on White racial attitudes in the United States that White college students "exhibited more prejudiced views in the interview than in their survey responses" (p. 75-76). In their study, the interviews were more racially-biased. These researchers compared interview data against surveys and found that students were more forthright during interviews. Creswell (2007) suggested that interviewing is a process of filtering through participants' responses based on their own interpretations of a phenomenon. Similarly, Blee (2005), who was a White academic, found in her study on White supremacists that they viewed her as an outsider because of her position as a female. Her study was hindered due to the belief that traditional White supremacist movements were restricted to men, but she found participants were more detailed in their explanations of the movements and their ideology.

I was aware that my being a large African-American male factored into the dynamics of the study. It shaped the interview dynamics with the all-female and primarily White participants' interview responses on race, poverty, and discrimination. I suspected

that participants avoided answering questions honestly for fear that I would react negatively to their responses. Therefore, I prepared to be an outside observer during the process. I maintained vigilance on my facial expressions, body language, and other cues that would cause the interviewee to shut down during the interview process. This seemed important given the racial focus, dynamics, and the exhaustion I experienced while navigating data collection process.

### **Reflective Journaling**

According to Connor-Greene (2000) and Kolb (1984), journal writing is a powerful instructional strategy that encourages understanding and application of the concepts of diversity such as race, privilege, and poverty. The use of journaling gives participants “the opportunity to reflect on and articulate their perceptions of their learning processes and achievements” (Dunlap, 2006, p. 25). It allows participants time to integrate the new information they received with previously held beliefs and knowledge. Additionally, journal writing strengthens critical thinking and captures changes in students’ perceptions.

Journal writing for the participants in the Belize Service Learning Program occurred during the six class meetings in the program (Twice in January, twice in February, once in March and in April). As previously stated, five class meetings occurred before the Belize literacy program and one class meeting occurred upon the students’ return. While in Belize, students wrote in their self-supplied journals and attended

“global change agent” lessons that were led by Peacework facilitator. Peacework is a national non-profit organization that collaborates with colleges and universities to provide high-talent students to developing areas; their primary purpose is to create a better world.

Participants would hand write in their personal notebooks. To encourage students to share their perceptions of the environment and experience, I provided a set of guided journal questions (see Appendix C). I supplied each participant with guided journal questions on a single sheet of paper. After the participants finished each journaling exercise, I collected and stored the guided journal questions in a folder to be used at the next journaling session. I designed the questions to stimulate the students’ thoughts and perceptions of their privilege and awareness of other diversity issues poverty and racism. Because the reflective writing occurred bi-weekly before the trip then daily while on the study abroad, the data would serve as one indicator of the changes (or lack of) during the study. Participants submitted a final reflection paper on their last day of class in April. This paper allowed the participants to thoroughly process their thoughts on the Belize Service Learning Program.

The reflective journaling was mandatory for all students in the course. I expected the journals to help me learn about the participants’ thinking processes during the literacy study program. Participants’ writing in their journals varied. Many participants were reserved and quiet in person; however, they wrote in detail about their experiences in

Belize. For example, one participant rarely spoke, but in her journal, shared that she was nervous and “freaking out” about teaching in Belize.

### **Researcher Reflections**

As a researcher and a teaching assistant throughout the trip, I had a unique perspective throughout the trip. My own perspective continuously evolved throughout the experience, and I captured my thoughts, feelings, and experiences while students wrote their own reflections. Rather than following reflection prompts, I reflected freely, at the moment, and depending upon what was currently in my consciousness related to study topics. My thoughts, captured in my researcher journal, provided additional insights that served as data and assisted with data analysis (Johnson, 2018).

### **Participant Observations**

According to Kawulich (2005), observations have been “the hallmark of both anthropological and sociological studies” (p.1). Participant observation is a method used by researchers as they “participate in the daily life of the people under study, observing things that happen, listening to what is said, and questioning people, over some length of time” (Becker & Geer, 1970, p. 28). These observations were central to my study. The participant-as-observer role provides rich details and insight to what participants’ experience. In the participant-as-observer role, I participated in activities, taught classes, interacted with students and teachers, and later recorded my observations. I was an

insider to the study, which provided richer, deeper data. I participated in the project while simultaneously trying to understand the participants' personal experience, interactions, and discussions. Takyi (2015) stated, "close contacts with informants help the researcher to understand, in practical terms, nuances in their discourses, which cannot be obtained through one-visit interviews" (p. x).

My observations began in March, as the study participants arrived in Belize. I had traveled to Belize the previous day. As participants arrived on different flights, I accompanied the trip liaison to pick up them up. During the trip from the airport to the hotel, I held casual conversation about their flights and their thoughts about being in the country. While in Belize, I first observed the participants as a group while they met their Belizean co-teachers. This introductory meeting lasted two hours, and it allowed the participants to interact with the Belizeans. After this session ended, the participants returned to their hotel, and my observations were more limited during this time. The next day, the group travelled to Al Tun Ha on a sightseeing excursion, allowing me to observe participants in a casual environment.

I began to observe the participants while teaching at the designated primary school on the second day. Each observation was a 20-minute session of each participant while interacting with students and assisting teachers in the classroom. Due to the number of participants, I observed each participant three times throughout the week. I jotted and took notes in my researcher journal while observing each participant while they interacted with the Belizean students. The jottings were briefs words or phrases written to

help me remember occurrences that I included in the full-length writing of notes. For example, I would jot the date, time, and location of the observation. In addition, I would jot words and phrases the participants and Belizean students would use as well as sights and sounds I heard in the class. After the day ended, I would retire to my room and add detailed notes to the jottings. I provided a description of everything that I could remember while in the field. I focused the jottings and field notes on the observable occurrences that relate to the research questions.

### **Data Analysis**

Stake (2005) stated that data analysis for multi-case studies begins at the case level. For each case (individual participant), I completed an open coding process. Open coding refers to the researcher sifting through line-by-line and starting to categorize smaller pieces of data. According to Emerson (1995), “In such line-by-line coding, the [researcher] entertains all analytic possibilities; he attempts to capture as many ideas and themes as time allows but always stays close to what has been written down in the field notes” and other sources of data (p. 151).

I incorporated open coding for each case after I completed my interviews and observation and after I collected participant journals. I went through each source of data, and in the margins, I made notes and jottings of different phrases, keywords, and themes that arose from the data. After coming up with general categories and themes, I sifted through the data again searching for themes, using what Emerson refers to as focused

coding. During this process, “You’re both discovering and creating the pattern as you create the pieces – the initial codes - and these begin to structure and frame what the other pieces are going to be and how they will fit together” (Emerson, 1995, p. 160). This second round of coding helped me narrow down my themes as I saw some categories that are very similar and overlapped. Stake (1995) stated that “We can look for patterns immediately while reviewing documents, observing, or interviewing – or we can code the records, aggregate frequencies, and find the patterns that way... important meanings will come from reappearance over and over” (p. 78).

I connected data that at first seemed not to fit together but could fit in a subcategory of the larger tenets of CRT. Critical race theory asserts that racism is "normal" in the United States and thus “the strategy becomes one of unmasking and exposing racism in its various permutations” (Ladson-Billings, 2005, p.21).

Following the guidance of Stake (2005), presentation of findings begins at the case level (Stake, 2005). I compiled substantial data units, including interview data, photographs, journal entries, and into individual case records for each participant that ranged between ten and fifty-seven pages. I then developed these into narrative case descriptions. Each case was described, and findings for each will be provided. I presented a “body of uncontested description” or details about the individual case that any researcher doing the same research would observe and document. In a separate section following the final case presentation, assertions that result from a cross-case consideration of findings were presented and discussed.

## **Positionality Statement**

To ensure the integrity of my research, this section discusses the background and experiences that I brought to the study. The researcher positionality statement allows for a critical self-reflection about the researcher's worldview, assumptions, and perspectives brought to the study (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Kee, Ntseane, & Muhammed, 2001). This statement situates the researcher's influences, interests, and biases that impacts his/her study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). During this study, I was in a dual role as both a teaching assistant in the Belize Service Learning Program and a doctoral student in Social Foundations Program at a state university. Although I served as a burgeoning researcher, this was my second experience with this particular program. Previously, I participated in the program as a student.

I am an African American male who attends a predominantly White institution where I seldom feel included in the dominant culture. My position is one of an outsider on campus and in this course, living in the margins of the campus culture. Often I felt invisible, as if my experience is invalid. Therefore, I brought an understanding of being in a culture as a minority. However, during my experience in the country where this service-learning study abroad program took place, I felt I was an insider. People of African and Hispanic descent primarily inhabit Belize, and they seem to naturally gravitate toward Black and Hispanic Americans who visit the country. For once, I



experienced being in the dominant cultural group while most of the members in my travel group were now the outsiders.

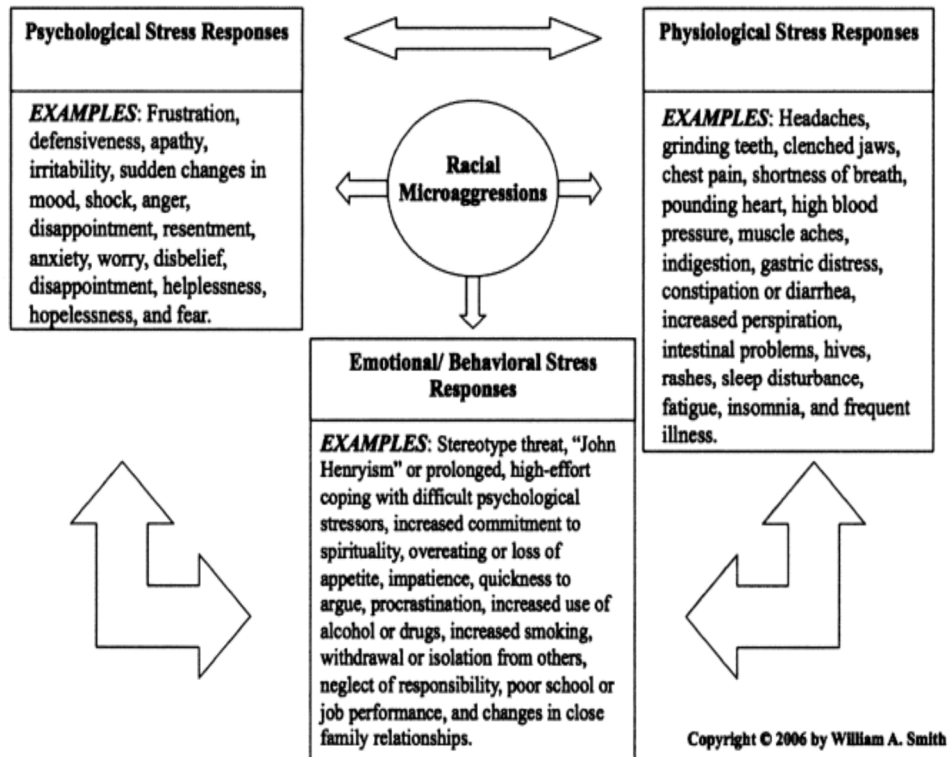
This change in perspective is what initially sparked my curiosity to pursue this research topic. I wanted to understand the White students' experiences in Belize, where they were now minorities, and I wanted to know if their perspectives changed concerning students of color on their campus at home. I wanted to know if they felt, while in Belize, the isolation and loneliness that I often experience on campus. This experience aroused a deep curiosity in the White students' experience when dealing with race, poverty, and privilege as the minority culture or "the other" in predominantly Black and Brown developing countries.

During my sixth grade year, a group named the King Kids visited my hometown. This group was led by a former resident of my hometown, and the purpose of the visit was to expose at-risk youth to new opportunities. During this visit, I was told about their travels across the country. I was fascinated by their stories and knew that I wanted to travel as well. During my senior year, I traveled out of state and flew on a plane for the first time. This flight became the motivation for traveling abroad. I met a professor from Texas Tech University who was returning from South Africa with students. Again, I was fascinated by his stories of being in a foreign country. I knew that I wanted to study abroad; however, as a collegiate student-athlete, I was prevented from doing so. I did attend my first study abroad while in graduate school at Langston University.

Because of this experience at Langston, I am invested in study abroad programs. I believe study abroad offers numerous benefits and every student should have the opportunity. I believe the growth that students experience when they are out of their comfort zone and having to navigate the new environment serves students well.

Another position that I must address in this statement is that I suffered from racial battle fatigue during this trip. Racial battle fatigue, as depicted in Figure 4, is the psychological and physiological stress placed on marginalized groups as they devote vast amounts of energy to persevering through microaggressions and racism (Smith et al., 2011). Many people of color suffer from a prolonged heightened awareness to racial microaggressions, subtle racial slights, recurrent indignities, and stigmatization (Smith, 2006).

By the end of this trip, I was suffering from headaches, constant fatigue, and irritability, but I had no idea why. However, I started reading back through my journals and realized that I was writing about how the participants exhibited microaggressions toward me (Johnson, 2018). In a normal situation, I would respond to those slights; however, I was in a position of observer/researcher. Therefore, I could not respond like I would have preferred. Because of this silencing, I began to internalize the miniassaults, and it affected me without an outlet for how I felt. In order to maintain my health and well being, I separated myself from the participants toward the end of the service learning project.



**Figure 4:** The process of Racial Battle Fatigue (Smith, 2006)<sup>i</sup>

### Study Sites

The study site involves two different settings: Ubuntu State University and Belize. The initial study site, Ubuntu State University (a pseudonym), is a land-grant institution located in the Midwest. The second site is Belize, the host country for USU students who participated in the study abroad program.

#### Ubuntu State University

The first setting, Ubuntu State University, is a land grant institution located in the Midwestern city, Salihah. The student population at this university is also primarily from the Midwest and includes many first-generation students from small rural communities. It includes mainly residential, undergraduate, and graduate students.

Of the approximately 26,000 students attending the institution as of the fall 2016 semester, only 7,822 or 28.43% were students of color. Students of color are defined as African American, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and native Hawaiian and other people of Pacific Islander descent. Graduate and professional students make up roughly 17% of the current enrollment of the institution. The number of students of color grew substantially from 2010 when the total number was under 6,000, which is less than 25%. However, this demographic change could be due, in part, to institutional changes in available demographic designations and national reporting requirements (IRIM, 2016). The number of international students has continued to grow as well. In the fall 2015 semester, over 2000 students representing over 102 countries were on the USU campus.

This university was founded in 1890 as a land grant institution and focused on agriculture and mechanical educational opportunities. In 1891, USU's minutes show that 23 women and 22 men enrolled as the first class for the institution. More than 50 years later, USU integrated and admitted its first African American student in August 1949 after a groundbreaking United States Supreme Court decision that required a local law school to admit a Black student.

Despite the decision to integrate, USU encountered racial issues consistent with the growing opposition to racial discrimination. Nationally, a civil rights movement was underway. In the late 1960s, African American students demanded change to what many perceived a hostile campus climate. In 1969, the students staged a walk out while the

African American Student Association provided a list of demands to improve the campus climate. Two of the prominent demands were the increased hiring of African American staff and faculty as well as the development of a multicultural center.

About 15 years later, the university counseling services hired an African American man as director with two counselors, one African American and one a Native American. The university hired a Hispanic counselor some years later. University records show little history of protests involving any other cultural group with the exception of African American students. Shifting its focus, the institution placed a heavy emphasis on creating a more diverse and inclusive campus that respected and valued students, faculty and staff of different cultural groups. Due to this focus on increasing diversity, USU won a national diversity award the four years immediately before this study.

A series of significant incidents of violence by police officers against African American men occurred across the national landscape over a four-year period. These events were saturated by racism and racial tensions. One key incident happened in 2014, when Darren Wilson, a White police officer, shot and killed Michael Brown, an unarmed African-American teenager in Ferguson, Missouri (Brown, 2015). Protests across the nation resulted and reoccurred after a grand jury chose not to indict the police officer. Campuses became sites of activism using silent protests; social media blackout campaigns, and petitions (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015). At Ubuntu State University, African American students protested and closed a very prominent street within the city.

In 2016 and early 2017, USU, like many other predominantly White institutions, experienced racial unrest on campus due to the racial climate in America. In the early 2000s, White students at the institution dressed in "Blackface" to attend a fraternity party (<http://newsok.com>). This incident led to mandatory sensitivity training for students who were involved; however, many African American students felt that the university administration failed to address the issue adequately.

More recently, African American students filed a complaint with the university administration over the closing of the Uhuru House, the African American living and learning community. African American students cited university policy as contributing to low occupancy, as well as missed opportunities for African American students to move into housing designated as an Afrocentric themed living and learning community.

Other pressing issues African American students at Ubuntu State University brought forth to the university administration included the following: harassment via social media toward historically African American fraternities and sororities, the small number of African-American faculty and staff, and limited access to campus resources such as meeting spaces and scholarships. Despite the growth of students of color on campus, Black and Hispanic students make up roughly 10% of the enrollment in campus undergraduate and graduate programs. Cultural competency and racial equality remain a developing and challenging issue at the institution.

Due to the institutional stance on diversity and the desire to produce culturally competent students, the Belize Service Learning Project offered a unique opportunity for

participants. As Ubuntu State University sought to address on-campus issues and to encourage students to develop a culturally diverse understanding, the university used scholarships to increase the number of students studying abroad. During the 2014-2015 academic year, students studying abroad received almost \$775, 000 in scholarships. This award met the institution's goal of sending 25% of students receiving degrees to cultural immersion experiences during their academic studies. Participation in the institution's study abroad programs increased by 4%, with long-term study abroad programs increasing by 12%.

Ubuntu State University offers a range of study abroad programs to multiple countries, both long-term and short-term. European destinations are the most popular study abroad programs. Thirty-six percent the study abroad participants pursued opportunities in the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, and Australia. The remaining students were distributed across 43 countries and recently added study abroad courses to Haiti and Costa Rica.

In addition, USU's educational college offered seven study abroad or travel courses to students. The international studies department has a mission to increase student awareness and provide students opportunities to travel domestically and internationally. Recently, the education college implemented an international strategic plan with the goal to improve the world through internationalization. The plan called for increasing student, faculty and staff involvement with study abroad courses by 50%

increase and creating an international academic certificate that meets degree requirements.

In the Belize Service Learning Program, students from various education-related degree programs at USU partner with Belizean teachers and children to develop effective literacy practices. The Belize Service Learning Program targets students pursuing education-related fields such as special education, elementary education, secondary education, English, and literacy education. Many of the students have some teaching experience before participating in the service learning projects. One of the project goals for participants was to provide high-level professional development in literacy instruction while learning about the local educational system and culture. The primary means of cultural transmission was through the Belizean teachers and students with whom the student participants interacted.

### **Belize/ Belize City**

Belize is the second site for this study. Belize is a culturally diverse country located in Central America. According to Medina (1997), “the Belizean nation is defined as a multi-ethnic ‘haven of cultural pluralism’, characterized both by its particular configuration of cultural diversity and its embrace of that diversity” (p. 757). Belize became an independent nation in the early 1980s, and Guatemala, who claimed the land as a territory, officially recognized Belize as such in the 1990s.



The country of Belize was the home to several Mayan cities before their demise in the early part of the first millennium. However, Mayan culture still influences the country. Belize City, with a population of over 57,000, is the largest city in Belize. Belize City was home to thousands of African slaves under British rule and has cultural aspects like other Caribbean countries. During the 1600s and 1700s, the British and Spanish fought over the country, and it formally became British Honduras in 1854. These disputes would continue between the British and Guatemalans, delaying the independence of Belize until 1981. Due to its history and location, Belize has a large population of Black and brown people. Latino, Creole, Maya, and Garifuna are the four largest ethnic groups in Belize, making up close to 90% of the population of Belize (Cayetano, 1993; Dobson, 1973; Medina, 1997; Wilk, 1995).

The country of Belize is 48.7% Mestizo, 24.9% Creole, 10.6% Mayan, 6.1% Garifuna, and 9.7% other (2000 census). The term Mestizo refers to people of mixed heritage. Creole is a person of West Indian or Spanish America with ancestry from Spain. Mayan are the indigenous people of Mesoamerica and North Central America. Garifuna people are of African and American Indian descent that settled in Central America.

Belize City has a notorious reputation for poverty and crime, which contrasts with the beautiful and exotic portrayals of Belize as a vacation destination. According to Peirce and Veyrat-Pontet (2013), “homicides were especially concentrated on the Southside, which includes only 10 percent of the country’s population but has a homicide rate of 135 per 100,000 inhabitants” (p. 5). The violence in Belize City has a detrimental

effect on the economic success of the country as it ranks near the bottom out of all countries (123 out of 142) in world standings (Schwab, 2010). Furthermore, over 60% of youth, ages 14 to 17, do not attend school (SISCA, UNFPA, and Interpeace, 2012). Youth graduation is under 40% (Lopez, 2013). Belizean youth are disproportionately involved in criminal activity.

The Belizean Ministry of Education underscores a message of pride for their diversity in the student textbooks, reinforcing the belief of unity in being Belizean over individual ethnic and cultural groups. This unity in diversity approach is very different from the United States approach to diversity. The United States professes the melting pot concept. However, ethnic and cultural groups heavily divide the U.S.

### **Ethical considerations**

I submitted the proposal for this study to Ubuntu State University's IRB office on February 26, 2016, and I gained approved prior to conducting the human subject research. Prior to receiving approval from the IRB office, I contacted the potential participants through email to gage their interest in the study. Upon IRB approval, I sent a second email to interested students that outlined the research project. The second email also functioned as the official invitation to participate in this study, and I gathered contact information. Each participant agreed to conduct three one-hour interviews and to submit

their pictures, journals, master narratives, and reflective papers. Participants signed informed consent sheets before the first interview.

I carefully considered the ethical issues that could arise from this study. Drawing on Farquhar (2012), I considered the following:

The governing principle of research ethics can be reduced to ‘do no harm’, either to the research participants or the wider world of research and the community of researchers. The case study researcher will become fully immersed in the context of the study, which may provoke some tension, and a thorough awareness of ethical research guidelines such as the above may assist in avoiding some uncomfortable issues. (p. 12)

I took the necessary steps to address the issues mentioned above. I minimized the potential harm that could come to the participants, and I remained attentive and open to the participants’ perspectives throughout this study.

I presented each subject with the consent form. I verbally explained the form in terms of participants’ rights, including the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and the right to cease participation at any time without penalty. The participants’ signatures indicates they agreed to participate in the study. Before data collection began, I provided the participant a copy of the consent form, which includes contact information for the researcher, advisor, and university IRB office.

While I did record interviews via two forms of digital voice recorder and then transcribe them to an electronic data file, I did not retain any personal identifying information about the participants. I used pseudonyms for each participant. I removed identifying information from field notes taken during interviews and observations. I collected reflective journals during the final class session as well as printed/electronic copies of the writings. I provided participants with their pseudonym on their journals. I kept the printed/electronic copies in the individual's file under their chosen pseudonym. I returned the journals with identifying information to participants within one week of receipt with the exception of one participant who requested her journal be thrown away. I did not report identifying information about participants in the research or reports, and demographic and descriptive information about the participants was generic.

I stored all data electronically in an external data file and on a password-protected computer and hard drive that I stored in the locked computer desk in a secure location. I stored the hard copies of the informed consent forms separately. No individual participant identifiers were directly connected to the observation or interview data.

### **Quality and Trustworthiness Criteria**

To ensure that my study is trustworthy, I applied Bloomberg and Volpe's (2012) guidance. I addressed the biases that I brought to this study through my positionality statement provided earlier in this chapter. In doing this, I created an open and honest process with the readers of this study. In addition, Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) stated

the value of using “multiple methods to corroborate the evidence that you have obtained via different means” (p. 113). I relied on multiple methods to collect data for this naturalistic case study, using interviews, reflective journals, and observations. I was familiar with the setting and program from previous travel, which allowed me to immerse in the project more quickly and comfortably.

I also carefully tracked my data collection and data analysis, and worked with my advisor and colleagues to review my research. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), “dependability refers to whether one can track the processes and procedures used to collect data” (p. 113). Lastly, I conducted a data audit. The data audit consisted of examining the data collection and analysis procedures for misrepresentations. As another method to enhance dependability, I documented the procedures for checking and rechecking the data during the study.

### **Transferability**

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) stated that transferability concerns “how well the study has made it possible for readers to decide whether similar processes will be at work in their own settings and communities by understanding in depth how they occur at the research site” (p. 113). I enhanced transferability by doing a thorough job of describing the research context and the assumptions that are central to the research. To do so, I provided “thick description” (Denzin, 2001). Thick description provided the reader

deeper meaning to the study. In this case, Denzin (1989) stated that thick description is deep, relative and interpersonal,

Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into an experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard. (p. 83)

### **Limitations**

First, as I described earlier in Chapter 1, the study was affected by a compressed timeframe between receiving IRB approval and traveling to Belize for the course. Due to this limited time, the first interviews were conducted over the phone and the time set aside for the interviews reduced to fifteen to thirty minutes. While having multiple interviews was a strength of the study, this limited time for the first interview also limited the amount of data that participants could initially share, and I wanted to have more time discussing the trip in advance. Furthermore, I conducted interviews over the phone, which did not provide the same detailed and nuanced data as face-to-face interviews. In addition, as is true of any participant observations, I could not participate in all of the same activities or be with participants all of the time. For example, while I observed the participants as they interacted in their assigned classrooms in Belize, I could not spend extended time observing any one participant. This limited the data that I could observe from each participant.

Secondly, the ability and willingness of students to openly share their experiences and feelings while outside of their university and home environments can influence the study. In addition, this study depended on participants' ability to recall experiences and write in their journals throughout the day. Many participants waited until the end of the night to write in their journals therefore data was limited to their recollection of events and what they transferred on to the page. Furthermore, participants were aware they were being observed and this may have influenced their behavior.

Next, the transcription of the interviews may have limited the study. Two separate recorders were used to capture the interviews however there were some distortions in small sections of the recordings. This required diligence, patience and became time consuming to complete. This thorough transcription process is a strength of my procedure and my analysis; however, the occasional gaps in the transcriptions are a possible limitation in that I might have missed a nuanced point. In addition, due to time constraints, member checks were removed from the research design.

Lastly, this study deals with power dynamics that include race, gender, class, and global power. Students may not want to participate due to the perception of bias or judgments. As I previously mentioned, the participants were primarily White females and they were negotiating the cultural and ethnic dynamics of a developing country. My being a large Black man who was observing and asking them questions about race may have made some participants feel uncomfortable as they negotiated the differences they were experiencing while in Belize.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, I provided a detailed description of this study's research design. I used a qualitative collective case study methodology to examine the experiences of graduate students from a predominantly White institution while studying abroad in Belize, a culturally diverse developing country. The participant sample was made up of a purposefully selected group of individuals who self-selected to participate in the Belize Service Learning Program, who were all graduate students. I employed three data collection methods including interviews, reflective journals, and observations. I supplemented these data sources with informal interactions, photographs, and the master narratives and other curriculum used in the course. I reviewed the data in conjunction with the current literature. I transcribed all of the data, crafted careful case records and narratives, and employed various strategies and techniques to ensure credibility and dependability.



## CHAPTER IV

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Belize Service Learning course, designed as an international service-learning course, provided Belizean and American teachers with a unique opportunity for professional development in literacy through USU and more specifically the College of Education (COE). The course provided a collaborative learning experience for USU and Belizean teachers through utilizing a co-teaching model with the designated partner school. Through a joint effort with a national non-profit organization, Peacework, the Belizean Ministry of Education, Belizean teachers, and USU students and faculty, the course provided a weeklong opportunity for limited cultural immersion, co-teaching, and professional development. In addition, the course leader intended to strengthen the literacy pedagogy of both Belizean teachers and USU students. I developed this study to question how the graduate students, who were teachers, made meaning of their Belize Service Learning project experience and examine how they explicitly interrogated the social, cultural, and power dynamics at work in those interactions.

Furthermore, USU students learned about the Belizean culture and educational system and participated in global change agent workshops with Peacework, a national non-profit organization that partners with higher education institutions to provide project-based learning. Through sustainable development, Peacework employed an integrative

method across seven disciplines to address “social, environmental, and economic challenges” in developing countries (Peacework.org). A USU faculty member developed and has led the Belize Service Learning course numerous times in previous years. However, to date, the research conducted during or on the course had not empirically captured the American teachers’ perspectives on their experience studying abroad with the social, racial, and cultural interactions while in Belize.

As a foundation for understanding the specific course through which this study took place, this chapter outlines the history, philosophical underpinnings of the course, marketing, and course requirements for the Belize Service Learning course. In this chapter, I use the terms service learning, course, and Belize Service Learning interchangeably. This chapter contains sections on the developmental history of the course, and course outline. Each section provides foundational information regarding the course and necessary context for understanding the research findings in later chapters. The first section provides details about the history of the course, the philosophy that defines the course and varied marketing tools used to recruit students to participate in the course. Secondly, I present information regarding the course syllabi, Peacework curriculum, COE marketing and researcher notes that constitute primary sources of data for the participants’ initial course experience. Lastly, the next section describes the Belize Service Learning course requirements such as readings, assignments, pre-trip class meetings, in-trip class meetings and Peacework workshops and post-trip class meeting.

## **Background**

### **History of Belize service-learning course development**

In 2007, The Belize Ministry of Education (MOE) shifted its purpose to focus on literacy education as one of their main initiatives. The Belize MOE, which was a part of Caribbean consortium of education (CCET), received grant funding to develop literacy education in the country. To address the issue of Belizean youth's increasing attrition and decreasing pass rate on government exams. The Belize MOE formed the Belize Literacy Unit, hereafter BLU, to start grass-roots literacy training and professional development for teachers around the country. Belize Literacy Unit's primary focus was to assist Belizean teachers in redesigning the curriculum for language arts, mathematics, and science. In addition, BLU received funding and collaborated with non-profit organizations such as Peacework and Rotary clubs to further development of educational opportunities. Peacework is a global nonprofit that currently does work in 17 countries. According to the Peacework (2014) website, the organization is a global nonprofit organization (a 501(c)3) that, "engages communities, academic institutions, and corporations in innovative cross-sector solutions for sustainable development around the world and across seven development disciplines: agriculture, business, education, engineering, health, public service, and technology" ([www.peacework.org](http://www.peacework.org)).

Peacework developed a longstanding partnership with Belize on various social, economic, and environmental growth goals. It was through a Belizean teacher, enrolled at USU as a doctoral student in 2007-2008, that USU College of Education (COE)

became aware of Peacework. Through a series of events around 2007, Peacework contacted the COE, to explore the possibility of developing a literacy education training and professional development program in Belize. Through this initial meeting, USU faculty traveled to Belize to meet with Belizean teachers and administrators to further discuss the possibility of a partnership. Belize Literacy Unit, Peacework, and USU determined that a partnership would be beneficial to all. Initially, the USU faculty used pre-service and in-service teachers to demonstrate lessons for the Belizean teachers, with the goal of sharing instruction responsibility for the service-learning course over time.

However, in the first year of the partnership, the USU staff encountered some difficulties. Some Belizean teachers assumed that the training was actually “break time” and left the room during the lesson demonstrations. Unfortunately, these misunderstandings led to wasted time dedicated to professional development and missed opportunities that could have benefited all parties. Afterwards, the USU faculty intentionally focused on developing the co-teaching aspect of the course. Co-teaching allowed the USU students and Belizean teachers a sense of ownership of the in-class instruction. Between 2012 and 2014, the USU faculty traveled to Belize each year before the service-learning course and USU students, provided professional development for the Belizean staff, and created a stronger instructional partnership for the course.

### **Philosophical Underpinnings**

The philosophical underpinnings were also evident in the course structure and readings. The philosophy of the course focused on developing lessons that utilized

multicultural and culturally relevant children's literature to teach literacy and a strong literacy foundation for the Belizean teachers. According to the USU faculty, the Belizean schools have "limited resources, low quality reading material and a majority of literature is Eurocentric" (USU faculty, personal communication, July 3, 2017). Therefore, this course focused on literacy education as the foundation for the curriculum. Lastly, the course focused on core literacy strategies utilized across multiple literacy platforms such as co-teaching, guided reading and writing centers to develop that foundation.

### **Marketing Efforts for the Course**

In 2015, the USU College of Education began to alert students to this unique learning opportunity. The course information appeared in COE course announcements, on television screens in the COE building, bulletin boards, the USU's College of Education and Outreach Education websites, and email list serves. In addition, USU's College of Education employed an outreach coordinator, who provided support to the College faculty, staff, and students, and tapped into how students communicate through social media. Outreach efforts included social media outlets such as UBU Study Abroad Facebook and Instagram pages that highlight student experiences during their international education travel.

### **Flyers**

In collaboration with USU marketing, the outreach department developed and displayed posters throughout the College announcing study abroad opportunities and

advertisements in course schedules. Faculty displayed the flyer on their office doors, outside their offices and on the announcement display boards on each floor of the COE building. The flyers provided photographic views of Belize, course specifics and estimated costs for the service-learning course. In previous years, the flyers emphasized the beauty of Belize. Numerous pictures of the beach, blue water, and palm trees served in conjunction with the general course description and cost to market Belize to students (see Figure 5) as an attractive and sunny country. However, the most recently developed flyers featured a photograph of the Belizean coastline, visually identifiable as Black and brown Belizean children interposed between more detailed course descriptions (see Figure 6). Furthermore, the flyer detailed the costs with a breakdown of the fees associated with the course. Students, on average, paid roughly \$2200 for the round trip flight and Peacework fees. Additional costs included tuition, travel insurance, and institutional course fees.



(Figure 5, previous project flyer)



(Figure 6, current project flyer)

## Picture Collage

In addition to the flyers, the outreach coordinator created a picture collage to market the course to students pursuing education related majors (see figures 5 and 6). The outreach coordinator collected the pictures from previous Belize Service Learning participants. Although the details of trip have changed from those presented in the collage, they capture the culture, diversity, and natural beauty in Belize City, the partnered schools, and the Belizean people (see Figure 7). This is an important aspect of the course marketing as the images appeal to perspective students.



(Figure 7, Belize Service Learning Photo Collage, taken by college staff)

### **Video**

In addition to the flyers and picture collage, a videographer traveled with the Belize Service-Learning class and captured the experiences for a feature video. Set to calypso music, the video captured the more joyful events and tourism parts of the course. In the video, USU students played with Belizean children, climbed the Al Tun Ha ruins, and participated in tubing through caves in the mountains. Furthermore, the video opened with a boat in the beautiful blue water of the coast of Caye Caulker, a small inhabited island off the coast of Belize with Jimmy Buffet's song, "Volcano" as the soundtrack. The video continued with a montage of shots that feature the Belizean Flag waving in the wind, the dirt streets lined with palm trees and people playing water games. In addition, video shots showed the USU students at the Belizean school and interacting with the Belizean students. The video captured the USU students as they read and



instructed the Belizean students however; the Belizean teachers were not as visible in the same capacity in the video, perhaps to protect anonymity. As the video comes to an end, the USU students, Belizean teachers and students flashed the USU signs, making the letters U, S, U with their arms. This is another important aspect of course marketing as the music and video appeal to prospective students.

### **Belize Service Learning Course**

#### **Course Overview**

The establishment of this service learning course was designed to allow USU students (undergraduate and graduate) an opportunity to “collaborate and co-teach with the Belizean teachers” while providing literacy instruction and learning about the Belizean educational system (course syllabus). The course also provided an opportunity for USU students to learn about the Belizean culture from the interactions with local teachers and students. In addition, the course reflected Peacework’s guiding principles of addressing “issues of diversity, poverty, and oppression related to educational and social systems” and promoted critical reflection on the student role as “global change agents” ([www.peacework.org](http://www.peacework.org)).

The course, in USU’s College of Education, allowed undergrad or graduate students to receive three elective credits, equivalent to a full credit course of the student’s choosing, and serve as travel/international course. The course had a hybrid component that included five pre-trip and one post-trip class meetings. The pre-trip classes oriented students on issues related to multicultural education, literacy education, and lesson

planning. The post-trip class allowed students to critically reflect on the course and their experiences while in Belize. In addition, the students discussed ways to continue being a “change agent.” The final component of course design was the most significant piece: the USU students traveled to Belize for 10 days to co-teach at the designated school. Students received a Belizean standard class assignment, the equivalent to the U.S. kindergarten through junior high school, to co-teach while in Belize. Consistent with the USU mission, the course broadened student perspectives through increasing their exposure to international communities. Ideally, these international experiences created avenues for in-service teachers to develop critical cultural competence and teaching strategies.

### **Enrollment in the Belize Service Learning Course**

Once USU students enrolled in the course, they were required to attend five pre-departure meetings and a final meeting upon return to the United States. This section provides information on class meetings, assignments, in country seminars and expectations.

#### **Pre-trip class meetings**

The course used several teaching methods, such as lectures, in class discussions, group discussions, and in-trip debriefing sessions/workshops to prepare students for the in-country experience. Students were required to attend five pre-trip meetings starting in January and occurred every two weeks there after until the trip. Subsequent classes met late January, February and early March on the Ubuntu State’s Tamir campus, a small

satellite campus that is affiliated with Ubuntu State but located in Tamir, the second largest city in the state.

### **“Introduction to course” – Class Meeting 1**

*“While I make every effort to embody the definition of liberal as ‘open minded and tolerant’, I find myself reverting to the stereotypes of the master narrative when making a quick association with a group dissimilar from myself.”*

Imani

The first class was an introduction to the service-learning course. All students enrolled in the course were graduate students. Students introduced themselves, their graduate program, and what attracted them to the course. In addition, students shared their expectations of the class and trip. Chapter 5 discusses the students in more detail. After the students disclosed their expectations, the entire class participated in a master narrative activity that I led. Master narratives are the stories, ideas, or concepts that shapes a person’s perception of people, events, and situations. I designed this activity to challenge the students’ perceptions of topics such as Christmas, athletes, education, and how these views influenced their behavior.

After the activity, the lead faculty discussed the course syllabus and viewed the promotional video used to market the Belize Service Learning course. The video highlighted previous project trips and included classroom activities, group excursions and cultural aspect of Belize. The video served to establish expectations of the portion of the course that took place in Belize City, the partner school, and the community. At

the end of the class, students received their first assignment that built upon the master narrative activity that I facilitated at the beginning of class.

### **“Multicultural Education “– Class Meeting 2**

*“While I have traveled many places, I have not visited schools in these places. This experience showed how cultural beliefs can come through in classrooms and schools.”*

Jamila

This was the first time the class met on the USU-Tamir campus. Students shared their master narrative papers and discussed the concept of multicultural education more thoroughly. The faculty introduced multiculturalism readings to the students through Sonia Nieto’s (1999), *Moving beyond Tolerance in Multicultural Education*. In this noteworthy resource for exploring multicultural education, Nieto argues that tolerance, which suggests enduring diversity, is the lowest form of support. She contends diversity requires a multistep process that holds educators accountable for their students’ learning respect for differences. The students defined multicultural education and explained how the concept would apply to Belize. In addition, the students discussed the language diversity of Belize and viewed a new video on the Garifuna, an ethnic group in Belize that is dying out. The Garifuna are descendants of West and Central African, Island Carib, European and Arawak people (Crawford, Gonzalez, Schanfield, Dykes, Skradski, & Polesky, 1981). Garifuna originated in the Lesser Antilles but the British colonial administration exiled them in the 1700s after multiple slave revolts. Currently, the

remaining population lives along the coasts of Honduras and Belize. Traditional Garifuna culture is slowly dying out due to constant migration and intermarriage.

**“Foundations of Effective Literacy Education” – Class Meeting 3**

*“I was very excited that the [Belizean] teachers had accepted this professional development and opportunity to help differentiate literacy in their classroom.”*

Maha

Students learned about guided reading instruction during the third class meeting. The faculty divided the students into small groups based on the standards (US grades) assigned to each student. The students viewed videos that discussed guided readings and read Richard Allington’s (2002) article on effective reading instruction and Fountas and Pinnell’s (2003) guided reading articles to develop a foundational understanding of the literary concepts. Additional articles on comprehension instruction and informational writing instruction allowed students to broaden their background knowledge on these areas. Lastly, there was a question and answer session, which allowed students to discuss preparation for Belize.

**“Introduction to the Poetry Workshop [and Printmaking Workshop]” –**

**Class Meeting 4**

*“Many of the[USU] teachers had initially expressed their own uneasiness of teaching poetry and I hope they do not feel that way any longer because of the success I saw them each having when they were immersed in poetry workshop.”*

Zola

In the fourth meeting, the students learned about art and poetry workshop instruction. The facilitator provided an overview of printmaking and then demonstrated how to create a print. The lead faculty added a printmaking option for the Belizean students to utilize additional resources while in country. During this class meeting, faculty explained that Belizean students would have the option of attending the poetry workshop or printmaking workshop after the co-teaching instruction. In addition, the students discussed the elements of poetry and the setup of the workshop. USU students received poetry-writing strategies and read Calkins' (1994), and Fountas and Pinnell 's (2003) articles on poetry writing.

#### **“Lesson Plan practice/Trip Preparation” - Class Meeting 5**

*“Most of our time before [the trip] was spent lesson planning, talking about the curriculum and about how the books that we were bringing weren't diverse as we wanted them to be. How to prepare [because] a lot of these book have snow in them and most our [Belizean] kids haven't seen snow. Or these animals are in this books and how to adapt your lessons to meet the needs of all the kids but it wasn't surrounding diversity or poverty.”*

Nia

During the final class before the class flew to Belize, students read economist David Bloom's (2004) article on globalization and education. This book chapter examines the connection between “education and economic development in a globalizing world” (Bloom, 2004, p. 58). This text provides a historical view on globalization, economic development, and education that argues the importance of educational systems in the world. In addition, it connects the Peacework mission to the course.

Furthermore, the lead faculty discussed the Belizean language, cultural and ethnic diversity and how that influences the educational system of the country, such as the Creole ethnic group controlling power in Belize. In addition, the class further discussed the poetry and printmaking workshops. The students discussed lesson plans adjustments and finalized trip preparations. Lastly, the students received the group's flight information and hotel arrangements while in Belize. To enhance safety, students received the contact information for other students to share with their families.

### **Post-trip class meeting**

The final meeting for the Belize Service Learning course met in early April, approximately three weeks after the students had returned from Belize. This schedule provided the students opportunity to process and articulate the meaning of their experience.

### **“Reflection and Wrap Up” – Class meeting 6**

*“When I was younger I saw the differences through a lens of fear, but on this trip I saw differences as interesting comparisons or ‘I wonder’ statements.”*

Sabra

During this meeting, students used their reflection papers to present for three to five minutes each on the defining moments of their experience. In addition, the final reflection paper and presentation encouraged students to connect the Peacework session with their experience as co-teachers. The students explained how the Belizean experienced provided them the opportunity to “deepen their learning” and “think critically and analytically about international development work.” Some USU students

addressed the course objectives and shared how they plan to “integrate new worldviews” into their teaching.

### **In-Country Expectations for the Course**

Once in Belize, students co-taught in the morning, while afternoons were devoted to Peacework seminars and the workshops. In addition, the Belizean teachers had professional development workshops during some afternoons while the USU students taught those Belizean classes.

### **Peacework Sessions**

*“[D]uring our peacework time there were certain moments that I hope can stick with others on this trip. I say this because I feel as though I’ve had several conversations like the ones had today and it’s not until I have had enough of those conversations that I truly began to see what kind of an impact these decisions can have on me... I’ve always been the type of person that enjoys engaging in those discussions on race, religion, sexuality, gender, etc. – though I know it makes many people uncomfortable but in the front of my mind – and for me that is the question... ‘Am I doing what is BEST for kids?’ ...”*

Zola

While in Belize, the students attended Peacework sessions. Peacework collaborated with USU to provide “developmental learning” workshops while the groups participated in the “international service” courses. The sessions provided students the opportunity to “explore their cultural identity”, “think critically and analytically” about global issues and “integrate new worldviews” while in Belize ([www.peacework.org](http://www.peacework.org)). In



addition, Peacework workshops used critical theory, human development, and popular education practices to ground the curriculum. The Peacework facilitator served as a guide through the sessions and encouraged open and honest discussion on global poverty, culture, and social systems. The following section titles came directly from the Peacework curriculum.

### **“Introduction to Peacework”**

The first Peacework session served as an orientation introducing the group, the organization, and curriculum for the week. The Peacework facilitator opened the workshop by describing the organization,

At Peacework, we believe social change is not just an end in itself, but a deeply personal process that activates the potential in all of us to make an impact. As you [USU students] work in this [Belizean] community, meet new people, and have new experiences, we hope that this workshop series will help you reflect, discuss, and grow as a change agent.

During this session, the facilitator asked students to share a professional goal and a fun goal and then challenged the group to support each other in accomplishing those goals.

### **“Us as International Allies”**

The second Peacework session approached viewing allyship from an international context. Students discussed their relationship with “domination and oppression” and “ally-work.” To facilitate this session, the facilitator sectioned the

class into four groups to discuss domination/oppression in terms of race, gender, sexuality, and class. Furthermore, students utilized the practice of “constructivist listening,” in which each person talks for 2 minutes while the partner actively listens without interrupting. Students discussed how those characteristics (race, gender, sexuality and class) influenced their worldviews and whether they were targets of oppression or privilege due to this aspect of their identity. In addition, the students discussed when they witnessed oppression, their response and how they would like others to respond to oppression. Lastly, the students discussed their definitions and how to be a better ally for oppressed populations.

### **“From Social Service to Social Change”**

The third Peacework session discussed social service versus social change and the “varying paradigms of international work.” The Peacework facilitator provided USU students with prompts to highlight social service versus social change. The USU students created skits and acted out how social service influences social change. In addition, the activity showed how students’ actions could fail to promote social change. However, the session was designed for students to “struggle a little with the difference” of social change versus social work.

### **“Global Systems of Poverty and Oppression”**

The final Peacework Global session discussed “understanding and processing poverty from a global systems perspective.” Students reflected on their week in Belize, how they witnessed poverty and oppression that “caused their heart to ache.”

The facilitator shared from the Peacework curriculum, “It is not easy to bear witness to others’ suffering. In our lives in the U.S., we are often sheltered from the often heart-breaking realities of poverty abroad.” In addition, students wrote out what they had witnessed, placed in them in a basket and shared their experiences with the group. During the debriefing, the facilitator affirmed each individual’s willingness to openly discuss difficult topics. He concluded the session with,

As global citizens, our lives have been shaped by systems of global governance. During the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the United States has been a leading player in global politics and economy. As Americans, our opportunities have been shaped by our position in global society.

### **Course Assignments**

Students received class assignments that facilitated course learning. The reading assignments and course content enabled students to learn beyond subject matter, including issues such as race, class, and gender as they relate to the content area. Furthermore, the assignments prepared the USU students for the in-country work. Each assignment developed the background knowledge on literacy education while critically examining issues of language diversity, race, poverty, and oppression.

#### **Master Narrative paper**

Master narratives describe the “myths and ideologies” that are used “to sustain a sanitized version of history” (Acuff, Hiram & Nangah, 2012, p.7). The assignment required students to critically reflect on how these narratives shaped their worldviews on

poverty, oppression, and racial dynamics. The students received question prompts to assist in developing their thoughts on master narratives. The questions explored how students developed their views, personal experiences challenging master narratives, and ways of moving beyond a master narrative worldview. Furthermore, the assignment required students to critically examine how these views shaped their expectations of Belize, the Belizean people and how their perceptions changed after the trip. This was especially important considering the racial dynamics of the group contrast with those of Belize. Lastly, this assignment counted for ten percent of the student's total grade.

### **Reflective Journal**

In addition to the in-country work, students kept a journal to document their experience in the course. Journaling encouraged students to critically reflect on their learning, Belizean culture, and their experiences. In addition, students reflected on what they were seeing, discoveries about educational systems, and engagement with language diversity. The student journals varied in length and detail. Some students wrote over twenty pages that detailed feeling nervous, anxious and grappling with the experiences during the course while other students wrote five pages. Furthermore, the students shared the challenges they experienced and opportunities for personal growth. Lastly, the reflective journal accounted for twenty-five percent of their final grade.

### **Participation and In-country Work**

Students received pre-departure assignments that developed background knowledge on literacy, culture, and Belize. However, the bulk of the student's grade was the in-

country work they completed with the teachers while in Belize. Once in country, students co-taught with Belizean teachers, attended Peacework sessions, led the poetry workshops, and assisted with the print making sessions. In addition, students toured the Mayan ruins, Al Tun Ha; cave tubed, snorkeled, and spent time on a small island off the coast of Belize. These parts of the course stressed cultural immersion and experiential field trips. While full “immersion” in a country is impossible to achieve in a short-term trip, the in-country portion of the course still had “the potential to be an amazing and life-changing experience” however that “depend[ed] on your [USU students] participation and effort” (USU faculty, personal communication, January 22, 2016). Lastly, this portion accounted for forty percent of the students’ total grade.

#### **Final Presentation/Reflective Paper**

Lastly, students presented on their experience while in Belize during the last class meeting. The final presentation could be in any format. However, the faculty expected the presentation to engage other students. In addition, the presentation focused on student learning, personal growth, and sustainability of their role as “global change agents.” In addition, students submitted a reflection paper that complemented the final presentation. Students organized the reflection paper around the major challenges, experiences, or learning while in Belize. The final presentation and reflective paper accounted for twenty-five percent of the students’ total grade.

#### **Additional Readings**

Lastly, lead faculty provided additional readings to the students during the pre-trip classes. The articles covered topics that would help the students for the in-country work such as reading instruction, literacy, culture, and language. The articles presented to the students, through the course interactive learning webpage, covered literacy strategies, language diversity, and multiculturalism and co-teaching best practices. Furthermore, the articles explored the nuances of language and the link between language, political hierarchy, and cultural conflict. The additional readings provided strategies for guided readings and small group teachings. Lastly, other readings required students to regularly monitor the course site for updates.

### **Summary**

This chapter outlined the service-learning project utilized by the College of Education at USU. Through a joint effort with Peacework, the Belizean Ministry of Education, Belizean teachers, and USU students and faculty, the course provided a weeklong opportunity for cultural immersion, co-teaching, and professional development. The course focused on literary education as the foundation for the curriculum and utilized core strategies across multiple literacy platforms such as co-teaching, guided reading and writing centers to develop that foundation. Furthermore, Peacework curriculum used critical theory, human development, and to “explore their [the students] cultural identity”, “think critically and analytically” about global issues and “integrate new worldviews”. By identifying the objectives and goals of the program, as described in the syllabus, Peacework curriculum and the USU faculty, this study provided insights into the

significance and usefulness of this type of service learning project in relation to students' intrinsic gains.

In Chapter 5, the data collected from the students who participated in this service-learning project presented as case narratives. This data collection developed intensely over an eight-month period and in the following analysis, every effort has been made to allow themes to emerge naturally through the students' own words in the form of separate cases. In addition, the data presented served to represent as accurately as possible, the institutional backdrop for investigating and defining the value of short-term, international educational projects.

## CHAPTER V

### PARTICIPANT PROFILES

Anthropologist Wolcott (1994) suggested three areas of emphasis when transforming qualitative data. He stated that separating “description, analysis and interpretation” of the data builds the story for the reader. Furthermore, Wolcott argued that qualitative researchers must arrange and describe the data before presenting the analysis. This chapter utilized one approach for describing the data: progressive focusing (Wolcott, 1994). Progressive focusing involves a broad description of participants and then moves to specific details and statements or thoughts expressed by the participants. In this chapter, I present descriptive participant narratives.

After a review of the research design and the study sites, I present the individual narratives of each participant in the study. I discuss observations, reflective papers, and final class presentations. Each participant narrative included a brief descriptor, data unit/quote, and a picture that captures the participant’s views while in Belize. In each narrative, I include demographic information, teaching background, first-hand experiences, and motivation to enroll in the Belize Service Learning Project. In addition, I provided the participants’ perceptions of significant course components, challenges they encountered, central statements, and the overall impact of the course.



The organization of this chapter is based on the extent to which participants took part in the study. While all participants' contributions are important to understanding the case, some students participated in 2-3 activities in the data gathering process, while others completed all aspects of the study as I designed it. Due to time constraints, job responsibilities and personal reasons beyond my control, some participants elected to discontinue participating in this study after the Belize portion of the course.

Semi-structured interviews allowed for a more profound understanding for the study abroad experience, as seen through the eyes of 10 current American schoolteachers. Furthermore, because of sharing their experiences and perspectives, the participants disclosed their perceptions of the value and meaning of study abroad program's potential impact on teacher education. This is useful for understanding how participants describe incorporating their experience in their own teaching. Furthermore, the study searches for implications that a short-term study abroad may have on teacher education programs.

### **Participant Narratives**

The participant narrative section provides a brief description of the participants as well as quotes that support thematic elements of the data findings. In addition, I assembled each participant narrative using the student's words in relation to the study abroad trip to Belize. Furthermore, the purpose of this study was to examine how graduate students, who are also teachers, make meaning of their Belize Service Learning project experience and explicitly interrogate the social, cultural, and power dynamics at work in those interactions. Therefore, it is fitting that the participants' words are

frequently utilized in the analysis, interpretation of data, and representation of findings in the following chapters (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011).

As a former participant of the Belize Service learning course, I have experienced the trip both as a student and now as the researcher. As is fitting in interpretivist and critical qualitative research, I brought to this study my experiences, beliefs, feelings, and assumptions. I made it a priority to stay true to the participants' words, experiences, and language used during this study abroad course (Wolcott, 1994). To do so, I used photographs, observation field notes, document analysis, and verbatim interview transcriptions to construct participant narratives in a purposeful manner (Erikson, 1986). The narratives, which follow, familiarize the reader with the participants' perspectives on education, culture, study abroad, and experiences in a developing country.

### **Participant Demographics**

All participants on the trip were female, consistent with the demographics of the field of education. They appeared to be majority White as well, consistent with both the educational field and university demographics. They taught at varying levels (see table 1).

Participant Name	Race/Ethnicity	Grade Level/Area	School environment	Degree Level
Asha	Black	Second	Suburban/ Predominantly White	Masters
Imani	White	College	Minority Serving Institution	PhD

Iniko	White	Third	Suburban/ Predominantly White	Masters
Jamila	White	Kindergarten	Urban/Predominantly White	Masters
Maha	White	Third	Suburban/ Predominantly White	Masters
Nailah	Hispanic/Mexican	Second	Urban/ Predominantly Hispanic	Masters
Nia	White	Third	Urban/Predominantly Black	Masters
Sabra	White	Special Education	Rural/Predominantly White	Masters
Zane	White	Music	Suburban/ Predominantly White	Masters
Zola	White/Iraqi	Third/ Fourth	Urban/Predominantly Black	Masters

**Table 1 – Participant Demographics**

As I described earlier, I created pseudonyms based on qualities, key words, or actions the participants displayed or used while in Belize. Each participant received an African pseudonym, and the groups received Swahili names. I changed the names and descriptions of the schools where they worked, and used pseudonyms for the Belizean teachers. The amount of data I collected from participants, from least to most, determined the order of participant narratives.

### **Group One: Mpya**

This group represents participants who completed only the first interview, provided all documents (journals, master narratives, reflective paper), and completed a final presentation.

## Asha (“Life”)

“We are all learning in her [Belizean co-teacher] room... You’ll never know for sure how things are here until you experience it firsthand. Even then it could be different depending on where you are, who you’re with.”

- Asha

Asha, a name that means *life*, teaches the second and third grades in the Tamir Public School District at elementary school. Barika serves about 600 students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade in traditional classrooms. The elementary school received an “F” grade from the state grading scale. Asha has been working for the school for six years. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Fundamental and Primary Childhood Development, and was working on a Master’s degree related to course studies and governance during this study.

Asha was interested in taking the Belize service learning course because she loves to travel and to teach (see Figure 8). This course afforded her the opportunity to do both. She expressed, “I like traveling, and I thought it would be a neat way to take an elective. It’s a fun experience and experiencing another culture I’ve never been to.” Asha was one of the quietest participants during the course. However, she was more vocal and



**Figure 8:** Inside the Belizean Classroom (Researcher Photo)

expressive when working with the Belizean students in Standard 3 (comparable to the fourth grade in the United States). She provided more details about her experience in her journals and reflective paper as well. While in Belize, she wrote, “Overall, I’m feeling under prepared & not sure what I should be doing in Cathryn’s class.”

Asha suggested the language barrier was one of the most challenging aspects of the service learning course. “One thing that was hard to get used to was understanding the language. With the heavy creole [Kriol] accents, I had to continually ask students and my teacher to repeat themselves and slow down to understand what was being said.” In addition, Asha expressed awkwardness and anxiety about not being prepared to teach in the Belizean classroom alone. “By the time LA [language arts] came, I was kind of freaking out because I was leading and teaching [writing] centers... but we [Belizean co-teacher and Asha] hadn’t had much time to plan.”

She questioned whether she had explained information well enough to her Belizean co-teacher. She wondered, “Did I say something wrong?” “Or not say enough? More Q’s [questions].” Furthermore, she wished she had more time with the Belizean students. “After lunch we were with our Belize host who works with Peace Corps [Peacework] the group who helped us plan everything. We do sessions with him every day. I’d prefer to be with the kids but it’s all good.” Asha, who seemed to enjoy interacting with the students the most, expressed that “kids are kids no matter what.”

Asha expressed a desire to grow and develop professionally while experiencing a new culture as motivation for taking the course. “Having the opportunity to be a part of this literacy trip to Belize has been a perfect opportunity for growth.” She described the course as “insightful,” and it allowed her to “reflect on” her career goals. The experience

has led her to consider “one day be an instructional coach or some other literacy leader in an elementary school.

### **Iniko (“Born During Troubled Times”)**

“My initial reaction to the school was sadness & disbelief. It was so sad. The classroom was makeshift. The yard was covered in litter. The houses were dilapidated. It was eye opening. The drive around Belize was really eye opening. I thought the houses were dilapidated.”

- Iniko

Iniko is a third grade teacher in the Bijou School District. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Fundamental Education. She was in the process of completing a Master’s in a reading-related degree. Iniko has been teaching for six years in an affluent suburban school district. The school district serves more than 6,000 pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade students in six different schools. The elementary schools received a grade of “A” in recent state report cards that measure school performance. Iniko described the school district as predominantly affluent “White privilege kids.” More than 80% of the students



**Figure 9:** Students on a Playground at a School in Belize (researcher photo)

are White, and the average household income is \$103,000, both higher than state averages.

Iniko was interested in the Belize course because “initially, probably just [because] everyone in my cohort was going.” Iniko expressed fragility, uncertainty, and insecurity about teaching the Belizean students (see Figure 9). “At first, I was very unsure of myself and Mr. Montana [Belizean standard 5 teacher] was very sure of himself, I wasn’t comfortable with sharing my ideas.” Iniko believed her nervousness and insecurity was due to having no experience with Belizean culture and limited class time preparing for the cultural and language difference aspects of the trip. She expressed that she felt “lost” even though “they [Belizeans] were speaking English.” Due to their heavy “accent,” she had to focus on “looking at the kid that is speaking.”

She experienced an interaction with a Peacework facilitator who she felt was hurtful. During the Peacework session on privilege, Gamba described how men have power that women do not as Whites have power that people of color do not. Iniko expressed privilege from the perspective of having others provide for you. This led to an exchange that seemingly bothered Iniko. “We chatted about feeling opposed [oppressed] or privileged. Gamba [Peacework facilitator] made a comment about viewing gender [females being given things] as not being privileged. Gamba stated, “I challenge you to think about that...sit with that...” I felt it [his comment] was condescending and judgmental. I didn’t feel like sharing after that”. Iniko expressed that teachers “should consider their responses” when “students share personal thoughts or feelings.”

Although she seemed to experience culture shock and disorientation from some of her interactions in Belize, Iniko stated that overall the course “solidified that teaching is

teaching. It's demanding and difficult in the United States and in Belize." Furthermore, Iniko felt that she became a "better teacher" and "person" after her experience in Belize. Lastly, the experience "inspired" Iniko to "reach out to communities around the world" and become an "agent of social change."

### **Maha ("Beautiful Eyes")**

"I learned today that the expectations in this culture are much different than America... Like procedures and expectations in the classroom, and I thought they were being crazy but I realized that is just the way they are."

- Maha

Maha is a second grade teacher in the Tamir Public School District and at an elementary school. The elementary school serves about 600 students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Despite receiving a "D-" on state report cards, the school is accredited by the Upper Middle Federation of Colleges and Schools. Maha has been at the school for four years. She holds a degree with honors related to education and business from a private Christian university. At the time of this study, she was enrolled in a Master's program in curriculum development and teaching. Maha has previous study abroad experience. She taught English classes to people in a small village in a developing South American country.

Maha decided to participate in the course because she was "interested in traveling" and "interested in education." This course offered the opportunity to experience both while receiving college credit. Maha taught Belize Standard 2 (United States Grade 3) while participating in the course. She described the Belizean students as



excited about the new material she introduced (see Figure 10). Maha stated students' faces "light up about reading" and they were "yearning for more small group readings."



**Figure 10:** Belizean Students Preparing for Language Arts (Researcher Photo)

The substitute teaching was one of the most challenging parts of the course for Maha. "I was alone for 3 hours to teach... Let's just say... it was crazy. My teacher didn't really leave any solid plans so we tried the best we could," stated Maha. She felt she was not adequately prepared to substitute teach while her co-teacher was in training with the Ubuntu State University faculty. The "[Belizean co-teacher] was very casual and laidback and didn't seem to have any steadfast plans. I thought I would be overstepping at times [to write lesson plans]." Maha believed her Belizean classroom seemed "like a

free for all” and “kids were all over the place here [Belize], punching, kicking, etc.” Furthermore, she described her co-teacher as “ineffective” and “unfocused” on teaching as she was constantly on her phone during class. Maha felt this adversely affected her teaching ability and the students’ learning.

Maha had trouble during the first part of the Belize course because of the disorganization; however, after her expectations for the students and teachers levelled out, some rewarding events took place. She described the course as “rewarding” and the students’ reaction to reading books on their level as “priceless.”

### **Zane (“God’s Gracious Gift”)**

“I was so caught up in the moment of teaching and learning and connecting with everyone around me that I would look down at my arms randomly and think to myself “Oh, I’m White”. I did not say this in a way of empowerment, but in a way of realization. We are all human when it comes down to it, and skin color doesn’t tell you anything about a person.”

- Zane

Zane holds a Bachelor of Literacy in Education from a private university, where she was involved in the arts. Zane was working on her Master’s degree in the teaching department at USU during the time of this study. She taught in the public school system for about 5 years and began her career as an arts-infusion teacher at an elementary. Zane now teaches music at two elementary schools.

Zane, a White woman, grew up in the Middle East and traveled frequently across Europe and Asia. Although she had never previously traveled to Central America, she believed she was more comfortable with the international travel aspect of the course. Zane hoped that this trip would open her thought process about people of color and

developing countries. She states, “My experiences traveling the world and conversations that I’ve had with people of different race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc... have also shaped my views. While my views might not be ‘the truth,’ they are my truth.”

She wanted to participate in the Belize Service Learning Project because it would provide her an opportunity to co-teach and learn other aspects of teaching. It would also give her experience with guiding readings. Zane stated, “I’ve never really traveled in that area and I do a lot of [music] professional development with teachers so I thought this was a good opportunity to co-teach and facilitate workshops in other areas” (see Figure 11). The guided reading is where she expected to have the most challenges due to her unfamiliarity with literacy education: “I’ve never had any experience with that.” She felt “vulnerable” and her “confidence dwindle[d]” when discussing the guided reading portions of the lessons.



**Figure 11:** Belizean Students, Teachers and USU Students Walking from Church (Researcher Photo)

Zane was one of the more vocal participants during the Belize Service Learning Project. She seemed to enjoy the Peacework sessions, saying, “It was pretty cool to talk to them [USU students Jamila and Zola] knowing it was a safe space.” However, she stated the Peacework discussions were “a little unsettling in some ways.” Furthermore, she integrated her arts education background while in the classroom, and the Belizean students created a new song for the children to sing. “I know that also sounds silly or childish, but music is a universal language, and being able to share my passion (which, really, is music integration with the curriculum) is ridiculously exciting to me.”

Zane expected to struggle with the guided reading, because literacy was not her specialization, but language barriers also caused some difficulty. She wrote the following:

I was not expecting [many] problems with a language barrier or clash of cultures. I expected my biggest struggle to be with learning and teaching the guided reading portion. Now, I ended up being correct that I would struggle with guided reading, but I also struggled with the language barrier.

Zane expressed feelings of being an outsider due to her not having experience with guided reading. However, she referred to “forgetting she was White” when she was in Belize and being reminded of it when she looked at her arms. Furthermore, her skin color is what made her feel more accepted and less like an outsider during the Belize Service Learning Course. Lastly, Zane expressed the trip taught her “that kids are kids wherever you go” and “shouldn’t be treated unequally because of anything that they don’t have control of.” She finished the course feeling “free enough to make connections

with the thing that [she's] passionate" about and her experience helped her find "strength in my weakness."

### **Group Two: Usafiri**

This group consisted of only one participant who completed two interviews, provided all documents, and completed a final presentation.

#### **Jamila ("The Beautiful One")**

"My initial reaction to the community surrounding the school was sadness. I felt very bad for the poverty, poor condition of the roads and homes, and people that just seemed to be wandering with no purpose."

- Jamila

Jamila is beginning her first year at an academy in an urban school district and previously worked in a suburban school district. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Fundamental Education from a private university. Jamila was working on her Master's degree in Reading from USU at the time of this study. The school district is predominantly ethnic minority school district. Approximately 61% of the district students are Hispanic, and approximately 32% are African American. The district was rated as academically acceptable in the last state report cards.

Jamila developed interest in the Belize Service Learning Project after "hearing stories from Zola and Nia" since they went the previous year. She also "loves to travel" and has "never been to Belize." In addition, many of the other students in her cohort had enrolled in the course as well. Jamila expressed she had traveled often before this trip; however, she never experienced the native culture as she would with this course (see

Figure 12). Jamila shared, “I have never traveled to another country while getting a chance to see their schools, so I have always learned about their culture through other avenues – food, history, speaking with locals, and observing their lives.”

She continued, “I was surprised that I was able to understand so much about the Belizean culture just by observing in their classrooms.”



**Figure 12:** The Neighborhood surrounding the Belizean School (Researcher Photo)

Jamila was one of the more observant participants during the Belize Service Learning Project. Overall, she was not as talkative as others, yet she did speak more frequently during the Peacework sessions. She was not as outgoing in her teaching, but she attempted to connect with the students while in the classroom. She expressed that the Belizean students had an immediate impact on her, and they had genuine excitement to be there. “The kids have already stolen my heart. They [Belizean students] are refreshing, loving, and just excited to be here. The relationships there [Belizean school] will not be difficult to cultivate,” stated Jamila.

Jamila had trouble during her time substitute teaching. She stated Belizean students did not really follow her instructions nor were the Belizean students or teachers familiar with the materials. Jamila stated the following:

When we [USU teachers] tried to introduce a [writing] center, it was too much for them to understand and apply, especially since they had no background in making classroom choices on their own...The [Belizean] students were not ready yet so we [Ubuntu team] knew it was not the best step to take.

In addition, Jamila felt her Belizean experience was extremely powerful in multiple ways, stating “It [course] impacted the way I view coaching, my views on language, and reignited my love for teaching reading.” Jamila stated, “I had not thought previously about how much culture is shown through in education, but I was able to understand this connection while immersing myself in the Belizean school.” Lastly, Jamila reflected on the impact of language for cultural development and identity. Jamila wrote the following in her journal:

While speaking with Ms. Houston [Belizean teacher], she often referred to Belizean Kriol as “broken English.” As I thought about this later, it made me very sad for her. How terrible it must be growing up and thinking that your language is broken and continuing that belief into adulthood.

### **Group Three: Kamili**

This group consists of participants who completed three interviews, provided all documents, and completed a final presentation.

## **Imani (“Faith”)**

“I saw that just walking to the church that day, that neighborhood looked impoverished. There was one building, I notice that the second floor of the house was coming apart and things were spilling out. I saw a porch that was falling all the way in the street. Somehow, that just struck me as that real poverty, yet you [Belizean parents] scarp up the money to put your child in that uniform even if it’s safety pinned together at the waist because the zipper is broken. You’ve given your child a face for the world to see that doesn’t put them in class and a box that screams “I’m poor.” They can go places and nobody will say ‘oh those must be poor children.’”

- Imani

Imani holds a Bachelor’s degree in Sociology and a Masters in Educational Psychology from USU. Currently, she is writing her dissertation for her Doctor of Philosophy degree in a field related to Instruction at USU. She has taught public education for 25 years in the Tamir Ummi School District and Chiamka Public School system. The school district is the eighth largest school district in the state and services over 16,000 students. Approximately 50% of the school district is White, middle-class students. Chiamka High is a smaller school district that serves roughly 500 students. More than half of the students that attend Chiamka are White.

Imani taught grades 10 through 12 in high school for over 15 years. Early in her teaching career, she taught United States History, Sociology, Political Science, and Economics. In addition, she taught for over 11 years at Chiamka High School for grades 9 through 12. Imani taught advanced placement (AP) classes in psychology, sociology, and United States History for over 11 years while in the public high school settings. At the time of this study, she taught part time at a minority serving institution.

Imani became interested in the Belize Service Learning Project on “a whim” after receiving the “email blast they sent to everybody in the college.” After speaking with her



advisor about the course being a “fabulous international literacy education” opportunity on her vitae, she enrolled in the course as an elective. Imani expressed she had traveled quite often before this trip; therefore, she had expectations that Belize would be similar to other developing countries. Imani stated in an early interview that “In contemplating our trip to Belize, I envision Black school children in school uniforms, classroom conditions which are primitive in comparison to American schools, and happy children jumping rope outside” (see Figure 13).



**Figure 13:** Belizean Students Walking to Church Services (Researcher Photo)

Initially, she was hesitant to go to Belize because she feared this would be what she calls a “White man’s burden” trip. She expressed,

I thought more about my initial fear... I have this kind of collective term, White man's burden, and what that refers to... I guess, collectively, to refer to the idea of people coming in from another place regardless of race but just coming in from

another place and bestowing their knowledge and whatever they have on the less fortunate.

Imani presents an interesting case. She seems to understand the nuances of race and the effects of colonialism on people of color. Imani stated the following:

The master narrative is used as a heuristic for judgment by individuals who do not care to look more closely or educate themselves about “the other.” I must guard against allowing the easy, stereotypical answer created by the dominant culture and delve more deeply into understanding my fellow woman and man.

However, in subsequent interviews, Imani focused her comments more on the beauty of a small island off the coast of Belize, and she planned to take a follow-up trip with her family. She stated the following:

We're [her family] going in January; I thought it was just an exceptionally beautiful place when we went to Caye Caulker [small island of the coast of Belize]. It [Caye Caulker] was like a fantasy; the kind of place that you read about [in magazines]. You might see as an advertisement for somewhere [beautiful beaches] on the Internet but you never find that place.

## **Nailah (“One Who Attains”)**

“I do have a little apprehension about that [skin color] because it’s easy to notice who’s not from around from there [Belize] because of the language, and I don’t know how different I will look from them but even just the language will be a key point to distinguish people who are or not from there.”

- Nailah

Nailah, a Latina woman, is currently a second grade teacher at an elementary school in Tamir, a Spanish immersion school. Initially, Nailah attended a community college for her associate’s degree and completed a Bachelor’s degree in Fundamental Education at a regional state university. At the time of this study, she was working on her Master’s degree as a reading specialist from USU. In addition, Nailah is entering her seventh year at the immersion elementary school. She taught as a first grade teacher for close to two years before transitioning to a second grade teacher.

Nailah was interested in the Belize Service Learning Program because she wanted to see how education is “done differently” in other countries and heard “great things from Zola and Nia.” In addition, she had never participated in a study abroad before, which provided additional motivation to participate in this course. Nailah expressed she had little experience with other cultures before this trip and wished to learn more about the diversity in Belize (see Figure 14). Nailah stated the following:

I know when they [fellow students, Zola and Nia] went, they focused on some culture and I really consider that an area that I could use a little bit more experience so I'm kind of expecting to go deeper into that and at the same time learn about other cultures and learn how they do things just on a day-to-day basis.



**Figure 14:** Writing Centers in Belizean Classroom (Researcher Photo)

Nailah expressed that Belize was like her experiences while visiting family in Mexico. She stated the following:

I was envisioning it would be like Mexico and that's what it turned out to be. You know as far as how the houses are built and how some people have more than others so I'm used to seeing that part of it and so that kind of panned out to be about the same.

However, Nailah was surprised about what she considered outside of the norm in students interacting with each other. She observed the Belizean students doing what she perceived as being more physical and violent toward each other. Nailah stated,

That was different for me just because it's not what I considered to be the norm which was trying to get along with other students and placing more of a focus on getting along with each other so that was a little bit different.

Paradoxically, the amount of affection that the Belizean students showed toward the USU surprised Nailah as well. “With their culture, I notice that they’re more...very embracing of us being here. Hugs and all of that at random times during the day just for no apparent reason and that’s fine,” stated Nailah.

Nailah was very observant of the skin color of the Belizeans. She expressed that skin color often reflected Spanish-speaking abilities in the United States but not necessarily in Belize. Nailah stated, “I do find myself thinking ‘well they’re light skinned, I wonder if they know Spanish or something.’ When in reality it might be the darker skin students who know it.” She also said, “I just assumed that everyone there would speak Spanish.” Finally, Nailah expressed an overall benefit from the service learning course. Although she thought the trip was too short, Nailah felt it was worthwhile, challenging her to reflect on what she could “do differently” in her classroom during “the new school year.”

“Still they [Belizeans] were doing pretty well compared to what my picture of it and compared to what I[’d] seen on TV. Or things people have said about “oh we’re going to Belize for missionary trips and we’re going to bringing these clothes” or “we’re bringing this and that”. I didn’t see that level of poverty. These children have a home to go back to. They bring in money in, which was surprising for me. Then it was still surprising that they weren’t all on the same poverty level even within the poorest school, there were a variety of poverty levels.”

- Sabra

### **Sabra (“To Rest”)**

Sabra, a White woman, has a Bachelor’s degree in Adolescent Development. She was working on her Master’s in Instruction, Learning, and Governance, including reading certification, at USU during this study. She has taught for over 12 years in the public

school setting. Sabra has taught pre-kindergarten for one year and special education for over ten years. At the time of this study, Sabra taught special education in a district that serves more than 1,200 pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade students in three different schools. The school district's student demographic profile is 60% Caucasian, 27% Native American, 11% African American, and 2% Hispanic. Roughly 70% of the students are on free and reduced lunch plans, indicating a high level of poverty among the families.

Sabra was interested in the Belize Service Learning Project because she felt that it was the opportunity practice “everything together” in literacy and “travel” while “helping others.” In addition, she felt that her cohort would be a great supportive group to travel to Belize with. Sabra expressed she wanted to travel more often for education rather than tourist purposes (see Figure 15). Sabra stated, “My husband and I want to travel to other countries and I don't want [it] to just be tourism and travel. So I'm looking forward to meeting new groups and working in education. So I'm hoping this will be something that leads to more of these experiences.”



**Figure 15:** Belizean Students Prepare for Print Making Workshop (Researcher Photo)

In addition, Sabra expressed uncertainty and insecurity about co-teaching and apprehensive because of the language barrier. During the early part of the trip, she wrote, “[I] felt awkward and distant by lack of communication and by not knowing the language or dialect... Creole [Kriol].” In addition, the language barrier proved to be the most difficult part of the trip for Sabra and affected her experience with the students as well.

Sabra stated,

In just one week, I was not able to fully grasp the language, the non-verbal cues, and the cultural norms or taboos. It was fascinating to realize how much I rely on language and its underlying tones and nuances of meaning to analyze people, how they feel and what they are thinking. Without these tools, I felt really lost. I really had to rely on myself to be brave to speak up, ask people to repeat and slow down, and to initiate conversations.

Sabra expressed a lot of concern about the violence she perceived from the students in Belize. As the van carrying the USU students approached a corner that was crowded with Belizean people, Sabra wrote the following:

I would have moved out of the way of the van as it turned the corner, but she stood her ground firmly as we drove around her. This made me wonder about the culture of poverty, violence, and this part of Belize. Do the mildly violent behaviors (slapping, hitting, kicking) and show of defiance at the school help kids define themselves as strong and brave and keep them on the higher ranks of a social ladder? Do the teachers participate in this as well as part of the overall culture?

Although she experienced some awkwardness, insecurity, and disorientation, Sabra felt that she became a “better teacher” and “person” due to this course. Sabra felt the “whole experience empowered” her and she felt “proud of her personal strength.” The experience has inspired her to think about future educational work in other countries and becoming a “social change agent in the future.”

#### **Group Four: Kurudi**

This group consists of two participants who had taken the course previously and returned a second time. They completed three interviews, provided all documents, and completed a final presentation.



## **Nia (“Purpose”)**

“I am feeling a little emotional today. The kids were absolutely angelic during my part of the lesson today, which is something that has not happened yet. I also caught myself laughing at a few off task kids today and Ms. Houston [Belizean infant 2 teacher] was smiling too. She is usually very strict and does not smile when these things happen. I can’t help but feel I am bringing some positivity to the classroom. I see my kids in these kids. Jabari [Belizean student] is so angry and defeated. He had a good day today and yet he still got his name up on the board. I saw a look of “I’ll never succeed” in his eyes. He just bawled when this happened. I have seen a huge change in him even in this short time. I hope he will continue. I worry that no one will be his champion.”

- Nia

Nia has been a special education teacher at an elementary school for the past five years. The school is a predominantly Black and Hispanic elementary school with an average property valuation well below the state average. Currently, more than 440 students are enrolled, and 99% of students qualify for a free or reduced price school lunch. She graduated from a state university with her bachelor’s, and she was completing her Master’s in Literacy. In addition to teaching her first through fourth grade students, Nia also serves as the Student Council Advisor and coaches soccer. One day, she hopes to open her own school. In addition, Nia was named the Teacher of the Year for the 2016-2017 school year.

Nia was one of the two students that participated in the Belize Service Learning Program for the second consecutive year. Initially, Nia enrolled in the course to gradually teach abroad. Nia stated the following:

I've always considered teaching abroad but never really knew how to get my foot in the door but when I heard about [these] trips. [I] saw the videos and everything, I thought it would be a good start to go for a week and see how I like it.

Additionally, Nia has considered teaching abroad for a longer duration, stating, "I'm thinking about even this year maybe next year, [teaching] somewhere else but really I just wanted to see what it would be like to teach abroad and if that was something I would like to pursue for a longer term in the future."

During the first trip, Nia seemed to enjoy being amongst the Belizean people and within the culture (see Figure 16). She mentioned exploring Belize City in a deeper, more meaningful way compared to tourism.

I really just enjoyed being amongst different cultures. I think that a lot of time going to visit other places you get caught up in the tourist aspects and everything...I been on cruises and when you get off...they put a lei on you. [And,] ends up, you miss what it's like really being in the country because everybody came for the tourist side of it and I really didn't feel like that was what it's like going to Belize. I got to experience the school and where we stayed...we got to see the real look inside of what it's like there [Belize City].



**Figure 16:** Belizean Kids Celebrate a Returning Student on the Playground (Researcher Photo)

During her first visit in the spring of 2015, the language barrier was difficult for Nia however; it [language] wasn't as difficult during the second trip. After the first trip to Belize, Nia stated, "Many times students had great things to say but I missed them due to the language barrier. I wish this was not a thing..." Additionally, the Belizean Kriol seemed easier for Nia to understand during the second trip. "Another area I saw a difference in from last year was language. I noticed I was able to understand much more than last year!" she wrote. She thought she understood the language better than others because of her previous experiences. Nia remarked,

This year, I think I got the hang of their language and dialects. While I didn't know exactly what they were saying at all times, I found that I could carry a conversation with them easily... I think I could attribute this to the relationship I formed with the students from the year before.

Furthermore, Nia wanted to participate in the Belize Service Learning Project again due to feeling that something seemed unfinished during the previous trip. Nia expressed excitement in learning about Belize for the cultural and background knowledge for her teaching. However, at the end of the second trip, Nia felt there was more that she missed. She expressed:

I felt like it was unfinished... I wanted to go back to Belize because of my wonderful experience last year. I felt like I had a lot of unfinished business. I wanted to spend more time with the kids learning and growing. I wanted to decide if I wanted to teach abroad or not.

Nia expressed challenges in attempting to discuss some cultural issues that the group encountered. She suggests that other Ubuntu students avoided conversations that centered on race and preferred to focus on the beauty of Belize. She stated the following:

I do remember Zola being like ‘the poverty, race stuff...’ I could tell they didn’t want to have that conversations there. I just remember people were very obvious, [you] could tell that we were not on the same page and didn’t want to cause any ruffles.

In addition, Nia expressed concerns about the violence she saw while in Belize, particularly teachers’ violence toward students. In fact, seeing the violence seemed to affect Nia emotionally during the course. “The amount of violence I have witnessed over this past week has caused my heart to ache. I have seen teachers hit their students with fists, allow their siblings to repeatedly punch them (as they turned their heads)” stated Nia. She continued, “...teachers allow parents to beat students through the day and even

encourage it. I have already formed attachments with the kids and it pains me to see them going through this.”

Finally, Nia felt the service learning course was worthwhile and beneficial to her. She shared that the course discussed “diversity” and “poverty,” but most of the class focused on “lesson planning and talking about curriculum.” In her opinion, the course needed “another class or two to prepare” for the diversity and culture that the participants would experience. In addition, Nia expressed a deep desire to teach abroad and open a school in the future. She credits this experience as helping her to reach that conclusion.

### **Zola (“Quiet, Tranquil”)**

“I think the saying that ‘kids are kids’ is true but I don't think it's okay to say that ‘kids are kids no matter what race or economic status or culture or whatever.’ I don't think that those things combine. Kids are kids but I think when you are working with a kid you have to think about all of those factors too.”

- Zola

Zola, a half White, half Iraqi woman, is a fourth grade teacher at an elementary school in North Tamir. She is also a Teach for America alum. She received a Bachelor's of Arts in Creative Writing with a minor in Gender Studies. Zola was working on Masters of Science in Literacy Education from a state university. She taught at a predominantly Black and Hispanic elementary school with an average property valuation well below the state average. Currently, more than 440 students are enrolled, and 99% of students qualify for a free or reduced price school lunch. To Zola, education, specifically literacy, is a powerful and transformational tool that she believes can be lifesaving.

Zola was one of the two students who participated in the Belize Service Learning Program for the second consecutive year. Initially, Zola enrolled in the course as a way to break up a monotonous routine while receiving college credit. Zola stated, “I think if we are being totally honest, it was a chance for me to earn credit for my program while also taking a break from my regular routine.” Additionally, “...it wasn’t like teaching my kids that I have any other time, but I still feel like I was being a productive member of society.”

During her first trip, Zola did not seem overwhelmed being amongst the Belizean students and teachers (see Figure 17). She mentioned that the school reminded her of her class in Tamir. Zola stated the following:

Essentially, I teach at a school in Tamir that’s like a very similar demographic so it didn’t seem anything out of the ordinary of what I do every day where I’m typically the minority at my school. I thought it was very interesting because that’s not necessarily what I thought the makeup was going to be like.



**Figure 17:** Belizean Students at the End of the School Day (Researcher Photo)

Furthermore, she expected the Belizean people to look more Hispanic and the diversity of the people startled her. Zola stated,

I feel like when we talk about places in Latin America or places in Central America, that's not the face you put to the name. It frightened me, but it didn't necessarily make me feel nervous or that's not something I am used to working around or someone I used to working with.

Zola often had discussions with the other students regarding teaching, poetry, and diversity topics. In addition, Zola taught the poetry sessions in the afternoons. This was where her passion really lay, and she wanted to see the poetry workshops that she facilitated succeed. Zola shared,

Another goal I had was that I also was committed to seeing the poetry workshop thrive and flourish. Because my passion will always be teaching poetry, I felt fortunate to get to share some of my own ideas for what the poetry workshop could look like.

Zola enjoyed sharing her passion of poetry with the students; however, she seemed to feel a sense of pride in assisting her fellow USU students develop in co-teaching:

It was fantastic to get to see my colleagues lead these same workshops and guide students through the writing prompts and exercises. Many of the [USU] teachers had initially expressed their own uneasiness of teaching poetry and I hope they do not feel that way any longer because of the success I saw them each having when they were immersed in poetry workshop.

Additionally, Zola considered the second trip a better experience for the Belizean students and USU students. Zola felt more confident working with the students on this trip, which led to a different overall perspective. “I, personally, had a way better trip this time. I feel, as far as, working with the students and teachers, I came in with a lot more confidence and came in with a little bit different mindset.” As a result, Zola believed the experience was substantially more positive and beneficial to the Belizean students.

Furthermore, Zola believed the faculty became more “hands off” and trusted that the participants could handle the assigned tasks. In her previous trip, most of the students were undergraduates with no teaching experience. However, the group that participated this time were all graduate students with teaching experience. She stated the following:



I think the main difference was [the faculty leader] was talking about on the last night of class [pre-trip], where she started to hand off a lot of responsibility to us [USU graduate students] and sort of trusted that we are all teachers. We will make the right decisions and we will be there for our teachers to help... and do what they think will be best for the kids.

Regrettably, Zola believed the conversation around race and poverty was lacking during this the course. She stated that one area she would improve the Belize Service Learning Program is the discussion about culture. Zola stated substantial time covered teaching and literacy, but culture, race, and poverty lack the same exposure in class, especially given the demographics and experience of the group.

I think if I were to give practical and logical suggestions from my experiences, I think I would keep it simple. Of all the time before going to Belize like the Friday night classes, if we're going to be a group of [current] classroom teacher [taking the course] already, I would spend less time on strategic teaching and more time on conversations about culture, race and diversity.

Overall, Zola expressed that she felt the course was worthwhile and helped her as a teacher. She believed the course was educational for Ubuntu State University students and encourages teachers to sign up. In addition, Zola believed this course proved that effective teaching is cross-cultural and the teacher plays the most important part in any classroom. She stated the following:

I think the biggest lesson for me was that education is education is education.

Good reading is good reading is good reading, it doesn't matter who you are and

where you are. These classrooms need effective teachers in them and they need practices and strategies that are going to engage students.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I utilized narratives to present sketches of the research participants based on individual interviews, document analysis, observations, and field notes. The narratives provided insight into how the participants made meaning of their Belizean experiences. In addition, it provided insight into how that experience has contributed to the way they understand themselves and their role as educators in an ever-changing American public school system. Each participant acknowledged different perceptions of how race and gender affect their work as teachers. Two participants presented sometimes conflicting narratives of how race affects their pedagogy, at times acknowledging its impact and other times refuting the idea that race influences their work.

In the next chapter, I discuss the findings of this study and identify the emergent themes from data analysis. Furthermore, the chapter utilizes quotes to illustrate the experience of the participants in this service learning course. Finally, chapter six provides course elements that contributed to the participants' experience.

## CHAPTER VI

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

Critical race theory argues that White supremacy saturates U.S. American society, therefore, Americans are immersed in an ideology that values Whiteness over the “other” - people of color. Haney-Lopez (2006) argued that Whiteness is “contingent, changeable, partial, inconstant, and ultimately social. As a descriptor and as an experience, ‘White’ takes on highly variegated nuances across the range of social axes and individual lives” (p. xxi). This concept proved important to this study when analyzing the American teachers’ meaning making of their Belize experiences. Naturally, these teachers carry with them the racialized learning and ideology of the Whiteness that dominates U.S. society to international settings as well.

Joel Feagin (2013) calls this “White racial frame...an overarching White worldview that encompasses a broad and persisting set of racial stereotypes, prejudices, ideologies, images, interpretations and narratives, emotions, and reactions to language accents, as well as racialized inclinations to discriminate” (p. 3). By viewing the Belizeans and Belizean culture through White racial framing, the participants perceived aspects of the Belizean practices as deficient compared to the U.S.

This study utilized a critical race theory (CRT) lens to question how graduate students, who were also classroom teachers, made meaning of their Belize Service

Learning project experience and how they explicitly interrogate the social, cultural, and power dynamics at work in those interactions. While CRT was effective at animating racial dynamics in the setting, it did not fit with all elements of the data; therefore, other theories offered ways to nuance and expand data analysis. For example, post-colonialism argues the agency, ability to engage or oppose imperialistic power by post-colonized people, individuals are capable of in developing countries (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2013). As previously mentioned, Belize gained its independence from British rule in the early 1980s and the influence is still noticeable in the country. This power dynamic is important and relevant when discussing predominantly White students from the United States and a previously colonized country. The data suggested a layered and nuanced experience in Belize therefore emergent themes had substantial overlap. I explored the participants' short-term study abroad experiences through CRT. According to Taylor (2009),

CRT comes from a long tradition of resistance to the unequal and unjust distribution of power and resources along political, economic, racial and gendered lines in America, and across the globe, with the support and legitimacy of the legal system which makes possible the perpetuation of the established power relationships of society. (p. 1)

Critical race theory holds that race is a dominant social construction that shapes peoples' lives. Critical race theorist such as Bell (1980) and Delgado (1995) attempted to

expand on social structures or biological factors by forcing themselves (thereby others) to scrutinize the severe impact of racism on American society. In addition, scholars suggested that educators use CRT as a tool for examining the relationship of education, race, and racism (Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT not only explains and examines underlying and cultural components of education that perpetuate White supremacy, but stimulates transformation and change (Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solorzano, 2009). This body of theory has basic interdisciplinary tenets that guide its framework. The tenets used to frame this data analysis for this study are described below. I reviewed this material from chapter three to ground the data analysis for this chapter.

**CRT positions U.S. society and institutions as inherently racist.**

First, Delgado & Stefancic (2001) argued, that racism is the “usual way that society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of color in this country” (p. 7). Therefore, CRT holds that racism permeates U.S. institutions such as banks, government, and higher education. In this view, racism also affects study abroad programs at PWIs and this study analyzes data with that understanding. Although race and racism are socially constructed, in the sense that concepts and beliefs are generally created and accepted within a given society and have very real consequences (Bonilla-Silva (2017), and influences higher education in a variety of ways.

**CRT positions Whiteness as property, privilege and control.**

According to Civil Rights lawyer Cheryl Harris (1993), “Becoming White [in the U.S.] meant gaining access to a whole set of public and private privileges that materially

and permanently guaranteed basic subsistence needs and, therefore, survival” (p. 1713). Whiteness has major implications over the quality of life that someone may attain as well as a stronger probability that one maintains control over the outcomes of their life. In this sense, analyzing the experiences of people attending a PWI and undertaking a SL trip abroad through CRT requires acknowledging that Whiteness provides privileges, power and a sense of control over one’s self; participants from the U.S. carry this agency in developing countries when they travel abroad and experience unfamiliar cultures. This agency seems to provide a sense of entitlement from the structural advantages that privilege and power. Although not all of the participants were White, participants still carried White ideological views when traveling abroad to developing countries.

### **CRT challenges the dominant ideology**

Critical race theory argues that the pervasiveness of the dominant ideology and racism is rendered invisible to Whites; therefore, many White people find it difficult to understand the experiences of people of color. Applying this racial framework to this study, participants in this international setting would find it difficult to understand the experiences of the predominantly Black and Brown Belizeans as well as people of color in the U.S. The participants may acknowledge that Belize is a developing country without connecting how Whiteness ideology has affected their views of the country and the people. Prominent cultural researchers argued that U.S. White people’s long-standing cultural assumptions of people of color have remained unchallenged, unacknowledged, or perceived as the natural behavior of those specific groups (McCoy, Winkle-Wagner, &

Luedke, 2015). Therefore, meritocracy, colorblindness, and equal opportunity are principles that primarily benefit White people (Solorzano, 1997).

Certainly, racism has been a part of the shared experience of people within the United States; however, we must interrogate those experiences in study abroad. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) stated, “Whites do not see themselves as having a race, but being, simply, people. They do not believe that they think and reason from a White viewpoint, but from a universally valid one – ‘the truth’ – what everyone knows” (p. 80). Due to the pervasiveness of the assumption that Whiteness is normal, White people can fail to recognize the “truth” in others’ viewpoints such as the Belizeans and this applies to study abroad programs in developing countries.

**CRT is committed to social justice and the elimination of all forms of subordination of people.**

If study abroad and service learning are viewed as development tools for cultural competency and creating a more just society, we must examine the underlying racism that permeates international travel experiences in United States institutions of higher education. Hence, one point of significance of this study resides in examining how in-service teachers make meaning of their Belize experience.

In this chapter, I discuss the findings that emerged from cross-case analysis of this research. I present the participant data as viewed through a CRT lens that analyzes data through the previously mentioned tenets.

### **Common Themes Emerging from Cross-Case Analysis**

I treated ten participants as unique cases, and the data suggested there were some common, often overlapping, themes present across multiple cases. I developed four themes that were present in all or most participant cases in this study. Each theme presents the major takeaways from this study. The themes presented some overlap such as the struggles with the language diversity and the ability to perform well as teachers in Belize while grappling with the language. I list the themes as well as subthemes that emerged from the teachers' experiences below:

1. "Fish out of water": Teachers Struggled with Language Differences
  - a. "You need to speak English to me, please. I don't understand Creole [Kriol]."
  - b. Language difference made teachers feel vulnerable
2. Avoiding that "heavy" stuff: Diversity, Poverty, and Oppression.
  - a. Preconceptions of the heavy stuff
  - b. Participant perceptions of the heavy stuff
  - c. Absence of Race
3. "Things are just different here"... Struggling with Cultural Differences
  - a. Lax Environment



- b. Violent/Physical Environment
  - c. Performance anxiety
  - d. Struggling with the “Co”
4. Experiential Knowledge of the “Other”/Being the “Other”
- a. Personal/Professional benefits
  - b. Struggles with being the “Other”
  - c. Glimmers of learning in being the “Other”

In this section, I discuss the listed themes that emerged from the data in more detail. I focus on connecting the data that included interviews, journals, observations, and documents to develop the themes.

### **Theme #1 – Teachers Struggled with Language Differences**

The Belize Service Learning course challenged the American participants and pushed them outside of their comfort zones due to cultural and language diversity within the country, classroom, and interactions with the Belizean students and teachers while teaching literacy skills. All participants, who were primarily educated in the United States and attended a PWI, described varying degrees of difficulty of understanding and struggles in adjusting to the language differences while teaching in Belize. One participant was raised in Saudi Arabia and received part of her education in Middle Eastern countries. These experiences showed their personal discomfort, emotional struggles, and feeling “disempowered.” For example, as Zane expressed, “I expected

there to be some difficulties with language differences, but I am feeling like a fish out of water.” In fact, as Sabra said, the inability to bridge language differences resulted in a sense of disempowerment, “I felt more powerless by the loss of understanding the language.” It should be noted, participants felt they were “disempowered” due to the language difference they faced in Belize. Participants still maintained some of the structural power and a sense of empowerment from being First World students in a developing country. As discussed later in this chapter, power dynamics come in to play as the participants sought to define their roles within the classroom and with the Belizean teachers.

**“You need to speak English to me, please. I don’t understand Creole [Kriol].”**

Furthermore, the teachers’ experiences showed they struggled with the language difference. The Kriol language is one of the three most spoken languages in Belize. Often the term Creole, which refers to the people, is used to describe the language that is spoken. As Johnson (2003) writes, Creoles are people of African and European descent with a unique background in Belize:

The process of the formation of a collective Creole identity was a long one. There were a variety of different groups that collectively were consolidated as “Belizean Creole” between 1650 and 1930: slaves brought to British Honduras from Africa (either directly, or, much more commonly, through Jamaica); “Creole” slaves

(slaves born in the Caribbean); free Black, free colored and European settlers, these latter three groups of freed people each encompassing an array of socioeconomic statuses, from wealthy slave owners to poor renegades. (p. 602)

Kriol is a language based on the British English system however it contains elements of African languages such as Woloff, Igbo, and Hausa (Salmon, 2015). Kriol is mostly spoken by and in countries with descendants of African slaves; therefore, the language is less likely to be viewed in a prestigious light. Interestingly, many Belizeans considered Kriol as “broken English”, it is not used in the schools and is not often considered as a legitimate language. Ethnographer William Salmon (2015) shared the following quote by a Belize City man:

The Kriol language or Kriol dialect that we have here in Belize is actually broken English. It's English not being said in the proper form, from the days that the English were colonizing Belize and the slaves were learning the language, they said the word the way that they thought they heard it, and that became the language of the day. The slower Kriol is talk, it sound like English. But when you talk it fast, it's hard for anybody to just pick up. (Male, mid-40s, ethnic Creole, native Kriol speaker, BC resident)

Conversely, The Kriol language was born out of continued interactions of individuals who spoke different languages and the need to communicate through these

differences. Ultimately, this interaction resulted in a new language. As children began to learn Kriol natively, it became the unofficial language of the country with more than 130,000 native speakers (Salmon, 2015). According to the 2010 Belizean Census, approximately 10 different languages are spoken in the country, making it one of the most linguistic diverse countries in the world.

Accordingly, Zane expressed that the language difference was evident at the initial meeting with the Belizean teachers, and the meeting set the tone for the rest of the week. She said,

The first night that I met my teacher, she barely spoke because of the language barrier... I felt like I would ask her questions and she wouldn't understand them. Then she would ask me questions and I wouldn't understand her. This also carried over into the classroom for the week.... If the teacher was not teaching a particular subject, she would speak in Creole [Kriol]. When the kids weren't learning in English, and even when they were, they were speaking Creole [Kriol].

Language is a fundamental aspect of communication, and the participants who traveled to Belize were used to what is defined as "standard" or "correct" English in the United States. Although the Belizean Kriol language was discussed in the pre-trip class meetings, language differences were a major challenge in how the participants experienced Belize. Asha, like many other participants, described the Belizean Kriol dialect as difficult to understand. She expressed, "With the heavy creole [Kriol] accents,

I had to continually ask students and my teacher to repeat themselves and slow down to understand what was being said.” Asha’ statements seemed to express the issue with the language diversity as well as how this affected her ability to teach. The struggle with language underlies the time constraints of a short-term study abroad.

Participants explicitly stated that the language barrier was the most difficult adjustment for the study abroad course. Some USU students had previous experience with the Belizean teachers and shared with new participants that certain Belizean teachers were easier to understand. However, participants still struggled to understand those previously identified Belizean teachers. As Nailah expressed,

Language was an issue for me. I really struggled to understand people and my teacher, I heard from others [USU students] my teacher was one of the easier [Belizean] teachers to understand and there were still times where I did not get it [Belizean dialect].

Iniko expressed how demanding it was to actively listen while the Belizean teachers and children were speaking to understand what the Belizeans said. Furthermore, Iniko implied that the Belizeans were speaking a different English than the form to which she was accustomed. She shared,

I often felt lost in conversations between my co-teacher and students due to the language barrier. That may sound funny since they were speaking English, my first, and only, language. The accent and dialect combined made conversations

very difficult for me to understand. They seemed to speaking so fast, and I quickly fell behind in listening comprehension.

Sabra expressed the emotional challenge due to the lack of understanding the language; her journal reflected some of these emotions:

I knew I was missing so much of what was being said (and not said) and was being laughed at for not understanding. It took some confidence in myself and my own observer mode to not take things personally or get upset at being laughed at or frustrated at not knowing what was going on around me. I think that as a younger person I would have been a lot less confident and on the verge of tears, but as the person I am now I was able to enjoy the realizations of the power of language and take in the odd feelings as wonder about a new situation and culture.

Sabra suggests that her experience and age helped ease the challenge. She implies that her maturity and years as a teacher allowed her to negotiate her feelings much better than if she was younger and inexperienced. In addition, Sabra's use of the terms "powerless" and "not understanding" suggest that language difference is a struggle for those in the minority and can affect (people) students on an emotional and psychological level.

Nia, too, recognized how the language barrier affected her emotionally. She also expressed feeling disappointed by not fully understanding what the students and teachers were communicating and sharing. In part, her frustration was because of missing the important things the Belizean children were saying:

It stinks! You never want to make other people have to repeat themselves multiple times and still not have an understanding, that was a real challenge today. During the read aloud, I was asking the whole class questions. Many times students had great things to say but I missed them due to the language barrier. I wish this was not a thing.

Zola expressed in her journal that the language barrier was an annoyance and hindrance in developing relationships; however, it was not a source of discomfort for her personally. Like Nia, Zola recognized that asking everyone to repeat themselves is equally problematic for the Belizeans. In her journal, Zola mentioned,

Language Barrier = Difficulty in creating connections... It's very reminiscent of time spent with my side of family [family from another country] – but I am at least capable of getting most of what they are saying in the classroom. I'm trying to be very careful to not ask them to repeat too much because I know how much I dislike repeating myself. I wonder if it should make me feel more uncomfortable – but it doesn't or hasn't yet.

Zola's background as a White and Iraqi female influenced her experiences in Belize and seemed to make her more aware of cultural differences.

Two participants, Imani and Zane, described their interactions with the Belizean students and how language affected their communication with the children. Although all the participants described some level of understanding the Belizean teachers and students

because they were speaking English, they felt the Belizean language was challenging. As previously stated, some participants suggested it was a different language while many Belizeans suggest Kriol is still English. Imani stated, “Some [accents] were stronger than others... I don't speak anything but English. What should I do?”

Imani implied that the Belizean student isn't speaking English, which is her only language but suggests that she's frustrated by not being able to effectively communicate with the Belizean students. Imani provided a glimpse of the range of emotions that the USU participants experienced due to the language differences. Initially, she seems to enjoy being in Belize and experiencing the language firsthand:

That was a wonderful part of it being able to be right there in the middle of things that was just one of the students and the teachers and listening to them as an outsider trying to grasp the Creole [Kriol] dialect.

However, Imani's interaction with a Belizean student seemed to leave both frustrated with the encounter:

There was one girl in particular who in my view was difficult to understand and she was talking away at me. I guess it was clear from my expression that I didn't understand, and she just glared at me like she was insulted that I couldn't understand her. I said her name and I said ‘I am sorry, do I sound kind of different to you? Do I sound like I have an accent to you?’ She nodded her head because she wasn't going to speak to me at that point and I said ‘well that's the way you sound to me. And I'm trying here.’ She kind of nodded her head.



Imani attempted to bridge the accent differences to develop an understanding with the Belizean student, but she continued to imply that the Belizeans were not speaking English. She acknowledged that the language was different but not quite like speaking another language. She stated, “it was a real indication that obviously it wasn't like going to somewhere that they were all Spanish speakers.”

The participants have internalized processes of making meaning of the language difference. These methods, typically shaped by U.S. American society, subscribe to a Eurocentric view of language. Belizeans write in Standard English and in some cases Kriol or an English-Kriol dialect, while speaking mostly Kriol. Similar to the debate centered on Ebonics or African American vernacular, Kriol is a form of English that is considered “broken” in comparison to Standard English. In the 1990s, the United States saw a national debate take place over language after the Oakland Unified School District voted to recognize Ebonics as an African language. Critics of Ebonics believed this was attempting to replace Standard English with what was perceived as inferior language. This dominant ideological view of language frames and justifies the participants’ stories of their interactions in Belize and the struggles they experience with the language differences.

Zane, similarly, viewed the Kriol dialect from the dominant perspective of Standard English in the United States and expressed contradicting feelings concerning this stance. She expressed frustration with the students as well as herself, which suggests

her struggle with knowing that her perspectives may be biased while also attempting to maintain her comfort zone:

It's really frustrating- and seriously, in my [United States (U.S)] American conditioned ways, I have said "you need to speak English to me, please. I don't understand [Kriol]." And that isn't their fault!!! It's mine. I mean, English is our common language, but still.

Zane, like other participants, used "American" or "America" in her statement to refer to the United States despite Belize being located in Central America. This term places the United States in a dominant role in relation to other parts of North and South America, which are often viewed as the "other." Although participants never explicitly stated that they viewed Belizean Kriol as an inferior language, Maha and Imani referred to the Kriol language as English, but different from "our" [meaning the English system in the U.S.] language. This suggests an implicit comparison to, difficulty grappling with that language diversity as well suggests an embodied struggle in experiencing otherness. To illustrate, Maha wrote:

I can understand because she is speaking English most of the time, but if they are playing around, she'll snap at them in Kriol and I don't know what she is saying. Or a lot of the times the kids will talk quickly to me and I don't know what they are saying. We were sounding out some words with some of them [Belizean

students], and they were asking me to spell it. I think the word was “late” and I didn’t know what they were saying but finally I was like ‘oh late’ because they didn’t pronounce the ‘a’ long vowel. So that is a barrier which is interesting because they [Belizeans] are using our phonics, are using the English phonics system but then sometimes they [Belizeans] don't say it that way.

Maha stated the Belizeans use “our phonics” meaning the Belizeans are using U.S. American English but not in “that way”. This implies that Belizeans are not using it correctly in comparison to U.S. Americans and although unintentional, Maha’s comment devalues the language diversity of the Belizean people.

Similarly, an experienced teacher, Imani discussed the effort to work through these differences; however, her statement suggests how the dominant culture perceived those who in their view do not speak correctly. For example,

They [Belizean student] were speaking an English language, whatever you want to call it but with the dialect, it was just so foreign to my ears. It was difficult in some cases and you have to try to work through that. I found the kids were willing to do that [work through the language issue] all of them were quite patient with the idea of this lady doesn't understand me. But this girl, she was not happy like there was something the matter with me. What the heck? But I feel like we worked through it.

Imani's statement illustrated the difficulty that the participants had adjusting to the language differences in Belize. As Imani stated, some Kriol words sound like English however Kriol is different language. Conversely, Imani's statements comes across as innocuous, however, according to CRT, her statement "whatever you want to call it" in reference to the student's language comes across as dismissive and condescending to people of color, similarly to the debate on Ebonics. In addition, Imani stated that the Belizean student was "not happy like there was something the matter with me, What the heck?" which suggested that she views herself as normal despite being a visitor to the Belizean school. Imani's comments reveal the microaggressions, subtle conscious or unconscious insults directed toward Blacks (Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000), which were exhibited on this trip

**"I think it was the language part, sitting in the classroom with that lost feeling."**

Sabra expressed a feeling of powerlessness due to not grasping the language difference and her being a language minority in Belize. The loss of this powerful communication tool is suggestive of the barriers students of color experience in predominantly White educational institutions:

I think it was the language part sitting in the classroom with that lost feeling. I felt more powerless by the loss of understanding the language and not knowing

the cultural nonverbal language. I realized how much I depend on that. Without our [words] it was like losing one of your senses.

Thus, Sabra's feelings suggest a loss of communication is isolating and challenging for her as a teacher in a developing country. The feeling she experienced seems to present her an opportunity to critically reflect on her experience as a minority in a developing country. Furthermore, this experience could present an opportunity for informing her teaching in the United States to challenge deficit discourses towards students of color.

To demonstrate, Jamila subtly began to critique deficit discourses toward the Belizean people. She expressed sadness for the Belizeans and her realization that negative perceptions of language may affect students more than she initially believed. During one conversation, a Belizean teacher described the Kriol language:

While speaking with Ms. [M], she often referred to Belizean Creole [Kriol] as "broken English." As I thought about this later, it made me very sad for her.

How terrible it must be growing up and thinking that your language is broken and continuing that belief into adulthood.

This Belizean service learning experience influenced Jamila to reflect on her views of language and literacy. In her journal, Jamila questioned her own views on language diversity and how society influences views on language. Her journal writings suggest that she struggled with perceptions of Standard English. She questioned the meaning of correct English and whether it reflects a person's intellectual capacity. Jamila wrote,

All through my time in the literacy program, we have talked about variations in language and dialect and how Standard English is not the only way to speak.

While I have agreed with this to a point, there has always been a part of me that did not fully agree. I was raised to speak clearly and “correctly”, and I still think that it is important to be able to speak intelligently. (Maybe the bigger problem is what society views as speaking intelligently.) However, my opinions changed in Belize.

In essence, this data suggests this course provided Jamila the opportunity to experience language diversity in a developing country and critically reflect on society’s views of intelligence, speaking correctly, and deficit discourse.

In addition, Sabra suggested the short-term study abroad programs did not allow adequate time to adjust to the language, and it was an experience to learn how much language affects our lives. Sabra wrote:

All of this is difficult to analyze as a short-term visitor. In just one week, I was not able to fully grasp the language, the non-verbal cues, and the cultural norms or taboos. It was fascinating to realize how much I rely on language and its underlying tones and nuances of meaning to analyze people, how they feel and what they are thinking. Without these tools, I felt really lost. I really had to rely on myself to be brave to speak up, ask people to repeat and slow down, and to initiate conversations.

As stated by school reformer Joan Wynne (2012), “As James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, and many others suggest, language is who we are. If any of us refuse to respect the other’s language, it becomes too easy, consciously or unconsciously, to then disrespect the person” (p. 212). Language plays an extremely important part of our daily lives; Kriol presented a struggle and challenge for the teachers, particularly on the short-term trip. Participants described frustrations with their ability to communicate with their Belizean co-teacher and students. However, the language diversity became less of an issue toward the end of the trip.

**Theme #2: Avoiding that heavy “stuff”: issues of diversity, poverty, oppression**

The Belize Service learning course listed objectives that focused on critically examining social issues such as diversity, poverty, and oppression as it relates to education and social systems. In addition, the course utilized Peacework and their global change agent curriculum to discuss those social issues. Course objectives called for critical dialogue about the student roles in being global change agents.

Despite these course objectives and Peacework sessions, participants seemed to avoid discussing those social issues such as race, poverty, and oppression while in Belize, or they focused solely on those issues while in the Peacework sessions. In some cases, participants experienced silencing or completely changing the topic by other members of the group when they attempted to initiate these discussions outside of the Peacework

sessions. This theme suggests the participants consciously chose to avoid the heavy “stuff”. This theme divides in to three subthemes.

First, I provide the participants’ preconception of the heavy issues such as diversity, poverty, and oppression. I share the participants’ views of Belize, Belizean culture, and expectations for their experience. These preconceptions occurred before the participants traveled to Belize. Next, I provide the participants’ perceptions of the “heavy stuff” while in Belize. The participants shared their views on the social issues that they witnessed while in Belize. Conversely, the participants grappled with their Belizean experiences and their worldviews. Lastly, I discuss the absence of race. Black and Brown people predominantly populate Belize, yet participants seemed to avoid using racialized terms to describe them or the context. This suggests that students recognized the differences they were seeing and experiencing, but, they continued to grapple with their preconceptions, perceptions, beliefs, and perhaps how to discuss them.

### **Preconceptions of issues such as diversity, poverty, and oppression**

Most participants articulated their preconceptions of the expected social issues listed in the course objectives. Their preconceptions ranged from concerns about their safety to the physical appearance of the Belizean people. Before the participants left for Belize, Jamila expressed concerns about the Belizean students’ knowledge base:

I think I was just expecting no experiences for the kids, very little exposure to many things. While we were planning for what we're teaching down there, I keep asking are they going to know a book with an animal? Are they going to know



what that is or what a roller coaster is? Are they going to know what a sheep is? I don't have any understanding what they're going to know. So [the course leader] said I was expecting too little and they're going to know more than what we think they do.

Jamila's reference to the Belizean's not knowing what certain items were was arguably an example of deficit views in advance of the trip. These teacher perceptions seem to adversely affect students of color. Jamila may have considered factors such as Belize being a developing country or the school being one of the poorer schools in Belize City. Deficit discourse is a phrase that refers to the assumption or attitude that a particular group of people has "deficits" of some kind. In this case, I use the phrase to refer to participants' perception of students of color in Belize as deficient, therefore lacking the intellectual capacity, knowledge, and exposure of their counterparts. Deficit thinking tends to question what students may or may not know and, in some cases, blames the students and their parents for the deficit (Pitzer, 2015). Other participants had similar references in advance of visiting the country of Belize.

I [am] going in with the assumptions of poverty and that I'll be working with other [Belizean] teachers, other [Belizean] professionals. I'm not sure that some of [the] expectations will be challenged. So I kind of have to believe that teachers working with us will be from impoverished homes, but I don't know.

In Imani's reference below, she refers to poor Black children that are happily playing at school, in poverty and never have the opportunity for education. This suggests her worldview of developing countries. Imani's acknowledgement of race in her writing of the master narrative before the trip suggests that she intentionally avoided discussing race later in the trip:

In contemplating our trip to Belize, I envision Black school children in school uniforms, classroom conditions that are primitive in comparison to [U.S.] American schools, and happy children jumping rope outside... Some girls live in abject poverty with loving parents who struggle and sacrifice to send their daughters to school, others are sold in marriage as prepubescent, and will never have the opportunity for an education.

This view of developing countries and people seem to be shaped by the marketing of non-profit companies seeking donations for impoverished countries. However, similar images of happy children playing appear in the college of education's marketing platforms. These images seem to shape how participants view the developing countries and their expectations of study abroad. For example, Jamila said,

I picture every developing country as they are typically portrayed in "adopt-a-child" commercials. Everyone is in great need of the most basic of things—food, clean water, [and] shelter. Children are dirty and malnourished...I imagine lots of "unfinished" looking things—houses that appear unfinished, people without shoes or clothes that fit appropriately, and buildings and roads that are falling apart.

When I thought about Belize or any Central American country, I automatically think of an adopted child commercial where they generally have clothes and they don't have food or water or don't have a type of shelter to live in. So that's what I think of automatically but I know that is not accurate...I just know I don't have a clear picture but that is a stereotype that I've always had before.

Summing up, Jamila initially believed that the Belizeans would look like the people in the commercials that show them as malnourished and developing countries as poor and dirty. Her perception relied on the narrative shaped by these non-profit organizations to increase the donations they received. This deficit view becomes the norm that many U.S. Americans, including teachers, accept of those from developing countries.

In addition, the view of developing countries and people relies on participants' assumptions that traditionally marginalized populations and people in developing countries can't or aren't willing to change their life outcomes. For example, in her master narrative assignment before the trip, Maha wrote,

I view the classroom as very minimal with open classrooms and very little furniture in the classroom. It also seems that we have better resources in America that we can use in our classroom such as books and curriculum... I had the mindset that these people all live in poverty, and they aren't going to want to waste their time to come to our classes. I had made the assumptions that the people were either really busy and couldn't come to our classes or really lazy and wouldn't want to come.

In advance of the trip, Maha perceived the Belizean people as lazy and disinterested in education, however, after the trip, she expressed they loved being exposed to guided reading. She expected the schools to fall below the standards of U.S. American schools, reflecting deficit views of Belize.

As I went back through the marketing materials and syllabus, I noticed that they mentioned student safety, which suggests Belize as something to fear. For example, Zane stated she was advised to travel to another country instead if she had time:

I was speaking with someone about Belize and she told me about some of the very poor areas, and that if I could get out of the trip on the weekends, to go to Guatemala instead. She told me about different cities in the country that I should or shouldn't go to.

Although she stated she was not worried, Sabra stated that other classmates have mentioned the violence they may encounter while in Belize. Violence and crime were discussed in the class before the trip. Sabra wrote:

Just that there's such extreme poverty that it's going to be so sad to see children in that extreme poverty and it's a lot of things I read about being in another country may sound very dangerous. I've traveled before so I'm not really worried about that but I don't expect any kind of problems [violent crimes] like that but if you read all of these things or speak with classmates you do. That's mostly what people are saying on mission trips to orphanages or something like that.

Sabra's statements reflect the broader belief that these poor violent countries need help by U.S. missionaries, a type of White man's burden. Furthermore, these preconceptions and concerns have kept some participants from experiencing an international study abroad project earlier. Jamila wrote,

These master narratives that everyone sees keep them from experiencing these places on their own and understanding the truth. Personally, these master narratives have kept me from considering travel in certain places because of the safety aspect of certain places.

Deficit thinking discounts the external forces that disadvantage some groups of people while giving power to other groups. In other words, many participants perceived that a developed country is far safer than a developing country with high poverty rates. Professor Paul Gorski (2012) states, "Deficit ideology is a worldview that explains and justifies outcome inequalities by pointing to supposed deficiencies within disenfranchised individuals and communities" (p. 313). Many participants had a hierarchical relationship with people of color in their previous travel abroad experiences on cruises and resorts; therefore, the participants seemed to develop a belief of implied superiority. Many participants expressed this power dynamic:

One of the narratives that I have about Belize is that they are very poor and need our help and salvation. One co-worker stated, "Be prepared, it will be very sad," when I told her I would be going to Belize for spring break.

Another participant stated, “I imagine everyone just waiting for others to come in and help them because they do not have the tools to better their lives themselves.”

### **Participants’ perceptions of the “heavy” stuff**

Despite their preconceptions of the “heavy” stuff, participants did share their perceptions of the issues such as poverty and oppression. Throughout the service-learning course, the participants grappled with the nuances of poverty, oppression, and their own privilege. On some occasion, participants seemed to minimize the impact that social issues such as structural oppression have on communities and people in Belize. For example, Imani seemed to display this during a Peacework session on oppression by stating, “We all are oppressed in some way. Whether it is due to your gender, sexual orientation, race. Everyone is oppressed somehow.” This shows the nuances that the participants were grappling with while on the in-country portion of the course.

White students made meaning of race, oppression, and discrimination through their backgrounds and life experiences. While these participants may have had multiple experiences with diverse populations such as people of color and cultures abroad, many seemed to rely on their experiences from their upbringing to negotiate issues such as oppression, discrimination, and poverty. For example, Iniko recalled her family’s background and her views of poor people:

I know my mom’s family was very poor, yet very loving. So I always knew that it didn’t matter what race you were, you could be down and out just the same. As I grew up and became spoiled, I thought people were poor due to their own bad

choices. I began to think that anyone could just try hard enough and have all the nice things money could afford.

Her views that convey a “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” philosophy seemed to eliminate race as a factor in poverty and suggests the dominant ideological belief that the impoverished were lazy. The “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” statement suggests that meritocracy, or the belief that rewards based on your abilities, determines a person’s success. However, this assumption fails to acknowledge the pervasiveness of structural racism and the barriers that people of color face. Furthermore, participants described having subservient relationships with people of color in previous experiences. These hierarchical relationships suggest the dominant ideological beliefs of the participants.

For example, Imani described a family vacation that changed her views on Mexican and Hispanics:

A life experience that confirmed my belief in the inaccuracy of the [U.S.] American master narrative that Mexicans are lazy and ignorant occurred when I travelled to Tulum, Mexico for my honeymoon in 2010. The tour guide who shepherded our group at Chechen Itza was well spoken, knowledgeable, and dignified in demeanor. From wait staff, to resort staff, to bus drivers, Mexicans were people I would be proud to know and call friends. The mentality of many [U.S.] Americans which disrespects people with a Mexican background (and often all Hispanics) is unwarranted and inaccurate.

Despite Imani's open-mindedness in which she was "very conscience [sic] of issues of race" and "view[ing] the world through that lens," she describes the people of color in her experience as servants or workers for her family. As previously stated about the hierarchal relationships of many Whites with people of color, Imani's comments reflected and reinforced the dominant ideological belief of the subservient "other" that is respectful and different from the more uncouth "other".

Another aspect of this theme is that participants expressed that the ability to effect change is limited by forces outside of the participants' control. One example is the idea that limited time hampered the possibility of change. The participants expressed that limited time in Belize and at the school affected how they were able to influence that "heavy" stuff. For example, the participants explored the length of time in Belize and how it limited their abilities to affect the Belizean community. Participants grappled with their ability to create change in such a short period in Belize:

I think our short service inspires individuals especially if you can make some real connections in the short time. But real help would need to be continuous and long-term. Teach them [Belizean] to fish (not just give fish) but it is validating long term could have a few long lasting effects with individuals.



It would be difficult to be a change agent working toward a goal of shifting culture in a short time, but teaching students how to better their lives will cause them to better their choices.

The lack of communication really does make this a 'one and done' process, which none of us want it to be. One of the most important things about making lasting changes is the continued support. The teachers here are not getting that. What can we do as teachers to help build that communication and relationship?

I sat with my teacher and all day yesterday & today asked what she wanted, what she thought, if she understood. I also think I need to sometimes have an 'Elsa' moment & let it go. There is always tomorrow to try again or change.

Overall, I am proud of myself, [I] hope that I made some impact on Ms. W and her students. One week is a very short time to make a real impact, which makes it really hard to leave and not have a plan of going back to help them.

Another perceived challenge to making changes related to perceptions of difference. Jamila explicitly stated that she could not relate to the lives of the Belizean hosts. She said, "I cannot begin to compare their [Belizean] lives to mine. They seem so drastically different in so many ways." This statement was similar to how Sabra felt

about walking through the community surrounding the school. Sabra explicitly noted difference, stating,

I think part of it was walking the neighborhood and just seeing how lives are so different and a lot of realizations of what we have in this country that others do not. It made me realize that we, that I have more power I guess than I had realized to make a difference.

Lastly, participants grappled with acknowledging and recognizing the privilege, racial and socio-economic status, which they carried to Belize. Nia seemed to struggle with the privilege that she was raised with compared to people of color and the inequality that she saw in Belize.

I found out that people assume that you are ‘oppressed’ because you identify that an area has impacted your life. I fully recognize that my White middle class background has propelled me through many aspects of my life. I realize if I was simply born into a different house, I may have not made it to where I am today. I can call my parents to borrow money if I am desperate. I can walk down the street with my hood on and no one assume I am doing something wrong. I get it. I can only hope that recognizing those things are helping me to help others and show others what I have already learned.

In addition, I witnessed Iniko experience discomfort in an interaction with [Peacework facilitator] Gamba. Iniko wrote that she felt Gamba spoke to her

condescendingly during the Peacework session about privilege. Iniko shared this incident and her feelings in her journal:

We chatted about feeling oppressed or privileged. Gamba made a comment about viewing gender (females being given things) as not being privileged. ‘I challenge you to think about that...sit with that...’ I felt it was condescending and judgmental. I didn’t feel like sharing after that.

In addition, Sabra seemed to display the privilege she holds as a White U.S. American through her perception of the country. In the following data, she witnesses a student bullied, harassed and wanted to save a Belizean student from what she perceived as a hostile Belizean environment. Sabra wrote,

Found the one I want to rescue – Derrick. Derrick was not picked on by teachers but was by the teachers’ favorite, Adam. Adam was making fun of Derrick at break and Derrick ran into class for protection...This is what makes me want to rescue him. Will he make it in this school/ neighborhood culture? He cannot lose this politeness and still feel successful.

### **Absence of race in discussions**

One glaring observation is that participants rarely discussed race explicitly despite the course identifying race as one of the critical objectives and the country being made up of predominantly Black and Brown people. Despite most of the participants appearing White, participants avoided discussing race explicitly. Feagin (2013) suggests White groups continue to perpetuate White racial framing that began centuries ago with the

colonizing of predominantly Black and Brown countries. Therefore, as CRT argues, racism is deeply embedded in U.S. American society and becomes implicitly or explicitly engrained in American ideology. The participants carry those ideologies and framing with them to other countries. These implicit ideologies seem evident in participant's interactions in this developing country, which was colonized and has a larger populations of African and/or Hispanic descent. As a response to this conscious or unconscious view, participants seemed to approach racial difference from a colorblind perspective. According to sociologist Sara Neil (2012), colorblindness is "based on the belief that the successes of the Civil Rights Movement have removed all racial barriers to success – that race does not matter anymore" (p. 1).

Participants seemed to intentionally avoid the use of race-specific terminology while in public or group settings. I vividly recall a conversation that I had with one participant while touring the secondary school with hundreds of Belizean students. The participant turns to me and says, "I don't fit in around here." I asked what she meant and she stated, "Just look around, I stand out. There aren't very many White people walking around here." Before that statement, I had not given the demographics of Belize much thought because I traveled with the predominantly White USU students and I was comfortable around the Belizeans. As our conversation continued, she stated, "You fit in here. You look like them. I don't." I responded, "How you are feeling now is how I feel every day that I am on USU's campus and in the United States." She looks at me, paused and said, "Well at least you get to feel normal for a week." Eventually, she apologized

for what she felt were racially insensitive comments to me and expressed that she had reflected on how this trip exposed her to everyday experiences of people of color in the United States.

Although this was one conversation throughout the week, it underscores that participants noticed race yet they avoided discussing it. Participants were silent on racial discussions in a service-learning program that explicitly stated that multiculturalism was integral to the course design. For example, Nia, one of the returning students described trying to have those conversations with other students:

I know for sure Zola and I's stances were one way [about race] and a couple of people were kind of saying things that were slightly different opinion than what Zola and I felt. Then I believe Jamila changed the whole topic all together. So I believe instead of having the [heavy] conversations all together we were like 'oh this is vacation, we don't want to ruin the fun end on Caye Caulker'. Nobody wanted to finish that [race] conversation so I don't know but I do remember Zola being like the poverty, race stuff... I could tell they [other USU students] didn't want to have that conversation. People were very obvious, [I] could tell that we were not on the same page [about race] and didn't want to cause any ruffles.

However, throughout the week, participants did begin to use colorblind terms that implicitly acknowledge race without overtly mentioning the word. According to CRT, colorblindness allows White people to ignore race and racist policies that create social inequity (Decuir & Dixson, 2004). In addition, sanitized statements such as we are all

human, we belong to one race, or I see you as just (insert name) replaced racialized words such as Black, Latino, or Asian. For example, Asha wrote that this experience made her realize “kids are kids.” Other participants repeated this statement through the week as well. Zane wrote, “One of the other things I took away from this experience was that kids are kids wherever you go.” These comments erase race as shaping the lived experiences of children in different contexts. Conversely, the “kids are kids” statement could refer to the behaviors, personalities and actions of similar age groups are the same regardless of race, ethnicity, or country. However, Zane previously acknowledged that the Belizean kids’ behavior was more respectful than the White kids she was used to. In her statement, Zane explicitly refers to her White students while not acknowledging the race of the Belizean students. Zane stated,

The kids seem very kind and also very respectful- it’s weird to see kids acting like this. I’m used to seeing middle-class → upper-middle class White kids who don’t care about their education & this isn’t that way here. It’s just an interesting difference between the two places.

As previously stated, CRT argues that this colorblindness allows White people to dictate the terms of how and when race is discussed. Therefore, White participants who carry this ideology with them may still unconsciously or consciously direct conversations away from uncomfortable issues. They may also explicitly speak in racialized terms when referring to Whites but race neutral terms when referring to people of color. For example, Sabra expressed that “kids are kids but you have to get them engaged, you have

to be able to talk to students in a way that is interesting to them.” However, the cultural and racial dynamics that influence what students find interesting remained unacknowledged. The two participants, Zola and Nia, who returned for a second time on the trip provided slightly contrasting views of the “kids are kids” belief. Nia’s statements sounded similar to those of the other participants. She shared,

I have learned that kids are kids even when I am in a different country, surrounded by students that are unfamiliar and I can’t even understand at times, they still remind me of my kids. No matter where I go, there will be kids fighting through similar circumstances.

However, Zola acknowledged that race and culture are factors when working with children. Zola expressed,

I don't think it's okay to say that kids are kids no matter what race or economic status or culture or whatever. I don't think that those things combine. Kids are kids but I think when you are working with a kid you have to think about all of those factors too.

Participants displayed this tool in the silence on racial discussions in a service-learning program that explicitly stated that multiculturalism was integral to the course design. For example, participants expressed colorblindness with their statement that “kids are kids” and avoiding the use of racialized terms such as Black or Hispanic. This statement seemed to eliminate the racial perceptions of the intellectual and linguistic abilities that many participants expressed before they traveled to Belize.

### **Theme #3: “Things are Just Different”... Struggling with Cultural Differences**

The ‘Things are Different’ theme captures participants’ description of the cultural differences that they experience while in Belize, such as Belizean teachers’ attitudes toward teaching, a violent/physical environment, anxiety about their performance and struggling with co-teaching. Participants expressed range of emotions as they grappled with the experience of a developing country that contrasted with their normal routine in U. S. American classrooms.

#### **Lax Environment**

First, with the exception of the two returners, the participants had very little exposure to Belize, its culture, and the dynamics of the USU partner school before traveling on the trip. Therefore, the participants viewed schooling through the prism of U.S. American lenses. Accordingly, the perception and views on education and teaching processes are drastically different. In the United States, teachers are viewed with less respect; however, the expectation is still one of professionalism and timeliness. Conversely, teaching is a well-respected profession in Belize. Belizean teachers are viewed in a much more favorable light despite, in most cases, having less professional development, education, and what the participants viewed as more lax attitudes toward education than the U.S. teachers. This co-teaching experience seemed to cause the participants to grapple with those differences. Many of the participants mentioned that



the Belizean teachers seemed disinterested and allowed for a very lax classroom environment. Maha stated:

My teacher was on the phone for most of the time so I'm worried she won't take these groups on past today. I would be pretty upset if she didn't try it out...

Tomorrow I plan on doing 3 more groups and I hope my teacher jumps on board too and tries it out. I don't know how to get her engaged in it. She came and watched it for a couple of minutes and then she was on her phone most times.

In a previous conversation, Maha expressed how things are different in Belize and that she would not approach education in a similar fashion as Belizean teachers. Hence, Maha's statements seemed paternalistic rather than equal in her role serving as a co-teacher to the Belizean teacher. Her statements also show the struggles with the co-teaching role that many participants expressed.

Furthermore, Zola expressed that her co-teacher displayed other forms of disinterest during class. In her views, the Belizean teacher seemed exasperated and tired. Her last statement suggests cultural differences in classroom discipline: "My co-teacher seemed a bit impatient (I wish I could think of a different word) – I even caught her nodding off asleep during their silent writing time. She never gave a single consequence all morning."

During the opening meeting, participants expressed disappointment in their co-teachers not attending the meeting as well as what they perceived as the Belizeans not wanting to engage while there. Imani stated,

We had a nice dinner and met up with our [Belizean] co-teachers. Mine didn't show up! I was very disappointed. I really need to work with and interact with her. Fortunately the other grade 6 teacher was there. Sharon, she is Sabra's co-teacher. Sharon was pleasant, but did not seem too interested in planning or discussing. She kept checking her phone.

In addition, Iniko felt similar to other participants about the Belizean's interest in meeting them. She wrote in her journal, "I felt like they [Belizean teachers] were disinterested in being there at first. But I'd probably be the same on Saturday night back at home." Iniko's statements reflect an attempt to understand and empathize with the Belizean teachers who did not attend the initial meeting.

Conversely, Zane expressed her disappointment with her co-teacher for not seeming interested in learning the literacy fundamentals. Her feelings seemed to suggest that the Belizean teacher may be disappointed in having Zane as her co-teacher, considering her limited experience with literacy education. She stated,

Also, I'm a bit disappointed in my co-teacher. She doesn't seem to really care about guided reading. Don't get me wrong- I'm sure she's disappointed in ending up with a music teacher as her co-teacher... My teacher has spent the majority of her time on her phone.

Furthermore, the participants expressed concerns about the lax environment having an impact on the Belizean students' education, testing, and supervision. All

participants mentioned how the Belizean teachers allowed the students to go unsupervised or showed no interest in the guided reading sessions.

The exam “protocol” was very lax. Mr. M stepped out during the exam to talk to Jasmine Flowers [Peacework host]. Students talked & messed around during that time. I’m surprised at how disorderly the classroom is. It’s not as strict as I initially expected.

In brief, Iniko expected the Belizeans to have stricter rules toward testing than in the U.S., despite previously expressing how lax the school environment seems. Her expectations seem to suggest contradicting views of Belizean schools. In addition, Nia expressed similar views about the “supervision” at the school. Often, the Belizean students went unsupervised and Nia expressed how serious of an issue this would be at her school. She stated,

I am surprised with the level of supervision before school and during lunch.

There is not a set person to “watch” the kids yet, everything seems to go alright.

If this were my school, we would have blood [teachers getting in severe trouble] with all these kids practically alone.

Maha expressed similar experiences of students left unsupervised. However, she questioned her co-teacher’s dedication to teaching. Maha felt that she was not very attentive or effective as a teacher. This left Maha feeling conflicted because although she really liked her co-teacher, she repeatedly questioned her abilities as a teacher. She wrote in her journal,

The kids were a lot better at centers and monitoring themselves, but she is also a lot more flexible about letting them do whatever as long as no one is out of control, or she's on her phone and doesn't notice... She hadn't finished her running records when we arrived so we worked on grouping her students those first couple of days. She was open to the experience; however, I'm not sure she was completely engaged in the experience. She was on her phone very often while she was teaching in the classroom. We spent all of our lunch breaks chatting with her friends. Although I really like her, I wouldn't say she is very effective as a teacher.

In conclusion, participants expressed varying concerns and feelings about the lax attitudes of the Belizean teachers. Participants felt that the Belizean teachers were disinterested in teaching and learning the literacy strategies that the USU students shared. Furthermore, the difference in expectations in teaching reflected and created issues of power and hierarchy within the classroom as participants grappled with defining their roles without offending or asserting control over the class.

### **Violent/Physical Environment**

One subtheme that was common across the participants' perceptions was that of things being "different" when compared to the United States. In addition to language, the differences that they identified primarily focused on the violent and physical environment that the participants perceived as engrained in the Belizean culture. This theme refers to the attitudes of the Belizean teachers and administration when it came to the physicality

of the students and, in some cases, teachers. Staats (2014) stated that amongst U.S. administrators and teachers, “implicit bias, the unconscious biases that people are unaware they hold but influence their perceptions, behaviors, and decision-making—is a powerful explanation for the persistence of many societal inequities, even among individuals with egalitarian intentions” (p. 1-2). As previously mentioned, the participants carry the U.S. ideology as they travel abroad and the implicit views of developing country influence their perceptions of incidents in Belize. The participants acknowledged a difference in values in each culture. For example, Jamila stated, “They also valued things differently. They allowed students to be much more physical than [U.S.] American kids- Belizeans also have much more responsibility as young children than [U.S.] Americans do”. Participants noticed the Belizeans sheltered their students far less than U.S. Americans and discussed social issues with their students at a young age.

All participants mentioned how much more physical the Belizean students seemed than their own students back in the United States. The physicality remains present at the Belizean schools. One of the returners, Nia, who teaches at an urban elementary school, stated,

Violence is still something I noticed quickly at the school again. Students were hitting, wrestling and throwing rocks at each other out in the yard during lunch/before school and no adults said anything. I know they were playing... but I am worried it will become a habit that will be hard to break. If it is a common way to play, what will happen when they really need to resolve a conflict?

Other participants described the violence they saw while in the Belizean school. For many participants the violence was surprising and they seemed to see it as part of the Belizean culture. It seems that participants were hypervigilant to the violence that they perceived as worse in Belize than at their own schools. Furthermore, the participants contrasted those interactions with their classrooms and schools in the United States. Asha, who teaches at a predominantly White suburban school, stated, “All the students wore uniforms; the classroom has concrete floors and no air conditioner. Another thing that surprised me was the way students interacted with each other. There were students hitting each other and running around all over [the place]”.

Other participants expressed similar shock and surprise at the physical culture. The Belizean teachers seemed to accept that physical behavior. However, Nia felt torn by the behavior she saw and her personal values. Nia openly questioned how she should approach the behavior,

I realize that the students in Belize may not feel safe in any areas of their lives. Anywhere they are not doing what is expected, they are being pinched, hit, and often humiliated. I am left wondering if I should accept this as a cultural difference, or fight for what I believe is right.

Furthermore, Jamila, who teaches at a predominantly White urban school, expressed that the Belizeans tolerated the violence more than U.S. Americans allow in their classrooms. She stated,

Then the frequent physical violence between students seemed to go unnoticed by most. It was not just playing and rough housing on the playground, but hitting in the classroom as well. That would not be tolerated in [U.S.] American classrooms... I came to understand that violence is more accepted in their culture than in [U.S.] American culture. Students played more physically and were able to be overly physical without teachers stepping in.

Conversely, Iniko had conversations with her Belizean co-teacher, who also did not understand why they tolerate the violence. She stated,

Students would fight while on their breaks. I saw them pushing, hitting, and kicking each other. This was difficult for me to watch and not say anything. I spoke to my co-teacher about it, and he said that was one part of the culture he still did not understand.

Iniko's co-teacher has a background that includes going to the United States to continue his education. He completed a bachelors and master's degree in the United States but returned to Belize to help his country.

In addition, Sabra wondered in her journal if poverty was the cause of the behaviors. After a day at the school, she wondered if the violence was cultural, engrained in the people, after witnessing a woman refuse to move as a van drove very closely to her:

On one corner, I noticed a young lady standing near the corner but partially in the street. I would have moved out of the way of the van as it turned the corner, but

she stood her ground firmly as we drove around her. This made me wonder about the culture of poverty, violence, and this part of Belize. Do the mildly violent behaviors (slapping, hitting, kicking) and show of defiance at the school help kids define themselves as strong and brave and keep them on the higher ranks of a social ladder? Do the teachers participate in this as well as part of the overall culture?

In some cases, the participants witnessed Belizean teachers' violence toward students as well. On two separate occasions, Nia viewed Belizean teachers hit students. This experience seemed to affect her and made her question the forces causing the violent culture.

The amount of violence I have witnessed over this past week has caused my heart to ache. I have seen teachers hit their students with fists, allow their siblings to repeatedly punch them (as they turned their heads) and teachers allow parents to beat students through the day and even encourage it. I have already formed attachments with the kids and it pains me to see them going through this. I am also pained to see how far behind some of these students are in school. Many of the students I have cannot write their name or all their letters. Poverty plays a big role in this.

Nia questioned the "stop the violence" campaign posters around the school and the ability of the students to learn in this environment. She wrote in her journal,



They seem to be enjoying the writing as well. However the violence is getting a little out of hand. Today my teacher hit a student with a closed fist. The student later hit a student and the teacher held him down so the child could retaliate. In the teacher break room, it says “stop violence among children,” yet I don't believe they really want that. How can the violence end if they have adults punching and dragging them while at school? How will they learn if every time they do wrong they get punched? It doesn't matter if they follow all plans laid out for guided reading; if the kids don't feel safe they aren't going to learn. – Nia

The violence made Maha question her responsibility as the teacher in the classroom while these physical interactions were taking place:

They were hitting each other, which apparently is normal, but it is hard to just let happen when I'm the teacher in the room... It's normal to be punching and hitting each other and talking while their teacher is talking. Up and [walking] around the room while their teachers talking. I mean there's so many things that are just different.

In conclusion, participants expressed how much more violent and physical they perceived Belizean culture, schools and people than U.S. schools and culture. Teachers struggled with what to say or do because they thought differences in violence might be “cultural.” Research suggests that teachers' attitudes, backgrounds, personal experiences, and professional development have influence on students of color academic achievement and educational experiences (Gregory & Roberts, 2017). Teacher perceptions seemed to

paint the picture of the developing countries as prone to violence and needing the U.S. help to become civilized. As previously stated, Imani expressed concern about the trip being a “White man’s burden” trip with the expectation they are to save the Belizeans. I would argue this perception continues the dominant ideology that portrays “the other” as deficient, violent, and lazy.

### **Performance anxiety**

Another subtheme that developed from the participants’ descriptions of their Belize experience was about their performance as teachers in a developing country. This theme focused on participants’ views of themselves as teachers and their wanting to perform well for the Belizean classrooms in their co-teaching roles while negotiating the cultural and linguistic differences they encountered. All of the participants were appointed to a classroom in Belize and they expressed some form of nervousness about their performance. Imani stated,

My only apprehension is being able to do a good job. Like I said this is nothing I’ve ever undertaken before, so I’ve had to learn a lot about literacy education and a little interact with an experienced teacher. I guess it goes back to my White man’s burden theory. I hope the [Belizean] teacher don’t see us as you know Lady Bountiful coming in to bring all these goodies to walk away.

Imani's reference to this experience as "nothing I've ever undertaken before" referred to the "White man's burden" trip, or the belief that industrialization is this only way to civilize developing countries. As previously stated, Imani wanted to avoid a trip that seemed to support the notion of the "White Savior" role of the United States. This perspective suggests that some participants may view study abroad trips such as this, to Belize, as a vehicle to assuage White guilt and perpetuate the White Savior role of the United States more so than developing cultural competency, linguistic skills, or teaching.

Zane expressed similar anxieties about teaching an unfamiliar subject. She declared, "Not being fluent in guided reading of any other ELA teaching tool[s], really makes me feel vulnerable & makes my confidence dwindle. That's not a feeling I am familiar with!"

Furthermore, Iniko shared her hesitancy to make suggestions for the class due to her own uncertainty and lacking familiarity with the culture. She stated,

I feel nervous putting my ideas out there due to ZERO experience with this culture and grade level. But every idea I've had is accepted with enthusiasm. I feel like, at first, I was very unsure of myself and Mr. Montana was very sure, I wasn't comfortable with sharing my ideas. But he and I click[ed] well.

Other participants shared similar responses about their interactions with the Belizean co-teacher and wanting to be viewed as a knowledgeable teacher. For example, Jamila stated, "I wasn't completely comfortable in my role. I didn't want her to feel like I was

stupid or unknowledgeable.” In addition, Sabra added, “I am a little nervous about making mistake or that type of thing with the teaching aspect [of the trip].”

Asha shared her feelings about the preparation leading up to the co-teaching and then her taking on the Belizean classroom without the presence of the Belizean teacher. She seemed emotional about preparation leading up to that point. In her journal, Asha expressed,

Overall, I'm feeling under prepared & not sure what I should be doing in Kim's class....By the time LA (language arts) came, I was kind of freaking out because I was leading and teaching centers.... But we hadn't had much time to plan. I was taking over the language arts for the day. After math, I was so freaking nervous!! But I went in, told them I was looking for helpers who are doing what I asked and they ate it up!!!

Nia affirmed Asha's feeling of the lack of preparation that all the USU students had for the Belizean classroom. Like Asha, Nia felt that she was not prepared for the experience in the classroom and would have liked more background information on Belizean schools. For example, Nia stated,

I feel like we didn't really get prep on exactly what was going to happen and I am someone that likes to know what is going to be like. I didn't know how the day was going to be set up. I did know what the kids were going to be like. I didn't know how the school was going to be like. I think part of that going in there and being surprised at some of things, like some of the conditions of the school and

things like that to take away from... There was a lot of shock value; I didn't feel like I was fully engaged and everything. I was like, 'wow, I need to see exactly what the school is like, what they do have? What they don't have? What the kids are like?'

This subtheme, "performance anxiety," calls attention to the participants' desire to perform well as teachers in the Belizean classroom while owning the instruction that takes place. The participants expressed nervousness about teaching in this unfamiliar context, with sometimes, unfamiliar content.

### **Struggling with the "Co" – Participant views of co-teaching versus coaching**

Another subtheme that developed from the participants' description of their experience while in Belize was the struggle with co-teaching. Although the course design explicitly states participants would co-teach with Belizean teachers, many participants struggled with the co-teaching aspect. In addition, many participants viewed their roles as a coach rather than co-teacher. The participants expressed this in how they instructed the Belizeans teachers to set up the classroom or complete a lesson. The participants conveyed their struggle with understanding their role in the Belizean classroom, the difference in teaching philosophies and preparation. For example, Jamila expressed her discomfort in her role,

I wasn't completely comfortable in my role. I didn't want her to feel like I was stupid or unknowledgeable, but I wanted to make sure that I was clear in what I

was envisioning. Tomorrow will also be different because Mrs. Houston will be doing her session with [faculty leader], so I will be in the class on my own.

Zane contrasted her teaching style with that of her Belizean co-teacher's and expressed her discomfort in the classroom. This discomfort seems to stem from different teaching philosophies between her and her co-teacher as well as not completely knowing her role. Zane wrote in her journal,

Hailey (my co-teacher) does A LOT of repeating, reciting, & memorization. I don't want to say that I feel uncomfortable, but I totally do. My approach to teaching is loud and fun, chaotic. I don't want to come in and just take over the classroom.

As previously stated, Asha expressed nervousness about preparing for the co-teaching in Belize and she echoed that while in teaching. However, Asha wrote in her journal there was a misunderstanding with her co-teacher while trying set up the writing centers. Her comments seem to suggest that Asha approached her role as more of a coach than co-teacher. Asha stated,

Overall, I'm feeling under prepared & not sure what I should be doing in Kim's class. I think the day went well though... There were times when I thought I had communicated what I thought I should happen and my co-teacher thought something else. We never had confrontation, but it was a little weird when I thought I communicated that one thing should happen and my teacher set up something else to happen. [I] thought my co-teacher and I were not on the same

page with everything, my goal was to support her in her classroom. I wanted to make sure that she got the most of guided reading and how centers work. As long as she got that practice and felt confidence in the strategy, I did not mind if everything else did not work how I planned. I was in her classroom and had to respect her choices. Which worked fine for me.

Additionally, Maha expressed a similar view with her co-teacher. She described providing the Belizean teacher with suggestions for the centers and demonstrating how the centers run. Maha stated,

I was only able to briefly focus our conversation on the Guided Reading. I gave suggestions and ideas for centers and asked her what she wanted to do and what would be the most successful in the classroom. She didn't have an opinion about that so we did a simple Reading Center and Writing Center. She wanted to watch me do Guided Reading on Wednesday and then with some encouragement and help planning the lessons, she tried it out on her own on Thursday.

Zola openly questioned her role with her co-teacher. After one class, she described her experience,

I also saw lots of talking out, several eating in class. I would handle those situations if this were in my own classroom in Oklahoma. However, this is not the place. I am still unsure entirely of what my co-teacher wants my role to be. I worry I am increasing her stress load instead of decreasing.

Sabra sought to be an ally for her co-teacher. Allyship was discussed during the Peacework curriculum from an international context. Gamba discussed how the participants could move from visitors to allies as they navigate the global change agent sessions. In this context, an ally referred to the U.S. American teachers who are in a dominant position working to end oppression, inequality, or inequity with the Belizean teachers (Patel, 2011). Sabra attempted to figure how she could best promote her being Ms. Waterloo's ally however despite her efforts, she seemed unsure of her relationship with her co-teacher:

[I'm] still having a struggle with showing myself as Miss Waterloo's ally. I'll try to communicate to her that I'm here to help her in any way that she needs not just here for the guided reading and centers... I feel I'm doing the talking and haven't found a way for her to share comfortably... How to compromise and not sound like 'I'm trying to take over your [Mrs. Waterloo] classroom' but be gracious of 'thank you for letting me be in your [Mrs. Waterloo] classroom'. How is that actually going to work out [?].

Jamila reflected on the co-teaching relationship experience, which allowed her to connect her courses with practical work in the Belizean classroom. She wrote,

During my time in Belize, I was able to make many connections to the coaching class that I am currently a part of. While I think I went into this experience thinking that the relationship between the Belizean teacher, Ms. Houston, and myself would be closer to co-teaching, it ended up as more of a coaching



relationship. It was clear that Ms. Houston was very unsure of how to start the implementation of guided reading and centers.

In conclusion, participants seem to feel uncertain about their roles once they arrived in Belize. Many participants grappled with the power dynamics of their roles within Belize as co-teachers. Participants stated they wanted to establish partnerships, however, they felt the Belizean teachers viewed them as the experts. In some cases, participants expressed that the Belizeans assumed more of an assistant role and allowed the U.S. American teachers to lead their classes. For most participants, this created uncertainty in their roles as co-teachers visiting an international classroom and working with unfamiliar teachers. Moreover, many participants approached their roles as coaching rather than co-teachers. In this coaching context, the participants guided, demonstrated, and supported the Belizean teachers through the guided reading lessons. The Belizean teachers maintained power while selecting and leading the lessons. The participants acted as peer consultants to the Belizean teachers. In addition, this subtheme shows participants' nuanced experiences. The participants expressed discomfort in their roles but also anxiety in how the Belizeans perceived them as teachers.

#### **Theme #4: Experiential Knowledge of the “Other”/Being the “Other”:**

All participants expressed a feeling of being “the other” or outsider leading up to or during the in-country portion of the course. Although many participants felt a connection to the group members of the course, they seemed to express curiosity, apprehension, nervousness, and uncertainty about being foreigners in a developing country. Initially, many participants enrolled in the course for personal gains and their professional benefit. However, being the “other” offers glimmers of learning for the possibilities of short-term study abroad and the service learning focus. As feminist scholar bell hooks stated,

The commodification of Otherness has been so successful because it is offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling. Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream White culture.

However, CRT argues that experiential knowledge has benefits. This is a central tenet in challenging dominant ideology and shaping the discourse around traditionally marginalized populations. In this section, I present the participants’ initial reasons for enrolling in the Belize service-learning course. Next, I discuss their experiences as “outsiders” and the “other”. Lastly, I present glimmers of learning from being the “other” that offer hope for the potential of this service-learning project, the opportunity to create lasting changes in traditionally marginalized areas and developing countries.

### **Personal/Professional Benefits**

Participants described their reasons for enrolling in the Belize service-learning project as personal attainment/professional development. I expected participants to seek some personal gain from this experience; however, I did not expect the layers that developed from the data. For example, Asha described her love for teaching and how this experience has helped her consider her teaching possibilities:

I am really glad I got to go on this trip to Belize and work with my co-teacher in the standard 3 classroom. I hope to one day be an instructional coach or some other literacy leader in an elementary school. This [Belizean service learning project] was very good and insightful practice for me to reflect on. I am excited to see where my career takes me. [I] am glad for the experience that I have had in this class and in Belize.

Imani expressed “less than noble” intentions for initially enrolling in the course. Imani explicitly stated her reason was for professional advancement and saw this an opportunity to better her career portfolio; “The opportunity to instruct primary school students in literacy began as another ‘notch’ for my Educational Psychology portfolio and my curriculum vitae ‘belt’”. Yet, she found value in developing her literacy foundational skills and experiential knowledge of being “the other.”

Another participant enrolled in the course to change her normal teaching routine while still feeling like she was being productive as a teacher. For example, Zola stated,

If we are being totally honest, it was a chance for me to earn credit for my program while also taking a break from my regular routine. Another appealing thing, it wasn't like teaching my kids that I have any other time but I still feel like I was being a productive member of society.

Other participants recognized the opportunity to tie their graduate courses' subject matter with practical real-world experience in a foreign country. The experience gave them opportunities to develop professional skills while helping others. Sabra stated,

Well it's kind of like an opportunity to ... just to put everything together through the program as far as literacy and to travel. It [travel course] just kind of all came together and opportunity to help others and learn from another culture. Also, do that [travel abroad] with the support of a group like this [USU cohort] that I've been with for two years.

In comparison, Zane saw this as an opportunity to travel to a part of the world that she has never been to while teaching in a developing country. She stated,

I've never really traveled in that area [of the world] and I do a lot of musical professional development with teachers so I thought this was a good opportunity to co-teach and facilitate workshops in other areas... I think I'll learn the most about guided reading because I've never had any experience with that. That'll be the biggest thing for me. The second thing would be co-teaching in an unfamiliar environment.

Most participants expressed an interest in teaching abroad or educational systems across the world. This course presented an opportunity for those participants to explore teaching abroad while also learning how other countries approach educating their youth. For instance, Maha stated in her interview,

I have always been interested in traveling and interested in education, those two go together with this opportunity. So it [Belize service learning project] is something I want to be a part of...Every time I go to another country, I always walk by and kind of seek out for schools just to see what they're like. I don't obviously get to go in and see what goes on in the classroom there. So I'm pretty excited about that. I just want to see what education, basically is like in other countries as well. I wouldn't say I chose specifically Belize but it just so happened that that's where going. One of the core reasons I enrolled in this course was to be able to see what schools and the educational systems of other countries looked like. Belize gave me that opportunity.

In addition, one of the returners, Nia stated she initially had an interest in teaching abroad. She stated,

I've always considered teaching abroad but never really knew how to get my foot in the door but when I heard about trips and saw the videos and everything I thought it would be a good start to go for a week and see how I like it.

As I continued to examine the data, I wondered what their initial thoughts were on Belize and the socioeconomic status of the teachers and students they would interact with

while on the trip. In chapter four, I mentioned how USU marketed the course and Belize as a beautiful tourist destination that seldom mentioned the crime or poverty in the country. As Jamila had written in her journal about the marketing:

Especially to the younger, 20-something population, these places are marketed as dreamlike escapes, a place to discover yourself, and a place to see culture and experiences you will not see anywhere else... For most Caribbean countries, they are portrayed as paradise. There are endless pristine beaches and beautiful scenery... However, I was met with streets covered with potholes, vast numbers of homeless begging on every corner, and rundown buildings everywhere you looked. It was the complete opposite of what I was expecting based on the stereotype of the travel blog-worthy pictures I had seen. But this truth had been hidden.

In conclusion, participants shared their reason for enrolling in the Belize service-learning project. Many of the participants stated they felt they would have a personal or professional gain from this experience. Some participants decided to enroll in the course because members of their graduate cohort were enrolled. Next, I will present the struggles the participant expressed with being an “outsider” or the “other”.

### **Struggles with being the “other”**

Being the “other” or “otherness refers to how identities are defined by those groups that control the narrative. For example, White people are the dominant racial

group in the United States and therefore they control the narratives and perceptions around other racial and ethnic groups within the country. For many participants in this study, this service learning trip was the first time they experienced being the racial “other” in this context. Participants expressed their struggles with being the “other” in various ways. For some participants, it was being a racial and cultural “other”, while other participants expressed an “otherness” because of their teaching experience. The participants shared their feelings of being the “other” and how their expectations helped shape the experiences. Zola wrote in her journal,

I think just coming into any setting that I'm going to be a teacher for a week I'm going to show you how to do informational writing is it kind of bringing a sense of entitlement that I was already worried about coming in with. And on the other side, do your kids not respond to that, or is your co-teacher not responding to that and I felt like an outsider in the sense that I wasn't welcome to bring my ideas, to bring my teaching practices and really let them flourish. I wasn't necessarily welcome or I didn't feel like my ideas were welcomed in the classroom, which is fine. It just kind of took me back and I went in there thinking ‘oh they want to learn from me, they want to see what I have to offer and they want to do this co-teaching experience.’ [I] ended up feeling like I don't know if they do.

Iniko wrote in her journal about being a gender and racial outsider. She seemed to express some anxiety over being the “other” and hoped that her experience would be similar to Zola’s first trip. Iniko stated:

I feel like I’m probably going to have moments where I’m feeling like I don’t belong. I feel like I’m going to have moments where I don’t belong as far as being an outsider. Even with the teachers there because I’m supposed to be like the White teacher and he’s a man so I think they’re going to see me really different. I’m hoping that he’s more of what Zola said before like he watched her teach. So I’m a little bit nervous about that part.

While many participants expressed the uncomfortable feeling of being an outsider, Imani seemed to view being the other in a different light. In another journal entry (below), Imani suggests that she is already “the other” in other aspects of her life because she is an older middle class White woman teaching a racially diverse classroom. Ironically, Imani’s comment reflects the browning of America and seems to suggest the feelings that White female teachers may have in their classrooms. She questions how normal this Belizean experience will be for her. Conversely, her experience in her classroom captures “otherness” as a gendered and feminist concept in contrast to a racial term, as she is the only woman in a class with all male students.



I have one class where I'm the "other" in the sense of obviously I'm much older. I am the only female... So I've come to see myself as the other in ways I haven't thought about, and it's really something I do have to think about because it doesn't seem natural.

In her third interview, Imani expressed that being the "other" during this trip helped her better empathize with her students and felt the experience made her a better teacher.

Initially, Zane expressed feeling like an outsider due to race. She stated that she was not sure how gender would be viewed but racially she would be a minority in Belize. Zane implies about racial differences in the country:

Just based off of looks alone because I am in the minority ones there, so that'll be one big difference. I don't know how male versus female is viewed in that country so that could be something if women aren't viewed as anything. I think skin color and language differences will make me feel more of an outsider there.

However, the initial feelings of race factoring into her outsider experience seemed to evolve more into questioning her competence as a teacher and conflicts with her religious outlook. Zane shared in an interview,

I feel a lot more like an outsider than I thought I would. Not being fluent in guided reading or any other ELA [English language arts] teaching tool, really makes me feel vulnerable & makes my confidence dwindle. That's not a feeling I

am familiar with! I felt like an outsider while on this trip/in this class. I am a teacher, but I'm not a reading teacher. I barely knew anyone in the class at all, which did not help in any way. I have the tendency to want to talk to people about real life issues and my beliefs, and it's difficult for me to do that whenever I don't have a connection with anyone yet. Feeling like an outsider continued when I was asked to teach the kids a Christian song to sing in church. I am not a believer in organized religion, so being asked to do that gave me quite a bit of anxiety. Every time the kids recited prayers and bible verses, I cringed internally. Beliefs made me feel like an outsider.

Ironically, Zane returned from the trip and felt like race made her feel less like an outsider while in Belize. The students accepted her for who she, a White Middle class woman, was and she realized that skin color is not important. Zane stated,

What was the one thing that did not make me feel like an outsider? The answer to that question is the color of my skin. I think I wrote in my journal about how I was so caught up in the moment of teaching and learning and connecting with everyone around me that I would look down at my arms randomly and think to myself "Oh, I'm White". I did not say this in a way of empowerment, but in a way of realization. We are all human when it comes down to it, and skin color doesn't tell you anything about a person. I kept on forgetting I was White throughout the week. I mean I could definitely still hear the language difference. But I'd see my

arms after 10 minutes and literally say in my head “oh yeah I’m White because I totally forgot about it! Because to kids, it really doesn’t matter. They don’t care- because they don’t think it means anything different.

Zane, who wrote that she does not believe in organized religion, grappled with her views on religion while co-teaching at an Anglican school, however, she seemingly overcame her discomfort and developed a connection with the Belizean children. While in Belize, Zane worked with the students to develop an original song for the children to sing during the church service. The Belizean children felt excited about the connection they developed with Zane. In this example, Zane expressed discomfort being the “other” while also showing her learning through short-term study abroad programs.

### **Glimmers of learning in being the “other”**

In this study, “otherness” provides glimmers of learning in what short-term service learning projects could have in teacher education programs. As previously stated by Imani, otherness is “something she has to think about because it doesn’t seem natural.” The participants seemed to show some growth and critical thought based on their experience of being the “other” while in Belize. For example, Jamila, as a White woman, seemed to welcome the idea of being “the other” and spoke about being in a country that is predominantly Black and brown. She stated,

I am very curious to see what is like; I have never been a minority anywhere I have gone. So I don’t really know what [I] should expect or what it’s going to be

like or how it's going to affect me. I don't know what that's going to be like; I'm sure we will see.

Furthermore, Maha expressed hope that the experience would increase her awareness of diversity issues within her teaching. Her statements seem to suggest that she, as a middle class White woman, at least acknowledged that she may have racial blind spots and this trip may influence her to be more aware of those shortcomings. Maha stated,

I hope that [being the minority] makes me more aware of this type of thing. So, I'll be more aware of diversity and to give myself opportunities to make a little more difference with my own kids. And maybe do a better job bringing in diverse literature into our classroom and that type a thing, which is what I try to do but I could do better. So I'm hoping that this experience as an outsider will make me more aware. I feel like I'm probably going to have moments where I'm feeling like I don't belong.

While Nia acknowledged that the experience was uncomfortable, she seemed to embrace her feelings and experience, which allowed her to make the best of the trip. Nia expressed,

I didn't feel like an uncomfortable outsider; it was like I enjoyed feeling slightly uncomfortable outsider. Like I'm weird, I like that kind of stuff, like I like that

feeling, I guess slightly uncomfortable. I do feel like I'm out of the loop being in the classroom where the teacher could understand everything the kids are saying and all the kids can understand and I can't understand it, but I have to ask a few times to say it again before understanding, I enjoy that. I didn't feel uncomfortable - where I feel excluded or unwelcomed and didn't want to be there - but it was slightly uncomfortable at times like having to have kids repeat things and they're like 'don't do you speak English? Don't you understand?' I do speak English, I really do, but I don't know what you're saying. So it was a good uncomfortable and it wasn't like I didn't enjoy it or didn't want to be there or felt like I wanted to leave or nothing like that.

Furthermore, this experienced challenged Nia to reflect on her own privilege as a White middle-class U.S. American. Nia expressed,

I found out that people assume that you are “oppressed” because you identify that an area has impacted your life. I fully recognize that my White middle class background has propelled me through many aspects of my life. I realize if I was simply born into a different house, I may have not made it to where I am today. I can call my parents to borrow money if I am desperate. I can walk down the street with my hood on and no one assumes I am doing something wrong. I get it. I can only hope that recognizing those things are helping me to help others and show others what I have already learned.

Lastly, the course offered glimmers of hope in expanding how participants' perceived language diversity. This course was designed to develop the literacy foundation of Belizean teachers and thusly the Belizean students. However, the course challenged preconceptions of what qualifies as speaking correctly or Standard English. For example, Jamila wrote in her reflection paper,

I was raised to speak clearly and “correctly”, and I still think that it is important to be able to speak intelligently. (Maybe the bigger problem is what society views as speaking intelligently.) However, my opinions changed in Belize.

After this trip, Jamila questioned how we view intelligence and Standard English. She experienced extremely intelligent students that others would not perceive as such because of their speaking style, what some consider another language or broken English.

The participants all expressed different views of being the “other”. Some participants expressed anxiety while other participants seemed to embrace the discomfort of being the “other” in a developing country. However, this Belize service-learning course seemed to offer participants a short term, easily digestible experience of being and experiencing the “other.” Lastly, the experience of “otherness” did seem to offer glimmers of learning for teachers during this short-term service learning project.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, I discussed the emergent themes from data collected from the participants' experiences. The participants described the experience, made meaning of the trip, and expressed their feelings during and after the course. Although the participants had different backgrounds, life and educational experiences, they shared some common experiences during this trip. This helped the participants make meaning of their experiences and, in some cases, challenged previously held worldviews. In chapter seven, I discuss my thoughts of this study, implications for future research and practice for this short-term service-learning program.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine how graduate students, who are also teachers, make meaning of their Belize Service Learning project experience and explicitly interrogate the social, cultural, and power dynamics at work in those interactions. This unique service learning project involved USU students co-teaching literacy fundamentals with Belizean teachers, leading poetry and printmaking workshops. In addition, the purpose was to explore how the American teachers explicitly discussed race, language, and poverty after those interactions. In this chapter, I will first summarize the study then answer the research questions, link material to scholarship on short-term study abroad, Peacework goals, and my theoretical framework of CRT. Lastly, I conclude with recommendations and final thoughts.

#### **Summary of Study Design**

This study grew from my belief and experience that study abroad programs present a unique opportunity to learn about and address societal issues such as racism, poverty, and inequality. The findings of this study indicate examples of this learning. Previously, I had enrolled in this course during a spring semester. Based on those experiences, I had hoped to focus this study on the experiences of undergraduate students who enrolled in the course. However, the demographic of the students change every year. As such, I wanted to explore, using a critical race theory lens, how the new group



of participants experienced and made meaning of their experiences in Belize. The group that enrolled in the course, graduate students who were also in-service teachers, became the focus of my study.

I conducted this qualitative collective case study over the spring and fall semesters. Data collection began in spring when the participants enrolled in the Belize Service Learning course and ended at the end of the fall semester, after the participants had returned to their respective classrooms in the United States. I used a collective case study research design (Stake, 1995). Collective case studies allow the researcher to use several cases to investigate one phenomenon. I used a collective case study approach to examine the ten participants' (cases) experiences of navigating a developing country while co-teaching literacy fundamentals. Stake (1994) stated, "They [cases] may be similar or dissimilar, redundancy and variety each having voice. They are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding...about a still larger collection of cases" (p. 237).

I used multiple methods for this case study. I conducted the first interviews before the participants flew to Belize. Due to the timing of IRB approval, I conducted the interviews over the phone. This was one limitation of the study. I asked participants about their perceptions of race, how it affects them, and what they hoped to learn from this trip (see Appendix A). I traveled with the group and assumed the role of researcher-interviewer for this qualitative collective case study that involved multiple interviews;

conversations and interpretations of the participants' shared experiences (Creswell, 2013; Spradley, 1980). Data was collected from three over-the-phone interviews, journals, in-country interviews, classroom assignments, photographs, and observations.

### **Participants**

Ten women participated in this collective case study. I gave each participant a pseudonym: Asha, Imani, Iniko, Jamila, Maha, Nailah, Nia, Sabra, Zane and Zola. Two of the participants, Nia and Zola, enrolled in the course and returned to Belize for the second consecutive year. The participant sample was naturalistic and purposive, made up of the group of individuals who participated in the Belize Service Learning program, who were all graduate students, and formerly or presently public school teachers. I reached out to the Belize Service-Learning Course faculty then sought students who were enrolled in the course and might be interested in participating in this collective case study. The faculty shared the interested students' emails with me. Electronic invitations and consent forms were emailed to the interested participants. In addition, I attended the first class meeting and asked for participation. Initially, eleven students were interested in participating, but one student decided not to travel to Belize due to health concerns. The actual trip took place during their schools' spring break and allowed them to travel while working full time.

During the entirety of the Belize service-learning course, participants kept journals of their experiences. The USU faculty provided guiding questions during some occasions that students were required to write in their journal. Upon request, I provided

additional questions to assist participants reflect on their experience. These open-ended questions are available in appendix C. The post-trip interviews consisted of open-ended questions that delved into the in-country experience as shown in appendix D.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

I analyzed the data for each participant individually; creating case records that combined all relevant data sources such as interviews, documents, and field notes. Then I used a cross-case analysis (Stake, 1994) to search for similarities, and differences in each case as themes emerged, and to interpret the common themes that appeared among the “participants’ cases” (p. 89). I used constant comparative analysis, creating categories and separating each participant’s experiences into individual cases (Glasser & Strauss, 1967, Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As a tool of validity and data immersion, I did not utilize any online transcription service to transcribe the one to three interviews I conducted with each participant; instead, I chose to manually transcribe each interview.

I used phrases or single words to categorize critical data points and asked myself reflective questions such as, “What is the data saying to me?” (Saldana, 2013; Wolcott, 1994). Finally, I employed in vivo coding which ensured that “the terms used” (Strauss, 1987, p. 33) are from the participants themselves. In vivo coding allowed the use of “participant-generated words” (Saldana, 2013, p. 91) to be utilized in the study. Themes emerged from the participants’ experiences during the in-country trip, after returning to the United States and resuming their daily lives as teachers provided additional data for

the emergent themes. I explored the participants' short-term study abroad experiences through a critical race theory theoretical lens. Three research questions guided this study:

- 1 What meaning do in-service teachers, who participate in a short-term, co-teaching, international service-learning course, make of their Belizean experience?
- 2 How do the in-service teachers perceive the race, language, and poverty issues during the Belizean service-learning courses?
- 3 How does CRT help render racial dynamics visible in the Belize service-learning course?

### **Discussion of the Research Questions**

*Question 1: What meaning do in-service teachers, who participate in a short-term, co-teaching, international service-learning course, make of their Belizean experience?*

Overall, all the participants expressed this course was a life altering experience that will last with them for a lifetime despite short-term study abroad scholarship pointing to changes being short-lived. Most participants suggested this course provided the opportunity to develop professionally and enhance their career. In addition, all participants articulated the importance of language to the teaching profession, developing relationships with students and other teachers. The two returning participants conveyed this experience had a deeper impact on them due to having a better understanding of the Belizean culture, schools and teachers. The returners felt their first trip was incomplete, and they valued their second trip. They expressed feeling more satisfied with the impact they were able to have with the poetry workshop, Belizean students, and development of literacy foundations on their second trip. Several participants stated that this course

stretched them personally, professionally and inspired them to become more active in their communities. Lastly, they also wanted more preparation to design and implement procedures for the classrooms they were assigned.

First, all the participants felt that this course was extremely beneficial to their personal development. For example, one participant, Asha, said she struggled with communicating with adults and one of her personal goals was to become more confident in that area by working with her Belizean co-teacher. The participant expressed that this experience with the Kriol language helped her develop confidence in communicating with adults. Furthermore, participants expressed pride in their strength to adapt and overcome the cultural and language differences they experienced while in Belize.

Next, two of the participants did not have a background in literacy; therefore, they expressed how the course stretched them professionally. One participant articulated how she felt like a “fish out of water” because her background was in the arts. However, after the course, the participant planned to introduce literacy components to her classes.

Some participants’ learning emerged from struggles. Participants mentioned several times about asking the Belizean to repeat words, slow down while speaking or not understanding what was said. This experience made it difficult for participants to communicate and co-teach with the Belizean teachers. Secondly, most of the participants articulated that limited time was factor during the course. Participants expressed that the short time frame influenced their abilities to develop relationships, understand the language, and make a bigger impact on the Belizean school than they would have liked.

Research suggests that short-term study abroad programs can provide positive learning outcomes, despite the time limitations, for participants when coupled with culturally relevant pedagogy (Tarrant et al., 2014) and critical discussions such as those found in the Peacework curriculum.

In addition, all participants explicitly stated or implied the idea that “kids are kids.” Participants explicitly stated that kids are kids or they compared the Belizean children to their students in the United States. The participants seemed to work hard to make connections across different cultures and countries. The teachers saw similarities in U.S. and Belizean children, which provided some comfort as they navigated new terrain. In addition, this statement seemed to reinforce their confidence as competent teachers. Lastly, “kids are kids” served as a stand in for the “heavy stuff”, further exhibited by the participants rarely commenting on race which I discuss in more detail below. I discuss some of the participants’ specific experiences below.

The first participant, Asha, discussed the idea of professional development in the context of positioning herself to stretch professionally. Asha explained that this trip allowed her to travel and teach, two of her favorite things to do. Asha explained that even though she was excited about the opportunity, the first time meeting the Belizean teachers made her nervous. She was felt comforted by other USU students telling her that she had one of the best Belizean teachers to work with. Asha, a Black woman, stated she felt things were “different” from her teaching context in the United States including student uniforms, the classrooms with concrete floors, no air conditioner and how

physical the Belizean students were with each other. Despite these differences, Asha felt that “kids are kids” regardless of the outside influences. Lastly, like other participants, Asha expressed some struggles with the language diversity in Belize. She felt the communication was easier toward the end of the trip. Asha stated she needed more time in Belize to get used to the experience. However, she felt she worked well with the Belizean students and had an advantage with the literacy fundamentals. Although she expressed frustrations with the lack of planning by her co-teacher, Asha felt that her biggest takeaway was deciding what was best for her Belizean co-teacher. Overall, Asha expressed that she was happy about taking the trip, learning from a different culture, and reflecting on where her career could potentially go.

The second participant, Iniko, expressed that she initially ignored the marketing for the Belize Service-Learning project because she felt that the course was unattainable for her as a teacher, mother, and graduate student. Her opinion changed as members of her graduate cohort enrolled in the course. Iniko, a White woman, expressed surprise with how physically the students interacted and the graphic AIDS awareness campaign in the schools. Iniko was surprised that the Belizean government would target such young age groups with posters in the classrooms. However, she felt she might be doing her own students a disservice by not exposing them to social issues. She, like Asha, expressed difficulty with the language differences at the beginning of the trip but felt more comfortable during the latter parts. She expressed that she felt lost initially and was uncomfortable sharing ideas with her co-teacher. Iniko stated this trip taught her that

teaching is teaching, made her a better teacher and person. As the literature suggests, short-term study abroad programs have shown to affect participants in positive ways such as intercultural development and awareness to global social issues. Lastly, she felt inspired to reach out to communities around the world to be an agent of change.

Imani, the third participant and a White woman, expressed worry about teaching in a developing country due to the language diversity, cultural differences, and unfamiliarity with literacy education. However, she was motivated by the credit hours and opportunity to develop experiences for her vitae. Imani felt learning the fundamentals of literacy were far more difficult than she initially thought and that was an area she struggled with before leaving for Belize. While in Belize, Imani expressed that she struggled with the language but the kids were similar to those in the United States. Interestingly, Imani assumed the Belizeans would be malnourished however she observed no signs of neglect or deprivation with the children. Overall, Imani felt this was a trip that she will always treasure and plans to take her family to Belize so they can experience its beauty.

The fourth participant, Jamila, felt that the Belize experience was powerful and influenced her in numerous ways. She felt that the trip opened her eyes to how culture is shown through educational practices. In addition, Jamila, a White woman, expressed that this trip changed her views on language. She admitted that this was something that she grappled with throughout the co-teaching experience. Jamila admitted that she was always taught that Standard English was correct and other forms were broken, however,



she felt this trip showed her that intellectual abilities are not always tied to language. Jamila felt sadness for her Belizean co-teacher and students when they discussed Kriol being “broken.” She questions how detrimental it must be for people to spend their lives hearing and believing that their language is broken. Jamila felt that this trip was the most powerful educational experience that she had ever had. She stated that she finished the course with a new understanding and appreciation of language and culture.

Maha, a White woman, felt this trip allowed her to fulfill a curiosity that she has had throughout her travels. The Belize service-learning project allowed her to learn more about the educational system and policies in other countries. Like the other participants, Maha struggled with the language differences at the beginning of the trip; however, she felt communication had improved toward the end of the trip. She felt that the experience was rewarding and allowed her to use her creativity to make up for the lack of resources in the classroom. Maha said this experience was most rewarding when she saw the passion that the Belizean students displayed toward learning. She felt that this trip reignited her passion for education and helping students reach their potential.

The sixth participant, Nailah, stated she had never been in a situation where she struggled with the language however she felt uncomfortable with the language in Belize. She, a Mexican woman, stated there were several times that she asked people to repeat themselves because she could not understand. During these times, she admitted she felt frustrated for both her and the other person because she did not want them to think they were at fault. Her experiences in Belize reminded her how tough teaching is,

and she found the violence among students difficult to watch. Those actions left her sad and questioning the practices of other teachers. Nailah felt her time in Belize was an incredible learning experience. She felt it presented her opportunities to develop her coaching skills in practical ways. Overall, she expressed that the course was rewarding in her personal and professional lives.

This course was about discovery for Sabra, a White woman. Initially, she viewed the course and the travel to Belize from a position of fear. Initially, Sabra stated she was fearful of the unknown and that gradually changed to an appreciation of differences. She felt she developed a sense of wonder while traveling through Belize. However, Sabra felt that being in Belize for such a short time hampered her experience and ability to develop relationships with the Belizeans. Sabra felt this influenced the communication with her co-teacher and students. She expressed that she missed much of what they were saying cause of the language differences and there was not enough time to really develop understanding. As previous mentioned, the scholarship on short-term study abroad stressed time as a limitation in the students' experiences. She felt the language differences were compounded by her frustration and struggles with implementing the writing centers. Sabra felt that she would have cried and given up had she been younger. Interestingly, Sabra felt that this experience helped her find strength in herself that she never knew she had. Overall, Sabra loved the experience that the course presented. The travel experience and the people she encountered amazed her.

Initially, Zane, a White woman, expressed that she struggled but the overall experience was positive. She felt that she would struggle with the guided reading due to her being a music teacher; however, she felt the language differences were more difficult for her to learn. Zane conveyed that she felt embarrassed about asking the Belizeans to repeat themselves and speak slower to accommodate her. Zane articulated that she felt [U.S.] Americans expected other countries to comfort them and when interacting with the Belizeans, she was looking for an easier way out of the situation rather than listening harder. Furthermore, she stated she felt like an outsider because she was a music teacher and did not know literacy fundamentals like the other participants. Zane conveyed that she felt conflicted with how religion was incorporated in the school and helping the students create a song for church because she does not believe in organized religion. Zane felt that the biggest thing that she took away from the course was that literacy instruction can be effective when you implement it every day and that kids are kids. Overall, she believes that she has grown as a literacy instructor, person, and teacher from this experiment. Zane felt that she found strength in her weaknesses due to this course.

The last two participants enrolled in the course and returned to Belize for the second straight year. Initially, Nia and Zola expressed a feeling of leaving things “unfinished” as their reason for returning. These two participants provided deeper understanding of the potential of the Belize service-learning course to influence teacher education programs and thereby, teachers.

Nia, a White woman, was one of two participants who enrolled in the course for a second time. She wanted to return because she felt something was incomplete and unfinished from her first trip. Initially, Nia was worried that going a second time would not compare to her first trip to Belize. She stated she was anxious to see how the students would respond to her and expressed excitement when students recognized her from the previous year. Nia felt that she did not struggle as much with the language differences as she did previously but she had have some difficulties at first. The second trip provided more realizations for Nia. She felt that this course helped her find her passion in guided reading and helping struggling readers find success. Nia felt this experience gave her hope in what literacy education could do for teachers and students. Overall, Nia felt this experience was life changing and empowering.

Lastly, Zola, a White and Iraqi woman, was one of two participants that enrolled and traveled to Belize twice. She felt the previous trip was unfinished and expected this course to be different from the previous course because more graduate students were enrolled. Zola conveyed that she was surprised by having to cover two Belizean classes instead of one. She worried that her time in each class would be reduced and limit her interactions with the Belizean students. Zola stated she wanted to make sure her Belizean co-teacher heard her voice but she did not want to be overbearing in the class which points to participates grappling with their role within the classroom in a limited time. Like Nia, she had an easier time adjusting to the language difference but still struggle at times communicating with the Belizeans. Zola wanted to ensure the USU students

thrived in the poetry workshops and she felt excited when they were successful in the workshops. Zola felt that she was more confident as a teacher, learner, and person due to this experience. Overall, she felt that the experience created a change of perspectives for all participants.

*Question 2: How do the in-service teachers perceive the race, language, and poverty issues during the Belizean service-learning courses?*

There is considerable research that explores the role of study abroad programs in increasing cultural competence in students who participate. The current research on short term study abroad has produced mixed results as some literature suggests the benefits are limited and students experience little to no change in short durations. However, there is limited research on how students from a predominantly White institution that participate in study abroad programs negotiate the challenges of learning in an international context, specifically the Global South, which aligns with my initial reasons for this research. As philosopher and postcolonial theorist Frantz Fanon (1967) wrote:

Sometimes people hold a core belief that is very strong. When they are presented with evidence that works against that belief, the new evidence cannot be accepted. It would create a feeling that is extremely uncomfortable, called cognitive dissonance. And because it is so important to protect the core belief, they will rationalize, ignore, and even deny anything that doesn't fit in with the core belief.

(p. 194)

In this study, participants described struggles with language difference, the poverty of the region, and the violence they witnessed.

First, the participants expressed language was one of the more difficult aspects of the experience. Many participants struggled with the Kriol language and repeatedly asked the Belizeans to speak more slowly or repeat statements. In some cases, these requests led to tense interactions for participants with some of the Belizean students. Participants felt the language differences restricted their ability to connect with the Belizean teachers. Furthermore, the Kriol language challenged previously held views on Standard and “correct” English. Some participants implied “speaking correctly” relates to a person’s intellectual abilities; however, the Belizean students challenged this perception. This conflict in the Belizean’s language and the participants’ perception of correct English underscores the duality of people of color. As Dowdy (2002) states about her experience growing up in a similar Caribbean area, “there was a White and a right way” (p. 7).

The participants also suggested the Belizeans students and, in some cases, teachers, behaved more violently and aggressively toward each other compared to U.S. students and teachers. Frequently, the participants expressed the violence “got out of hand,” became “excessive,” and “disheartening.” The Peacework sessions provided dedicated time for students to discuss the “heavy stuff” while developing cultural competency. However, the participants’ data seemed to suggest that the Belizeans, who are primarily Black and Brown, are more prone to violence. They did not state this

explicitly, but their comments referred to “cultural” reasons for the violence, which can be a coded way of discussing race. Research shows that White people often perceived the acts of Black and Brown people to be far more violent and aggressive than similar acts committed by a White person which justified the dominant ideology (Duncan, 1976; Sagar & Schofield, 1980; Unnever & Cullen, 2012). As mentioned in Chapter 2, the U.S. is experiencing a “browning” of its school age demographic while teachers are remaining predominantly White and middle class. Therefore, the participants’ perception of Black and Brown students being more violent and aggressive could carry over into the Belizean context. In addition, it can have devastating and long lasting effects on students of color who enter their classrooms.

Furthermore, the participants' discomfort presents a type of embodied learning of the “other.” The experiential experiences of “otherness” glimmers of learning for the possibilities of short-term study abroad and the service learning focus. Critical Race Theory argues that experiential knowledge has benefits. This is a central tenet in challenging dominant ideology and shaping the discourse around traditionally marginalized populations. Some participants welcomed the idea of being the “other” and the potential that the experience had for their cultural competency development. For example, both Nia and Zola, the returners, incorporated the Belizean experience into their teaching and developed a co-teaching classroom at their school. Another experienced the “change agent” part of the trip, which inspired her to become more active in her community. Sabra articulated that she understands that she plays a larger role in society,

has the ability to effect change in her community and accepts the responsibility to become more involved with issues that affect her students. As previously mentioned, her experience speaks to the participants identifying their own privilege and understanding their roles to affect change within society.

The teachers in this study also responded to these challenges by relying on skills, ideas, and dominant narratives they developed from their life experiences. According to scholar Bree Picower (2009), White students rely on “tools of Whiteness designed to protect and maintain dominant and stereotypical understandings of race – tools that were emotional, ideological and performative” (p. 197). These primarily White students’ backgrounds and life experiences seemed to shape their meaning of race, poverty, and language. For some, they experienced vast differences. For example, one participant explicitly stated that she could not relate to the Belizean people. “I cannot begin to compare their [Belizean] lives to mine. They seem so drastically different in so many ways.” Furthermore, these participants may have had multiple experiences with diverse populations in their lives, including their teaching; however, many seemed to rely on stereotypes, master narratives, and information from their upbringing to navigate the situations. Iniko recalled her family’s background and her views of poor people:

I know my mom’s family was very poor, yet very loving. So I always knew that it didn’t matter what race you were, you could be down and out just the same. As I grew up and became spoiled, I thought people were poor due to their own bad



choices. I began to think that anyone could just try hard enough and have all the nice things money could afford.

Interestingly, Iniko expressed how “privileged” she felt compared to the Belizeans. However, her views of “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” seemed to eliminate race as a factor in poverty and suggests the dominant ideological belief that the impoverished were lazy. The dominant ideological beliefs of the participants reflected hierarchical relationships. According to Picower (2009), “the term hegemonic understandings refers to the participants’ internalized ways of making meaning about the how society is organized” (p. 202). The participants relied on their teaching experience and backgrounds to navigate the Belizean classrooms. However, for many of the participants attending a PWI, they seemed to rely on stereotypical views of developing countries and communities before the trip. One example of hegemonic understandings is viewing the Belizean students, teachers, and community from a deficit perspective. Many participants expressed they knew little of Belize but expected the country to be extremely impoverished, people asking for the participants’ help and rundown buildings. These perceptions were based on what previous participants had told them as well as the outside marketing sources.

#### **Deficit construction of Belizean students, teachers, and community.**

One example of hegemonic views is that of deficit construction of developing countries. A deficit view of the Belizeans portrays them as unable to help themselves and inferior to the United States. Most of the participants expressed a deficit view of the

Belizeans in some fashion. Before the participants left for Belizean, Jamila expressed her concerns for the Belizean students' knowledge base: "I think I was just expecting no experiences for the kids very little exposure to many things." Jamila's reference to the Belizean's not knowing what certain items were was an example of deficit views, which changed after experiencing this trip. Other participants expressed similar references to the Belizean community and people. For example, Sabra stated, "I [am] going in with the assumptions of poverty and that I'll be working with other teachers, other professionals." As with the other participants, they were told before the trip that Belize City was an impoverished area and this helped shape their perceptions of the students, schools, and teachers. Furthermore, these types of views adversely affect students of color. This deeply held view places the onus on individual student behavior while failing to address and absolving the social causes that leads students to underachieve. By focusing on the perceived student weaknesses, the teachers overlook influences that are more dynamic and oppressive that perpetuate impoverished schools and communities.

As I continued to examine the data, I wondered about participants' initial thoughts on Belize and the socioeconomic status of the country. In chapter four, I mentioned how USU marketed the course and Belize as a beautiful tourist destination with limited mentioned about the crime or poverty in the country. In preparation for the trip, there was a class discussion on crime and poverty. As Jamila had written in her journal about the marketing of Belize and Caribbean countries to which she was exposed before this trip:

Especially to the younger, 20-something population, these places are marketed as dreamlike escapes, a place to discover yourself, and a place to see culture and experiences you will not see anywhere else... For most Caribbean countries, they are portrayed as paradise. There are endless pristine beaches and beautiful scenery... However, I was met with streets covered with potholes, vast numbers of homeless begging on every corner, and rundown buildings everywhere you looked. It was the complete opposite of what I was expecting based on the stereotype of the travel blog-worthy pictures I had seen. But this truth had been hidden.

Interestingly, Jamila was referring to vacation companies; however, USU used similar images and videos to market their study abroad programs. As previously mentioned, USU emphasized the beauty of the Belize as a way to market to predominantly White students. The university flyers displayed beautiful water, White sand beaches, and brightly colored buildings. Conversely, this clashed with the grim views of an extremely impoverished Belize City.

### **Emotional Tool of Whiteness.**

Often, participants seek to defend their White hegemonic leaning positions through emotional tools. Although these tools are meant as a reaction to a discussion, they obscure and minimize the initial statements about race and power being discussed (Picower, 2009). Imani seemed to display this emotional tool during a Peacework session on oppression. She writes, “We all are oppressed in some way. Whether it is due to your

gender, sexual orientation, race. Everyone is oppressed somehow.” Similarly, one participant told the faculty lead that I was pressuring the participants for information. Previously, I witnessed Iniko experienced discomfort that she attributed to culture shock. She also expressed that Gamba [Peacework facilitator] spoke to her condescendingly about privilege. Iniko shared this incident and her feelings in her journal:

We chatted about feeling opposed or privilege. Gamba made a comment about viewing gender (females being given things) as not being privileged. ‘I challenge you to think about that...sit with that...’ I felt it was condescending and judgmental. I didn’t feel like sharing after that.

This incident captures an example of what Diangelo (2011) terms, “White fragility.” According to Diangelo, a critical and racial social justice educator “White fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such in turn, function to reinstate White racial equilibrium” (p. 54). These participants were placed in a culture and country in which primarily Black and Brown people live, which, for some of the participants, contrasted from their normal experiences. Furthermore, the Peacework curriculum challenged the participant’s perspectives around those “heavy stuff” issues such as race, poverty and language differences.

### **Ideological tools of Whiteness.**

Another tool used to perpetuate Whiteness is ideological, “mainstream understandings” (Picower, 2009, p. 206) and statements that reinforce dominant perspectives of people and communities of color. Participants expressed the ideological tools of Whiteness in various ways. One way that ideological tools are displayed is the belief that the ability to affect change is limited by things outside of the participants’ control. Many participants expressed this belief, Imani wrote:

I think our short service inspires individuals especially if you can make some real connections in the short time. But real help would need to be continuous and long-term. Teach them [Belizean] to fish (not just give fish) but it is validating long term could have a few long lasting effects with individuals.

Furthermore, ideological tools of Whiteness are displayed in statements that reinforce the beliefs that participants could not connect or relate to the Belizeans due to differences in their lived experiences. As Jamila expressed, [Their lives] seem so drastically different in so many ways.” Although these statements come across as innocuous, such statements of difference continue to reinforce the hegemonic beliefs of extreme difference that can accompany Whiteness and further perpetuate inequalities in racial dynamics.

### **Performative tools of Whiteness.**

Lastly, performative tools of Whiteness continued to perpetuate hegemonic beliefs through participant actions. The action and, in some cases, the inaction of

participants reaffirmed Whiteness as normal. Participants displayed this tool in the silence on racial discussions in a service-learning program that explicitly stated that multiculturalism was integral to the course design. Nia described trying to have those conversations with other students:

I know for sure Zola and I's stances were one way and a couple of people were kind of saying things that were slightly different opinion than what Zola and I felt. Then I believe Jamila kind of changed the whole topic all together. So I believe instead of having the conversations all together we were like 'oh this is vacation, we don't want to ruin the fun end on Caye Caulker'. Nobody wanted to finish that [race] conversation so I don't know but I do remember Zola being like the poverty, race stuff... I could tell they [other USU students] didn't want to have that conversation. People were very obvious, [I] could tell that we were not on the same page [about race] and didn't want to cause any ruffles.

Furthermore, performative tools of Whiteness are expressed by the desire or want to rescue or help "the other." Sabra explicitly stated her desire to do so. She wrote in her journal, "Found the one I want to rescue [particular student]—... Derrick was not picked on by teachers but was by the teachers' favorite, Anderson."

As previously mentioned, many participants had a hierarchal relationship with people of color therefore the participants seemed to develop a belief of implied superiority. "I imagine everyone just waiting for others to come in and help them because they do not have the tools to better their lives themselves," wrote Jamila. Her

views changed after the trip, she expressed the Belizeans challenged her views on intelligence and language. Jamila stated she questioned what really “correct” English is and why this is considered the best way to use the English language.

According to Picower (2009), this belief “maintains the cycle of racism by releasing the need of the participants to learn skills that address culture and racism... because they were doing enough by simply going to these communities that ‘need’ their help” (p. 210). In the context of service learning and study abroad, this continued the First World versus Third World power dynamics. However, as stated by Younes and Asay (2003), “Regardless of setting, educational planning is a political process that reflects the orientation of the institution and the interests of the planner who negotiates the personal and educational needs of the learner” (p. 142).

*Question 3: How does CRT help render racial dynamics visible in the Belize service-learning course?*

A significant pattern in this study was that race was seldom explicitly spoken about during the in-country portion of the trip despite Belizean teachers and children being Black and brown. Also, the course objectives explicitly stated critically examining race, poverty and social issues were expected. Participants avoided the use of racialized terms however they used coded words that stand in for race such as “kids are kids”, “diverse”, and “we are all human” to implicitly discuss race. This language suggests a colorblind racism operating in educator’s perceptions. Educator Jenny Gordon (2005)

defines colorblind racism as an “ideology in which White people are taught to ignore race” that reestablishes “existing power relations that privilege White people” (p. 281). According to Critical Race Theorist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2014), this “engages, as all ideologies do, in ‘blaming the victim,’ it does so in a very indirect, ‘now you see it, now you don’t’ style that matches the character of the new racism” (p. 73).

Bonilla-Silva (2014) states that colorblind racism has four frames: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism and racism minimization. He suggests that each frame builds the ideology of colorblind racism. For example, naturalization is taking the stance of things are just the way they are and natural in a given context. Participants expressed these sentiments throughout her journal writings and reflective papers. For example, Jamila implies that the Belizean culture is more violent than her own. Speaking about the physicality of the play between students, Jamila shared, “I often felt the urge to step in while observing the physicality among students in Belize, but I had to understand that that is just their culture. They do not view it as wrong.” Therefore, she attempts to normalize a behavior as “cultural” that she would not accept or expect in her own environment.

According to Bonilla-Silva (2017), minimization of racism is another frame of colorblind racism. In this frame, racism and discrimination is no longer seen as an issue that affects people of color. In addition, it allows White people to minimize the impact of racism and discrimination in communities of color while simultaneously admiring the culture. For example after initially suggesting she was conscious of race, one participant



seemed to admit that they viewed things with a White gaze, “I’m not saying I Whitewash everything. I know that race is important I do not deny that race is important just like gender is important and various other characteristics. On the other hand I can’t say I dwell on it and maybe I am White washing a little bit.” In other words, the participant does not feel the same impacts of racism as people of color therefore she does not give racism much thought. As Bonilla-Silva (2017) and Gordon (2005) suggests, these conceptual practices allow White people to ignore race and avoid challenging the dominant culture in this U.S. that shapes their worldview. Consequently, this provides a delusion for White Americans that seems to allow them to preserve their blamelessness, shields their conscience, or conceivably their soul from culpability and responsibility of dismantling Whiteness ideology. One component about White ideology is that you do not necessarily have to be a White person to subscribe to it. People of color may still follow those conceptual practices of ignoring race while avoiding challenging the dominant culture of the U.S. Conversely, the participants of color may have felt no need to discuss race considering they physically and racially resembled the majority of Belizeans.

Furthermore, some participants had limited experience with guided reading and expressed feelings of being an outsider due to their limitations, their race, and lack of familiarity with the culture. These experiences have led many participants to consider these factors when they encounter students of color in their classrooms. Despite this experience, participants viewed Belize as different and questioned cultural norms of the

teachers and students. According to philosopher of race, George Yancy (2016), this is referred to as the White gaze, the preternatural norm upon which the Black body is viewed. Black bodies, therefore Blackness, are defined through the prism of Whiteness. Despite her genuineness, Zane expressed privilege during this trip. Zane stated, “One of the other things I took away from this experience was that kids are kids wherever you go. They shouldn’t be treated unequally because of anything that they don’t have control of.” This statement seemed to come from a place of privilege. According to Allan Johnson (2006), “privilege is always a problem for people who don’t have it and for people who do, because privilege is always in relation to others” (p.8).

### **Significance of Study**

As a previous participant and researcher in this study, I have a greater understanding of the cultural, social, and socioeconomic influences of how study abroad programs affect teachers and predominantly White students. This experience has increased my critical awareness and compelled me to “speak truth to power” toward the stereotypical views enacted on marginalized populations. In addition, this study proved to be significant to the participants as they navigated and negotiated the developing country, Belize. Study abroad proponents argue the many values that can emerge from students’ experiences traveling abroad. They maintain that students with short-term international experience will increase their capacity to effectively connect with diverse groups (Green, Luu, & Burris, 2008; NAFSA, 2003). However, critics argue that study abroad programs do not create lasting changes and any gains are short lived. Conversely,

proponents argue that students who experience short-term and long-term study abroad programs immersed in other cultures have shown growth in intercultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. Moreover, the third interviews with five participants who continued throughout the study did reveal some long term benefits from this experience. For example, some participants restructuring their classrooms upon return to the United States and continued reflection on their privilege. The participants gained greater insights into the educational practices of a developing country and the global, cultural, social, and linguistic forces that impact student development and education despite the generally light influence of Peacework. However, as stated by Younes and Asay (2003), “Regardless of setting, educational planning is a political process that reflects the orientation of the institution and the interests of the planner who negotiates the personal and educational needs of the learner” (p. 142).

Peacework provides “developmental learning” workshops while the group participated in the “international service” course in Belize. The sessions provided students the opportunity to “explore their cultural identity”, “think critically and analytically” about global issues and “integrate new worldviews” while in Belize ([www.peacework.org](http://www.peacework.org)). It is Peacework’s claim that through these sessions, participants will become global change agents and grow from this experience. That is a lofty claim for a weeklong program that was a first time experience for most participants. The participants did experience growth in their cultural competency and critically reflecting on their privilege, but these hopes for Peacework might be ideal for long-term study

abroad. Furthermore, exploring the pedagogies of a developing country that is predominantly of African and Hispanic ancestry challenged the participants on their worldviews and self-defined pedagogical beliefs.

This study is also significant to scholarship because it adds to literature on study abroad programs and how they influence American teachers' critique of topics such as race, poverty, ethnicity, and power dynamics after participating in study abroad programs. In addition, this study extended current knowledge by using qualitative case study methods, primarily participant observations, in-depth interviews, and field observations, to examine the experiences of American in-service teachers who are in graduate program and enrolled a service learning course that provided the opportunity to co-teach in a culturally diverse developing country, Belize. Lastly, this study is significant as it has the potential to serve as a model for critical study abroad and service learning professional development programs for in-service teachers. There is considerable research that explores the role of study abroad programs in increasing cultural competence in students who participate. However, there is limited research on how the predominantly White students that participate in study abroad programs negotiate the challenges of learning in an international context, specifically the Global South.

## **Recommendations**

This service-learning program in Belize has potential to serve as a model for critical study abroad and service learning professional development programs for in-service teachers. Critics of short-term study abroad have pointed to the limited long-term influences that these experiences have on participants. Conversely, research shows that studying abroad increases the student's academic and intellectual capacity, increases the students' professional networks, increases personal confidence and awareness, and fosters students' intercultural awareness and acceptance of diverse perspectives (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006). Therefore, I propose recommendations to improve the course and institution. First, this is a unique recurring, short-term service-learning experience, which provided pre-service and in-service teachers, among others, the opportunity to assist with developing effective literacy practices for the designated school, collaborate and co-teach with the Belizean teachers while providing professional development in literacy instruction. The course design is essential to the participants, their experience, and takeaways from the course. Each time the course is taught, the makeup of the course has to be taken into consideration: students' ages, teaching experience, whether they have traveled abroad, racial/ethnic background and cultural competency. In previous trips, the students who enrolled ranged from sophomore to doctoral students, however this group were graduate students who were in-service teachers. Due to their positions as teachers, they had a fundamental

understanding of classroom management and curriculum development that previous students did not. However, many did not have cultural competency development and struggled with the language and cultural differences. I suggest for future scenarios with this class and others considering a similar model that those graduate students who are in-service teachers have pre-trip classes that focus more on cultural competency, race, and poverty. For example, Nia stated,

Most of our time before [going to Belize] was spent lesson planning and talking about the curriculum... but it [class] wasn't surrounding diversity or poverty or anything like that... I think that the [faculty lead] intended to incorporate that [talks on diversity, poverty] before but maybe we just need another class or two to prepare especially if it was like the first group of people that went. All those undergrads hadn't been in a school at all much less a school like we were going to [in Belize] and the flip side everybody [this year] had taught before but nobody had been exposed to a school like we were going to. It would take more of shock value away, if there was more talk [about diversity, poverty] before...

In addition, the pre-trip classes should create a space to for students to examine their reasons for enrolling in the Belize service learning course and critically reflect on the inherent privileges that the students may bring to the course. Additional readings that address Whiteness, White fragility, and White ideology should be introduced to the

course. Ideally, the students will have greater awareness of their privileged identities and how these identities may intersect with oppressive and oppressed groups.

Secondly, the course syllabus details working with Peacework to develop change agents that empower people in developing countries to support themselves. The Peacework curriculum challenges participants to critically examine their place in the world. However, the participants rarely mentioned the short sessions as beneficial. Participants routinely misstated the name of Peacework, negotiated the timeframe for the sessions, and avoided discussing the curriculum. Clearly defining the Peacework component as limited to planting a seed or sowing a seed would clarify its limits as a framework for a short-term course. In addition, I recommend extending the Peacework sessions to before and after the in-country trip.

Next, the participants mentioned they struggled with their role while in the Belizean classroom. Although the course explicitly stated that this is a co-teaching experience, the participants and Belizean teachers seemed to have different views on what that entailed. I recommend that previous communication occur with the Belizean teachers and the USU students enrolled in the course. I suggest using Skype, Google Hangout, Facebook video or another audio-visual communication platform for the USU students and Belizean teachers to communicate. This should be required for the course.

Furthermore, many students that attend PWIs and participate in study abroad programs in developing countries in the Global South have limited experience with

people of color. An introduction to predominantly Black or Hispanic schools could prove beneficial to those students who enroll in the Belize service-learning program. I recommend the course add an additional component and seek to collaborate with predominantly Black or Hispanic public schools in the surrounding area. In addition to spending a week in Belize, I suggest USU students spend a week in a similar school in their state of residence.

In addition, study abroad has remained a majority White experience for students in higher education since its inception. Despite being roughly 15% of the higher education population, only about 5% of Black students enroll in study abroad programs during their undergraduate years. Men of color and White men also participate in low numbers. To address this issue, I recommend Ubuntu State University and other institutions develop a program and set aside funds that specifically target marginalized populations with the expressed concern to study abroad. Research suggests that White students benefit from diversity in the classroom; it is reasonable to suggest similar benefits would occur during study abroad program.

Lastly, these are broad recommendations for the course and institution; however, they support a foundation for more specific actions. Short-term study abroad programs are limited in what can be accomplished due to the design, however, introducing critical race theory, post-colonialist and critical studies readings to the course before departure



can provide benefits in developing critical competency, continual self-reflection and producing counter-narratives for the participants.

### **Future Research**

Continued research on the role of studying and teaching abroad for in-service teachers is needed. While this study sheds light on how in-service teachers make meaning for their study abroad experience and implications for teacher education, there remain gaps in the literature concerning in-service teachers and study abroad. The uniqueness of this study abroad allows for continued studies on in-service teachers that travel abroad and teach in developing countries. This research would be especially beneficial for teacher education programs and White students who are planning to enter the teaching field. It would allow higher education institutions to provide potential teachers with global experience in an ever-shrinking world while also providing the cross-cultural development that White teachers need in a changing United States educational system.

The Belize service-learning course had specific objectives. The students assigned their own meaning from their experience. This study examined a specific population of students that enrolled in the course during this specific semester. The nature of the study would change as the demographic of the students change. The present study occurred after all graduate students had attended their first class. To capture student motivation for studying abroad, it is important to interview students after they initially enroll in the

course. A follow up interview could occur after the first course and students have a better understanding of what the course entails. In doing so, these findings could potentially contribute to the understanding of in-service teacher motivation for studying abroad and designing the course to meet the needs of the in-service teachers that are enrolled in travel courses.

In addition, future research should explore the unexamined Whiteness of study abroad programs at PWIs. As previously mentioned, study abroad programs have remained disproportionately White despite the increasing numbers of students of color enrolling in higher education institutions. Moreover, students are studying abroad at higher numbers however the rates of who attends have remained the same for years. It is important to examine the historical and cultural aspects that seem to limit students of color opportunities and affect their motivation to study abroad. As previously mentioned this is prominent purpose of CRT, emancipating the United States institutions of its' historically racist roots.

Lastly, these are broad recommendations for future research into study abroad programs. The findings from the previously mention recommendations will further contribute to the growing body of literature on study abroad, Whiteness studies and critical race theory on in-service teachers and teacher education programs.

## **Final Thoughts**

*The paradox of education is precisely this, that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated.* – James Baldwin

This has been a journey of discovery, examining our society and questioning our education; for the participants and me. A discovery of self, purpose, and acceptance that you may write really poorly at first (Lamott, 1994). Initially, this dissertation was a means to an end. However, throughout this process, I learned more about people, society, my institution, and myself. I began this program with the intentions of studying athletes and their experiences. It was my background, what I knew, and what I felt comfortable with researching. Then I had my first class, Language, Literature and Culture. In this class, I rarely spoke and listened to my classmates. One reason that I was not very vocal was due to my own insecurity and fear. I feared that I was not smart enough to be in a doctoral program, stereotype threat rearing its ugly head. I feared that my thoughts would not be accepted and dismissed. I struggled with this fear throughout most, if not all, of this program. However, one day in that class, we were discussing African American vernacular. As other students mentioned “them” and “those people”, I found myself wondering ‘why are you all so scared of Black people? All we ever did was be Black.’ So I asked. No one could answer the question. At that point, I realized my journey had lead me to this exact moment so that I could understand my purpose is bigger than me. I am committed to advocating, speaking, and fighting for marginalized populations.

I started this dissertation out with a vignette from my personal journal that included lyrics from a prominent Hip Hop artist, so now I end with words from perhaps the greatest Hip Hop philosopher of all times. This quote exemplifies what this research process has meant to me and as a challenge to others who seek to make this world a better place for all. Peace.

*I'm not saying I'm gonna change the world but I guarantee you I will spark the brain that will change the world. – Tupac Shakur*

## REFERENCES

- Acuff, J. B., Hirak, B., & Nangah, M. (2012). Dismantling a master narrative: Using culturally responsive pedagogy to teach the history of art education. *Art Education*, 65(5), 6-10.
- Adams, M. (1997). Pedagogical frameworks for social justice education. *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook*, 30-43.
- Agee, J. (2009). Developing qualitative research questions: a reflective process. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(4), 431-447.
- Alba, R. D. (1990). *Ethnic identity: The transformation of White America*. London, GB: Yale University Press.
- Allington, R. L. (2002). What I've learned about effective reading instruction: From a decade of studying exemplary elementary classroom teachers. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83(10), 740-747.
- Allport, G. W., & Mazal Holocaust Collection. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Cambridge, Mass: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Altenbaugh, R. J., & Underwood, K. (1990). The evolution of normal schools. *Places where teachers are taught*, 136-186.
- Alvarez, A. R. (2001). Enhancing praxis through PRACSIS: A framework for developing critical consciousness and implications for strategy. *Journal of teaching in social work*, 21(1-2), 195-220.

- American Council on Education. (2002). *Beyond September 11: A comprehensive national policy on international education*. (Rep.). Washington DC: American Council on Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED467614).
- Anderson, P. H., Lawton, L., Rexeisen, R. J., & Hubbard, A. C. (2006). Short-term study abroad and intercultural sensitivity: A pilot study. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 30(4), 457-469.
- Anderson, P. H., Lawton, L., Rexeisen, R. J., & Hubbard, A. C. (2006). Short-term study abroad and intercultural sensitivity: A pilot study. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 30(4), 457-469.
- Anyon, J. (1997). *Ghetto schooling: A political economy of urban educational reform*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Apfelbaum, E. P., Sommers, S. R., & Norton, M. I. (2008). Seeing race and seeming racist? Evaluating strategic colorblindness in social interaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95(4), 918.
- Ash, S.L., & Clayton, P.H. (2004). The articulated learning: An approach to guided reflection and assessment. *Innovative Higher Education*, 29(2), 137-154.
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (2013). *Post-colonial studies: The key concepts*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Baldwin, S.C., Buchanan, A. M., & Rudisill, M. E. (2007). What teacher candidates learned about diversity, social justice, and themselves from service-learning experiences. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 58(4), 315-327.

- Banks, J.A. (1997). *Educating Citizens in a Multicultural Society. Multicultural Education Series*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Banks, J.A. (2003). *Teaching strategies for ethnic studies*. Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.
- Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. A. M. (Eds.) (2009). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Barnes, R. D. (1990). Race consciousness: The thematic content of racial distinctiveness in critical race scholarship. *Harvard Law Review*, 103(8), 1864-1871.
- Becker, H.S., & Geer, B. (1957) Participant observation and interviewing: A comparison. *Human Organization* 16(3), 28-32. doi: 10.17730/humo.16.3.k687822132323013
- Bell, D. (1980). *Race, racism, and American law* (2nd ed.). Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown.
- Bell, D. (1995). Who's afraid of critical race theory? *University of Illinois Law Review*, (4), 893-910.
- Bell, D. (2009). Who's afraid of critical race theory? In E. Taylor, D. Gilborn, & G. Ladson-Billings. (Eds.), *Foundations of critical race theory in education*. (pp. 37-50). New York: Routledge.
- Bell, L.A. (1997) Theoretical foundations for social justice education. In M. Adams, L.A. Bell, and P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook*. (pp. 1-15) New York: Routledge.

- Bell, L. A., & Griffin, P. (1997). Designing social justice courses. In M. Adams, L.A. Bell, and P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook*. (pp. 46-58) New York: Routledge.
- Bennett, M.J. (1993) Towards ethnorelativism: A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. In Paige, M. (Ed.), *Education for the intercultural experience* (pp. 21-71). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Bennett, M. A., & Benton, S. L. (2001). What are the buildings saying? A study of first-year undergraduate students' attributions about college campus architecture. *NASPA Journal*, 38(2), 159-177.
- Berliner, D. (2006). Our impoverished view of educational reform. *The Teachers College Record*, 108(6), 949-995.
- Bikson, T., Treverton, G., Moini, J., & Lindstrom, G. (2003). New challenges for international leadership: Lessons from organizations with global missions. Santa Monica, CA: Rand.
- Black, A. M. (1996). *Casting her own shadow: Eleanor Roosevelt and the shaping of postwar liberalism*. New York City, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Black, H. T., & Duhon, D. L. (2006). Assessing the impact of business study abroad programs on cultural awareness and personal development. *Journal of Education for Business*, 81(3), 140-144.
- Blee, K. M. (2005). Racial violence in the United States. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28(4), 599-619.



- Bloom, D. (2004). Globalization and education. *Globalization: Culture and Education in the New Millennium*, 56.
- Bloomberg, L. D., & Volpe, M. (2012). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A road map from beginning to end*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Bonilla, Y., & Rosa, J. (2015). # Ferguson: Digital protest, hashtag ethnography, and the racial politics of social media in the United States. *American Ethnologist*, 42(1), 4-17.
- Bonilla-Silva, E., & Forman, T. A. (2000). "I Am Not a Racist But...": Mapping White College Students' Racial Ideology in the USA. *Discourse & Society*, 11(1), 50-85.
- Bonilla-Silva, E., & Embrick, D. G. (2006). Racism without racists: "Killing me softly" with color blindness. *Reinventing Critical Pedagogy*, 21-34.
- Bonilla-Silva, E., & Ashe, A. (2014). The end of racism? Colorblind racism and popular media. In S. Nilsen & S. E. Turner. (Eds.), *The Colorblind Screen* (pp. 57-83). [Google Books version]. Retrieved from:  
[https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=o4QTCgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA57&dq=+The+end+of+racism%3F+Colorblind+racism+and+popular+media&ots=ODf\\_PgunXC&sig=tiephIDw8HhtGP5gxklw5q270vA#v=onepage&q=The%20end%20of%20racism%3F%20Colorblind%20racism%20and%20popular%20media&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=o4QTCgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA57&dq=+The+end+of+racism%3F+Colorblind+racism+and+popular+media&ots=ODf_PgunXC&sig=tiephIDw8HhtGP5gxklw5q270vA#v=onepage&q=The%20end%20of%20racism%3F%20Colorblind%20racism%20and%20popular%20media&f=false)
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2017). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America*. Landam, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bowen, H.R. (1977). *Investment in learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Brah, A. & Phoenix, A. (2009). Ain't I a woman? Revisiting intersectionality In E. Taylor, D. Gilborn, & G. Ladson-Billings. (Eds.), *Foundations of critical race theory in education*. (pp. 247-257). New York: Routledge.
- Brown, S. C., Stevens, R. A., Troiano, P. F., & Schneider, M. K. (2002). Exploring complex phenomena: Grounded theory in student affairs research. *Journal of College Student Development, 43*(2), 173-183.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon, England: Multicultural Matters.
- Calkins, L. (1994). Poetry. *The Art of Teaching Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Calmore, J.O. (1992). Critical race theory, Archie Shepp, and fire music: Securing an authentic intellectual life in a multicultural world. *Southern California Law Review, 65*, 2129-2743.
- Cayetano, S. & Cayetano, F. (1997). *Garifuna History, Language and Culture of Belize Central America and the Caribbean*. BRC, Belize City.
- Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Budget Management. (2000) *Population census 2000: Major findings*. Retrieved from [http://sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Census\\_Report\\_2000.pdf](http://sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Census_Report_2000.pdf)
- Chang, M. J. (2002). Preservation or Transformation: Where's the Real Educational Discourse on Diversity? *The Review of Higher Education, 25*(2), 125-140.
- Chieffo, L., & Griffiths, L. (2004). Large-scale assessment of student attitudes after a short-term study abroad program. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, 10*, 165-177.

- Chen, G.M., & Starosta, W.J. (1996): Intercultural communication competence: a synthesis. *Communication Yearbook*, 19, 252-283.
- Chiseri-Strater, E., & Sunstein, B. S. (1997). *FieldWorking: Reading and writing research*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Clark, B. (1983). *The higher education system: Academic organization in cross-national perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Collins, P. H. (2009). *Another kind of public education: Race, schools, the media, and democratic possibilities*. Beacon Press.
- Connor-Greene, P. A. (2000). Making connections: Evaluating the effectiveness of journal writing in enhancing student learning. *Teaching of Psychology*, 27(1), 44-46.
- Crawford, M. H., Gonzalez, N. L., Schanfield, M. S., Dykes, D. D., Skradski, K., & Polesky, H. F. (1981). The Black Caribs (Garifuna) of Livingston, Guatemala: genetic markers and admixture estimates. *Human Biology*, 87-103.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1988). Race, reform, and retrenchment: Transformation and legitimation in antidiscrimination law. *Harvard Law Review*, 1331-1387.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Cross, M.C. (1998). *Self Efficacy and Cultural Awareness: A Study of Returned Peace Corps Teachers* (pp. 1-59, Rep.). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED429976)

- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Cushner, K. (2007). The role of experience in the making of internationally-minded teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 34(1), 27-39.
- Cushner, K. & Brennan, S. (Eds.) (2007) *Intercultural Student Teaching: A Bridge to Global Competence*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Education.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Constructing 21st-century teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(3), 300-314.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hammerness, K., Grossman, P., Rust, F., & Shulman, L. (2005). The design of teacher education programs. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds.). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*, (pp. 390-441). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Dass, R., & Bush, M. (1992). *Compassion in Action: Social and Spiritual Growth and Healing on the Path of Service*. London, GB: Rider.
- DeCuir, J. T., & Dixson, A. D. (2004). "So When It Comes Out, They Aren't That Surprised That It Is There": Using Critical Race Theory as a Tool of Analysis of Race and Racism in Education. *Educational Researcher*, 33(5), 26-31.
- Delgado, R. (1995). *The Rodrigo chronicles: Conversations about America and race*. New York City, NY: New York University Press.
- Delgado, R. (1997). *Critical White studies: Looking behind the mirror*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (1995). Critical Race Theory: An Annotated Bibliography 1993: A Year of Transition. *University of Colorado Law Review*, 66. 159-193
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical Race Theory*. New York City, NY: New York City Press.
- Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive Interactionalism*. (Vol. 16, Applied social research methods series). London, GB: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K. (2001). *Interpretive interactionism* (Vol. 16, Applied social research methods series). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dewey, J. (1902). The school as social center. *The Elementary School Teacher*, 3(2), 73-86.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and Education*. New York, NY: MacMillian.
- Diamond, J., & Spillane, J. (2004). High-stakes accountability in urban elementary schools: challenging or reproducing inequality? *The Teachers College Record*, 106(6), 1145-1176.
- DiAngelo, R. (2011). White fragility. *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 3(3). 54-70.
- Dobson, N. (1973). *A history of Belize*. Longman Caribbean, Trinidad: Addison-Wesley Longman Ltd.

- Döring, N., Lahmar, K., Bouabdallah, M., Bouafia, M., Bouzid, D., Gobsch, G., & Runge, E. (2010). German-Algerian university exchange from the perspective of students and teachers: Results of an intercultural survey. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 14*(3), 240-258.
- Dowdy, J. K. (2002). Ovuh dyuh. In L. Delpit & J. K. Dowdy (Eds.), *The skin that we speak* (pp.1-13). New York, NY: The New Press.
- Dudziak, M. (1988) Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative. *Stanford Law Review, 41*(1), 61-120. doi:10.2307/1228836
- Dudziak, M. L. (2011). *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Duncan, B. L. (1976). Differential social perception and attribution of intergroup violence: Testing the lower limits of stereotyping of Blacks. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 34*(4), 590.
- Dunlap, J. C. (2006). Using guided reflective journaling activities to capture students' changing perceptions. *TechTrends, 50*(6), 20-26.
- Durbin, R. J. (2006). The Lincoln Commission and the future of study abroad. *International Educator, 15*(1), 4-6.
- Dwyer, M. M. (2004). More Is Better: The Impact of Study Abroad Program Duration. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, 10*, 151-163.
- Edwards, K. T. (2014). Teach with me: The promise of a raced politic for social justice in college classrooms. *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis, 2*(2), 3.

- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed., pp. 119-161). New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Esterberg, Kristin G. 2002. *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill. □
- Fanon, F. (1967). *Black Skin, White Masks*. London and Sydney: Pluto Press.
- Farkas, G. (2008). How educational inequality develops. *The colors of poverty: Why racial and ethnic disparities persist*, 105-134.
- Farrugia, C. A. (2016). *Open doors 2015: Report on international educational exchange*. New York, NY: Institute of International Education.
- Farquhar, J. D. (2012). *Case study research for business*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Feagin, J. R. and Feagin, C. B. (2003). *Racial and ethnic relations*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice- Hall
- Feagin, J. R. (2013). *The White racial frame: Centuries of racial framing and counter-framing*. New York City, NY: Routledge.
- Field, A. (2000). *Discovering statistics using SPSS for Windows: Advanced techniques for beginners (Introducing Statistical Methods series)*. London, GB: Sage Publications.
- Fountas, I.C., & Pinnell, G.S. (2001). *Guiding readers and writers (Grades 3-6): Teaching, comprehension, genre, and content literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

- Fountas, I.C., & Pinnell, G.S. (2012) Guided reading: The romance and the reality. *The Reading Teacher*, 66(4), p.268-284.
- Gallego, M. A. (2001). Is experience the best teacher? The potential of coupling classroom and community-based field experiences. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(4), 312-325.
- Gibson, H. (1998). The educational tourist. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 69(4), 32-34.
- Giles Jr, D. E., & Eyler, J. (1994). The theoretical roots of service-learning in John Dewey: Toward a theory of service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 1(1), 7.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Goldoni, F. (2013). Students' immersion experiences in study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, 46(3), 359-376.
- Gordon, J. (2005). White on White: Researcher reflexivity and the logics of privilege in White schools undertaking reform. *The Urban Review*, 37(4), 279-302.
- Gordon, P., Heischmidt, K., Sterrett, J., & McMillan, H. (2009). Internationalising the business program: One college's approach. *Marketing Management Association Fall Educator's Conference*, 133-136.
- Gorski, P. C. 2012. Perceiving the Problem of Poverty and Schooling: Deconstructing the Class Stereotypes that Mis-Shape Education Practice and Policy. *Equity and Excellence in Education* 45(2): 302-319.



- Grant, C. A., & Gillette, M. (2006). A candid talk to teacher educators about effectively preparing teachers who can teach everyone's children. *Journal of Teacher Education, 57*(3), 292-299.
- Grant, C. A., & Secada, W. G. (1990). Preparing teachers for diversity. In W.R. Houston, M. Haberman, & J. Sikula (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (pp. 403-422). Old Tappan, NJ: Macmillan.
- Green, M., Luu, D., & Burris, B. (Eds.). (2008). *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. campuses (2008 ed.)* Washington, DC: American Council on Education.
- Gregory, A., & Roberts, G. (2017). Teacher Beliefs and the Overrepresentation of Black Students in Classroom Discipline. *Theory Into Practice, 56*(3), 187-194.
- Grossman, G. M., & Sands, M. K. (2008). Restructuring reforms in Turkish teacher education: Modernisation and development in a dynamic environment. *International Journal of Educational Development, 28*(1), 70-80.
- Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306, 330 (2003)
- Gurin, P., & Nagda, B. R. A. (2006). Getting to the what, how, and why of diversity on campus. *Educational Researcher, 35*(1), 20-24.
- Hackett, J., Summers, A., Coppage, T., & Handy, M. (2015). A case for Community-based Teacher Education: The Critical Space Between Social Justice-Oriented Teaching and Learning [Online Publication]. Retrieved from <http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1071&context=catalyst>

- Hadis, B. F. (2005). Gauging the impact of study abroad: how to overcome the limitations of a single-cell design. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 30(1), 3-19
- Haney-Lopez, I. (2006). *White by law: The legal construction of race*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Hanna, P. (1936). *Youth serves the community*. New York, NY: D. Appleton-Century company.
- Hanvey, R. G. (1976). *An attainable global perspective*. New York, NY: Global Perspectives in Education.
- Harris, A.P. (1994). The Jurisprudence of Reconstruction. *California Law Review*, 82, 741.
- Harris, C. I. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, 1707-1791.
- Harris, M. (1964). *Patterns of Race in the Americas*. New York, NY: Walker.
- Heyl, J. D., & McCarthy, J. (2003) *International education and teacher preparation in the US*. (Paper presented) Global Challenges and US Higher Education: National Needs and Policy Implications, Duke University, 24 January, 2003. Durham, NC: Duke University.
- Hirabayashi, L. R. (1997). Asian American Studies and institutional politics. In T. K. Nakayama & C. F. Yoshioka (Eds.), *Asian Pacific Americans and the U.S. South-west* (pp. 23–38). Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University.
- Hoffa, W. (2007). *A History of U.S. Study Abroad: Beginnings to 1965*. Lancaster, PA: Forum on Education Abroad.
- Hooks, B. (1990). *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Hooks, B. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Howard, G. R. (1999). *We can't teach what we don't know: White teachers, multiracial schools*. Williston, VT: Teachers College Press.
- Howard, T. C. (2003). Culturally relevant pedagogy: Ingredients for critical teacher reflection. *Theory into Practice*, 42(3), 195-202.
- Howard, G. R. (2006). *We can't teach what we don't know: White teachers, multiracial schools*. Williston, VT: Teachers College Press.
- Hu-DeHart, E. (2000). The diversity project: Institutionalizing multiculturalism or managing differences? *Academe*, 86(5), 38.
- Hurtado, S. & Alvarado, A. R. & Guillermo-Wann, C.(2015). Thinking About Race: The Salience of Racial Identity at Two- and Four-Year Colleges and the Climate for Diversity. *The Journal of Higher Education* 86(1), 127-155.
- Hutchins, M. M. (1996). International education study tours abroad students' professional growth and personal development in relation to international, global, and intercultural perspectives (Doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University). (UMI No. 9710583).
- In America, Education Is Still the Great Equalizer (2012, February 17). Retrieved February 19, 2016 from <https://blog.ed.gov/2011/12/in-america-education-is-still-the-great-equalizer/>
- Ingram, E. (2014). Understanding "International": Faculty Perspectives on Study Abroad and Global Studies Education. Retrieved from ISU Research and eData: <https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=eui>
- Institutional Research & Information Management. Student Profile Fall 2016

- Institute of International Education (2015). *Open doors data*. Retrieved from <https://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Data>
- Jaoko, J. (2010). Study abroad: Enhanced learning experience in cultural diversity. *College Quarterly*, 13(4), n4.
- Jarchow, E., McKay, J. W., Powell, R., & Quinn, L. F. (1996). Communicating personal constructs about diverse cultures: A cross-case analysis of international student teaching. *Preparing tomorrow's teachers: The field experience*, 178-196.
- Jayakumar, U. M. (2008). Can Higher Education Meet the Needs of an Increasingly Diverse and Global Society? Campus Diversity and Cross-Cultural Workforce Competencies. *Harvard Educational Review*, 78(4), 615-651.
- Johnson, A. G. (2001). *Power, privilege, and difference*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Johnson Jr, J. H., Farrell Jr, W. C., & Guinn, C. (1997). Immigration reform and the browning of America: Tensions, conflicts and community instability in metropolitan Los Angeles. *International Migration Review*, 1055-1095.
- Johnson, J. K. (2018). Who's Afraid of the Big Black Man?. *Educational Studies*, 1-8.
- Johnstone, A., & Terzakis, E. (2012). Pedagogy and revolution: Reading Freire in context. *Education and capitalism: Struggles for learning and liberation*, 187-210.
- Kantor, H., & Lowe, R. (2004). Reflections on history and quality education. *Educational Researcher*, 33(5), 6-10.
- Kawulich, B. B. (2005). Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 6(2).

- Kehl, K., & Morris, J. (2008). Differences in global-mindedness between short-term and semester-long study abroad participants at selected private universities. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 15, 67-79.
- Kielsmeier, J. C. (2000). A time to serve, a time to learn. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 81(9), 652.
- King, J. E. (1991). Dysconscious racism: Ideology, identity, and the miseducation of teachers. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 60(2), 133-146.
- Kitsantas, A. (2004). Studying abroad: The role of college students' goals on the development of cross-cultural skills and global understanding. *College Student Journal*, 38(3), 441.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Kraft, S. (1996). Affirmative action: A solution is redefined as a problem. (Unpublished document). Yeshiva University, New York, NY.
- Kumashiro, K. K. (2000). Toward a theory of anti-oppressive education. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(1), 25-53.
- Labaree, D. F. (2008). *An uneasy relationship: the history of teacher education in the university*. Retrieved from [https://web.stanford.edu/~dlabaree/publications/An\\_Uneasy\\_Relationship\\_Proofs.pdf](https://web.stanford.edu/~dlabaree/publications/An_Uneasy_Relationship_Proofs.pdf)
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). What We Can Learn from Multicultural Education Research. *Educational Leadership*, 51(8), 22-26.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 7-24.

- Ladson-Billings, G. J. (1999). Chapter 7: Preparing teachers for diverse student populations: A critical race theory perspective. *Review of Research in Education*, 24(1), 211-247.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2000). Racialized discourses and ethnic epistemologies. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2, 257-277.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2001). *Crossing over to Canaan: The Journey of New Teachers in Diverse Classrooms*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2005). Is the team all right? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56(3), 229-234.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in US schools. *Educational Researcher*, 35(7), 3-12.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? In E. Taylor, D. Gillborn, & G. Ladson-Billings (Eds.). *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education* (pp. 17-36). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lamott, A. (1994). Shitty first drafts. *Bird by bird: Some instructions on writing and life*, 21-26.
- Lather, P. (1992). Critical frames in educational research: Feminist and post-structural perspectives. *Theory into practice*, 31(2), 87-99.
- Lauen, D. L. (2008). False promises: The school choice provisions in the NCLB. In A.r. Sadovnik, J.A. O'Day, G.W. Bohrnstedt, & K.M. Borman (Eds.) *No child left behind and the reduction of the achievement gap: Sociological perspectives on federal educational policy*, (pp. 203-226). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Lensmire, T., McManimon, S., Tierney, J. D., Lee-Nichols, M., Casey, Z., Lensmire, A., & Davis, B. (2013). McIntosh as synecdoche: How teacher education's focus on White privilege undermines antiracism. *Harvard Educational Review*, 83(3), 410-431.
- Leonardo, Z. (2002). The souls of White folk: Critical pedagogy, Whiteness studies, and globalization discourse. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 5(1), 29-50.
- Leonardo, Z. (2009). The color of supremacy: Beyond the discourse of 'White privilege.' In Taylor, Gilborn, & Ladson-Billings (Eds.), *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education*. (p. 261 -276). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lomawaima, K. T. (1995). *They called it prairie light: The story of Chilocco Indian school*. Omaha, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- López, J. (2013). *Organized Crime and Insecurity in Belize* (pp. 1-20, Working paper). Washington, DC: Inter-American Dialogue.
- Lupi, M. H., Batey, J. J., & Turner, K. (2012). Crossing cultures: US student teacher observations of pedagogy, learning, and practice in Plymouth, UK schools. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 38(4), 483-496.
- Lustig, M. W., & Koester, J. (2003). *Intercultural competence: Interpersonal communication across cultures*. Boston, NJ: Allyn and Bacon.

- Malweski, E., Sharma, S., & Phillion, J. (2012). How international field experiences promote cross-cultural awareness in preservice teachers through experiential learning: Findings from a six-year collective case study. *Teachers College Record*, 114(8), n8.
- Mann, H. (1848). Twelfth annual report to the Massachusetts Board of Education. In Cremin, L. A. (1957) *The republic and the school: Horace Mann and the education of free men*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Marks, D. (2002). *OSU fraternity suspends three*. Retrieved January 24, 2016, from <http://newsok.com/article/2808812>
- Marshall, C. (2004). Social Justice Challenges to Educational Administration: Introduction to a Special Issue. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 40(1), 3-13.
- Marx, H., & Moss, D. M. (2011). Please mind the culture gap: Intercultural development during a teacher education study abroad program. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62(1), 35-47.
- Mattingly, P. H. (1975). *The classless profession: American schoolmen in the nineteenth century*. New York City, NY: NYU Press.
- Medina, L. K. (1997). Defining difference, forging unity: The co-construction of race, ethnicity and nation in Belize. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 20(4), 757-780.
- Merriam, S. B., Johnson-Bailey, J., Lee, M.-Y., Kee, Y., Ntseane, G., & Muhamad, M. (2001). Power and positionality: Negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 20(5), 405-416.



- McCoy, D. L., Winkle-Wagner, R., & Luedke, C. L. (2015). Colorblind mentoring? Exploring White faculty mentoring of students of color. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 8*(4), 225.
- McHue, B. (2000). *Service-learning: The formative years*. Detroit, MI: W.K. Kellogg Foundation Press.
- McIntosh, P. (1990). Unpacking the knapsack of White privilege. *Independent School, 49*(2), 31-36.
- McKinney, K. D. (2005). *Being White: Stories of race and racism*. New York: Routledge.
- Mills, C. W. (2014). *The racial contract*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada, 305 U.S. 337 (1938) Retrieved from <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/305/337/>
- Morrell, J. (2010). Teacher preparation and diversity: When American pre-service teachers aren't White and middle class. *International Journal of Multicultural Education, 12*(1).
- Murrell Jr, P. C. (2001). *The community teacher: A new framework for effective urban teaching*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press
- NAFSA: National Association of International Educators. (2003). *Securing America's future: Global education for a global age. (Rep.)*. Washington, DC: National Association of International Educators.
- NAFSA: National Association of International Educators. (n.d.) *Trends in U.S. Study Abroad*. Retrieved February 2, 2016, from

- [http://www.nafsa.org/explore\\_international\\_education/advocacy\\_and\\_public\\_policy/study\\_abroad/trends\\_in\\_u\\_s\\_study\\_abroad/](http://www.nafsa.org/explore_international_education/advocacy_and_public_policy/study_abroad/trends_in_u_s_study_abroad/)
- NAFSA: National Association of International Educators. (n.d.). Retrieved December 11, 2017, from <http://www.nafsa.org/>
- Nahan, M. D. (1982). *Bionomic Investigation of the Malaysian Large Scale Fishing Sector: A Case Study of Kedah/Perlis* (Doctoral dissertation, Australian National University).
- National and Community Service Trust Act (1993). Retrieved from [https://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/cncs\\_statute\\_1993.pdf](https://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/cncs_statute_1993.pdf)
- Ndoye, A. (2003). Experiential learning, self-beliefs and adult performance in Senegal. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 22(4), 353-366.
- Neppel, J. M. (2005). Study abroad as a passport to student learning: Does the duration of the study abroad program matter? (Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland).
- Neville, H. A., Worthington, R. L., & Spanierman, L. B. (2001). Understanding White privilege and color-blind racial attitudes. *Handbook of Multicultural Counseling*, 257-288.
- Noordhoff, K., & Kleinfeld, J. (1991). *Preparing Teachers for Multicultural Classrooms: A Case Study in Rural Alaska. Draft*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED335312)
- O'Connor, C., Hill, L. D., & Robinson, S. R. (2009). Who's at risk in school and what's race got to do with it? *Review of Research in Education*, 33(1), 1-34.
- Omi, M., & Winant, H. (2004). Racial formations. *Race, class, and gender in the United States*, 6, 13-22.
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2005). *The definition and selection*

- of key competencies: Executive summary*. Retrieved From  
<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/35070367.pdf>
- Otten, M. (2000). Impacts of cultural diversity at home. In P. Crowther, M. Joris, M. Otten, B. Nilsson, H. Teekens, & B. Wächter (Eds.), *Internationalisation at Home: A position paper* (pp. 15-20). Amsterdam: European Association for International Education.
- Paige, R. M., Cohen, A. D., & Shively, R. L. (2004). Assessing the Impact of a Strategies-Based Curriculum on Language and Culture Learning Abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 10, 253-276.
- Parker, L., & Lynn, M. (2002). What's race got to do with it? Critical race theory's conflicts with and connections to qualitative research methodology and epistemology. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 7-22.
- Parker, L., & Villalpando, O. (2007). A Racialized Perspective on Education Leadership: Critical Race Theory in Educational Administration. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 43(5), 519-524.
- Patel, V. S. (2011). Moving toward an inclusive model of allyship for racial justice. *The Vermont Connection*, 32(1), 9.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pearson, M. (2015, November 10). A timeline of the University of Missouri protests. *Cable News Network*. Retrieved January 24, 2016, from  
<http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/09/us/missouri-protest-timeline/index.html>

- Peirce, J., & Veyrat-Pontet, A. (2013). *Citizen security in Belize*. Retrieved from <https://publications.iadb.org/bitstream/handle/11319/6001/ICS%20TN%20Citizen%20Security%20in%20Belize.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Peters, G., & Woolley, J.T. (n.d.). *32-Executive order 6101 starting the civilian conservation corps (March 31, 1933)*. Retrieved from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=14609>
- Picower, B. (2009). The unexamined Whiteness of teaching: How White teachers maintain and enact dominant racial ideologies. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 12*(2), 197-215.
- Pitzer, H. (2015). Urban Teachers Engaging in Critical Talk: Navigating Deficit Discourse and Neoliberal Logics. *Journal of Educational Controversy, 9*(1), 8.
- Pritchard, A., Morgan, N., & Ateljevic, I. (2011). Hopeful tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 38*(3), 941-963.
- Reilly, D., & Senders, S. (2009). Becoming the Change We Want to See: Critical Study Abroad for a Tumultuous World. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, 18*, 241-267.
- Reiman, R. (1992). *The New Deal and American Youth: Ideas and Ideals in a Depression Decade*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press.
- Retrieved October 12, 2017, from <http://www.peacework.org>
- Roberts, R., & Edwards, M. C. (2015). Service-Learning's Ongoing Journey as a Method of Instruction: Implications for School-Based Agricultural Education. *Journal of Agricultural Education, 56*(2), 217-233.

- Romano, R., & Cushner, K. (2007). Reflections on the importance and value of the overseas student-teaching experience. *Intercultural student teaching: A bridge to global competence*, 215-225.
- Roscigno, V. J., & Ainsworth-Darnell, J. W. (1999). Race, cultural capital, and educational resources: Persistent inequalities and achievement returns. *Sociology of Education*, 158-178.
- Ross, S. L. (2010). Transformative Travel: An Enjoyable Way to Foster Radical Change. *ReVision*, 32(1), 54-61.
- Rowan-Kenyon, H. T., & Niehaus, E. K. (2011). One year later: The influence of short-term study abroad experiences on students. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 48(2), 213-228.
- Rowe, W., Bennett, S. K., & Atkinson, D. R. (1994). White Racial Identity Models A Critique and Alternative Proposal. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 22(1), 129-146.
- Rudolph, F. (1990). *The American college and university: A history*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press.
- Rumberger, R. W. (2010). Education and the reproduction of economic inequality in the United States: An empirical investigation. *Economics of Education Review*, 29(2), 246-254.
- Sadker, D., & Sadker, M. (2007). Gender bias: From colonial America to today's classrooms. *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*, 135-169.

- Sagar, H. A., & Schofield, J. W. (1980). Racial and behavioral cues in Black and White children's perceptions of ambiguously aggressive acts. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 39*(4), 590.
- Saldaña, J. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oak, CA. Sage
- Savicki, V., Adams, I., Wilde, A., & Binder, F. (2008). Intercultural Development: Topics and Sequences. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, 15*, 111-126.
- Schaefer, R. T. (2004). *Racial and ethnic groups*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Schein, E. (1985). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schwab, K. (2010, September). *The global competitiveness report 2010-2011*. Retrieved from [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GlobalCompetitivenessReport\\_2010-11.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GlobalCompetitivenessReport_2010-11.pdf)
- Scoffham, S., & Barnes, J. (2009). Transformational experiences and deep learning: The impact of an intercultural study visit to India on UK initial teacher education students. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 35*(3), 257-270.
- Sedlak, M. W. (1989). Let us go and buy a schoolmaster. In D. Warren (Ed.), *American teachers: Histories of a profession at work*, (pp. 257-290). New York, NY Macmillan.
- Shannon-Baker, P. & Talbot, S. (2016). Even the dirt is dangerous: Racism in U.S. American study abroad programs. In V. Stead (Ed.), *RIP Jim Crow: Fighting racism through higher education policy, curriculum, and cultural interventions* (pp. 405-416). New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing

- Shultz, E., Neyhart, K., & Reck, U. M. (1996). Swimming against the tide: A study of prospective teachers' attitudes regarding cultural diversity and urban teaching. *The Western Journal of Black Studies*, 20(1), 1.
- Sideli, K. (2000). It's 2000: Do you know where your students are? *International Educator*, 9, 38-43.
- Sileo, J.M. (2011). Co-teaching: Getting to know your partner. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 43(5), p.32-38.
- Sinanan, A. (2016). The value and necessity of mentoring African American college students at PWI's. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 9(8), 155.
- Sleeter, C.E. (1994). White racism. *Multicultural Education*, 1(4), 5-8, 39. □
- Sleeter, C. E. (2001). Preparing Teachers for Culturally Diverse Schools: Research and the Overwhelming Presence of Whiteness. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(2), 94-106.
- Smith, A. W. (1988) Racial Insularity at the core: Contemporary American racial attitudes. *Trotter Institute Review*, 2(2), 8-14
- Smith, W. A. (2005). *Racial battle fatigue, race-related stressors, and the academic challenges for college students of color: An interdisciplinary theory*. (Unpublished Manuscript, submitted for publication). University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT.
- Smith, W. A., Hung, M., & Franklin, J. D. (2011). Racial battle fatigue and the miseducation of Black men: Racial microaggressions, societal problems, and environmental stress. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 63-82.

- Solorzano, D. G. (1997). Images and words that wound: Critical race theory, racial stereotyping, and teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 5-19.
- Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 60-73.
- Solorzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2001). From racial stereotyping and deficit discourse toward a critical race theory in teacher education. *Multicultural Education*, 9(1), 2.
- Solorzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23-44.
- Speck, B. W., & Hoppe, S. L. (Eds.). (2004). *Service-learning: History, theory, and issues*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Spradley, J. P., & McCurdy, D. W. (1980). *Anthropology, the cultural perspective*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Spring, J. H. (2008). *The American school: From the puritans to no child left behind*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Staats, C. (2014). *Implicit racial bias and school discipline disparities: Exploring the connection*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press
- Stake, R. (1994). Case Studies. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.



- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative Case Studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 443-466). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Stanton, T. K., Giles, D. E., Jr., & Cruz, N. I. (1999). Service-learning: A movement's pioneers reflect on its origins, practice, and future. (Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Stoops, N. (2004). *Educational attainment in the United States: 2003*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/p20-550.pdf>
- Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1994) Grounded Theory Methodology: An Overview. in N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications□
- Stuart Wells, A., Duran, J., & White, T. (2008). Refusing to leave desegregation behind: From graduates of racially diverse schools to the Supreme Court. *The Teachers College Record*, 110(12), 2532-2570.
- Su, Z. (1996). Why teach: Profiles and entry perspectives of minority students as becoming teachers. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 29, 117-133.
- Su, Z. (1997). Teaching as a profession and as a career: Minority candidates' perspectives. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 13(3), 325-340.
- Sweatt v Painter, 339 U.S. 629 (1950). Retrieved from <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/339/629/case.html>

- Takyi, E. (2015). The Challenge of Involvement and Detachment in Participant Observation. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(6), 864-872.
- Tarrant, M. A., Rubin, D. L., & Stoner, L. (2014). The added value of study abroad: Fostering a global citizenry. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 18(2), 141-161.
- Tatum, A., & Gue, V. (2012). The sociocultural benefits of writing for African American adolescent males. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 28(2), 123-142.
- Taylor, E. (2009). The Foundation of Critical Race Theory in Education: An Introduction. In E. Taylor, D. Gillborn, & G. Ladson-Billings (Eds.). *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education* (pp. 1-16). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Thomas, M. E. (2011). *Multicultural Girlhood: Racism, Sexuality, and the Conflicted Spaces of American Education*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press
- Tierney, W. G. (1997). The parameters of affirmative action: Equity and excellence in the academy. *Review of Educational Research*, 67(2), 165-196.
- Titlebaum, P., Williamson, G., Daprano, C., Baer, J., & Brahler, J. (2004). *Annotated History of Service-Learning*. Dayton, Ohio: University of Dayton.
- Trent, W., Owens-Nicholson, D., Eatman, T.K., Burke, M., Daugherty, J., & Norman, K. (2003). Justice, equality of educational opportunity and affirmative action in higher education. In M. Chang, D. Witt, J. Jones, & K. Hakuta (Eds.), *Compelling interest: Examining the evidence on racial dynamics in higher education* (pp. 22-48). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- Troyna, B. (1987). Beyond Multiculturalism: towards the enactment of anti-racist education in policy, provision and pedagogy [1]. *Oxford Review of Education*, 13(3), 307-320.
- Tyack, D. B., Lowe, R., & Hansot, E. (1984). *Public schools in hard times: The Great Depression and recent years*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Unnever, J. D., & Cullen, F. T. (2012). White perceptions of whether African Americans and Hispanics are prone to violence and support for the death penalty. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 49(4), 519-544.
- Urban, W. J., & Wagoner Jr, J. L. (2009). *American education: A history*. New York City, NY: Routledge.
- U.S. study abroad students, by gender 2011/12 (n.d.). Retrieved February 02, 2016, from <http://www.statista.com/statistics/297198/us-study-abroad-students-by-gender/>
- Valli, L. (1995). The dilemma of race: Learning to be color blind and color conscious. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 46(2), 120-129.
- Van der Eyken, W., Goulden, D., & Crossley, M. (1995). Evaluating Educational Reform in a Small State A Case Study of Belize, Central America. *Evaluation*, 1(1), 33-44.
- Van Zanten, A. (2005). New modes of reproducing social inequality in education: the changing role of parents, teachers, schools and educational policies. *European Educational Research Journal*, 4(3), 155-169.
- Villalpando, O., & Delgado Bernal, D. (2002). A critical race theory analysis of barriers that impede the success of faculty of color. *The racial crisis in American higher education: Continuing challenges for the twenty-first century*, 243-269.

- Wade, R. C. (2000). Service-learning for multicultural teaching competency: Insights from the literature for teacher educators. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 33(3), 21-29.
- Wilson, W. J. (2009). *More than just race: Being Black and poor in the inner city (issues of our time)*. WW Norton & Company.
- Waters, M. C., & Vang, Z. M. (2007). *The challenges of immigration to race based diversity policies in the United States*. Paper presented at the Conference on the Art of the State III Diversity and Canada's Future, Montebello, Quebec, CA.
- Walters, L. M., Garii, B., & Walters, T. (2009). Learning globally, teaching locally: incorporating international exchange and intercultural learning into pre-service teacher training. *Intercultural Education*, 20(sup1), S151-S158.
- Wilk, R. (1995). Learning to be local in Belize: global systems of common difference. In D. Miller (Ed.). *Worlds apart: Modernity through the prism of the local*, (pp. 110-133). London, GB: Routledge.
- Wolcott, H. F. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis, and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Wynne, J. (2012). We don't talk right. You ask him. *Intercultural communication: A reader*, 13, 119-126.
- Yancy, G. (2016). *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race in America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

- Yosso, T., Smith, W., Ceja, M., & Solórzano, D. (2009). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate for Latina/o undergraduates. *Harvard Educational Review, 79*(4), 659-691.
- Youdell, D. (2006). Diversity, inequality, and a post-structural politics for education. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education, 27*(1), 33-42.
- Younes, M. N., & Asay, S. M. (2003). The World as a Classroom: The Impact of International Study Experiences on College Students. *College Teaching, 51*(4), 141-147.
- Zeichner, K. (2010). Rethinking the connections between campus courses and field experiences in college-and university-based teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 61*(1-2), 89-99.
- Zemach-Bersin, T. (2007). Global citizenship and study abroad: It's all about US. *Critical Literacy: Theories and Practices, 1*(2), 16-28.

## APPENDIX A

### Interview Script

#### Living Life Outside the Margins

##### Background/Early Education

1. Where were you born and raised?
2. Can you describe your upbringing?
3. What is/was your parents' educational level?
4. What is your sibling(s)' educational levels?
5. What were your parents' views on education?

##### Education

1. What inspired you to pursue education as a profession?
2. What was your experience in pursuing higher education?
3. What (if any) issues have you encounter during these pursuits?

##### Teaching Experience

4. How would you address those issues?
5. What changes would you like to see in school reform that will address the issues public school environment?

##### Contemporary Issues

1. What are you expecting from this experience?
2. How do you expect this experience to change your thinking about education and diversity issues?
3. What do you expect to learn from this experience?
4. What thoughts (if any) do you expect this experience give you about issues in your local  community? The nation? The world?
5. Do you have any assumptions or stereotypes of this experience and the students/staff you will be working with? Community? Please share your thoughts?
6. How do you expect your assumptions or stereotypes (about people, a community, the world, etc.)  to be challenged by the experience?
7. What do you expect to learn about yourself from this experience?
8. In what ways do you think your understanding of culture and diversity issues will change?

## APPENDIX B

### ADULT CONSENT FORM

#### OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

**PROJECT TITLE:** Living Life outside the Margins:

**INVESTIGATOR:** Jason K. Johnson, Doctoral Student, Oklahoma State University

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the change in intercultural sensitivity and self-awareness for 15 -20 students from a predominantly White institution while studying abroad in a culturally diverse developing country. This study will capture the discourse of students at a four-year, predominately White institution in Stillwater, Oklahoma and how it reflects institutional educational policies as well as attitudes toward diversity issues on campus and community. This study will explore participants' perspectives of the challenges and successes they have had when encountering racial inequities in a developing country while learning to be global agents of change.

**PROCEDURES:** By signing this consent form you agree to participate in the study. You will be given a copy of the consent, which includes contact information for the researcher, advisor, and university IRB. I will conduct one interview, which will last approximately 60 minutes. I will record the interviews via digital voice recorder and then transcribe them to an electronic data file with no identifying information. No identifying information about participants will be reported in the research or reports. Demographic and descriptive information about the participants will be generic and de-identified.

Once the interview is transcribed, you will have an opportunity to participate in a member check. You may be asked via email or telephone to participate in a follow-up interview to clarify earlier comments. This will last approximately 30 minutes.

**RISKS OF PARTICIPATION:** There are no known risks associated with this project, which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

**BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:** There are limited qualitative studies that focus on changes in the intercultural sensitivity development of the study abroad students at a state-supported Midwest University in this research. By participating in this study, participants add to a growing body of literature on the subject.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** The researcher will present and explain a consent form (Appendix C), which explicitly outlines the subjects' rights, including the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and the right to cease participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to choose a pseudonym if you prefer to not use your own name. By signing the consent, individuals agree to participate in the study. Participants will be given a copy of the consent, which includes contact information for the researcher, advisor, and university IRB.

The researcher will record interviews via digital voice recorder and then transcribe them to an electronic data file with no identifying information. No identifying information about participants will be reported in the research or reports. Demographic and descriptive information about the participants will be generic and de-identified.

All data will be stored electronically in an external data file, on a password-protected computer, and stored in the locked home of the principal investigator. The researcher will store the signed consent forms in a locked file cabinet in 220 Willard Hall, separate from the data. No individual subject identifiers will be connected to the observation or interview data. Demographic and descriptive information will be generic and reported with no geographic identifiers. Paper copies of any data will be stored in the principal investigator's office in a locked file for a one-year period after the study file closes with the IRB, at which time they will be shredded. Electronic files will be destroyed three years after the completion of the study. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people who participate in research.

**CONTACTS:**

If you have questions or concerns about participating in this research study, you may contact the researcher conducting this study by telephone at 405-317-0717 or by email at [Jason.k.johnson@okstate.edu](mailto:Jason.k.johnson@okstate.edu) or you may contact Dr. Lucy Bailey at 405-744-2994, or by email at [lu.bailey@okstate.edu](mailto:lu.bailey@okstate.edu).

For information on participants' rights, contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405.744.3377 or [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu).

**PARTICIPANT RIGHTS:**

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time, without penalty.



If you prefer to use a pseudonym, please provide it below:

---

**CONSENT DOCUMENTATION:**

I have been fully informed about the procedures listed here. I am aware of what I will be asked to do and of the benefits of my participation. I also understand the following statements:

I affirm that I am 18 years of age or older.

I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form will be given to me. I hereby give permission for my participation in this study.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

---

Signature of Researcher

---

Date

## APPENDIX C

### **JOURNAL PROMPTS**

#### Living Life outside the Margins

1. As you reflect on the week what were your initial reactions to arriving in Belize and seeing the community? Meeting the teachers? Students?
2. How did □ your views change?
3. Describe any inequities you may have seen throughout the week.
4. How did your views, thoughts, beliefs on culture and diversity change throughout the week?
5. Describe how you felt you were immersed in the Belizean culture?
6. Describe some meaningful cultural interactions.

## VITA

### Education

2018, Doctor of Philosophy — Social Foundations of Education, Oklahoma State University  
2006, Masters of Education — Urban Education, Langston University  
2003, Bachelor of Science — Health Education, Oklahoma State University

### Positions Held

Assistant Executive Director, Enrollment Management  
Director, University College, Langston University  
Graduate Research Assistant, Oklahoma State University  
Coordinator, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Oklahoma State University  
Director, Sooner Upward Bound, University of Oklahoma  
Coordinator/ Interim Director, Educational Talent Search, Langston University

### Conference Presentation/Papers

2017 Presenter – National Association for Student Affairs Professionals on *Race Relations and Campus Climate: Are you S.M.A.R.T.?*

2017 Presenter – Critical Questions in Education Conference on *Creating a Positive Campus Climate for Students of Color*

2016 Presenter – Oklahoma Educational Research Association Conference on *The Stories from the Margin*

2015 Presenter – National Association for Student Affairs Professionals on *Stories from the Margin: African American males experience in the Academy*

2015 Presenter - Oklahoma College Student Personnel Association on *Promoting and Reflecting a Healthy Campus Climate for Diversity.*

2014 Presenter – Oklahoma Educational Research Association Conference on *The Oral History of African American Educators in Oklahoma*

2014 Presenter – Oklahoma State University Research Day on *The Oral History of African American Educators in Oklahoma*

2013 Presenter – Critical Questions in Education Conference on *Motivating and Inspiring African American Males to Achieve*

2011 Presenter – International Conference on Social Science on *Motivating and Inspiring African American Males to Achieve*

---