Impact of International Student Teachers on a New South Wales, Australia Community Over Ten Years: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to evaluate change in the impact of American agriculture education student teachers on a rural community in New South Wales, Australia over ten years. The study analyzed interviews with ten participants of the American Student Teaching Program in a New South Wales community. The researcher was a student teacher in the New South Wales community for ten weeks and taught agriculture in one of the community's high schools. Exposure to individuals in the community and also recommendations from the agriculture teachers and principals of the Australian school, which included the principal, deputy principal, one head teacher, two agriculture teachers, three support staff members, and two area businessmen, served as the basis for participant recruitment. The researcher transcribed the interviews. The researcher and a peer reviewer coded and categorized the data into themes. Since the researcher was a participant in the Australian Student Teaching Program, participatory action research enabled the researcher to identify areas of influence suggested by the interview participants. Participants identified two major themes: impact on student growth and sense of community, and eight subthemes: student performance, international growth, culture, perceptions and stereotypes, values, beginning impressions of American student teachers versus current impressions, involvement within the community, and community acceptance as impactful changes.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and General Information

Background and Setting

Globalization refers to a full range of factors that are sweeping across the globe unhindered by boundaries and policies of a nation-state (Dator, Pratt, & Seo, 2006). Furthermore, globalization includes planes, tankers, container ships, migratory labor, electronic communications, as well as the spread of ideas, values, and practices (Dator, Pratt, & Seo, 2006). However, globalization is not a new concept. Many types of globalization have existed for years, the oldest form being environmental (Dator, Pratt, & Seo, 2006). With the fast increase in globalization, reciprocal basis of ethics is a large problem (Dator, Pratt, & Seo, 2006). Reciprocity in regards to future generations is more crucial because present generations can impact the lives of future generations who cannot express what globalization means to them (Dator, Pratt, & Seo, 2006). Therefore, globalization and culture represent key elements of change in the modern world (Greig, 2002).

With increased globalization, society places greater attention on increasing understandings of stereotypes, cultural awareness, and language barriers (Bunch, 2009). Therefore, there is an increased need for knowledge of international cultures and experiences, and a focus during the past few decades includes application of cultured learning in educational programs to encounter increasing global diversity (Cushner & Mahon, 2002). Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, and Colby (2000) stated that:

> Culture learning is the process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction

> with individuals from other cultures. It is a dynamic, developmental, and ongoing process which engages the learner cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively (p. 4).

Such learning includes "learning about the self as a cultural being; learning about cultural impact of human behavior; culture-specific and culture-general learning; and learning how to learn" (Paige et al., 2000, p. 7). Culture-general learning involves learning about universal, cross-cultural phenomena, while culture-specific learning involves learning about a specific culture (Paige et al., 2000). Educators should participate in cultured learning experiences and to develop global competencies (Lane, Maznevski, Mendenhall, & McNett, 2004). Moreover, global competencies refer to the various traits, attitudes, skills, and abilities that comprise global expertise (Lane et al., 2004). To gain more experiences with global competencies, faculty abroad programs are becoming more popular to provide colleges with international experiences to incorporate into their curriculum (Sandlin, Murphrey, Lindner, & Dooley, 2013).

Although the benefits, impacts, and experiences of international programs on the participants have been widely studied, studies evaluating the impacts of the student teachers within the communities in which they reside are scarce (Bunch, 2009). In 1999, approximately 160,000 students studied abroad in Australia (Michael, Armstrong, & King, 2003). Michael et al. (2003) stated that "overseas fee-paying students contributed $3.8 billion towards the national economy in 2000-2001" (p. 58).

Statement of the Problem

There is a current awareness of the need for the globalization of teacher education programs in order to produce globally minded teachers (Alfaro, 2008). A study conducted by Sandell (2007) found that two-thirds of participating international student teachers reported a significant impact on professionalism, international perspectives, and personal development. In

2003-2004, the number of American students studying abroad decreased 9.6% (Sandell, 2009). With continued globalization, a drastic importance of culturization and more international studies needs emphasis. The Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications (ALEC) at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville currently has an Australian Student Teaching Program in agriculture education. This program allows students with an Agriculture Education concentration to complete their student teaching in New South Wales, Australia. In addition, student teachers are not the only beneficiaries of these programs but also the community in which they are located (Bunch, 2009). In a study assessing the impact American student teachers had on New South Wales, Australia community members, Bunch (2009) stated that, "the participants did not readily admit to cultural change, instead they acknowledged cultural influences. However, with the continuation of the program cultural changes within the community are likely" (p. 75). Upon completion of the study, Bunch (2009) stated that the following questions had arisen:

- What impact did American student teachers have after five and ten years had elapsed from the first student teaching experience?
- After five and ten years, are the New South Wales community members more receptive to international visitors? (p. 105)

Purpose and Central Research Question

The purposes of this qualitative study was to evaluate the impacts American student teachers had on a New South Wales, Australia community since the Australian Student Teaching Program was established, and if rural community members were more receptive to the participating international student teachers. This study examined how school administrators and

members of a New South Wales, Australia community perceive and are in influenced by American student teachers. The main objective of the study was:

1. What is the impact of international student teachers on a New South Wales Australian Community over the 10 year period program?

Significance of the Problem

This study sought to determine the influences American student teachers have on members of a New South Wales, Australia community over the 10 year period of the program. This study also served to determine the change in perception over time. Much research pertaining to how international student teaching benefits future educators is available, but research relating to the impact and role these participants play within the host community lacks. Since there is a lack of research regarding the impact international student teachers have on the communities in which they are placed, this study is significant to determine how the international participants are perceived through the lens of the host community.

This study is also significant for the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications (ALEC) at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville to ensure that the students selected to participate in the Australian Student Teaching Program are making a positive influence within the community for not only the students but also the teachers, school administration, and community members. This study will provide the opportunity for evaluation and assessment of the Australian Student Teaching Program.

School staff and administration serve as stakeholders because understanding the impacts the international student teachers have on their students can increase the interest in agriculture programs within the Australian school. If the impacts are extremely positive, school interest

could increase as well as school reputation, grades, graduation percentages, and overall test scores.

Based on the previous information, globalization increases, and literature regarding individual and cultural benefits of international student teaching, determining the impacts of international student teachers on students, parents, school administrators, and the members of a New South Wales, Australia community is significant to the leaders of the ALEC Student Teaching Program. Furthermore, determining the community impact is significant to Australian students, parents of Australian students, Australian school administrators, future international student teachers, and other international student teaching programs.

Limitations/Delimitations

The results of this study were subject to the following limitations:

1. Time spent with the Australian participants since the Australian Student Teaching Program is limited to a ten week time span.
2. The researcher was a participant in the Australian Student Teaching Program.
3. Community impact may be greater because it is a rural community with a population of 19,067 (Broken Hill, 2012).
4. Perception of international student teachers may be influenced due to 13% of the population being Aboriginal (The University of Sydney, 2014).

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made for the purpose of this study:

1. Participants involved in the study answered all interview questions truthfully and without bias.

2. Participants involved in the study were not influenced by the presence of the researcher when providing information.
3. The researcher was not biased when transcribing information given from participants during the interviews.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were operationally defined for this study:

- Agriculture education is the teaching of agriculture, natural resources, and land management through hands-on experiences and guidance to prepare students for entry level jobs or to further education to prepare them for advanced agriculture jobs (The University of Tennessee, 2009).
- Secondary education in Tennessee represents high school grade levels 9-12 (Huffman, n.d.a.).
- Secondary education in Australia represents stages 4-6 (school years 7-12) (NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2011).
- The University of Tennessee Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications Department is known as ALEC. The ALEC degree allows students to complete concentrations in four areas which include: education, extension, leadership, and communication (The University of Tennessee, 2009). ALEC prepares graduates for formal and non-formal education careers (The University of Tennessee, 2009).
- The Australian Student Teaching Program is the international student teaching program offered by The University of Tennessee ALEC department. The program allows students the opportunity to obtain a comprehensive vision of food and fiber systems, as well as global issues that exist in Australia (The University of Tennessee, 2009). The program

takes place in a New South Wales, Australia community, and allows students to spend ten weeks teaching agriculture and science at an Australian school (The University of Tennessee, 2009).

- Community impact: a strong effect that the international student teachers had on the community.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The contents of this chapter include an overview of acculturation, the steps of acculturation, and the perspective outcomes. In addition, this chapter discusses an overview of culture within a community, focusing on cultural impressions and stereotypes. Necessary points of discussion include a sense of community and the community's four criteria: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Lastly, this chapter highlights secondary education in both New South Wales, Australia and in Tennessee.

Acculturation

Sam and Berry (2010) define acculturation as "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (p. 437). During acculturation, one undergoes many types of changes including biological, social, and physical (Sam & Berry, 2010). Kramer and Ikeda (1998) stated that "as one moves from the magic univalent, to the mythic bivalent and to the perspectival trivalent worlds, dimensional awareness accrues or increases" (p. 37). The more dissociated a culture becomes, the more dimensions they are able to reflect upon (Kramer & Ikeda, 1998). When people from different cultural backgrounds interact with one another, they may adopt the other's language, beliefs, values, behaviors, and technologies (Sam & Berry, 2010). Figure 1 outlines group and individual level acculturation and identifies two groups in contact (Sam & Berry, 2010). Figure 1 also shows five aspects of cultural contexts: the original culture (A & B), two changing groups, and the nature of their interactions (Berry, 2005). These five sets of phenomena define the acculturation

process and establish a starting point for acculturation at a psychological level (Berry, 2005). Beginning with culture-level phenomena, *Culture A* refers to the society of origin and *Culture B* refers to the society of settlement (Berry, 2005).

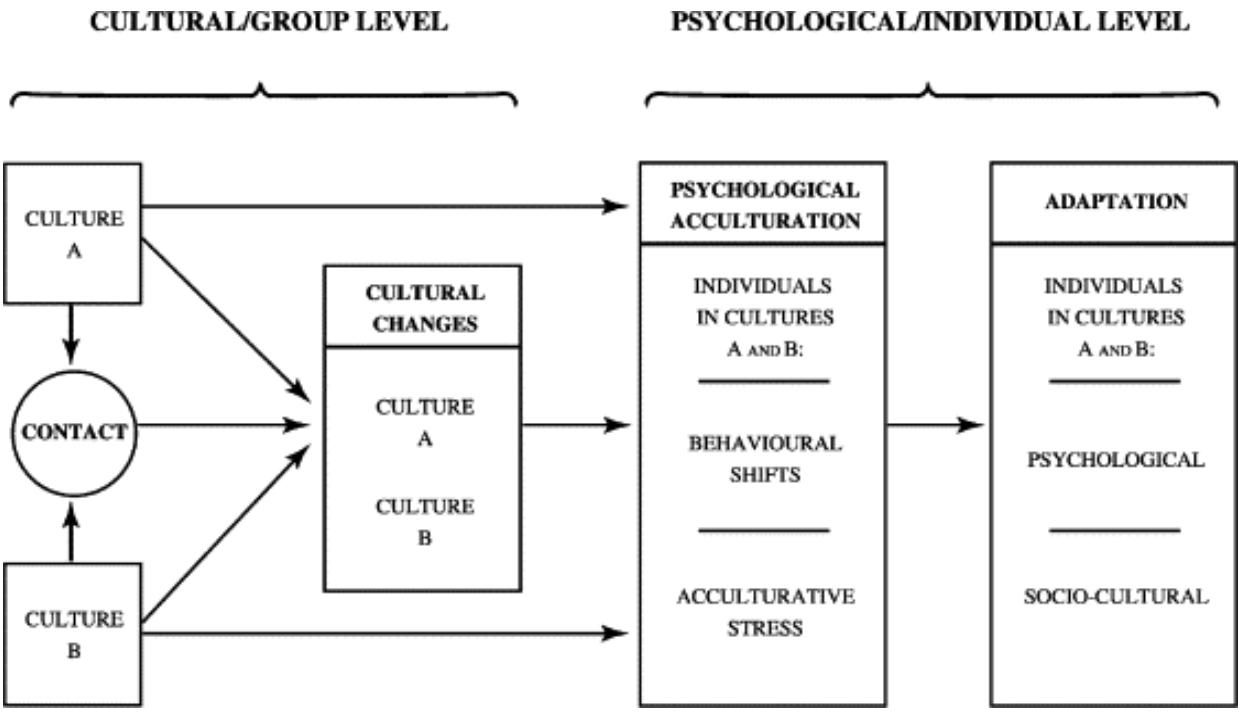


Figure 1. Framework for conceptualizing and studying acculturation (Sam & Berry, 2010)

Complete understanding of acculturation begins with social contexts such as cultural characteristics (Berry, 2005). Berry (2003) stated that "the combination of political, economic, and demographic conditions being faced by individuals in their society of origin also needs to be studied as a basis for understanding the degree of voluntariness in the migration motivation of acculturating individuals (p. 703)." Behavioral shifts and acculturative stress are two ways to conceptualize acculturation outcomes (Berry, 2005).

Behavioral Shifts

Behavioral shifts are changes in behavior from previously learned patterns to those more frequently found in the new society (Berry, 2009). Certain variables such as political, economic, and social factors may not have an initial change on an individual at first contact (Berry, 2009). However, as contact continues, the individual's level of participation and number of problems may increase (Berry, 2009). Two phenomena of behavioral shifts, learning from the new culture and shedding features of the original culture, can resolve contact problems (Berry, 2009). However, when this process occurs, potential for conflict within these processes could occur (Berry, 2009). New culture learning combined with limited culture shedding occurs with the integration strategy, and the integration strategy leads to high conflict due to the resistance of the dominant society (Berry, 2009). The conflict that arises during the experience can act as a stressor and result in acculturative stress.

Acculturative Stress

Stress is a psychological state brought on by environmental factors, or stressors that require reduction of normal function until satisfactory adaptation to the new situation is achieved (Berry, 2009). Berry and Annis (1974) stated that "persons undergoing cultural change will experience a certain amount of psychological discomfort (p. 382)." Acculturative stress refers to stressors that are brought by the process of acculturation and can enhance one's life chances (Berry, 2009). At a community level, acculturative stress will be greater where there is a greater behavioral and cultural difference between groups (Berry & Annis, 1974).

Other variables that direct the relationship between stress and acculturation affect the outcome of acculturation (Berry, 2009). The factors that precede acculturation and influencing factors during acculturation influence these individual level variables (age, gender, education,

religion) (Berry, 2009). One major factor in the emergence of stressors is the degree of contact with a larger society that one desires; the larger the difference, the greater the stressor (Berry, 2009). Furthermore, acculturative stress depends on the presence of stressors as well as the individual's coping strategies and resources (Berry, 2009). For individuals who are able to cope, acculturative stress may not emerge (Berry, 2009).

The outcome of the acculturation process is adaptation. Adaptation can vary from well-adapted to maladapted (Berry, 2009). Searle and Ward (1990) have distinguished two adaptations: psychological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation (p. 457).

Psychological and Sociocultural Adaptation

Psychological adaptation in acculturation is the psychological changes and outcomes that occur as a result of individuals experiencing acculturation (Berry, 1997). Coping styles, humor, loneliness, stress, and personal flexibility are associations of psychological adaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). Furthermore, psychological problems increase quickly upon contact while sociocultural adaptation has a linear improvement with time (Berry, 2005).

Sociocultural adaptation refers to the ability to meet social demands in host cultures (Oguri & Gudykunst, 2002). The most important factor for sociocultural adaptation is the length of residence in a new culture (Zlobina, Basabe, Paez, & Furnham, 2006). Early stages of adaptation are especially low and gradually increase (Zlobina et al, 2006). Additionally, other variables that influence sociocultural adaptation include higher education, income, and gender (Zlobina et al., 2006). Adapting to a new culture and having the necessary skills to convey a new cultural environment can be beneficial when trying to assimilate to an established community (Ward, 2013).

Culture in Community

Culture is speculated to have emerged among the development of civilizations due the rise of agriculture, which allowed people to have food and stability within a specific geographic area (National Geographic, 1993). No matter culture's origins, culture is a driving force in today's global world, and different contexts and applications define culture. Sociologists and anthropologists debate the term culture. Older definitions have deemed culture as the way of life of a people (Swidler, 1986). Tylor (1924) defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (p. 1). In addition, enculturation creates personality (Triandis & Suh, 2002). Personality is defined by Funder (1997) as "an individual's characteristic pattern of thought, emotion, and behavior" (p. 1). Furthermore, personality is created through the process of enculturation (Hofstede & McCrae, 2004). A study by Hofstede and McCrae (2004) found that personality factors are common to respondents from the same country (p. 70). Hofstede and McCrae (2004) also stated that "personality traits are construed as basic tendencies that are rooted in biology and that interact with external influences, including culture, in shaping the skills, habits, tastes and values of the individual" (p. 74). Personality can play a large role in an individual's life, and one can perceive immediate impressions of character upon a few spoken words (Asch, 1946).

Cultural Impressions

People tend to enhance their evaluations of in-group members and degrade out-group members in order to maintain higher levels of self-esteem (Flynn, 2005). Additionally, individuals pursue positive social identity through beliefs about the nature of relations between groups (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Accordingly, people classify themselves and others into various

social categories, prototypical characteristics theorized from group members define these categories (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Classifying individuals into social categories creates a strong version and a weak version of social perception (Jussim, 1991). The strong version assumes that perceptions create social reality as much as it reflects reality, while the weak version acknowledges that prejudices and beliefs sometimes create social reality (Jussim, 1991). Jussim (1991) presented a reflection-construction model that demonstrates the relationship between social perception and social reality (see Figure 2) (p. 57). Background information refers to anything the perceiver may base their beliefs such as the target's past behavior or social group membership (Jussim, 1991). Path A represents the influence background information has on the perceiver and how this information can predict future behavior from the target regardless of influence from the perceiver (Jussim, 1991). Path B suggests the extent that the perceiver bases their beliefs on the background information (Jussim, 1991). Path C shows the influence of the social belief on the target's behavior while Path D shows the influence of social beliefs on the perceiver's behavior (Jussim, 1991). Path E represents the extent the perceiver's judgments regarding the target are based on the actual behavior or attitude of the target (Jussim, 1991).

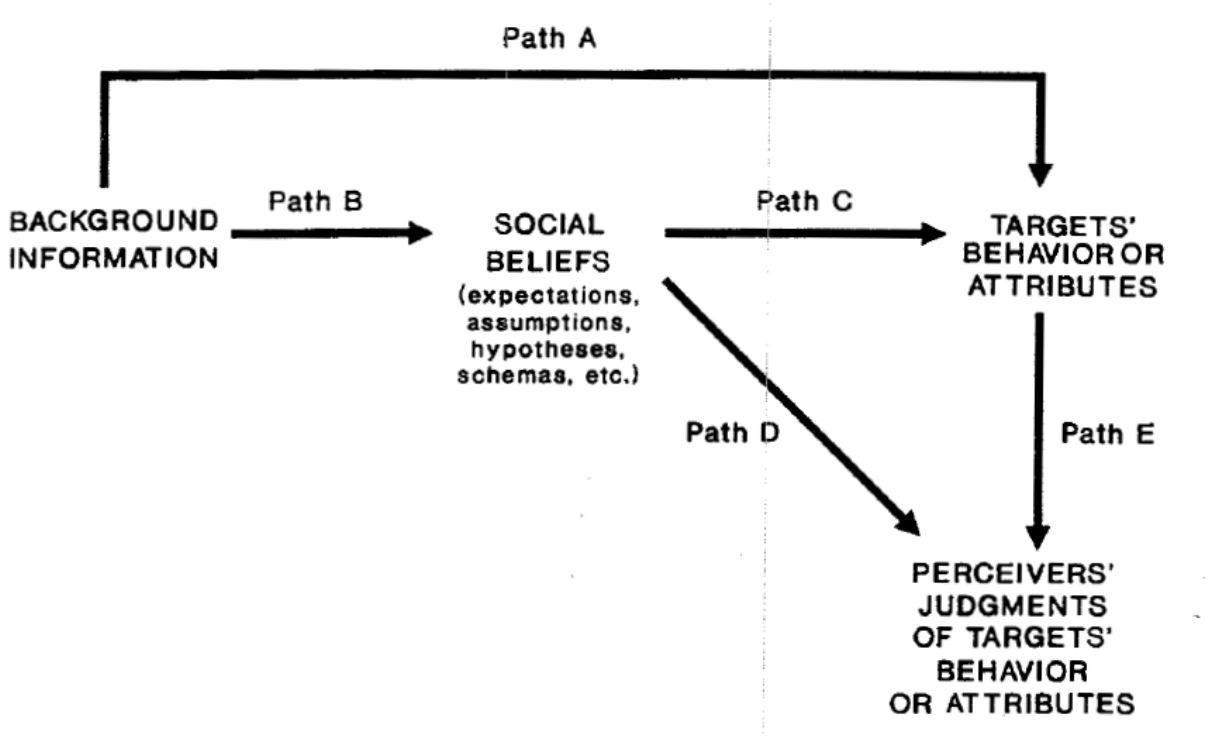


Figure 2. The reflection-construction model of relations between social perception and social reality (Jussim, 1991)

Cultural Stereotypes

Impressions of individuals can lead to perceptions of the group as a whole (Tajfel, 1982). Stereotypes refer to prejudgments reached before researchers collect relevant information (Tajfel, 1981). Although individuals form stereotypes, their implications emerge from the context of group membership because individuals continuously organize themselves into groups in order to satisfy their needs (Bar-Tal, 1997). One consequence of belonging to a group is that some individuals form a self-social identity which defines them as group members (Bar-Tal, 1997). Bar-Tal (1997) produced a model of stereotypic contents that categorized variables that serve as the basis for formation and change of stereotypes (p. 495). Figure 3 depicts background variables, transmitting mechanisms, and mediating variables that lead to stereotypical outcomes. The first category in the model is background variables. This category includes socio-political

factors and economic conditions, as well as the nature and history of group relations, and the behavior of other groups (Bar-Tal, 1997). Bar-Tal (1997) stated that "the present nature of intergroup relations is a *major* determination of held stereotypic contents" (p. 496). Past intergroup influence is also a key variable. Wars, animosity, hostility, as well as help, cooperation, and friendship impact the present nature of intergroup relations (Bar-Tal, 1997). The model suggests that stereotypical content becomes part of the individual's knowledge and serves as a variable for processing new information (Bar-Tal, 1997). Although there are many social factors influencing stereotypes, it is important for an individual to be adaptive and be willing to make adjustments to existing attitudes (Flynn, 2005).

The transmission of mechanisms plays a large role in stereotypic outcomes and societal channels serve as the first form of variable transmission. Researchers characterized these channels as political (speeches, news, commentaries), social (norms, friends), cultural (books, art), and education (programs, curriculums) (Bar-Tal, 1997). In addition to these channels, socializing members also pass along information (Bar-Tal, 1997). Socializing members include parents, grandparents, and other extended family, and not only pass stereotypes to younger generations, but create a climate that serves as a facilitator of stereotypical contents (Bar-Tal, 1997). These practices are then intertwined with the indigenous expression of community (Rappaport, 1995).

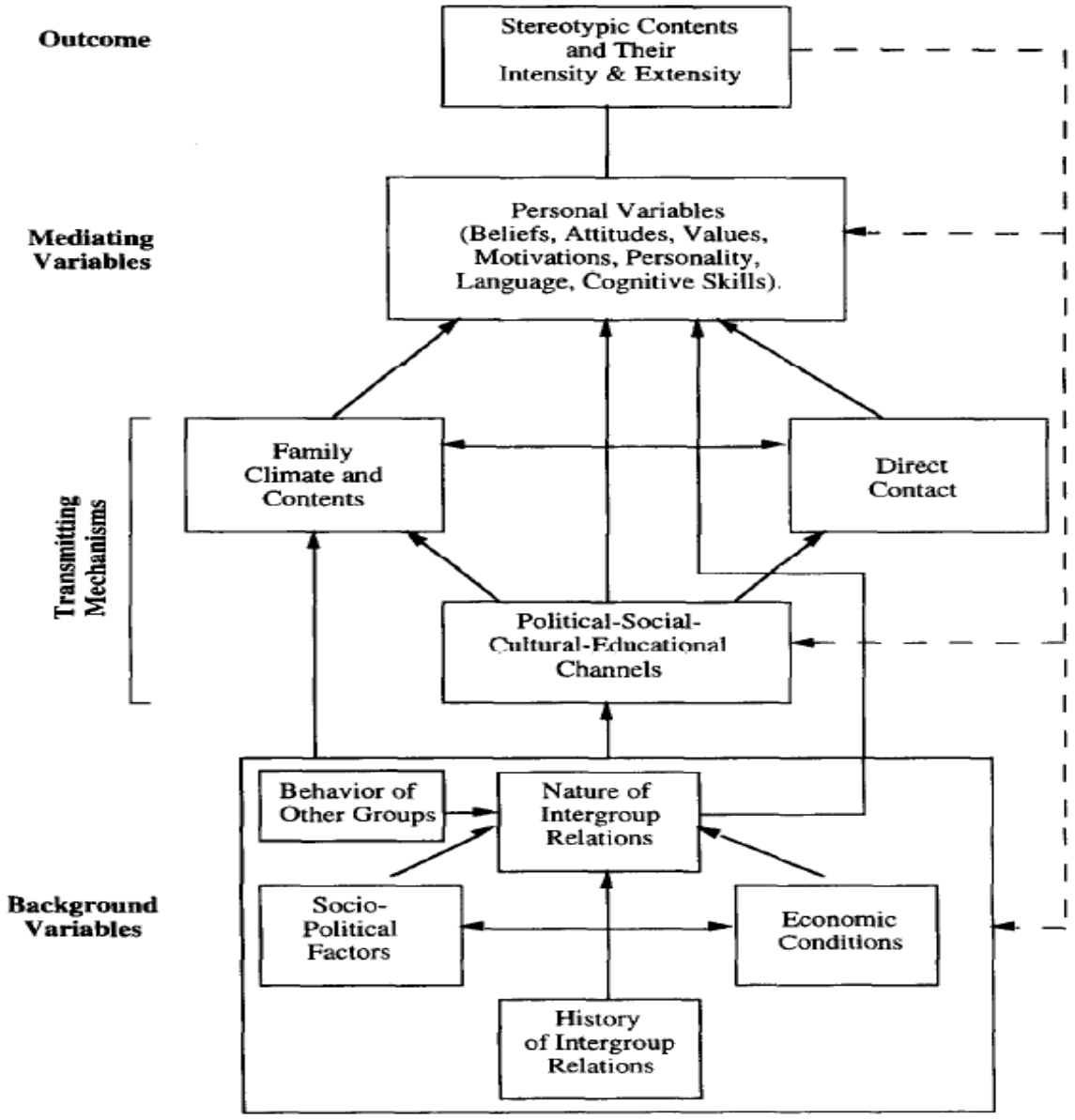


Figure 3. Model of Stereotypic Contents Formation and Change (Bar-Tal, 1997).

Sense of Community

Communities are fundamental contexts for human activity (Wiesenfeld, 1998). Wiesenfeld (1998) defined community as a "homogenous group of individuals, clearly distinguishable from others" (p. 337). Two major uses of the term community involve: the territorial notion of community and the relational notion of community (McMillan & Chavis,

1986). The territorial aspect of community refers to geography in terms of neighborhood, town or city, while the relational notion of community refers to the quality of human relationship without reference to location (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The implications can refer not only to the geographic location of the group in which they reside but also the emotional relationship they share within the community. Furthermore, McMillan and Chavis (1986) proposed a theory of sense of community which included four criteria: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection.

Community Membership

Community membership is a feeling of investment of oneself to become a member and achieve a sense of belonging (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Moreover, community membership is not only a feeling of belonging, but also a feeling of being a part (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Boundaries, emotional safety, sense of belonging, and personal investment determine who is a community member and who is not (Chavis, Hogge, McMillan, & Wandersman, 1986).

Boundaries suggest that there are people who do and do not belong within a group (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Language, dress, and ritual amongst group members create boundaries (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). These boundaries also provide members with emotional safety, which is the next attribute to determining membership (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Emotional safety can be more broadly associated with security (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Established boundaries provide structure and security that protect intimacy (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). This sense of safety may also include physical security as well as economic or financial security (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

The recognition of a member by another member of a group is one description of belonging (Hagerty, Williams, Coyne, & Early, 1996). Establishing and maintaining relatedness to others is a pervasive human concern (Hagerty et al., 1996). People survive, develop, and grow through interpersonal interactions (Hagerty et al., 1996). According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), sense of belonging includes "the feeling, belief, and expectation that one fits in the group and has a place there, a feeling of acceptance by the group, and a willingness to sacrifice for the group" (p. 10).

Working towards membership provides a feeling that one has earned a place within a group, which makes membership more meaningful (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). In addition, personal investment plays a large role in developing emotional connections (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). This investment, along with a sense of belonging, emotional safety and security, and set boundaries contribute to who is a part of the community and who is not (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Community Influence

The concept of influence is bidirectional (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The notion that a member be attracted to the group and have some influence over the group is the first direction (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). On the other hand, cohesiveness is dependent on the ability to influence group members (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). However, influence of group members can generate conflict and lead to either competition or cooperation. The difference between competition and cooperation is how one achieves an individual goal within each situation (Grossack, 1964). In competitive situations, an individual does not reach a goal unless all other individuals are unable to reach their goals, while in cooperative situations an individual does not reach a goal unless all other individuals participate in reaching the equivalent goal (Grossack,

1964). Cooperation leads to more cohesive behavior, attempts influence, uniformity, and communication than competition (Grossack, 1964). Cohesiveness within a group is the result of forces acting upon members to remain within a group (Martens & Peterson, 1971). There is a positive relationship between cohesiveness and influence on community members to conform, and when members conform in a community, the bond between them is strengthened and basic needs are met (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Fulfillment of Needs

According to Maslow, humans psychologically desire five sets of basic needs: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). Fulfillment of basic needs promotes positive, caring, and helpful relations (Staub, 2003). In addition to the basic human needs, benevolence and conformity are universal requirements of human existence from a social standpoint (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz and Knafo, 2002). Roccas et al. (2002) stated that "for individuals to coordinate their pursuit of these goals they must express them as values" (p. 790).

Families and cultures teach individuals a set of personal values (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). These values indicate needs and the order in which an individual attends to them (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Sharing the same values of needs, priorities, and goals with others fosters the belief that joining together can better satisfy these needs (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The sharing of needs also leads to group cohesiveness because groups with a sense of community benefit individuals so that they are able to meet group needs while also fulfilling individual needs (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), a community demonstrates strength when it is able to "fit people together so that people meet

others' needs while they meet their own" (p. 13). The twofold fulfillment of needs with social interaction can lead to a connection of emotion (Simon, 1967).

Shared Emotional Connection

Shared emotional connections affect the development of a sense of community because it offers members positive ways to interact, share and resolve events, honor members, personally invest within the community, and develop a strong spiritual bond (Chavis et al., 1986). In terms of emotional connection, different aspects affect interaction; McMillan and Chavis (1986) stated that "the more people interact, the more likely they are to become close" (p. 13). However, general interaction does guarantee cohesiveness, and if the experience is more positive, the bond is greater (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). These positive experiences are not limited to interaction, sharing, event resolution, and personal investment but can relate to land, sea, landforms, and plant life (Grieves, 2009).

Many members of an indigenous community have a strong spiritual tie to the homelands, ceremonial life, and histories which lead a strong emotional connection (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). For instance, the Indigenous Australians, or Aboriginals, primarily base their social groups on familial relationships (Dudgeon, Mallard, Oxenham, & Fielder, 2002). Perceptions of Aboriginals on community have two main aspects: physical grouping and sense of belonging (Dudgeon et al., 2002). In a study conducted by Dudgeon et al. (2002) on the Aboriginal perceptions of communities, one interviewee stated "a sense of community in Aboriginal terms seems to be identity and networks of belonging and participation – which primarily comes through family connections" (p. 21). Family connections and kinships form very strong relationships through the overlapping of the two main aspects of community for the Aboriginals (Dudgeon et al., 2002).

Secondary Education

Education is one of the most important services governments provide (Afonso & Aubyn, 2005). In 2001, total public expenditure on education was 84.4% in Australia and 93.0% in the United States (Afonso & St. Aubyn, 2005). Secondary education is also important on individual social and economic levels as well. Rumberger (1987) stated that "by leaving high school prior to completion, most dropouts have serious educational deficiencies that severely limit their economic and social well-being throughout their adult lives" (p. 101).

Secondary Education in New South Wales, Australia

New South Wales (NSW) is a state in southeast Australia with an estimated population (as of June 2012) of 7.29 million, or 34.5% of the Australian population, making it the Australia's most populous state (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). In NSW, secondary education is broken into stages that relate to years of schooling: (a) Stage 4 - Years 7 and 8, (b) Stage 5 - Years 9 and 10, and (c) Stage 6 - Years 11 and 12 (NSW Department of Education and Community, 2011). Education assesses student achievement based on eight key learning areas (KLAs) of the secondary curriculum: (a) Creative Arts, (b) English, (c) Human Society and Its Environment, (d) Languages, (e) Personal Development, (f) Health and Physical Education, (g) Science, and (h) Technology (NSW Department of Education and Community, 2011). In NSW public schools, agriculture falls under the Technology learning area. In years 7 and 8, educational policy requires all students to complete a Technology course (NSW Department of Education and Community, 2011). In years 7-12, educational standards allow students the opportunity to study electives in the Technology area which includes: agriculture, design and technology, engineering studies, industrial technology, information processes and technology, food technology, software design and development, and textiles and design (NSW Department of

Education and Community, 2011).

Economic dependence of the Australian population on secondary education has grown over the last fifty years (Teese & Polesel, 2003). When World War II ended, only one out of ten children in Australia completed a school program that would meet the requirements to attend a university (Teese & Polesel, 2003). Most males returned to the farm or began manual jobs once they were free to leave school (Teese & Polesel, 2003). With the shift to economic dependence on school, qualification levels for jobs started to rise in the 1950s (Teese & Polesel, 2003). Secondary education is a crucial component in Culture B in the acculturation model.

Secondary Education in Tennessee

In the United States, education is a state and local responsibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Federal contribution to elementary and secondary education is approximately 10.8% (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). In Tennessee, there are over 1,700 public schools that serve students grades kindergarten through 12 (Huffman, n.d.a.). Of those schools, 65% are considered Title I (Huffman, n.d.b.). The U.S. Department of Education (2004) states that the purpose of a Title I schools is "to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments" (p. 1). Secondary education achieves state standards by ensuring high-quality academic assessments and teacher preparation, meeting needs of low-achieving children in high poverty schools, holding schools accountable for improving academic achievement, distributing sufficient resources, providing children with an accelerated educational program, promoting school wide reform, and elevating the quality of instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

In Tennessee, state academic standards provide a common set of expectations for students (Huffman, n.d.a.). According to Huffman (n.d.a.), state standards establish necessary knowledge and skills for students to succeed in post-secondary study or careers. State standards include: vocabulary, arts education, computer technology, career guidance, early childhood, English/language arts, English as a second language, health/PE/wellness, mathematics, science, service learning, social studies, and world language (Huffman, n.d.a.).

Career and technical standards, or known as Career Clusters, include standards on Agriculture, Food, Natural Resources, and other fields (Huffman, n.d.c.). Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources specifically helps prepare students for careers in agriculture services including food, fiber, wood products, natural resources, horticulture, and plant and animal products (Huffman, n.d.c.). State education offers six programs of study: veterinary and animal science, agriculture engineering and applied technologies, agribusiness, food science, horticulture science, and environmental and natural resources management (Huffman, n.d.c.).

Chapter 3

Methodology/Procedures

Research Design

This study focused on opinions and attitudes of school administrators, teachers, and community members to determine the impact of international student teachers on a New South Wales, Australia Community. Therefore, this study was designed:

1. To determine the benefits of hosting international student teachers on the local school system;
2. To determine how the presence of international student teachers impacted the community they were involved with;
3. To explain changes in perception that occurred in the community due to the presence of international student teachers;
4. To determine if/how perceptions of international student teachers within the community have changed over time; and
5. To evaluate the impact American student teachers have had on the community since the development of the Australian Student Teaching Program.

A qualitative approach was necessary for this study because the overall goal was a holistic picture and depth of understanding rather than variables; verbal data cannot be expressed quantitatively (Hays & Singh, 2012). Furthermore, the researcher took on the role of action research participant within the New South Wales, Australia community. Therefore, this qualitative study followed a participatory action research design.

Participatory Action Research

Participatory action research is research that focuses on facilitating change in the participants as well as the researcher during the research process (Hays & Singh, 2012). McTaggart (1991) stated that "participatory action research is concerned simultaneously with changing both individuals *and* the culture of the groups, institution, and societies to which they belong" (p. 172). Since principal investigator was a participant of the student teaching program and a researcher of this study, the research method conducted was participatory action research. Participatory action researchers seek understanding of people's experiences while engaging their own experience and subjective interpretations (McTaggart, 1991). Furthermore, Kidd and Kral (2005) stated that "participatory action approaches are likely the best way to generate knowledge and action that is meaningful for the people involved and make it more likely that researchers may be invited to contribute to those communities" (p. 191-192). Participant observation, interviews, field notes, logs, and document analysis compile the information collected using participatory action research (McTaggart, 1991).

Procedure

The researcher spent ten weeks as an American student teacher in the New South Wales, Australia community during the fall of 2014. During this time, the researcher participated in community events and cultural activities such as weekly dinners with other teachers, gatherings at local venues, festivities at community members' homes, and local sports functions. Furthermore, the researcher spent an extensive amount of time within the Australian school system with administrators, teachers, and students. The researcher also spent time in the homes of community members.

Interviews and researcher reflections served as outlets for data collection. Furthermore, this study followed a semistructured interview approach. Semistructured interviews have the advantage of being objective, along with allowing a more thorough understanding of the respondent's opinions (Borg & Gall, 1983). Three protocols for interviews were:

1. Australian School Administrators
2. Australian Teachers
3. Australian Community Members

Prior to interviewing, each participant signed an informed consent statement. The researcher conducted the interviews between November 6, 2014 and December 6, 2014. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes and was recorded. The interview questions attempted to identify changes in the community impact of American student teachers since the beginning of the program in 2005.

The principal of the participating school (Caleb) was selected as a representative of the school. This individual played a critical role in the continuation of this program. Based on the deputy principal's involvement with the program, the deputy principal (Ryan) was also selected. The researcher also selected the two mentoring teachers (Scarlett and Oliver) based on their involvement with the American student teachers within the classroom. One mentor teacher also identified staff members who could provide useful insight due to their involvement of the program since its beginning. Therefore, three support staff members (Joseph, Claire, and Lillian) were selected. Furthermore, one head teacher (William) was also selected. To provide opinions unrelated to the educational setting, the researcher also selected two area businessmen (John and Miles).

The interview questions for the Australian School Administrators, Teachers, and Community members were replicated from the Bunch study (2009) as followed:

Interview Protocol (Australian School Administrators)

Question #1: What are the reactions from parents of students in the school?

Question #2: What distracters, if any, are present during the time of the student teaching experience?

Question #3: What were some of the initial reactions faculty and staff in the school had towards the program?

Question #4: Were there any changes in school climate/culture while American teachers were in the school or after leaving?

Questions #5: What are your thoughts about having the student teachers in your school?

Interview Protocol (Australian Teachers/Support Staff)

Question #1: Do students perform at a higher level as a result of having an American student teacher in the classroom? Explain your answer.

Question #2: Does the American teaching experience promote interest of students to travel or continue educational goals? Explain your answer.

Question #3: Does motivation in school change as a result of new ideas and refreshing change? Explain your answer.

Question #4: What role does leadership have when having student teachers in the classroom?

Question #5: What impressions (if any) do the student teachers leave on the overall community?

Question #6: What were your beginning impressions on the international student teachers?

Question #7: Have your perceptions of hosting international student teachers changed since the beginning of the program?

Question #8: Do the students express any signs of shifts in behavior or stress as a result of the student teachers?

Interview Protocol (Australian Community Members)

Question #1: What were your beginning impressions on the American student teachers?

Question #2: Have your perceptions of hosting American student teachers changed since the beginning of the program?

Question #3: Do you feel that the community is more accepting of the American student teachers since the program began 10 years ago? Explain your answer.

Question #4: Does the community members express any signs of shifts in behavior or stress as a result of the student teachers?

Question #5: What impressions (if any) do the student teachers leave on the overall community?

Question #6: Do you feel that community members share values similar to the American student teachers? Explain your answer.

Question #7: Do you feel that there has been a cultural shift within the community since first hosting the American student teachers? Explain your answer.

Upon completion of each interview, the researcher recorded notes about the length of session, impressions of the interviewee, comments about the flow, and reactions of the

interviewer to the interviewee. Such impressions are useful for understanding while analyzing data (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). After returning home, the researcher began transcribing interview recordings.

One of the basic principles of participatory action research is to reflect on the information gathered (Hays & Singh, 2012). Furthermore, participatory action research uses critical reflection throughout the research process as a validity check (Hays & Singh, 2012). Therefore, the reflections of the researcher demonstrate a large amount of this study's data. Throughout the research, the researcher recorded thoughts, opinions, feelings, biases, and community's impact on the researcher.

Subjects

The target population for this study was school administrators, teachers, and members of an Australian community. Exposure to individuals in the community and also recommendations from the agriculture teachers and principals served as the basis for recruitment of participants.

The researcher interviewed the Australian participants, and the interview questions identified observational changes within the community since the beginning of the international student teaching program. The questions were open-ended and encouraged extensive feedback and explanation from the participants.

Rigor

Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) stated that "without rigor, research is worthless, becomes fiction, and loses its utility. Hence, a great deal of attention is applied to reliability and validity in all research methods" (p. 2). Hays and Singh (2012) defined validity, in quantitative research, as "evidence of authentic, believable findings for a phenomenon from

research that results from a strict adherence to methodological rules and standards" (p. 192). In qualitative research, validity is known as trustworthiness (Hays & Singh, 2002).

Trustworthiness

Hays and Singh (2012) listed several criteria for trustworthiness. Credibility is equivalent to internal validity in quantitative research (Hays & Singh, 2012). Credibility is a major principle that researchers use to determine if conclusions make sense (Hays & Singh, 2012). Transferability is analogous to external validity in quantitative research (Hays & Singh, 2012). Transferability provides enough description of the research process that readers can make decisions about the findings (Hays & Singh, 2012). Dependability refers to the consistency of the research over time and across researchers (Hays & Singh, 2012). Dependability is similar to reliability in quantitative research (Hays & Singh, 2012). The next criterion, confirmability, is genuineness of participant reflections, and, similarly, authenticity is the attempt to truly represent participant perspectives (Hays & Singh, 2012). Furthermore, coherence is the degree of consistency throughout the research design (Hays & Singh, 2012). Coherence reflects that the researcher infuses the selected research tradition throughout the research project. Sampling adequacy refers to the use of sampling methods (Hays & Singh, 2012). Another criterion is ethical validation, which refers to treating all aspects of the research process morally (Hays & Singh, 2012). The final two criteria for trustworthiness are substantive validation and creativity. Substantive validation relates to the substance of the research (Hays & Singh, 2012). Research is substantive if it significantly contributes to a profession (Hays & Singh, 2012). Creativity is the flexibility the researcher has during the overall process (Hays & Singh, 2012). Showing flexibility is a sign of rigor (Hays & Singh, 2012).

Trustworthiness Strategies

In regards to maximizing the criteria for trustworthiness, Hays and Singh (2012) stated "it is important to use multiple strategies that address the research process, data interpretation, and report writing" (p. 205). Hays and Singh (2012) identified twelve strategies to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research reflexive journals, field notes, memos, member checking, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, theory development, peer debriefing, simultaneous data collection/analysis, negative case analysis, thick description, audit trail, and referential adequacy. Trustworthiness was established in this study by using seven of the listed procedures.

Credibility

Believability of the study establishes credibility (Hays & Singh, 2012). Credibility is a major criteria used to determine if the conclusions of a study are practical (Hays & Singh, 2012). Since the researcher played a dual role as participant and researcher, the researcher kept a journal throughout the research process. The journal included thoughts about how the research was impacting the researcher, how participating within the community through social events such as weekly meals and social gatherings at local venues was impacting the researcher, and observations about how the researcher's presence was impacting the community. Furthermore, the researcher recorded field notes upon completion of the interviews and as any observations were made.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency of study results across researchers (Hays & Singh, 2012). For this study, a peer, who is familiar with the study's content and complexity, reviewed the researcher's work. The peer reviewer (a university faculty member trained in qualitative

research) looked for consistency between participant responses, researcher observations, notes, and conclusions. The peer reviewer also ensured that researcher biases did not alter the results of the study. The peer reviewer also transcribed and coded the data. Upon completion of the coding, the peer reviewer and the researcher compared themes. Two major themes and eight subthemes emerged.

Transferability

Transferability is the external validity in qualitative research (Hays & Singh, 2012). The use of interviews, related literature, and a reflexive journal to ensure consistency between sources establish transferability in the study. Therefore, several perspectives helped to develop triangulation of information. Furthermore, the researcher vividly described procedures, interview results, and conclusions.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to how genuine the reflections of the investigated participants are referred in the findings. Member checking was used to ensure confirmability within the study. Member checking is the continuing discussions with research participants in order to clarify responses and ensure authentic representation (Hays & Singh, 2012). Upon completion of interview transcriptions, research participants reviewed the transcriptions to check for discrepancies and how well the data analysis represents their experience. Furthermore, although the researcher's time in the field was limited to ten weeks, the researcher lived within the community being studied. Therefore, the researcher gained an understanding of characteristics of the culture and the community. Consequently, the researcher persistently observed the community and education throughout the ten weeks in which the researcher lived within the community being studied. Multiple situations, including different social settings, times of the

day and week, and interactions among differing social groups provided opportunities for observations.

Researcher Bias

The researcher in this study was a participant in the Australian Student Teaching Program. As a result, the research acknowledged that personal biases existed. Since the researcher was a student teacher within the community, the researcher desired that the impact on the community was positive. Furthermore, the researcher spent extended time with several community members and knew them on a personal level. Therefore, when analyzing the data, the researcher's personal impression of the participant could have been imposed on the denotation of the responses. In order to bracket the researcher bias, the researcher's own beliefs were put into abeyance for the analysis of the data. Furthermore, the interview transcriptions were returned to the participants to ensure that the researcher had not misinterpreted the data.

Chapter 4

Journal of Agricultural Education Manuscript

This chapter includes the manuscript prepared for submission to the Journal of Agricultural Education.

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We offer our thanks to administration, faculty, and staff of Broken Hill High School, NSW, Australia for hosting American student teachers within their school system. We also offer thanks to the administration, faculty, staff, and community members for participating in this study.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to evaluate change in the impact of American agriculture education student teachers on a rural community in New South Wales, Australia over ten years. The study analyzed interviews with ten participants of the American Student Teaching Program in a New South Wales community. The researcher was a student teacher in the New South Wales community for ten weeks and taught agriculture in one of the community's high schools. Exposure to individuals in the community and also recommendations from the agriculture teachers and principals of the Australian school, which included the principal, deputy principal, one head teacher, two agriculture teachers, three support staff members, and two area businessmen, served as the basis for participant recruitment. The researcher transcribed the interviews. The researcher and a peer reviewer coded and categorized the data into themes.

Since the researcher was a participant in the Australian Student Teaching Program, participatory action research enabled the researcher to identify areas of influence suggested by the interview participants. Participants identified two major themes: impact on student growth and sense of community, and eight subthemes: student performance, international growth, culture, perceptions and stereotypes, values, beginning impressions of American student teachers versus current impressions, involvement within the community, and community acceptance as impactful changes.

Introduction/Theoretical Framework

Globalization refers to a full range of factors that are sweeping across the globe unhindered by boundaries and policies of a nation-state (Dator, Pratt, & Seo, 2006). With increased globalization, society places greater attention on increasing understandings of stereotypes, cultural awareness, and language barriers (Bunch, 2009). With the fast increase in globalization, reciprocal basis of ethics is a large problem (Dator, Pratt, & Seo, 2006). Reciprocity in regards to future generations is more crucial because present generations can impact the lives of future generations who cannot express what globalization means to them (Dator, Pratt, & Seo, 2006). Therefore, globalization and culture represent key elements of change in the modern world (Greig, 2002). Berry (2008) stated, "…globalization is initiated by intercultural contact and leads to cultural and individual change" (p. 328). Therefore, when different cultural groups meet, they go through the process of acculturation.

Sam and Berry (2010) defined acculturation as "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (p. 437). During acculturation, one undergoes many types of changes including biological, social, and physical

(Sam & Berry, 2010). Furthermore, when people from different cultural backgrounds interact with one another, they may adopt the other's language, beliefs, values, behaviors, and technologies (Sam & Berry, 2010). Therefore, a complete understanding of acculturation begins with social contexts such as cultural characteristics (Berry, 2005).

An individual's culture plays a significant role in his/her perception, especially self-esteem. People tend to enhance their evaluations of in-group members and degrade out-group members in order to maintain higher levels of self-esteem (Flynn, 2005). Additionally, individuals pursue positive social identity through beliefs about the nature of relations between groups (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Accordingly, people classify themselves and others into various social categories, and prototypical characteristics theorized from the members of group define these categories (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Classifying one into social categories creates a strong version and a weak version of social perception (Jussim, 1991). The strong version assumes that perceptions create social reality as much as it reflects reality, while the weak version acknowledges that prejudices and beliefs sometimes create social reality (Jussim, 1991). Therefore, impressions of individuals can lead to perceptions of the group as a whole (Tajfel, 1982).

Stereotypes, or prejudices, refer to prejudgments reached before relevant information has been collected (Tajfel, 1981). Although individuals form stereotypes, their implications emerge from the context of group membership (Bar-Tal, 1997). Individuals continuously organize themselves in order to satisfy their needs (Bar-Tal, 1997). One consequence of belonging to a group is that some individuals form a self-social identity which defines them as group members (Bar-Tal, 1997). Although there are many social factors influencing stereotypes, there is an importance for an individual to be adaptive and be willing to make adjustments to existing

attitudes (Flynn, 2005). For example, Bunch's (2009) study on the impact of American student teachers on an Australian community found that "cultural awareness brought about by the presence of the American students teachers resulted in disproving some of the stereotypes towards Americans" (p. 68). Bunch (2009) also discovered that preconceived stereotypes were altered, however new incorrect stereotypes were formed. Collectively, socializing members, including parents, grandparents, and other extended family, not only pass stereotypes to younger generations, but create a climate that serves as a facilitator of stereotypical contents in communities (Bar-Tal, 1997).

Communities are fundamental contexts for human activity (Wiesenfeld, 1998). Wiesenfeld (1998) defined community as a "homogenous group of individuals, clearly distinguishable from others" (p. 337). Two major uses of the term community are: the territorial notion of community and the relational notion of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The territorial aspect of community refers to geography in terms of neighborhood, town or city, while the relational notion of community refers to the quality of human relationship without reference to location (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). In addition, there are four criteria that define a sense of community: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Community membership is a feeling of investment of oneself to become a member and achieve a sense of belonging (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Moreover, community membership is not only a feeling of belonging, but also a feeling of being a part (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Four contributing attributes to determine who is a community member and who is not exist, two of which are sense of belonging and personal investment (Chavis, Hogge, McMillan, & Wandersman, 1986). Belonging is the recognition of a member by another member of a group

(Hagerty, Williams, Coyne, & Early, 1996). According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), sense of belonging includes "the feeling, belief, and expectation that one fits in the group and has a place there, a feeling of acceptance by the group, and a willingness to sacrifice for the group" (p. 10). Working for membership provides a feeling that one has earned a place within a group, which makes membership more meaningful (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). In addition, personal investment plays a large role in developing emotional connections with community members (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). This investment, along with a sense of belonging, emotional safety and security, and set boundaries contribute to who is a part of the community and who is not (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

The concept of influence is bidirectional (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The notion that a member be attracted to the group and have some influence over what the group does is the first direction (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). On the other hand, cohesiveness is dependent on the ability to influence group members (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). However, influence of group members can generate conflict and lead to either competition or cooperation. In competitive situations, an individual does not reach a goal unless all other individuals are unable to reach their goals, while in cooperative situations an individual does not reach a goal unless all other individuals participate in reaching the equivalent goal (Grossack, 1964). Furthermore, cooperation leads to more cohesive behavior, attempts influence, uniformity, and communication than competition (Grossack, 1964).

Fulfillment of basic needs promotes positive, caring, and helpful relations (Staub, 2003). Cultural and social conditions that frustrate basic psychological needs lead to violence, while conditions that fulfill needs constructively develop peaceful relationships (Staub, 2003). In addition to the basic human needs, benevolence and conformity are universal requirements of

human existence from a social standpoint (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz & Knafo, 2002). Roccas et al. (2002) stated that "for individuals to coordinate their pursuit of these goals they must express them as values" (p. 790). Families and cultures teach individuals a set of personal values (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). These values indicate needs and the order in which an individual attends to them (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Sharing the same values of needs, priorities, and goals with others fosters the belief that joining together can better satisfy these needs (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The sharing of needs also leads to group cohesiveness because groups with a sense of community benefit individuals so that they are able to meet group needs while also fulfilling individual needs (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Overall, a community is considered "strong" when it is able to "fit people together so that people meet others' needs while they meet their own" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 13).

Shared emotional connections affect development of sense of community because it offers members positive ways to interact, events to share, positive resolution to events, opportunities to honor members, personal investment within the community, and a strong spiritual bond (Chavis et al., 1986). In terms of emotional connection, different aspects affect interaction. McMillan and Chavis (1986) stated that "the more people interact, the more likely they are to become close" (p. 13). However, general interaction does guarantee cohesiveness, and if the experience is more positive, the bond is greater (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Creating a community can be difficult and there are several factors within that community that affect relationships. One community entity where relationships are formed and impacted is the local school system. School systems function differently in communities, but they also function differently in different countries. Two countries that are focused on in this paper are Australia and the United States and within those countries, two states were selected. In

Australia, New South Wales was selected and in the United States, Tennessee was selected. New South Wales (NSW) is a state in southeast Australia with an estimated population (as of June 2012) of 7.29 million, or 34.5% of the Australian population, making it the Australia's most populous state (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). In NSW, secondary education is broken into stages that relate to years of schooling: (a) Stage 4 - Years 7 and 8, (b) Stage 5 - Years 9 and 10, and (c) Stage 6 - Years 11 and 12 (NSW Department of Education and Community). Education assesses student achievement based on eight key learning areas (KLAs) of the secondary curriculum: (a) Creative Arts, (b) English, (c) Human Society and Its Environment, (d) Languages, (e) Personal Development, (f) Health and Physical Education, (g) Science, and (h) Technology (NSW Department of Education and Community). In NSW public schools, agriculture falls under the Technology learning area. In years 7 and 8, all students are required to complete a Technology course (NSW Department of Education and Community). In years 7-12, students are given the opportunity to study electives in the Technology area which includes: agriculture, design and technology, engineering studies, industrial technology, information processes and technology, food technology, software design and development, and textiles and design (NSW Department of Education and Community).

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challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments." State standards can be achieved by ensuring high-quality academic assessments and teacher preparation, meeting needs of low-achieving children in high poverty schools, holding schools accountable for improving academic achievement, distributing sufficient resources, providing children with an accelerated educational program, promoting school wide reform, and elevating the quality of instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

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Communities are unique and being a member of a community requires one to adapt and adjust to several influences within that community. Those factors can only be truly understood by being immersed in that particular community and studying the individuals which comprise the community. Therefore, the idea behind this study was for the researcher to be part of a

community and school system within that community to better understand the influence that another culture can have on a community.

Purpose and Objectives

The purposes of this qualitative study was to evaluate the impacts American student teachers had on a New South Wales, Australia community since the Australian Student Teaching Program was established, and if community members were more receptive to the participating international student teachers. Therefore, this study was designed:

1. To determine the benefits of hosting international student teachers on the local school system;
2. To determine how the presence of international student teachers impacted the community they were involved with;
3. To explain changes in perception that occurred in the community due to the presence of international student teachers;
4. To determine if/how perceptions of international student teachers within the community have changed over time; and
5. To evaluate the impact American student teachers have had on the community since the development of the Australian Student Teaching Program.

Methodology and Procedure

Participatory action research is focused on facilitating change in the participants as well as the researcher during the research process (Hays & Singh, 2012). McTaggart (1991) stated that "participatory action research is concerned simultaneously with changing both individuals *and* the culture of the groups, institution, and societies to which they belong" (p. 172). Participatory action research seeks understanding of people's experiences while engaging their

own experience and their own subjective interpretations (McTaggart, 1991). Furthermore, Kidd and Kral (2005) stated that "participatory action approaches are likely the best way to generate knowledge and action that is meaningful for the people involved and make it more likely that researchers may be invited to contribute to those communities" (p. 191-192). Since the principal investigator was a participant of the student teaching program and a researcher of this study, the research method conducted was participatory action research. Participant observation, interviews, field notes, logs, and document analysis are forms of research collection in participatory action research.

One of the basic principles of participatory action research is to reflect on the information gathered (Hays & Singh, 2012). Furthermore, participatory action research uses critical reflection throughout the research process as a validity check (Hays & Singh, 2012). Therefore, a large amount of data from this study was collected through the reflections of the researcher. Throughout the research, the researcher recorded thoughts, opinions, feelings, biases, and the impact that the community had on the researcher.

The researcher spent ten weeks as an American student teacher in the New South Wales, Australia community during the fall of 2014. During this time, the researcher participated in community events and cultural activities such as weekly dinners with other teachers, gatherings at local venues, festivities at community members' homes, and local sports functions. Furthermore, the researcher spent an extensive amount of time within the Australian school system with administrators, teachers, and students.

This study followed a semistructured interview approach. Semistructured interviews have the advantage of being objective, along with allowing a more thorough understanding of the respondent's opinions (Borg & Gall, 1983). Upon completion of each interview, the researcher

recorded notes about the length of session, impressions of the interviewee, comments about the flow, and reactions of the interviewer to the interviewee.

The researcher conducted the interviews between November 6, 2014 and December 6, 2014. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. The interview questions attempted to identify changes in the community impact of American student teachers since the beginning of the program in 2005. Prior to interviewing, each participant signed an informed consent statement.

The principal of the participating school (Caleb) was selected as a representative of the school. This individual has played a critical role in the continuation of this program. The deputy principal of the participating school (Ryan) was also selected based on his involvement with the program. Two mentoring teachers (Scarlett and Oliver) were selected based on their involvement with the American student teachers within the classroom. One mentor teacher also identified staff members who could provide useful insight due to their involvement of the program since its beginning. Therefore, three support staff members (Joseph, Claire, and Lillian) were selected. Furthermore, one head teacher (William) was also selected. Finally, two area businessmen (John and Miles) were selected to provide opinions unrelated to the educational setting.

The interview questions for the Australian School Administrators, Teachers/Support Staff, and Community members were replicated from the Bunch study (2009) as followed:

Interview Protocol (Australian School Administrators)

Question #1: What are the reactions from parents of students in the school?

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Questions #5: What are your thoughts about having the student teachers in your school?

Interview Protocol (Australian Teachers/Support Staff)

Question #1: Do students perform at a higher level as a result of having an American student teacher in the classroom? Explain your answer.

Question #2: Does the American teaching experience promote interest of students to travel or continue educational goals? Explain your answer.

Question #3: Does motivation in school change as a result of new ideas and refreshing change? Explain your answer.

Question #4: What role does leadership have when having student teachers in the classroom?

Question #5: What impressions (if any) do the student teachers leave on the overall community?

Question #6: What were your beginning impressions on the international student teachers?

Question #7: Have your perceptions of hosting international student teachers changed since the beginning of the program?

Question #8: Do the students express any signs of shifts in behavior or stress as a result of the student teachers?

Interview Protocol (Australian Community Members)

Question #1: What were your beginning impressions on the American student teachers?

Question #2: Have your perceptions of hosting American student teachers changed since the beginning of the program?

Question #3: Do you feel that the community is more accepting of the American student teachers since the program began 10 years ago? Explain your answer.

Question #4: Does the community members express any signs of shifts in behavior or stress as a result of the student teachers?

Question #5: What impressions (if any) do the student teachers leave on the overall community?

Question #6: Do you feel that community members share values similar to the American student teachers? Explain your answer.

Question #7: Do you feel that there has been a cultural shift within the community since first hosting the American student teachers? Explain your answer.

Upon completion of each interview, the researcher recorded notes about the length of session, impressions of the interviewee, comments about the flow, and reactions of the interviewer to the interviewee. Such impressions are useful for understanding while analyzing data (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). After returning home, the researcher transcribed interview recordings. The researcher and peer reviewer categorized data into themes before comparing notes and agreeing on themes and subthemes within the data.

Trustworthiness is validity in qualitative research (Hays & Singh, 2012). There are several criteria to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research including credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, authenticity, and coherence (Hays & Singh, 2012).

Trustworthiness was established in this study by using credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Believability of the study establishes credibility (Hays & Singh, 2012). Credibility is a major criterion used to determine if the conclusions of a study are practical (Hays & Singh, 2012). Since the researcher played a dual role as participant and researcher, the researcher kept a journal throughout the research process. The journal included thoughts about how the research was impacting the researcher, how participating within the community was impacting the researcher, and observations about how the researcher's presence was impacting the community. Furthermore, the researcher recorded field notes upon completion of the interviews and as any observations were made.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency of study results across researchers (Hays & Singh, 2012). For this study, a peer, who is familiar with the study's content and complexity, reviewed the researcher's work. The peer reviewer (a university faculty member trained in qualitative research) looked for consistency between participant responses, researcher observations, notes, and conclusions. The peer reviewer also ensured that researcher biases did not alter the results of the study. The peer reviewer also transcribed and coded the data. Upon completion of the coding, the peer review and the researcher compared themes. Two major themes and eight subthemes emerged.

Transferability

Transferability is the external validity in qualitative research (Hays & Singh, 2012). The use of interviews, related literature, and a reflexive journal to ensure consistency between

sources establish transferability in the study. Therefore, several perspectives helped to develop triangulation of information. Furthermore, the researcher vividly described procedures, interview results, and conclusions.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to how genuine the reflections of the investigated participants are referred in the findings. Member checking was used to ensure confirmability within the study. Member checking is the continuing discussions with research participants in order to clarify responses and ensure authentic representation (Hays & Singh, 2012). Upon completion of interview transcriptions, research participants reviewed the transcriptions to check for discrepancies and how well the data analysis represents their experience. Furthermore, although the researcher's time in the field was limited to ten weeks, the researcher lived within the community being studied. Therefore, the researcher gained an understanding of characteristics of the culture and the community. Consequently, the researcher persistently observed the community and education throughout the ten weeks in which the researcher lived within the community being studied. Multiple situations, including different social settings, times of the day and week, and interactions among differing social groups provided opportunities for observations.

Researcher Bias

The researcher in this study was a participant in the Australian Student Teaching Program. As a result, the research acknowledged that personal biases existed. Since the researcher was a student teacher within the community, the researcher desired that the impact on the community was positive. Furthermore, the researcher spent extended time with several community members and knew them on a personal level. Therefore, when analyzing the data,

the researcher's personal impression of the participant could have been imposed on the denotation of the responses. In order to bracket the researcher bias, the researcher's own beliefs were put into abeyance for the analysis of the data. Furthermore, the interview transcriptions were returned to the participants to ensure that the researcher had not misinterpreted the data.

Findings

Based upon the responses from the participants interviewed, two major themes emerged. Those two themes were the impact on student growth and sense of community. Within those two major themes, eight subthemes also emerged. The subthemes of student growth are student performance and international growth, and the subthemes of sense of community are culture, perceptions and stereotypes, values, beginning impressions of American student teachers verses current impressions, involvement within the community, and community acceptance.

Student Growth

Student Performance

Student growth was revealed from participants as it was related to student performance. Most participants noticed an increase in student performance resulting from the presence of American student teachers. Scarlett stated, "I think they (Australian students) actually got their work done a lot faster than what they were previously, and I think they seemed to enjoy the class a lot more having someone different in the room." Not only did the presence of American student teachers have an impact on students who were enrolled in agriculture classes but also students from other classes as well. Scarlett specified,

> I think the kids are a lot more interested to come to class cause they knew you were gonna be there. Even kids wanted to come to our class out of other classes towards the end. So I think that creates motivation for the class.

Furthermore, many students who were associated with past behavior problems became more intrigued with the subject matter and class participation. Ryan commented,

> Those kids, to me, looked a little more interested in the subjects whilst there tends to be lots of behavior problems from the agricultural side of things, and they are not always engaged but just listening to them. They have certainly picked up something from you being here, and I am assuming that it also opened their eyes a little bit to what goes on.

Joseph, Scarlett, Oliver, Caleb, and Ryan agreed that the increase in student performance was a result of having a culturally different educator present. Joseph stated,

> I think they learn different aspects and different things you bring from another country and learn that our way may not be the best way... a different way of looking at things, and a different way of doing things. Different culture, respect for different things. I think they can learn a lot from different people in different countries.

Similarly, Oliver stated, "Different persons have their different styles and different ways of teaching and when different things are put in to practice in different ways that definitely affects the students in a positive manner." Oliver also added,

> Some of the areas that you guys are teaching about, [are] probably done a little bit different from here, and students can see different ways of doing things, and that definitely has an impact on those who are typically not able to follow one particular aspect but can follow the other one so that way the student gets a chance to grasp the concept and application.

Additionally, participants suggested that having someone from a different country come to teach allows the students the opportunity to think more globally. Oliver highlighted,

> In a remote community like this, having people from outside definitely helps students broaden their views and acceptance. The fact that they do not have to think so locally, they can actually think quite globally and they think 'Okay, [this] is not the only place I can get employment; Australia is not the only place where I can get employment.'

International Growth

According to Joseph, William, Scarlett, Oliver, and Ryan, students also developed an international interest. When asked if hosting American student teachers promoted interest of students to travel, Joseph replied,

> Yeah I think it does. Because lots of people ask you lots of questions about what you do [in America], what is [in America]… Students are interested in America and want to go over there and see what another country is like.

Additionally, Ryan stated,

> From the students that I have spoken to, they have been very curious. They have been asking questions particularly 'where are they from?' 'what is different there from here?' from outside of school, and I talk to some of them at cricket training and things like that, they are often referring to 'such and such they told me this today' and that does not happen all the time and in other classes so there has definitely been interest from the kids, which I think is fantastic.

Furthermore, Ryan added, "It is great, and I think for the kids, it is a great experience for them as well particularly in an isolated area like [NSW City], where most of them would probably not experience going to America."

Sense of Community

In addition to the impact on student growth, sense of community was another prominent theme that emerged from the participants. McMillan and Chavis (1986) defined sense of community as "a feeling that members have a belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p. 9).

Culture

When asked if there had been any changes in culture within the school since the beginning of the program, William responded,

> Some of the kids kept in contact via social media and that sort of thing. So, I think that definitely has an impact on the kids, and I like to think that they bring a bit of their culture and like the rest of the world we get to see what is on [American television] just like you get to see an Australian on television. And I think that the reality is always really different than the media perception. I think it has been good. I think the changes to the culture probably are better awareness. Sometimes small country towns can be very literal, some kids never experience anything outside their country town so to have someone come in and then establish that professional teacher/student relationship with them.

Furthermore, when Claire was asked if there had been a cultural shift since the beginning of the program, they responded

> I think there has been. I think before, even though you can see things on the internet and all the rest of it, it is that experience person to person; the internet does not relate to me on a person to person basis. So I had a view of what American culture was like, a lot of that was based on television, movies, and all that sort of thing, which is fantasies in some

> cases. So for me, having that knowledge and having somebody that comes in and talks about 'well this is my daily life experience' it is different. And it is probably more real.

Nevertheless, not all participants felt the same way. When asked the same question, John responded,

> I really do not think there is a cultural shift. I do not think a couple teachers here or there are going to change the culture of a town. But I think they have enjoyed the cultural differences and enjoyed being exposed to that, for sure."

Perceptions and Stereotypes

Although some participants disagreed that there has been a complete culture shift, participants agreed perceptions and stereotypes have changed since the beginning of the program. When asked if perceptions have changed since the beginning of the program, Miles replied

> It has changed a lot actually. Because you do see those television programs and things like that. So yeah that has changed. We learn a lot more about different areas of America and a lot more about America from having people out here, which is good. We see certain things and that is what we go off of; a lot of American shows and American movies, and that is what we are pretty much fed and some people believe that that is how Americans are and the way they act and behave and a lot of that is [not true].

Furthermore, Claire stated

> I now understand that there are some similarities in terms of what is portrayed in American movies and the internet, but there are also a lot of difference because you are people who are talking to me about what your life is like and how it is similar to ours but also how it is different from ours. I think that cultural relationship has been a lot better.

Values

This dissolving of stereotypes also led participants to realize that values were similar to the American student teachers. When asked if the participant felt that American student teachers shared similar values, William responded, "I think they align quite strongly." Moreover, when asked the same question, Miles replied

> Definitely, I think your values are right along with what we are like. Things are a little bit different like in different communities you get different beliefs. I think you guys are strongly Christian from where you are from, and this is more multicultural but still I think the beliefs are the same.

Beginning Impressions of American Student Teachers

Some participants admitted that their beginning impressions were not as positive. When asked how they felt when they first learned that there would be an American student teacher, Claire stated,

> Obviously your first impression is always 'what is the impact going to be with these people being in the school?' because it is a different school system between the two countries. We did not know who the person was and we did not know what the person was going to be like. We did not know how they were going to affect our kids, so it was very important that we went in with an open mind, but also recognize there could be some difficulties if the person came out and was not necessarily a really understanding person.

However, not all participants shared the anxiety of having a new face within the community. Oliver stated,

> Well, I was really excited because we are constantly learning so my feeling was all of us could get some opportunity to learn new things and techniques and ways because even theoretically there are lots of things we read in books and journals that comes from Americans cause they spend more money on research and everything in the world. But still, reading and seeing is different. So when I first heard that two of the American students were coming, I was really interested in seeing what I learn from books and journals and all those things, how that has changed or reshaped in practice.

Some participants were neither anxious nor excited but curious. Ryan stated, "Well initially I guess I asked myself 'why?' Why pick, Australia? I was curious to see how the two different educational settings would come together and work." Regardless of initial reactions, all participants agreed to a level of excitement upon hearing that they would receive more American student teachers. Claire stated,

> I think because our last experience was reasonably positive, you are more willing now to step back and go 'well this is going to be great.' You are actually looking forward to it because you are seeing it as a continuation of something that happened before that was good. If it had not been good before, then there would be major problem.

Furthermore, Joseph specified, "We look forward to it every time someone comes out."

Community Involvement

One point to ensuring that impressions are positive is the attitude and involvement of the new member within the community. Claire solidified this concept by admitting

> If you come in with a bit of an open mind to start with and willing to try things it just makes it so much easier for us to support you and get you to be involved in what we are involved with because if you came in with an attitude of 'I am not going to do anything'

> then people automatically put up their shutters and sort of go ‘well we are not going to invite you anywhere’ and ‘we have invited you to three places and you have not gone so we are not going to invite you again,’ and again, those walls keep building a barrier.

Additionally, Lillian stated, “I think that because you came prepared to try things and experience things Australian wise, it has been so much easier to mix in with you as well.” Lillian went on to say that all of the previous student teachers have been willing to be involved with the community,

> We have not ever had any issues, and I am prepared to go the extra mile when you see the teachers from America are prepared to take the extra time to blend in and mix with us, that makes a big difference.

Community Acceptance

The participants in the study claimed that the American student teachers were very well accepted into the community. Scarlett stated, “[NSW City] is a very accepting sort of town. It is very welcoming town that welcomes all different cultures.” Furthermore William stated,

> My recollection is that [the community] has been very accepting of the American teachers. Whether that has gone up, I do not know because I think that it has always been at a high level. We have had some trouble with international teachers in the past because of strong dialects, and some of the kids have really struggled to understand some of the accents that some of the staff members have had in the past which has caused problems. Also, sometimes some of the cultural backgrounds where we have had teachers come from a very strong misogynistic background and do not understand how our kids do not have those same kinds of values. But I believe you guys have settled in very well, and there have not been any issues come my way in terms of culture or based on culture.

When asked if the community was more accepting of the American student teachers since the beginning of the program, Claire replied,

> I think probably it is (more accepting). And part of it has to do just with society and culture in terms of where we now have more access to the rest of the world where before we used to have a small view of the world because we did not have any experiences. But now you have got the internet and all that stuff, and even though it is not really living that real life, it gives you access to that information. I also think people are more accepting because it was good last time. It was not a really bad experience, and people did not have to put out all these spot fires and deal with bad behavior or something like that. Since it was good, people look at it and go 'well I think this is a great program. I think it offers us something as well as us offering the people coming in something as well.' Again, it just comes down to what our last experience was that impacted on what our next experience it is. The more positive and good and excited and enjoyable something is, the more likely you are to do it again.

The Bunch study (2009) found that most participants admitted that they had been culturally influenced by the American student teachers, and the student teachers left a positive impression on the community. Participants in this study agreed that the overall impact of the American student teachers was overwhelmingly positive. William stated, "I think it is always been positive with relation to the community. Like I said, there have been past teachers that have kept in contact with not only [the mentor teachers], but some of our older students that they have formed a bit of a more adult bond with." Furthermore, participants revealed that the success of the program is largely due to the participants that have been chosen to partake. Caleb stated,

"The previous people fitted in nicely and enjoyed the social as well as the academic nature of the role." Moreover, Claire indicated,

> The people chosen have been the right sort of people in terms of I want to get out there I want to have an experience not 'I have got to go out there and do this' that sort of thing.

A participant in the Bunch study (2009) also stated, "In Australian schools, the cultures move so slowly" (p. 57). However, most participants implied that there had been a cultural shift. Although John stated, "I really do not think there has been a cultural shift." he went on to say, "I think they have enjoyed the cultural differences and enjoyed being exposed to that."

Student impact and development of the student teacher may be the most important factors in the Australian Student Teaching Program. However, fitting in with the hosting community can ensure that the student teacher is accepted and, in turn, makes it a more enjoyable and educational experience. In order to achieve this acceptance, it is important for the international student teachers to be open-minded. It is essential for the international student teacher to be willing to shed previous culture and adapt to the culture of the hosting community. Furthermore, the community is very accepting of international student teachers and has become more accepting since the establishment of the program.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Summary

In this world of increased globalization, great attention is put on educators to increase global awareness and international experiences. Furthermore, cultured learning requires first-hand contact with groups of individuals from different cultural backgrounds. When two culturally different groups of individuals come in contact, many changes occur within either or both of those groups. Acculturation can result in the adoption of a group's language, beliefs, values, behaviors, and technologies (Sam & Berry, 2010). This adaptation to a new culture is necessary to assimilate to an established community (Ward, 2013). Therefore, this study sought to determine the impact of American student teachers on a rural New South Wales, Australia community.

Student Growth

Student growth is a major theme that emerged from this study. Primarily, the study revealed that there was a noticeable increase in student performance as a result of the American student teachers. Scarlett solidified this theme by stating,

> I think they (Australian students) actually got their work done a lot faster than what they were previously, and I think they seemed to enjoy the class a lot more having someone different in the room. I think the kids are a lot more interested to come to class cause they knew you were gonna be there. Even kids wanted to come to our class out of other classes towards the end. So I think that creates motivation for the class.

Secondly, the presence of American student teachers developed an international interest among the Australian students. Ryan stated,

> From the students that I have spoken to, they have been very curious. They have been asking questions particularly 'where are they from?' 'what is different there from here?' from outside of school, and I talk to some of them at cricket training and things like that, they are often referring to 'such and such they told me this today' and that does not happen all the time and in other classes so there has definitely been interest from the kids, which I think is fantastic.

Furthermore, having an international presence was very impactful for students of an isolated community, who may have felt that international travel was an unattainable goal. Ryan specified, "It is great, and I think for the kids, it is a great experience for them as well particularly in an isolated area like [NSW City], where most of them would probably not experience going to America." Although we are living in a globally interconnected society, many youth are gaining international knowledge from the media (Carano, 2009). Incorporating global perspectives into curriculum provides a way to alter lack of cultural awareness (Carano, 2009).

Sense of Community

Several subthemes emerged from sense of community including culture, perceptions and stereotypes, values, beginning impressions of American student teachers versus current impressions, involvement within the community, and community acceptance. Culture, perceptions, stereotypes, and values are very important aspects to a community. Although not all participants felt as if there was a shift in culture, the presence of the American student teachers did lead to cultural changes within the Australian community. Each community has a distinct cultural characteristics and values which can perceive immediate impressions of character. This study revealed that the presence of American student teachers led to changes in the community

members' perceptions and stereotypes of Americans. When asked if their perception had changed, Miles replied,

> It has changed a lot actually. Because you do see those television programs and things like that. So yeah that has changed. We learn a lot more about different areas of America and a lot more about America from having people out here, which is good. We see certain things and that is what we go off of; a lot of American shows and American movies, and that is what we are pretty much fed and some people believe that that is how Americans are and the way they act and behave and a lot of that is [not true].

Furthermore, Claire stated

> I now understand that there are some similarities in terms of what is portrayed in American movies and the internet, but there are also a lot of difference because you are people who are talking to me about what your life is like and how it is similar to ours but also how it is different from ours. I think that cultural relationship has been a lot better.

This is an important factor because impressions of individuals can lead to perceptions of the group as a whole (Tajfel, 1982).

The presence of American student teachers also allowed community members to recognize that many values aligned between the two groups. Miles stated

> I think your values are right along with what we are like. Things are a little bit different like in different communities you get different beliefs. I think you guys are strongly Christian from where you are from, and this is more multicultural, but still I think the beliefs are the same that we hold between you guys and us.

Sharing similar values fosters the belief that joining together can better fulfill needs (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Sharing of needs also leads to group cohesiveness (McMillan & Chavis,

1986). A change in how community members felt towards hosting American student teachers presently compared to the beginning of the program also emerged. Many community members were anxious of having new individuals within the community. Claire stated,

> Obviously your first impression is always 'what is the impact going to be with these people being in the school?' because it is a different school system between the two countries. We did not know who the person was and we did not know what the person was going to be like. We did not know how they were going to affect our kids, so it was very important that we went in with an open mind but also recognize there could be some difficulties if the person came out and was not necessarily a really understanding person.

However, that impression has been replaced with a new, exciting impression. This was due largely to the fact that the American student teachers who had previously been involved in the program left a positive impression on members of the community. Claire stated,

> I think because our last experience was reasonably positive, you are more willing now to step back and go 'well this is going to be great.' You are actually looking forward to it because you are seeing it as a continuation of something that happened before that was good. If it had not been good before, then there would be major problem.

Furthermore, Joseph specified, "We look forward to it every time someone comes out."

This acceptance of American student teachers within this community is due to the fact that the American student teachers have been deeply involved within the community. Claire identified,

> If you come in with a bit of an open mind to start with and willing to try things it just makes it so much easier for us to support you and get you to be involved in what we are involved with because if you came in with that attitude of 'I am not going to do anything'

> then people automatically put up their shutters and sort of go ‘well we are not going to invite you anywhere’ and ‘we have invited you to three places and you have not gone so we are not going to invite you again’ and again those walls keep building a barrier.

Community acceptance creates a sense of attachment in community members (McMillan, 1996). In conclusion, the international student teaching experience in a NSW City has been positive and well-received.

Researcher/Participant Reflection

The following paragraph will be a reflection from the researcher, who was also a participant in the Australian Student Teaching Program, on the overview of the program. Field notes and reflection journals were utilized to describe the experience, as well as future recommendations.

Program Overview

Prior to departing for Australia, I was very anxious. I had never traveled outside of the United States, nor had I stayed in a location other than my home state for more than a few weeks while vacationing. The thought of living in another country was overwhelming, and I questioned my ability to accomplish the task. Anxiety aside, I was also excited, and honored, to be given such a wonderful opportunity. I looked forward to gaining insight and understanding of differing cultures and educational systems. The program was overall an amazing experience and made me a better educator and classroom manager. I also discovered veneration for cultural differences and ways of life.

When I first arrived in the rural town where I would be teaching, the school was on a recess, and many teachers that I would befriend were traveling out of town. The first week was very discouraging. Being in a small town and knowing no one was detrimental. I found myself

counting down the days until the program would conclude and wondering how I would survive the next few months. However, later that week my mentoring teacher would arrive back in town, and I was invited to many social gatherings. I quickly realized that the community members in this town were very friendly and welcoming.

The following weeks progressed very quickly. I began taking leadership of the agriculture classes, building rapport with the educators and students within the school, and participating in community events and activities such as barbeques at the homes of community members, gatherings at local venues, weekly dinners with teachers from other departments, and local horse and dog races. The students in Australia were unlike any of the students in which I was familiar. Teaching in a culturally different environment required me to utilize teaching methods and classroom management techniques different from those I had previously applied in the United States.

After completion of the program, and my return to the United States, I was happy to be reunited with friends and family. I feel that this program has changed me not only as an educator but also as a person. I learned a multitude about Australian culture, managing diverse classrooms, and international agriculture. I also learned about myself in terms of willpower, dedication, friendship, resolution, and adaptation. Although the study was primarily focused on the impact left on the Australian community, the impact left on the American student teachers is beyond measure.

Before traveling to Australia, I had developed stereotypes of Australians based on information gathered from the media. After meeting and interacting with them, I discovered how incorrect I was about them. Not only were stereotypes and impressions dissolved in community members, but my own stereotypes were dissolved as well.

Emerging in an Australian community and being fully involved in the Australian cultural, I realized the similarities and differences between cultures. This interaction allowed me to understand that individuals across the world have different hobbies, values, preferences, beliefs, and daily activities. I now have more of an understanding of a person's actions if they do not align with my own. Furthermore, understanding communication styles and cultural context can be arduous to communicate with others. I learned new meaning for words and phrases and was able to understand Australia lingo. Realizing there are various meanings of a term has made me more conscious of the existence of language barriers.

Future Recommendations

As revealed in the study, it is very important for future participants of the Australian Student Teaching Program to embark open-mindedly. Success of this program is reliant on the individual's willingness of new experiences. The Australian community members are overly willing to involve the American student teachers, and the American student teachers must be willing to engage in the community as well. Otherwise, the Australian community members may not be as eager to host the American student teachers. Furthermore, future participants must be able to recognize that there are many social differences between Australia and America. One must be open to cultural differences and expect to be taken out of their normal comfort zone. Living within this community will be very unlike living in America. Therefore, one must be willing to adapt to the differing culture. McMillan (1996) stated, "People bond with those whom they believe want and welcome them" (p. 317).

Being immersed as a student teacher in an international community has several benefits. This allows for the student teacher to develop a more understanding of stereotypes, cultural awareness, and language barriers. Furthermore, student teachers that develop global

competencies are enabled to incorporate these international experiences into their curriculum. However, the student teacher is not the only person to whom this program is beneficial. The presence of an international student teacher also affects the community members of the host community.

Recommendations for Future Research

Some questions arose during this study. Future research questions should answer the following:

- What impact did American student teachers have on the Australian students?
- What would the impact have been on the Australian community if the American student teachers were present for a full year?
- What impact would American student teachers have on a community that was less accepting of international visitors?

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Appendix

IRB Outcome Letter

THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE
Office of Research & Engagement
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

1534 White Ave.
Knoxville, TN 37996-1529
865-974-7697
fax 865-974-7400

October 29, 2014

Derek Anthony Brawner
UTIA - EXT-Agricultural Program - EXT-Agricultural Program

Re: UTK IRB-14-09600-B
Study Title: Impact of International Student Teachers on a New South Wales Australia Community Over Ten Years: A Qualitative Study

Dear Mr. Brawner:

The Administrative Section of the UTK Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed your **application** for the above referenced project. It determined that your application is eligible for **expedited** review under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1). The IRB has reviewed these materials and determined that they do comply with proper consideration for the rights and welfare of human subjects and the regulatory requirements for the protection of human subjects. Therefore, this letter constitutes full approval by the IRB of your application version 2.0 as submitted. Approval of this study will be valid from October 29, 2014 to October 28, 2015.

In the event that subjects are to be recruited using solicitation materials, such as brochures, posters, web-based advertisements, etc., these materials must receive prior approval of the IRB. Any revisions in the approved application must also be submitted to and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. In addition, you are responsible for reporting any unanticipated serious adverse events or other problems involving risks to subjects or others in the manner required by the local IRB policy.

Finally, **re-approval** of your project is required by the IRB in accord with the conditions specified above. You may not continue the research study beyond the time or other limits specified unless you obtain prior written approval of the IRB.

Sincerely,

Colleen P. Gilrane

Colleen P. Gilrane, Ph.D.
IRB Chair
UTK Institutional Review Board

Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol (Australian School Administrators)

Question #1: What are the reactions from parents of students in the school?

Question #2: What distracters, if any, are present during the time of the student teaching experience?

Question #3: What were some of the initial reactions faculty and staff in the school had towards the program?

Question #4: Were there any changes in school climate/culture while American teachers were in the school or after leaving?

Questions #5: What are your thoughts about having the student teachers in your school?

Interview Protocol (Australian Teachers/Support Staff)

Question #1: Do students perform at a higher level as a result of having an American student teacher in the classroom? Explain your answer.

Question #2: Does the American teaching experience promote interest of students to travel or continue educational goals? Explain your answer.

Question #3: Does motivation in school change as a result of new ideas and refreshing change? Explain your answer.

Question #4: What role does leadership have when having student teachers in the classroom?

Question #5: What impressions (if any) do the student teachers leave on the overall community?

Question #6: What were your beginning impressions on the international student teachers?

Question #7: Have your perceptions of hosting international student teachers changed since the beginning of the program?

Question #8: Do the students express any signs of shifts in behavior or stress as a result of the student teachers?

Interview Protocol (Australian Community Members)

Question #1: What were your beginning impressions on the American student teachers?

Question #2: Have your perceptions of hosting American student teachers changed since the beginning of the program?

Question #3: Do you feel that the community is more accepting of the American student teachers since the program began 10 years ago? Explain your answer.

Question #4: Does the community members express any signs of shifts in behavior or stress as a result of the student teachers?

Question #5: What impressions (if any) do the student teachers leave on the overall community?

Question #6: Do you feel that community members share values similar to the American student teachers? Explain your answer.

Question #7: Do you feel that there has been a cultural shift within the community since first hosting the American student teachers? Explain your answer.

Vita

Derek A. Brawner was born in Knoxville, Tennessee to Toney and Tammy Brawner. He has one younger sister, Heather. Derek was raised in Scott County, Tennessee and attended Huntsville Elementary School from kindergarten to fourth grade, Huntsville Middle School from fifth to eighth grade, and Scott County High School from ninth to twelfth grade. After graduation, Derek attended Roane State Community College before transferring to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where he obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science in December, 2012. Derek enrolled in the Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications graduate program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and graduated with a Master of Science degree in May 2015. Derek plans to dedicate his career to promoting agricultural education, extension programming, and youth development.