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The convergence of the global and the local: what teachers bring to their classrooms after a Fulbright experience in Kenya and Tanzania.

Kelly Bryn O’Brien

University of Massachusetts Amherst

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THE CONVERGENCE OF THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL: WHAT TEACHERS BRING TO THEIR CLASSROOMS AFTER A FULBRIGHT EXPERIENCE IN KENYA AND TANZANIA

A Dissertation Presented

by

Kelly Bryn O’Brien

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 2006

International Education
THE CONVERGENCE OF THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL:
WHAT TEACHERS BRING TO THEIR CLASSROOMS
AFTER A FULBRIGHT EXPERIENCE IN KENYA AND TANZANIA.

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by

Kelly Bryn O'Brien

Approved as to style and content by:

Gretchen Rossman, Chair

Alfred Hartwell, Member

Frank Hugus, Member

Christine B. McCormick. Dean
Department Head
School of Education
DEDICATION

To Gabriel Turab O’Brien,
the best fellow traveler, ever.
May your journey take you around the world,
into yourself, and always be full of wonder, love, and kindness.

To Barbara W. O’Brien,
Thank you for paying my way to teach
in a small secondary school in Western Kenya....
This all started there!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would never have been written without the support and assistance of many outstanding teachers, colleagues, and friends. Thank you to all the teachers (Barbara, Erika, Blanca, Alicia, Jorge, Susan, Stacey, Craig, Kristin, Julianna, EveLynn) who journeyed to East Africa and who whole-heartedly immersed themselves into the cultures, took full advantage of the experiences offered, and continue to learn and grow. You allowed me access to your thoughts and classrooms, answered all my questions, and I continue to be inspired by your energy, creativity, and drive to help your students expand their horizons. You made the process of research and writing a joy. A special thank you to Barbara Brown (pp. 89, 110, 111, 149), Susan Wright (pp. 110, 111, 126) Erika Guckenberger (p.110), Stacey Dinarello (p. 111), Alicia Carroll (p. 151), and Lucy Montgomery (p. 151) who let me use their photos in this dissertation.

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I am indebted to friends, colleagues, and families in Kenya and Tanzania, who opened their homes and hearts to us and offered unique, fresh insight into their lives. I can’t wait to get back.

Gretchen, thank you for your wise advice and editorial patience. Your continued guidance helped make this a better paper than it was originally. And also thank you for all of your support over the past few years. You were a critical component of my CIE experience. Thank you to Ash Hartwell and Frank Hugus, the other members of my committee, for your support, advice, and willingness to serve.
I am grateful to the CIE community for six years of academic and professional growth and international education opportunities. I am especially grateful for the opportunity to have been involved with the Global Horizons program, my catalyst for learning about the importance of international education for K-12 teachers and the field of teacher education.

Thank you Dale and Karin for providing a home and a whole lot of love to Gabriel and me through out my academic career at CIE and beyond. Your support has been invaluable.

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Tashi, you offer a continual supply of inspiration! Thank you for being my friend.

Robin, you provided me with a most comfortable writers retreat: a quiet space and lots of coffee. Everything needed to focus and be productive as well as great company at the end of the day when I needed to put the work aside and relax. Thank you.

Barbara...I love you and without you watching Gabriel so I could write—this paper would never, ever have been completed. You have been our guardian angel for the past seven years and I can’t imagine our lives without you. Thank you.
ABSTRACT

THE CONVERGENCE OF THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL:
WHAT TEACHERS BRING TO THEIR CLASSROOMS
AFTER A FULBRIGHT EXPERIENCE IN KENYA AND TANZANIA.

MAY 2006

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After the events of September 11th 2001, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts revised their curriculum frameworks to include extensive coverage of Islam and Muslim society. As a result, K-12 teachers had to seek out professional development courses to increase their knowledge on this vast subject. In the summer of 2004, with funding from Fulbright, the University of Massachusetts Amherst together with Boston University offered Massachusetts teachers a cultural immersion program into Islam and Muslim communities in East Africa.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand not just what teachers learned as a result of this four and a half week immersion experience into the lives of Muslims in Kenya and Tanzania, but more importantly how it was learned. I sought to understand and examine what conditions were critical to learning, and subsequently how teachers utilized that learning in their classrooms upon their return, particularly within the contexts of multicultural and global education.
This study was situated within the contextual frameworks of experiential education and study abroad. Participants included 10 K-12 teachers from across Massachusetts representing all grade levels and most subjects. Data gathered through direct observation, participant observation, primary documents, and interviews were analyzed and resulted in conclusions that teachers benefit greatly from a study abroad opportunity. Experiences identified as important to their learning included:

- Actually being in Kenya and Tanzania,
- Immersion into the lives of East Africans through homestays and other face-to-face encounters, and;
- Engaging in reflective activities with the group and individually.

The study revealed that the teachers applied their experience and learning in a variety of ways. Some teachers were hampered in their attempts to bring their experience into the classrooms due to circumstances beyond their control. All teachers faced obstacles to putting their experience into action, however many developed new and creative lessons based on their learning abroad. In addition, they bolstered and expanded existing lessons by utilizing a variety of materials from East Africa. Many created and implemented professional development workshops for their peers for the first time, reflecting an increase in confidence typical of a study abroad experience.

From the work these teachers did, both in the classroom and with their peers, it is evident that their skills, attitudes, knowledge, and understanding concerning Islam and Muslim communities as well as global and multicultural education were enhanced.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This dissertation grew out of a subject very dear to my heart: study abroad. I worked for many years in the field of study abroad and learned to appreciate the complex growth and learning it inspires in the undergraduate students who participate on the programs. Karin Boye, a Swedish poet, wrote, “Yes it hurts when the bud bursts, there is pain when something grows” (Ward, 1999, p. 1). Time abroad can often be a journey of painful growth, as one leaves familiar surroundings and is forced to examine oneself and the world with new perspectives. It can be a frustrating and difficult time for the students as they are often propelled to view their own place in the world with a much more critical eye. However, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained during an experience abroad are extraordinary and often life-changing. After 13 years of working in the field of study abroad, I returned to graduate school to better understand the theoretical foundations of international education.

Global Horizons

When I began my doctoral studies at the Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts in January 2000, I was assigned to coordinate the Global Horizons program. Global Horizons is a Massachusetts’ state funded program created to support K-12 teachers in their efforts to globalize and internationalize their curricula. Through Global Horizons I was exposed to K-12 teachers and their desires for expanding their courses to include more global perspectives.
I have been able to combine my passion for study abroad with a newfound interest in K-12 teachers. By virtue of working with Global Horizons, I have been introduced to the world of US K-12 education. While working with teachers in Western Massachusetts, developing workshops and summer institutes to help them expand the global dimensions of their curricula, I began to think “Wouldn’t it be interesting to understand how a study abroad experience affects teachers?” Questions such as “How do K-12 teachers experience professional development opportunities abroad?”, “What do they gain from their experience abroad?”, and “How do they transform their experience into classroom lessons and curricula?”, became the basis for this study.

A Preliminary Study

During my tenure as a doctoral student I conducted a small preliminary study into this topic. I identified three teachers who had recently been abroad on programs specifically designed for teachers. Two of the teachers had been to Asia (China and Mongolia) and the third teacher had been to Africa (Ghana). I interviewed each teacher and observed in two of their classrooms hoping to understand how they used their overseas experience in the classroom and what aspects of their trips were most important to them and why. I learned that teachers use their overseas experience in a number of ways in the classroom. They often use their time abroad and materials acquired while abroad to bolster and support existing lessons or they develop new lessons based on the experience.

However, an important lesson I learned while conducting this preliminary study was that I felt a stronger connection with the teacher who traveled to Ghana than with the teachers who had traveled to China or Mongolia. I have never been to Asia but I have
lived in different parts of Africa for nearly ten years and am very familiar with the experience that this teacher described. Therefore I was fortunate to have developed a Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad program designed to take Massachusetts K-12 teachers to East Africa. This program and the teachers involved became the focus of this dissertation.

A Fulbright Grant

In the summer of 2004, ten teachers from across the state of Massachusetts, myself, and one other group leader, with a grant through the Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad program, traveled to Kenya and Tanzania to learn about Islam and Muslim communities in an East African context.1

By focusing on the complex interactions of Islam and Muslim communities in the context of East African society and history, we hoped that the participants would achieve a number of concrete goals. For example, we hoped that the teachers would increase their cognitive knowledge about Islam and Muslim societies outside of the Middle East; develop effective understanding and accurate perceptions of the peoples, cultures, and history of Kenya and Tanzania through firsthand experience; and expand their capabilities for teaching about aspects of Islam, Kenya, and Tanzania. Along with these goals, we also explicitly stated that the teachers would develop grade-level specific curricula for use in their classrooms and the school districts in which they teach and would disseminate the curricular products throughout the United States. The program designers believed that experiential education through study abroad, meaning a full, rich

1 While the program on which this research is based was funded through the US Department of State, no official endorsement is inferred.
immersion into the realities of the lives of Muslims in East Africa interspersed with periods of reflection and dialogue on the experience, was one of the best ways to achieve the above stated goals.

**The Questions**

The following dissertation was conceived not only as a way to understand if the program goals had been realized, but also as a way to build on the small study I had previously conducted, going into much more depth about the teachers' experience. What were the critical events or experiences of the program that led to learning? How was that learning translated into specific classroom lessons and curriculum? How important was the group to the overall learning experience? Does a short-term intensive period abroad for teachers help support the goals of both global and multicultural education as well contribute significantly to in-service teacher professional development? How and why was this experience important to teachers beyond the classroom? These are a few of the questions that guided this research. Using a qualitative case study method, the teachers' experiences in East Africa and upon their return are analyzed. This dissertation is situated within the contextual frameworks of experiential education and study abroad with an eye to understanding how they can be relevant to teacher development as well as add to teacher understanding of global and multicultural education.

The distinct theoretical and practical strands involved in this dissertation research are experiential education and study abroad. How does a short-term study abroad experience support teachers in their efforts to teach their specific subjects? Does it help them teach from a more global perspective? Does it help them teach from a multicultural perspective? What experiences were the most profound and contributed significantly to
teacher learning? I hoped to better understand how an overseas experiential education program provides Massachusetts K-12 teachers with greater opportunities for learning and growth within their specific fields and within the wider frameworks of global and multicultural education. In particular, I was interested in knowing how teachers’ knowledge and perspectives shift and evolve as a result of a four and a half week Fulbright excursion to Kenya and Tanzania and how these shifts affect what they do in their classrooms as well as their personal and professional lives.

By drawing on data gathered over the summer of 2004 and into the following academic year, through in-depth interviews, observation and participant observation, as well as analysis of documents, such as curricula, lesson plans, workshop materials, and poetry produced by the teachers, this qualitative case study offers insights into what teachers learned as they became more exposed to the people and issues of Kenya and Tanzania having had the opportunity to reflect on and learn from their experiences and interactions.

The Findings

That teachers benefit greatly from an experiential study abroad opportunity, one deeply immersed in local culture is a primary conclusion of this research. Two major questions to emerge from the data were:

- What experiences led to learning while in East Africa and upon return?, and;

- How did teachers subsequently use their learning in their classrooms and personal lives?

Experiences that teachers identified as important to learning include actually being in Kenya and Tanzania, immersing into the lives of East Africans through homestays and
other face-to-face encounters, and engaging in reflective activities with the group and on their own.

How teachers used their learning was diverse. Some teachers were hampered in their attempts to bring their experience into the classrooms due to circumstances beyond their control. Some had their course load change dramatically and could no longer directly teach about Africa or Islam. Other teachers had their jobs change completely and were no longer in the classroom. Some teachers encountered hostile administrations that effectively blocked all attempts to creatively implement their experience. While all teachers faced time as an obstacle to putting their experience into action, the majority of teachers were highly creative in shaping and implementing their learning and experience in their classrooms and beyond.

Teachers developed new lessons based on their time abroad. They bolstered and expanded existing lessons. They utilized a variety of materials from East Africa including photos, books, cloth, postage stamps, etc to initiate conversation and discussion among students. Many of the teachers developed and implemented professional development workshops for their peers. This was the first time these teachers had facilitated professional training sessions for their colleagues, reflecting an increase in confidence typical of a study abroad experience. From the work these teachers did, both in the classroom and with their peers, it is clear that their skills, attitudes and knowledge concerning global and multicultural education were enhanced.

**Dissertation Overview**

The next chapter presents the literature in which this study is cocooned, offering an explanation of multicultural and global education, moving on to an examination of
study abroad in general, and then a review of the research on teachers abroad and the importance of an international opportunity for educators. Chapter two continues to explain experiential education, the primary conceptual framework upon which this dissertation is constructed. The diverse foundations of experiential education are clarified, experiential learning models are offered, and the importance of reflection and the role of the group in learning are also explored. Chapter two concludes with a brief review of learning theories that are related to the leaning gained by the teachers on this program.

Chapter three offers a brief history of the development of this group projects abroad program, the rationale for the project and some of the difficulties in bringing it to light. Chapter four describes the research design and methods. Qualitative research was the overall approach to collecting and analyzing data for this dissertation. The case study was the particular method utilized. Chapter five introduces the participants and provides a more detailed description of the in-country dimension of the program. Chapters six and seven analyze the data gathered through interviews, participant observations, observations, and material artifacts gathered.

Chapter six primarily examines the “experiences that led to learning”, including “being there” in East Africa, “the homestays”, “reflection”, and “the group”. Chapter seven examines “how learning was used” by the teachers in their classrooms and beyond. Vignettes of four teachers and how they have utilized their experience are presented. The concluding chapter offers a summary, discusses the implications and limitations of this research, as well as ideas for future studies.
CHAPTER 2

THE COCOONING LITERATURE

The following chapter draws from many bodies of literature in which the varied dimensions of this dissertation can be found. The strands of this research can be located in the literature on global and multicultural education, study abroad, experiential education, and learning theories.

In this chapter global and multicultural education are explored. Conflicts between these pedagogical approaches are discussed as well as opportunities for convergence. Study abroad as a field in itself is examined as well as the opportunities for teachers to travel abroad and how such an experience can propel educators into global and multicultural education. The primary conceptual framework for this dissertation is experiential education. In this chapter the diverse foundations of experiential education are explored, with particular attention to the role of reflection and the group in learning. The final section of this chapter looks at specific learning theories that are closely related to both experiential education and to how the teachers learned through their Fulbright experience.

Global and Multicultural Education: Conflicts and Convergence

Before exploring the literature on teachers abroad, one must first understand the pedagogical foundations of global and multicultural education. This is so, because much of the literature on teachers abroad resides within the concepts of either, and sometimes both, global or multicultural education.
Global Education

Historically global and multicultural education have been identified as two separate and often conflicting approaches to learning, pedagogy, and curriculum design. Global education, also often referred to as international education, has its roots in the aftermath of World War II. During this time politicians and academics discerned a need for a better understanding of the rest of the world; this need is reflected in the foreign policy, area studies, and international educational exchanges that were developed at that time. Global education has been “dominated by men of European descent who wanted American students to understand the mechanics of emerging global systems and their own personal economic, political, environmental, and cultural interconnectedness with other peoples around the world” (Merryfield, 2006, para. 1). In other words “global education stems from the premise that information and knowledge about the rest of the world must be used to better understand ourselves and our relationships to other peoples, cultures, and nations” (Tucker & Cistone, 1991, p. 5).

A second surge of support for global education came in the 60’s and 70’s with the ideas of Buckminster Fuller and his concept of “Spaceship Earth”, along with the realization of dwindling non-renewable natural resources. With the advancement of technology that shot astronauts and cosmonauts into space came the dawning awareness that the lines on a map that divide us are not a reality and that the earth is a single interconnected organism where all beings are inextricably linked by the very fact that we all live on this planet together. Bumper sticker slogans and concepts such as “think globally, act locally” and the “global village” are gentle reminders of the seriousness of our interconnected fate (Tucker & Cistone, 1991).
Much effort has gone into defining global education. While it means different things to different people, the essence of what is meant by global education remains fairly constant from scholar to scholar. Regardless of the specific definition prescribed to, global education is supported by a number of academic organizations. For example, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) adopted a resolution supporting global education in teacher training programs (Gollnick, 1992). The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) is one of the principal advocates of global education in the United States. In their position statement they wrote in part,

that an effective social studies program must include global and international education. Global and international education are important because the day-to-day lives of average citizens around the world are influenced by burgeoning international connections. The human experience is an increasingly globalized phenomenon in which people are constantly being influenced by transnational, cross-cultural, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic interactions. The goods we buy, the work we do, the cross-cultural links we have in our own communities and outside them, and increased worldwide communication capabilities all contribute to an imperative that responsible citizens understand global and international issues (National Council for the Social Studies, 2006, para. 1).

Basically global education is a pedagogical approach that K-12 teachers can implement to help students understand the fundamental connectedness of all peoples across the planet. It is an approach that often focuses on world issues and can be utilized and supported across the curriculum.

In a fundamental essay entitled *An attainable global perspective*, Robert Hanvey (1976) defines and gives structure to the concept of global education. The ideas presented in this short paper have influenced the development and direction of a myriad of teacher
education programs and "has probably influenced the global education movement more than any other one document" (Merryfield, 1997, p. 3). In his essay he dresses the bones of global education with the following five interconnected dimensions:

1. Perspective Consciousness: The development of an awareness that not everyone sees and understands the world in the same way. Perspective consciousness is the realization and appreciation for other images of the world and an understanding that some of these multiple images of the world are profoundly different than one's own.

2. "State of the Planet" Awareness: The development of an in-depth understanding of past and present global issues, events, and conditions that often help define and shape one's perspective. This includes an understanding of emergent conditions and trends within politics, the environment, resources, health, national and international conflicts, etc...

3. Cross-cultural Awareness: A general understanding of the significant characteristics of world cultures with an emphasis on understanding similarities and differences and priming students to respect and accept world cultures and developing in them the capacity to participate in the wider world.

4. Knowledge of Global Dynamics: An understanding of how the world is linked together. This is an introduction into systems thinking and to systems knowledge, leading to an awareness of the complex international system in which nations, states, communities, and individuals are linked.

5. Awareness of Human Choice: An analysis of strategies for action and responses to issues in local, national, and international settings. This includes an awareness of the
problems of choice facing individuals, nations, and humanity as our consciousness and knowledge of the global system develops and expands.

These ideas clearly influenced Kenneth Tye when he wrote the introduction to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development’s 1991 Yearbook, *Global education: From thought to action*. He states that global education “involves learning about those problems and issues that cut across national boundaries, and about the interconnectedness of systems—ecological, cultural, economic, political, and technological. Global education involves perspective taking—seeing things through the eyes and minds of others—and it means the realization that while individuals and groups may view life differently, they also have common needs and wants” (1991, p. 5).

In the US, global education remains particularly pertinent in today’s world of globalization, instant messaging, living room wars, and earth-shifting events. Students in US classrooms can benefit from global education as they become familiar with how different the world looks from a global perspective in contrast to the conventional ethnocentric perspective that is typically taught. By turning the lens on the diverse, pluralistic United States, multicultural education can help support a global perspective from a slightly different angle.

**Multicultural Education**

Like global education, multicultural education grows out of a specific period in US history. While “the seeds for multicultural movements were planted in the 1930’s” (Goodman & Carey, 2004, p. 11), multicultural education as understood today has its roots in the Civil Rights Movement, in particular it was supported by “African Americans and others who were especially concerned with equity, social justice, and the educational
success of children of color” (Merryfield, 2006, para.1). With the Civil Rights Movement and the breaking down of segregation, school populations in the 50s, 60s, and 70s became increasingly multicultural and diverse. At the same time litigation such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1967 Bilingual Education Act, and the 1974 Equal Education Act was enacted to guarantee equal rights for all students in schools (Goodman & Carey, 2004).

However, with the expansion of racial and ethnic diversity in US public schools, it became increasingly clear that teachers were having difficulty educating this “new” student body. It was also clear that many students themselves were having difficulty adjusting. Something was urgently needed to help make sense of the complex sociopolitical, historical, and cultural milieu in the US that allowed for racism, oppression, inequity, discrimination, and a variety of other social issues that threatened to overrun schools.

Multicultural education was conceived as a way for students and teachers to understand one another’s history and celebrate the diversity and contributions that all US cultures make to our pluralistic society, as well as to renew American democracy, and to support and facilitate changes stemming from the Civil Rights Movement (Goodman & Carey, 2004; Grant, 1995; Nieto, 2000). While the civil rights movement and the dismantling of segregation may have precipitated the need for multicultural education, that need grows ever more urgent as the diversity in our classrooms and the pluralism in the United States continues to expand, due in part to the “large waves of recent immigrants from Mexico, Central and South America, the Middle East, and Asia that have necessitated new ways of thinking about learning and teaching. However, most
educators are not adequately prepared for the cultural mix which faces them, and they do not have adequate resources to help them understand underlying cultural values" (Rothstein-Fisch, 2003, p. 1). Like global education, multicultural education continues to be relevant to our schools simply by the fact that now more than ever students from all over the globe populate US classrooms.

Multicultural education seeks to have students know the wider world by understanding their own personal, local, and national histories and the forces that have come together to create the United States. It is a pedagogy conceived to help young people examine their own histories and those of their classmates in an attempt to identify and unlearn racism and stereotypes to forge a more just and equal society. The need for multicultural education is so great that the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) requires it as a component of accredited teacher education programs. The National Council for the Social Studies offers curriculum guidelines for multicultural education because “multicultural education helps students understand and affirm their community cultures and helps to free them from cultural boundaries, allowing them to create and maintain a civic community that works for the common good” (National Council for the Social Studies, 1991, para. 4).

In her practical, how-to book, Developing multicultural educators, Jana Noel (2000) identifies six goals for multicultural education and suggests that by learning through a multicultural approach students will:

1. Gain an awareness of their own cultural backgrounds: Indeed a critical aspect of multicultural education is the idea that students should start where they are. They need to be drawn into the subject by learning about themselves, their own communities and
histories, ultimately understanding their own personal identities, the foundation for further multicultural learning;

2. Gain an understanding of different perspectives on life in the US: Here students gain a broader view of experiences through the lens of other cultures represented in the US, understanding that theirs is not the only way to perceive and know events. Students learn “that their view of the world is not universally shared and that others have views of the world that are profoundly different from one’s own” (Bennett, 1995, p. 311);

3. Gain an understanding of the cultures of different groups: Here students understand that the US, while often presented as being a monolithic society, is instead made up of a number of different cultures acting and responding to events in very culturally specific ways. Through this goal it is hoped that students begin to understand what those cultural ways of being involve. Ideally students move beyond a superficial understanding of foods and special holidays to a more in-depth knowledge of feelings and motivations for responses to the world;

4. Learn how to reduce stereotyping, prejudice, and racism within themselves and society: A significant aspect to multicultural education is an understanding of social injustice in its many forms...particularly as racism, stereotypes, and prejudice. It is important for students to understand how damaging stereotypes and prejudice can be and the different forms they can take, by learning “about the nature of society and how it allows prejudice and racism to develop and continue” (Noel, 2000, p. 178);

5. Develop skills needed to take social action to eliminate social injustice: Once students have an understanding of where stereotyping, prejudice, and racism come from and how they continue to be supported, then students can begin to learn how to
counteract these and other injustices. This goal of multicultural education requires that students understand the sources of oppression and injustice in the US and that they gain the analytic and reflective thinking skills need to combat social injustice and envision a more just society;

6. Gain a recognition and understanding of global issues: Once students have a handle on their own personal identities, as well as an understanding of other cultural perspectives, a history of oppression in the US, combined with the knowledge and desire to create social change at home, these skills, attitudes and knowledge can be broadened to include a more global perspective. This goal of multicultural education is supported by the skills and perspectives gained by the students in the other five goals. It is here that students take what they have gained by learning about the United States and begin to examine the world with the same skills.

Multicultural education is critical for learning to live in the United States, just as global education is critical for learning to live in the wider world, one in which the US is an integral part. Considering their divergent beginnings, it’s easy to understand why tensions might exist between multicultural and global education. Many who concentrate on multicultural education feel that global educators fail to take into account issues of racism, classism, and other injustices and oppressions that exist in the United States. Conversely those who focus their efforts on global education feel that multicultural educators focus only on the improvement of a few selected groups of Americans. Nor have they “seen evidence that teacher education in multicultural education prepares teachers to understand the cultures of all Americans or to connect the problems of diversity and equity in the United States with global economic, political, environmental,
and social inequities and the diversity of the human condition around the world” (Merryfield, 2006, para. 2).

It is not just supporters from these educational approaches who lob criticism at each other. Educational scholars who see an inevitable and necessary return to mainstream, conventional ethnocentric pedagogy, have critiqued, almost condemned, both of these approaches to education. Global and multicultural education both stress an understanding of, appreciation for, and acceptance of global and/or multicultural perspectives, and there is a myth that these ideas inhibit pride in one’s own white, middle class, dominant culture (Diaz, et al., 1999). Some authors believe the myth to be reality. Hirsch (1987), for example, in his book, Cultural literacy: What every American needs to know, contends that learning about and understanding other people’s cultural perspectives “should not be allowed to supplant or interfere with schools’ responsibilities to ensure our children’s mastery of American literate culture” (Hirsch, 1987, p. 18).

It is my belief, however, that these two fields of education are not so very far apart. They can and should support one another. They should come together to ward off criticisms from the likes of Hirsch and others who fear that the America they believe exists will cease to be if children learn to view and understand the world through multiple perspectives.

In their work, Global perspectives for educators, Diaz, Massialas, and Xanthopolous (1999) point to the similarities between the two approaches and feel that both global and multicultural education include “the study of cultural diversity, human rights, varied curricular perspectives and prejudice reduction” (1999, p. 3). The primary difference between global and multicultural education is the context in which they
operate. Multicultural education often focuses on the above topics within a national context, while global education examines these topics through global issues. Some authors do not even recognize this distinction. Tiedt and Tiedt (1995) believe that “multicultural education connects the study of other countries, the concept of the world as a global village, and recognition of the need for everyone on this planet to collaborate to insure clean air and conserve our resources” (Tiedt & Tiedt, 1995, p. 17). In determining goals for teacher education programs with a global perspective, Bruce, Podemski, and Anderson (1991) state that “students should perceive and value cultural diversity, within the United States and globally... and have the confidence, disposition, and skill to be at ease in other cultural groups within the United States and outside” (emphasis added) (p. 23).

Hanvey (1976) and Noel (2000), two authors cited above, present ways of conceptualizing global and multicultural education. While these are not the only ways to consider these approaches to education and learning, they do offer an opportunity to highlight the striking similarities to each approach.

**Toward Convergence: Global and Multicultural Education**

Despite the criticisms that each approach can hurl at the other, there is a significant amount of overlap between global and multicultural education. Both global and multicultural education desire that students develop an understanding that their perspective of the world is based on their unique personal and cultural histories. Critical to this is the fact that other people hold perspectives of the world that are profoundly different from one’s own. Both multicultural and global education strive for an understanding among students of the diversity among the worlds’ cultures (many of
which exist in the United States) beyond the superficial to a more meaningful awareness of what motivates people of other cultures and countries.

Global education hopes that students gain an in-depth understanding of past and present global issues, events, and conditions that often help define and shape one’s perspective, in much the same way that multicultural education teaches students about the nature of prejudice, racism, and oppression within US society in an attempt to help them understand how their perspectives are shaped. The sixth goal of multicultural education is the attainment of recognition and understanding of global issues…this of course is a basic premise of global education.

Indeed I think that the similarities between global and multicultural education are profound. The only discrepancy between them is the explicitly stated goal of multicultural education to identify social injustices and to gain the skills for enacting social change. However even if this is not explicitly stated as a premise for global education, I believe that it is implied. Indeed it would be difficult to teach global education without some acknowledgement of global inequalities and instilling in students the skills required to endorse and initiate change. This provides a wonderful opportunity for working on a local level while thinking globally.

I fully believe in the validity of multicultural and global education and would like to see the creation of a curriculum that combines both approaches. Lynn Cheney, the Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, noted “self knowledge requires that we understand other cultures” (Cheney, 1987, p.17), and Diaz (1999) wrote that “Understanding diversity at home and abroad is a critical component to a well rounded education” (1999, p. 4). Both of these statements speak directly in support of a combined
global/multicultural curriculum, strengthening students' abilities and desires to understand and participate in an ever-expanding multicultural and interconnected world.

Through this brief review of global and multicultural education, it is clear that great expectations are placed on students in terms of learning, awareness, and skills development. However, in order for students to get anything worthwhile out of the curricula, teachers have to be able to implement them. Teachers need to know about the local and global issues that have shaped their own worlds. They then need to understand and transcend their own racial, ethnic biases, prejudices, and stereotypes, while introducing students to this world of multicultural and global understanding and perspective. Teachers need to be knowledgeable about past and current events that have shaped global history and continue to define different nations of the world as well as understand issues of concern that connect us all to each other. This is a very tall order for an overworked and underpaid segment of society.

As much as we demand from students, we demand even more from teachers. Multicultural and global education should not be add-ons to an already over-loaded curriculum, but should be infused throughout the curriculum in support of the specific content of a variety of subjects. However this is easier said than done, especially if teachers are unaware or uninspired by the concepts of global and multicultural education. Many teachers were never introduced to these topics during their training. So then, how can teachers learn about and be supported in their efforts to teach from multicultural and/or global perspectives? It is not within the scope of this paper to address all of the needs that teachers might possess in their struggle to implement these educational approaches. I hope to understand how a short-term experiential leaning opportunity
overseas can support teachers in their specific subject areas as well as help them teach toward the goals of global and multicultural education.

This dissertation seeks to understand if having an intense immersion experience overseas helps educators teach their content areas more competently and confidently. Does it lead to a greater understanding of global and multicultural connections? The following literature review provides an explanation of the field of study abroad and then reviews the literature specific to study aboard for teachers.

**An Explanation of Study Abroad**

Study abroad has a long, rich history in the US, with at times a direct link to political and foreign policy concerns. Huang (1996) traces the American institutionalized practice of study abroad to between the two world wars and as directly related to the advancement of global education. During this time many US universities opened study abroad programs for their undergraduate students in European nations. These programs were seen as a way to promote democracy and rebuild destroyed economies (Huang, 1996). The growth of international educational exchange on college campuses in the 40's and 50's was in large part due to governmental support as part of US foreign policy. “The Fulbright Program, language studies as part of Title VI, the National Defense Education Act, and even the US Marshall Plan supported and encouraged the exchange of students” (Bates, 1997, p. 20). In 1979, President Jimmy Carter formed the Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies to assess the learning students acquire on study abroad programs. “This report helped to rekindle interest in international education” (Bates, 1997, p. 21). After the end of the Cold War, study abroad programs again enjoyed a surge in popularity.
President Clinton promoted the concepts of global and multicultural education in a 1992 speech to the American public, where he emphasized that “we must develop a world awareness...this means understanding the interconnectedness of world systems as well as different values and points of view” (Clinton, 1992, p. xi). The interest in and the expansion of study abroad programs are inextricably related to the development of global education.

Outcomes of Study Abroad

For many years scholars, practitioners, and administrators have sought to understand what undergraduate students learn as they study abroad. A brief search of the literature on study abroad shows that there are numerous outcomes to measure and test. Some of the more widely recognized outcomes include: global awareness, inter-cultural and global competence, second language acquisition (SLA), academic and intellectual development, global mindedness, and personal development.

The outcomes of a study abroad experience for US undergraduates are many and very well documented (Augusbuger, 1986; Bates, 1997; Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Diamond, 1991; Elbaz, 1988; Kauffmann et al., 1992; Mezirow, 1989; Pike & Selby, 1988; Shougee, 1999). The ways one can use study abroad as a basis for research are vast. Researchers have used quantitative methods in an attempt to measure the development of global knowledge (Barrows, 1991), change in behaviors (Brown, 1998; Hofstede, 1984; Ruben, 1976), and change in attitudes (Bates, 1997; Day-Vines, 1998; Paige, 1983; Stephan & Stephan, 1992) among students who have studied abroad. The results of studies comparing students who went abroad to students who did not showed that students who went abroad generally gained higher levels of international interest,

Much of the research into the outcomes of study abroad has been conducted with students who attended programs in Western Europe and Australia, still the most popular study abroad destinations (Open Doors, 2005). Very few studies look specifically at study abroad experiences in the developing world. Research into the outcomes of study abroad has focused on abstract concepts such as global mindedness, an increase in maturity levels in students who study abroad, and intercultural competencies, as well as on very concrete outcomes such as an increase in second language learning and an improvement in factual subject knowledge.

The Importance of Study Abroad for Teachers

The literature on study abroad for US undergraduates is vast, healthy, and growing rapidly as researchers continue to examine the many facets of the field. The literature on the fields of multicultural and global education and teacher training is also very extensive. However, the specific literature that examines the combination of study abroad and teacher education within the fields of multicultural and global education is not so vast. The literature on what US classroom teachers learn as a result of a focused study abroad opportunity is often aligned with the larger concepts of global and multicultural education. Merry Merryfield and Angene Hopkins Wilson are two researchers who have focused much of their careers on understanding international experiences for educators. They are leaders in the field of teacher education and much of what we know about the effects of international experiences on teachers in general and within the fields of global/multicultural education comes from these two women.
As humanity awakens to the realization that the world is an interconnected whole and the fate of the people next door or across the globe can affect local communities, our youth needs to understand these connections and the roles that they can play in the construction of a healthy global society. One of the major goals in both global and multicultural education is to develop respect for and understanding of various ethnic groups and how they contribute to the development of society. Students can only be expected to do this if teachers know this. Therefore teacher training, either pre-service or in-service, is vital if educators are to teach from and for global multicultural perspectives.

While most teachers learn to understand multicultural and global perspectives “through brief in-service education programs and presentations at professional conferences” (Merryfield, 1991, introduction), often times these are not successful strategies for helping teachers become more globally aware or cross culturally sensitive (Gonzalez-Miles, 1980; Ogilvie, 1984; Williams, 1988; Wolfer, 1990). Although short-term in-service training can lead to an improvement in global and multicultural pedagogical approaches and instruction skills, they don’t necessarily have a positive impact on teachers’ knowledge level or attitudes relative to global or multicultural education (Ogilvie, 1984).

While these studies are somewhat dated and people like Merryfield and Wilson strive for more integrated training sessions by, for example, having Africans, Asians, Latin Americans directly interacting with teachers during workshops, there is little that can be done in a typical workshop setting to simulate what can be gained by teachers when they travel abroad. Indeed as Merryfield writes, “teachers need personal cross-cultural experiences with people different from themselves. Although Americans can
have profound experiences with cultural difference within the US, teacher education programs must provide opportunities for extended travel, study or living in other parts of the world” (Merryfield, 1995, p. 25). As the following studies show, the experience of being overseas combined with the intimacy of interacting directly with local populations has a profound effect on teachers both personally and professionally.

The Importance of International Experience for Teachers

Over the years Merryfield (1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2001) has done extensive work with classroom teachers on incorporating more multicultural and global perspectives into their classrooms. She has found that there is no substitute for face-to-face interaction with people from around the globe to help teachers understand their own biases and prejudices and to support their efforts to teach from a clearer global/multicultural perspective. Recently she has been experimenting with a multicultural teacher education course taught online. The teachers in this course found that while they were able to compose their thoughts and speak more clearly from the heart over the World Wide Web, many teachers maintained “the course’s reliance on electronic technologies prevented them from ‘knowing the other’. Some perceived that they had to physically interact with people face-to-face to develop relationships across cultures—relationships that some teachers said were prerequisite to their rethinking how their own teaching could better support diversity and social justice” (Merryfield, 2001, p. 283).

Wilson (1984, 1986, 1986b, 1993) has also worked extensively with teachers, specifically on the importance of an overseas experience and how it is incorporated into their lives, personally and professionally. In one study Wilson (1984) examined the
affects of a six-week study tour of teachers to Nigeria. Her study revealed that teachers found the experience influential to changing and improving classroom teaching. In particular the teachers who traveled to Nigeria “were found to be more selective in their use of materials to teach African Studies, as well as more apt to challenge the misconceptions and stereotypes some students associated with the culture” (as cited by Young, 2001, p. 10). The participants also commented that the trip was a life-changing experience, one that increased their sensitivity to diverse US student populations, a concept critical to the field of multicultural education. The experience also revitalized their desire to teach.

In another study, Wilson researched the overseas experiences of returned Peace Corps Volunteers who teach social studies. She concluded that “they were cultural relativists, aware of and accepting of differences in people and culture; that they utilized their experience in what they taught, not only in country-related topics but by focusing on concepts such as ethnocentrism, racism, distribution of wealth; and that they saw themselves as living examples rather than agents of change” (1993, p.48)

In 1993 Wilson conducted another, rather extensive study of teachers with international experience for her book, The meaning of international experience for schools. She observed in classrooms, interviewed teachers, students, and administrators and found, similar to US undergraduates who study abroad, that internationally experienced teachers “begin to gain a global perspective (substantive knowledge and perceptual understanding) and develop self and relationships (personal growth and interpersonal connections). In turn, that global perspective and personal and
interpersonal development can be passed on to the students and the wider school community” (Wilson, 1993, p. 16).

Martens (1991) researched the perceptions of teachers who participated in the German Marshall fund. Teachers were selected to travel to Germany for summer in-service training opportunities. She found that, upon their return, teachers had a new sense of authority and a great desire to share their knowledge and experiences, they understood the importance of building and bridging international relationships, and desired to study abroad again.

For her dissertation, Casale-Ginnola (2000) sought to understand the meanings of international experiences for teachers. Her research participants took part in a wide variety of overseas experiences from short-term month-long personal sojourns to long-term stints with the US Peace Corps. Her framework for analysis was social interaction theory which attempts to understand the meanings people give to specific items. These could be other people, materials and artifacts, as well as social interactions. By analyzing teachers’ overseas experiences through social interaction theory, Casale-Ginnola concluded that teachers were affected both professionally and personally as a result of their time overseas. Professional growth included heightened sensitivity to and understanding of the students. Personal growth outcomes included increased confidence and positive character development (Casale-Ginnola, 2000).

Wolf (1993) designed a study to determine the impact of a five-week Fulbright group project upon the attitudes and perceptions of Iowa teachers toward their host country, Russia. Further she examined the impact of such an experience on global education perspectives. Comparisons of attitudes and perceptions were made between the
applicant and non-applicant groups. Interestingly, Wolf found no significant differences in attitudes and perceptions between participants and non-participants and only little evidence that the out-of-country experience influenced participants’ views. However her work did reveal that over time (four months to seventeen years), the experiences of the Fulbright group did have an impact on global perspectives and teaching. Also with time, the participants reported a greater appreciation of the US as well as their host countries and other cultures.

While many studies conducted with teachers concerning their overseas experiences have utilized largely qualitative approaches, a number of interesting studies have sought to understand the relationship of teachers’ globalmindedness or worldmindedness to their overseas experiences through primarily quantitative measures. In a very early study of factors related to an individual’s formation of positive perspectives on the world as identified as worldmindedness, Webster (1961) found that personality and experience (contact with other people) were far better indicators of positive global perspectives than content knowledge.

In attempting to assess teachers’ globalmindedness, Wolfer’s (1990) study compared the globalmindedness of teachers who had lived or studied abroad with the globalmindedness of those who did not. His “analysis revealed a significant relationship between the subject teachers having world travel experience and their greater globalmindedness as measured by the Acceptance of Global Education Scales (AGES) and The Worldmindedness Scale” (Wolfer, 1990, p. 1). Teachers in his study also cited world travel as the reason for the increase in their humanistic, cultural, and global awareness.
Many studies look at the importance of an overseas teaching opportunity for pre-service teachers. James Mahan and Laura Stachowski (1994), national leaders in developing pre-service intercultural and international field experience programs for teachers in training, have been involved with the Overseas Student Teaching Project at Indiana University-Bloomington. This program has provided much data on the outcomes of international pre-service teaching experience. Mahan and Stachowski found that pre-service teachers who “teach, live, study, communicate, and participate in international schools and communities achieve a unique blend of learnings pertaining to life in the world, global concerns, the act of teaching, and their own capacities, both professionally and personally” (Mahan & Stachowski, 1994, p. 16).

The University of Minnesota-Morris runs the Global Student Teaching (GST) program. GST organizes and coordinates overseas student teaching opportunities for pre-service teachers from across the states. Specifically designed to help pre-service teachers acquire a global perspective, GST sends students to teach in countries around the world for 11 weeks at a time. Kissock (1997), the director of GST, found that regardless of where student teachers went, UK, Cameroon, New Zealand, India, or Germany, they developed “their teaching skills, expanded their understanding of the role of education in society, and broadened their view of our world” (Kissock, 1997, p. 135).

Colleen Willard-Holt (2001) sought to understand the effects of a truly short time abroad for pre-service teachers. She worked with a group of pre-service teachers who traveled to Mexico for one week as part of their teacher education program. Unlike Wolf’s work (1993) cited above, Willard-Holt found that even a week abroad is sufficient time for a positive impact on teachers’ global awareness and their desire to incorporate a
more global perspective into their classrooms. Participants also reported that, because of their week abroad, they were less quick to judge and expended more effort trying to get children to understand concepts. They reported that they were more patient and had more empathy with their students, particularly marginalized students (Willard-Holt, 1996). This outcome has direct relevance for both multicultural and global education. On the down side, she found that after a week in Mexico, some people felt they had become experts on Mexico!

Evidence from the previous studies suggests that time spent overseas will have a direct impact on teachers’ skills, perspectives, perceptions, and/or understanding; something will be altered as a result of study abroad. As is clear from the results of the above studies, overseas experience for teachers has its rewards. Time spent abroad is generally worthwhile and leads to positive outcomes both professionally and personally.

This dissertation examines through the lens of experiential education what teachers gain and subsequently bring to their classrooms as a result of a four and a half week Fulbright excursion to Kenya and Tanzania. I was specifically interested in how a program abroad for teachers can improve teacher knowledge of specific areas and topics as well as lead to a broader worldview. How and to what extent are changes visible by what teachers do in their classroom, both in content areas as well as within the larger contexts of global and multicultural education? Do changed attitudes and perspectives manifest themselves in the classroom? I hoped to better understand how the lived experience of being overseas, being face-to-face with people in other lands, living in their homes and sharing their meals, and traveling with a supportive group of colleagues leads to the changes identified in this study. Experiential education is the over arching
conceptual framework for this dissertation, therefore it is to experiential education that we now turn.

**Experiential Education**

In what ways and due to what experiences do Massachusetts K-12 teachers' perceptions of themselves and their work, change as a result of a four and a half week Fulbright program in Kenya and Tanzania? How do they translate their learning into curriculum and lesson plans? Do teachers become more critical and reflective thinkers about the world and of their place in it as a result of an experience abroad? These are some of the fundamental questions I sought answers to. This is important to me because I have a keen interest in the fields of study abroad and teacher development. Teachers who have a fuller, more wholly integrated understanding of the lives and cultures of other communities, based on an experience in a specific region, may be in a better position to help their students understand the concepts and goals of their specific content areas as well as those of global and multicultural education. Teachers need to become aware of the realities of other people's lives beyond the theories and stereotypes espoused in texts, thus becoming more confident and dynamic global educators.

**The Diverse Foundations of Experiential Education**

The primary conceptual framework for this research is experiential education. This section offers a brief introduction to the foundations of experiential education and an overview of pertinent literature. Other theoretical foundations that inform this work include theories on learning. Literature concerning learning theories including group learning is also presented.
It is believed that Confucius once said: “Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand”. With words such as these, an ancient Chinese philosopher sowed the seeds of experiential learning that grew into the contemporary theories we know today. Experiential education can be defined as a “pedagogy that provides an environment for students to put theory into practice” and “involves learning activities that engage the learner directly in the phenomena being studied” (Mitzel, 2006, para. 1).

Experiential learning is also identified as a process through which the learner constructs knowledge, skills, and value from direct experience. It includes a variety of hands-on educational approaches such as fieldwork, internships, field trips, oral interviews, lab work, site visits, study abroad, games and simulations, etc. Indeed, any intentionally structured learning activities that engage students directly and actively in the subject being studied can be identified as experiential learning.

The theories and concepts of experiential learning have contributed to and been influenced by countless fields and disciplines. If we look at the range, we see everything from agriculture to conflict resolution; assessment to youth development; practical skills training to theoretical models; and personal growth to workplace training and development. Also important to mention are outdoor and environmental education, service learning opportunities in social work and mental health programs, recreation, physical education, community health, and programming for people with disabilities. All of the above identify themselves as adhering to experiential approaches to learning.

Two hundred years after Confucius spoke, Aristotle said “What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing” (World of quotes, 2006, p.1). The concept of experience as
teacher has its roots in the ages. The seeds sown thousands of years ago have grown into complex, extensive fields of thoughts, ideas, and practices. They have produced bountiful fruits and hybrids. The contemporary products in this field grew from the fertile minds of theorists such as John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Jean Piaget, Kurt Lewin, David Kolb, and continue to be modified by theorists such as Carol Gilligan, Mary Belenky, and John Dirkx, among others. The following section is a literature review of experiential education.

**Founding Theorists of Experiential Education**

John Dewey (1997), often identified as the father of contemporary thoughts and ideas on experiential education, wrote passionately about the ennui and listlessness that existed in US classrooms during his time, and which continues today. School demands conformity with rules and regulations and requires that students are docile, receptive, and obedient. Once in the classroom, children and students are disconnected from the world they live in and find very few opportunities to connect their lives to the work done in school. This situation often leads to the surface learning of subjects that have no direct link to the lives of the students. The subject matter is imposed upon them in a situation that “forbids much active participation by pupils in the development of what is taught” (Dewey, 1997 p. 19). The school is identified as an “institution sharply marked off from other social institutions” (Dewey, 1997 p. 18), offering few opportunities for students to practice or test what they are learning in their community, let alone the wider world. Dewey argued that active experience, not sitting in the classroom endlessly listening to lectures, is key to learning. “There is an intimate and necessary relation between the process of actual experience and education” (Dewey, 1997, p. 20). Dewey’s belief that
experience, past and present, served as a potent generator and resource for learning is deeply embedded in the writings of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire.

Like Dewey, Paulo Freire (1985) criticizes the narrative approach found in most educational settings, describing it as the banking method of education or learning. This approach disregards the experience students bring to the classroom and offers no other opportunities for further experience to enhance learning.

The teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the “banking” concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. They do, it is true, have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store. But in the last analysis, it is men themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system. For apart from inquiry, apart from praxis, men cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other (Freire, 1985, p. 58).

The student is merely the receptacle into which the teacher pours knowledge; “instead of introducing the student to the real world of experience, the teacher talks about it” (Eyford, 1989, p. 29).

Freire and Dewey both promote the necessity of interaction with the world for a deeper, more holistic understanding of whatever students might be learning about. Freire offers a problem-posing education very similar to experiential education to replace the banking system. Banking education supports the “myths of reality” or what Dewey calls the “lore and wisdom of the past” (Dewey, 1997, p. 18) by concealing certain facts and not supporting dialogue or critical thinking on the part of the students. During problem posing education, people “develop their power to perceive critically the
way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality but as a reality in process, in transformation” (Freire, 1985 p. 71). It is an education that demands experience, experimentation, dialogue, reflection, and action—all key components of experiential learning.

Jean Piaget (1953) and Kurt Lewin (1948) are two theorists and researchers who have built on the foundations laid by Dewey and are representative of how diverse fields are influenced by and contribute to the theoretical underpinnings of experiential learning. They write from divergent fields of thought and practice, but both believe that there exist important and powerful connections between experience and learning.

Jean Piaget (1953) developed a theory of learning involving cognitive development that provided theoretical support for experiential education. Through his research into how knowledge is developed in humans, “he demonstrated that people relate to new experiences according to previously integrated experiences” (Belsky, 1989, p. 187), essentially building and expanding their knowledge with new experience by reflecting on it and incorporating that knowledge into the new experience.

Kurt Lewin, an organizational theorist writing in the 1940's, argued that “personal and organizational development resulted from the ability of an individual or a group to set goals, theorize about prior experience, experiment with that theory in their work, and revise their goals and theories based on the results of their experience” (TPL, 2006, para. 9). Lewin understood experiential learning as a cycle building on itself. His research was critical to the development of experiential learning models developed by David Kolb forty years later.
Some more recent theories involving experience are being cultivated by women. Writers such as Gilligan (1982) and Belenky (1986) also argue that experience is key to learning, understanding, and growth. However, the theories cited above are, for the most part, derived from the experience of men. Unique to the works of Gilligan and Belenky is their focus on the experience of women, how women relate to other people, and the modes through which women process information into knowledge. For example, through their research, Belenky et al. (1986) found that women tend to weave "together the strands of rational and emotive thought and of integrating objective and subjective knowing. Rather than extricating the self in the acquisition of knowledge, these women used themselves in rising to a new way of thinking" (Baker, 2002, para. 63).

Women are identified as being more emotionally connected throughout the learning process through the use of empathy and collaboration with others. This focus on emotive and somatic learning and the place of the body—the gut reaction, the feeling—in how people learn distinguishes these aspects of experiential learning. Learning becomes not just a physical experience, but an emotional one as well.

Learning especially in an adult context is "one that places an emphasis on factual information and the use of reason and reflection to learn from experience" (Dirkx, 2001, p. 63). However Dirkx argues that "emotionally charged images, evoked through the contexts of adult learning, provide the opportunity for a more profound access to the world by inviting a deeper understanding of ourselves in relationship with it" (Dirkx,
2001, p. 64). Of course this can be true for both women and men and is particularly pertinent to study abroad, as it can be an experience rife with emotional turmoil.

These authors and others offer critical perspectives on emotion, feeling, relationship, gender, race, and culture and their effects on how learners transform their experience into knowledge.

**Experiential Learning Models**

Drawing on rich and diverse foundational theories, David Kolb (1984) published a highly influential work entitled *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. In this work, Kolb develops his theory of experiential learning and offers a model for its implementation. Kolb’s interest lay in understanding the processes associated with making sense of concrete experiences, similar to Piaget’s interest in understanding how humans develop knowledge. “Learning,” Kolb suggested, “is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (1984, p. 41).

How this transformation can occur is demonstrated in one of the more provocative concepts to come from Kolb’s work and the most useful for the field of study abroad: the four stage experiential learning cycle. In the development of his model, Kolb drew abundantly from Lewin’s work in organizational theory. Kolb’s model continues to be widely used, and many other models have been developed as a result. Through his model, Kolb offers educators, practitioners, and facilitators some practical approaches for using and implementing experiential education.
This model can be viewed as a cyclical process of continuous reflection and action. A person engages in a holistic, concrete experience, participating, observing, and feeling with all of her senses. She then reflects on the experience, often using theory to help frame her thoughts and analysis. This analysis leads to abstract conceptualization, the development of new theories or behaviors utilized during active experimentation, thus creating new experiences. Kolb describes his model as a recurring cycle within which the learner tests new concepts and modifies them as a result of reflection, thinking, and discussion. It is through this continued experimentation, experience, and reflection that the transformation of experience into learning occurs. It can be a very powerful transformation during which the learner goes from the receiver of experience to the producer of knowledge that will be taken into future experiences. This is an essential aspect to the teachers’ experience overseas. How and what do they take from the experience to produce knowledge that will be utilized in their classrooms?
Kolb’s model is essentially the model that was utilized for the summer Fulbright program to Kenya and Tanzania. Inherent in this model and this research is Mezirow’s (1990) concept of perspective transformation. Perspective transformation can be used to explain how people can become critically aware of how and why their assumptions and presuppositions have come to control the way they perceive, identify, categorize, understand, and feel about their world. In this case how they perceive, understand, and feel about the world of Islam in East Africa, their relationship to it, and how they choose to teach about these specific topics, as well how it informs their teaching on the more general topics of global and multicultural education. “The essence of life is transformation. Nothing that is alive remains the same. Transformation can be a mere physical change brought about by age, but it can also be a profound change born out of learning and experience” (Ada, 2004, p. 138).

As indicated in some of the studies above, it is not enough for teachers to sit in a workshop for a day or a week to alter their perspectives and attitudes towards global and multicultural education. Such transformation requires a more intense experience. Perspectives of Africa, Islam, culture, global awareness and teachers’ own vision for teaching about these topics are transformed due to an immersion experience within the field. An experiential learning program offers opportunities for teachers to reformulate their assumptions about the wider world and “to permit a more inclusive, discriminating and integrative perspective and of making decisions or otherwise acting upon these new understandings” in future situations (Moon, 1999, p. 87).
The Importance of Reflection

Critical to all experiential learning models and to perspective transformation is the process of reflection. Reflection is also mentioned as a key component in teacher education and teacher development. Reflection is a practical way of enhancing learning, particularly from experience. There exists an implicit assumption that we cannot really learn from any experience unless we reflect upon it, think about it; process it through discussion, conversation, and writing. Reflection on experience, often through a theoretical framework, leads to insights and new understandings of what is the underlying lived experience or what is being taught in the classroom. “Freire’s notion of praxis links reflection with action. Reflection and action must be related, theory must be checked against experience, and experience must be interpreted through theory” (Eyford, 1989, p. 29).

Dewey (1916) discusses reflection within experience stating that “thought or reflection, is the discernment of the relation between what we try to do and what happens in consequence. No experience having meaning is possible without some element of thought” (p. 144-145). Moon (1999) proposes that “reflection appears to suggest more processing than simply recalling something”, like the well-known phone number of a favorite friend (p. 4). As we process our experiences, through reflection, discussion, thought or writing, “the quality of the experience changes; the change is so significant that we may call this type of experience reflective” (Dewey, 1916, p.145). It is during reflection that “the pieces fall into place, and the experience takes on added meaning in relation to other experiences. All this is then conceptualized, synthesized,
and integrated into the individual’s system of constructs which he imposes on the world, through which he views, perceives, categorizes, evaluates, and seeks experience” (Wight, 1970, p. 234).

Clearly we do not learn from experience alone, but from our processing of it. It transforms us and therefore the next experience we enter into; thus the concept of continuity of experience is also an important facet to experiential learning. Dewey explains that the “principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after” for it is a somewhat different person who enters them (Dewey, 1997, p. 35).

It is not necessarily true that reflection occurs naturally or automatically or that every experience requires reflection. Caine and Caine (1997) refer to reflection as “active processing”, an important aspect of their brain based learning theory. They describe active processing as “the consolidation and internalization of information, by the learner, in a way that is personally meaningful and conceptually coherent. It is the path to understanding, rather than simply to memory...the pervasive objective is to focus on the process of our learning and extract and articulate what has been explored and what it means. In effect, the learners ask in as many ways as possible ‘What did I do?’ ‘Why did I do it?’ and ‘What did I learn?’” (Caine & Caine, 1997, p. 122). It is critical reflective thought that leads to learning. Caine and Caine go on to add “that active processing is not just a stage in the lesson, nor is it simply a time of reflection that occurs after some ‘experience’ is over” (1997, p. 122) as it appears to be in Kolb’s experiential learning model. Reflection then “is a matter of constantly working and
kneading the ongoing experience that students have. It needs to be embedded in, and a constant aspect of, all that is ongoing. Active processing involves frequent questioning and an expansion of students’ thinking, as well as an articulation of facts, concepts, and details” (Caine & Caine, 1997, p. 122).

Merryfield (1993) identifies the importance of reflection in teacher education, particularly as a “critical component in preparing teachers to teach with a global perspective” (Merryfield, 1993, p. 27). She identifies three reasons why the role of reflection is important for teachers and global education. Individuals enter teacher education programs as adults with worldviews already formed. “They must learn to understand the realities and contextual factors of their own perspectives and reflection can play a role in learning from the values, beliefs, knowledge and critical experiences that contribute to our perspectives of ourselves, other peoples, and the world” (Merryfield, 1993, p. 27). Reflection is also a critical aspect for “teachers in the intellectual construction of global education and application of global perspectives into ongoing instruction” (Merryfield, 1993, p. 27). Global education has been and continues to be a controversial topic. “Reflective practice can be an important tool in dealing with the controversial nature of global education as it can provide substantive feedback on perspectives on alternative practice” (Merryfield, 1993, p. 28). These reasons for reflection on global education are also relevant to the goals of multicultural education.

Experiential education was an important aspect of the Fulbright program examined for this research, and reflection is a critical component of experiential education. Reflection was introduced early in the program as a concept for learning that would be utilized throughout the experience. Participants practiced reflection through
discussions and written assignments during the orientation phase of the program in preparation for their time abroad. A desired outcome of the program was that participants would at one point be aware of and actively engaged in reflective learning even when they are not in lectures, discussions or writing for an assignment; it would become a process that occurred automatically as they progressed through the experience. Reflective learning or active processing enables self-reflection and deeper learning thus allowing teachers “to begin to take charge of learning and the development of personal meanings. Ultimately, then, active processing is self-referential. In really learning both material and exploring personal meanings, students get to deeply know themselves. This self knowledge then becomes the key to functioning effectively in a complex world” (Caine & Caine, 1997, p. 122). Reflection allowed teachers to developed a deeper understanding of the complex worlds of East Africa and Islam. They also began to better understand themselves in relation to these worlds and developed ways to transmit this learning to their pupils.

Reflection and its Limits

Of course reflection has its detractors. Atherton (2003) explains that reflection stresses thinking about what one is doing in order to learn from the experience; however, he has doubts about its value. He contends, “reflection is just as likely to produce unrealistic and untested delusions of expertise (or hopeless self-condemnation, or self-justification, or blame, or...) as it is to produce positive learning and development” (Atherton, 2003, para. 14). He also suggests that the learning model expressed by Kolb can be divided along an external (public) and internal (private) axis of learning (figure 2). He asserts that reflection is the result of an internal thought process. However others
argue that reflection can be the result of both personal and public reflection: “it is the individual's capacity for reflection that will enhance that individual’s learning or practice, a mix of working with others and working alone is likely to bring about the best progress in learning” (Moon, 1999, p.173).

Kolb’s Model
As expressed by Atherton

\[ \text{concrete experience} \quad \text{abstract conceptualization} \]

\[ \text{active experimentation} \quad \text{reflective observation} \]

private
internal activity
introverted

public
external activity
extroverted

Figure 2

I agree that reflection can lead to unrealistic ideas and incorrect conclusions. I also agree that some aspect of reflection is done in private, particularly in journals and writing assignments. However, I argue that the structure of experiential education utilized in Kenya and Tanzania during this Fulbright program was, for the most part, balanced between private and public reflection. A supportive group dynamic was created that offered space and support for the sharing of ideas and thoughts. Teachers openly shared and discussed their feelings, thoughts, and ideas around any given experience. These discussions moved beyond learning as a private act and into engagement in a learning community. According to Wenger (1998), “Learning ...is a
process of personal transformation that increases one’s capacity to engage and participate in a community” (p. 23). The group of participants that evolves into a community is often key to the individual’s learning. Group discussions and reflection throughout this Fulbright experience were often led by an academic facilitator or program director to prevent many unrealistic or incorrect conclusions from being drawn. Of course this doesn’t mean it never happened, but by having the reflection in a public forum facilitated by academics or “experts” meant the likelihood of incorrect conclusions or “untested delusions of expertise” was mitigated.

The Role of the Group in Learning

It is important to elaborate here the idea of group learning or communities of practice. The foundation of the Fulbright Group Projects Abroad was the group of ten teachers, two directors, and many in-country facilitators and coordinators who came together in Kenya and Tanzania for four and a half weeks in the summer of 2004. The teachers were from different schools across the state of Massachusetts. They taught different subjects at different levels. The group was a mix of men and women with a variety of ethnicities represented. The majority of this group met six times over the year, prior to departure, for orientation sessions and therefore arrived in East Africa with a fairly well-formed and positive group dynamic. This is in contrast to most undergraduates who participate in study abroad programs. Almost all undergraduate participants on any given study abroad program are from different schools across the United States and some do not seem to realize that there will be a number of other students joining them for their experience abroad until they arrive at the airport or in country and meet the other members of their group for the first time. In either case, it is
hoped that individuals will eventually transform into a functional working group, supporting each other as they experience all that their time abroad has to offer.

Building on the concept of the importance of the group for learning especially through experiential education, Hansman (2001) offers insight into a form of experiential education identified as situated cognition. She explains that in traditional experiential education, a person learns by doing. For example, if a person wants to learn about engine repair, she might read books, watch videos, get the tools, and go to task: learning how to repair an engine by doing it. However, the emphasis in situated cognition is on the interaction of the learner with other learners. In situated cognition experience is still the key to learning, but in a situated cognition context, the learner would join a car repair club to share experiences, get together with others interested in car repair and restoration, and learn from more advanced mechanics. They might meet together every few weeks to problem solve a particular issue together. “Dialogue between and among—the members of the group—may take place as a problem arises and is therefore integrally woven into the learning experience” (Dirkx, 2001, p. 46).

Key to situated cognition is learners learning from other learners...it is a function and process of the group and often leads to communities of practice.

A community of practice is “a social group engaged in the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise” (Pallas, 2001, p. 7). Ideally the group of teachers becomes a community of support as they go though the program together with a growing awareness that “where the circulation of knowledge among peers...is possible, it spreads exceedingly rapidly and effectively” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 93). According to Moon, “working with others can facilitate learning to reflect and can deepen and
broaden the quality of the reflection” (1999, p. 172). Groups can provide “attention that facilitates reflection, ask challenging questions, notice and challenge blocks and emotional barriers in reflection” (Moon, 1999, p. 172). The group can present itself as a space “for giving voice to one's own thinking while at the same time being heard in a sympathetic, but constructively critical way” (Hatton & Smith, 1995, as cited in Moon, 1999, p. 173.) Ideally, working as individuals who then return to share their ideas within the supportive realm of the group enables participants “to explore the socially constructed nature of meaning, contribute personal experiences to the learning of others and provide a mutually supportive environment to facilitate growth” (Moon, 1990, p. 86). Jarvis (1983) maintains that interaction with others is critical to learning by stating that “the dynamic tension between the self and the wider society” (p. 60) is the heart of learning.

In supporting teacher development though global education, Urso (1991) reports great success for teacher learning through networking with other teachers.

Teachers found the opportunity to meet and share with their colleagues at other schools to be one of the most enjoyable and beneficial parts of the project. On workshop evaluations, we often found the highest marks were given to the period of time allowed for teachers to meet in small groups with their peers from different schools, subject areas, and grade levels. Much comradery was established as teachers shared their educational hopes and concerns and their ideas and experiences about common problems and successful solutions. The substance of a particular workshop was sometimes of secondary importance to the interactions teachers shared among themselves (Urso, 1991, p. 105).
One aspect of this current study sought to understand the role of the group within the ever-shifting perceptions and understanding of East Africa and Islam held by the individual teachers. Did the group help support teacher learning and if so to what extent?

**Learning Theories**

The theory of experiential education explains that learning occurs through a continuous cycle of experience, reflection, discussion, and experimentation. This process occurs both privately and in a group. The strands of this work, experiential education, study abroad, and global/multicultural education, woven together produce learning. But what type and to what depth does learning occur? For the purposes of this dissertation, learning and learning theories are next explored in brief.

There are many different definitions of learning as well as explanations of the learning process. For some learning is a quantitative increase in knowledge or the storing of facts for reproduction. Behaviorists would claim that learning is a relatively permanent change in behavior that results from practice. This may sound like a rather simple process, but based on new research in the fields of genetics, evolutionary science, and neuroscience, we are beginning to understand that learning is a much more complicated process involving all of our senses, our bodies, and brains. More complex definitions of learning include an understanding that “learning involves relating parts of the subject matter to each other and the real world”; in other words, making connections between theory and practice. “Learning is interpreting and understanding reality in a different way. Comprehending the world by re-interpreting knowledge” (Saljo, 1979, as cited in Atherton, 2005, para. 15).
Brain Based Learning

For writers like Zull (2003) and others who conduct research on how the brain learns (Caine & Caine, 1991, 1997; Jensen, 1998; Sousa, 2003; Sylwester, 2003), "learning is biology". Learning is a function of the brain and, according to Jensen (1998), learning is what the brain does best: "Learning changes the brain because it can rewire itself with each new simulation, experience, and behavior" (p. 13). Stimulus is needed to begin this process. Stimulus can come from working on a puzzle, parachuting out of a plane, living for two weeks with a homestay family in Mombasa, or visiting a development project in Lamu. Using a variety of receptors, the brain absorbs stimulus, constructs experience, sorts it and stores it, and puts it into places where it can be easily accessed. According to research done at the Washington University School of Medicine (Jensen, 1998), the brain is very active when a new task is initiated, but it becomes less and less active as the task is better learned, indicating that the brain requires new stimuli to keep learning and growing. “The novel mental or motor stimulation produces greater beneficial electrical energy than the old hat stuff” (Jensen, 1989, p. 13). As the brain is absorbing novel inputs, it is sending chemical and electrical energy along its neural pathways...leading to cell growth and physical changes in the brain. In some cases creating “whole neural forests that helps us understand better and, maybe someday makes us an expert in that field” (Jensen, 1989, p. 14).

In their works, Making connections (1991) and Education on the edge of possibilities (1997), Caine and Caine (1997) offer “a solid understanding of how people learn” (p.17) by explaining their theory of brain-based learning. They did extensive research into a multitude of fields to understand how the brain learns. Based on their
findings, they developed a theory of brain-based learning. Their theory was an attempt to "redefine the learner as an absorber of information to one who interacts dynamically with it" (Caine & Caine, 1997, p. 17). Their research showed, and their theory explains, that every brain has basically an "unlimited set of memory systems that are designed for the memorization of meaningless information"...which works very well for the traditional or banking method of education. However they also believe that our brains “have the need to place memories and experience into a whole and that our brains do this automatically and this whole tells us how things in space relate and how ideas and experiences are connected. Without this type of memory, we could not write a spontaneous sentence recalling an experience”—obviously vital to the practice of reflection. “Both memorization and integration are critical, and learning is best when information is embedded in rich, meaningful experiences” (Caine & Caine, 1997, p. 18).

**Cognitive Dissonance**

For some theorists, the contexts for stimuli and rich, meaningful experiences needed for learning come in a variety of forms. One form is known as cognitive dissonance, an uncomfortable, sometimes distressing experience. According to cognitive dissonance theory, put forth by Leon Festinger (1957), there is a tendency for people to seek consistency among their thoughts, knowledge, beliefs, and opinions (cognitions). When there is an inconsistency between attitudes or behaviors (dissonance), something must change to eliminate the dissonance. There is discomfort when a discrepancy arises between what one already knows or believes and new information or interpretations. There arises a need to accommodate new ideas and shift perspectives. This can be very difficult because often if someone is called upon to learn something which contradicts
what they already think they know—particularly if they are committed to that knowledge—they are likely to refuse to accept the new learning.

In writing about adult learning, Jarvis (1983, 1987) discusses the idea of a discordant experience, similar to Festinger's ideas of cognitive dissonance. Jarvis posits that in familiar situations, "the amount of new knowledge gained may be minimal and it may merely reinforce that which is already known, but on other occasions the discrepancy between what the individual knows and the meaning that he gives to his experience is greater and the learning experience becomes more explicit" (Jarvis, 1983, p. 60). This seems to suggest, "that the motivating force for learning is a discordant experience between the self and the socio-cultural environment" (Jarvis, 1983, p. 60). It appears here that people may seek out discordant experiences to enhance learning, yet Festinger seems to indicate that people want to maintain cognitive consistency and therefore try to avoid situations that lead to cognitive dissonance. However, regardless of how or with what intention one enters into a situation, the learning gained in a familiar situation may be minimal compared to the learning gained from new, unfamiliar and somewhat uncomfortable experiences.

Culture Shock

The theories of cognitive dissonance and discordant experiences work especially well for the purposes of this dissertation on at least two levels. Teachers participating in study abroad programs, particularly in developing countries like Kenya and Tanzania, are immersed into unfamiliar cultures that lead to a form of cognitive dissonance or discordant experience known as culture shock. People experience culture shock when they find themselves in a place where the unspoken rules of behavior and relationships
challenge much of what they know. Many individuals struggle to open their minds to understand and accommodate the new rules of behavior and adjust to the new environment.

It is important to realize that it is not exclusively people’s minds that culture shock affects. The theories of discordant experience and cognitive dissonance and by extension culture shock relate also to Dirkx’s (2001) understanding of the power of feelings and emotions in the process of learning and meaning construction. The “heart” of learning and understanding is not necessarily in the brain, as espoused by the many scholars above. While people are experiencing culture shock, they may also be feeling discomfort throughout their body. The disequilibrium caused by culture shock can be manifest in a number of physical ways. People can become very withdrawn and depressed. They may also suffer from headaches or stomachaches and engage in radical behaviors such as drinking too much or otherwise self-medicating in an attempt to ease the pain and discomfort of culture shock. Immersion into unfamiliar cultural settings can lead to cognitive dissonance, culture shock, and some amazing learning as teachers are presented with living examples of Africans, Muslim communities, and Islam in the field, that may differ greatly from their preconceived notions of what is African, what is Islam, and who is a Muslim.

Accommodation and Assimilation

What do people do when they are confronted with new experiences and unfamiliar situations? The results vary and can be very positive or rather detrimental to learning. In some cases, individuals thrive on new and unfamiliar situations and seek
them out. Others have a more difficult time adjusting to unfamiliar cultural understandings and accommodating new knowledge, and therefore resist learning.

According to Piaget (1953), there are a couple of things people can do with new input. Piaget’s constructivist approach to learning describes the concepts of assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation and accommodation describe a process through which cognizance and understanding of the outside world are internalized. Although one may be predominant at any given time, assimilation and accommodation exist together like two sides of the same coin; they are inseparable.

In assimilation, what is perceived in the outside world is integrated into the internal world “without changing the structure of that internal world, but potentially at the cost of ‘squeezing’ the external perceptions to fit—hence pigeon-holing and stereotyping” (Atherton, 2005, para. 2). In a sense, one makes the outside reality fit with what one already knows, without trying to process all the input to acquire new understanding.

During accommodation, the internal world has to adjust itself to the “evidence with which it is confronted and thus adapt to it, which can be a more difficult and painful process” (Atherton, 2005, para. 5). Because there are no pre-existent fields of understanding through which new and unfamiliar data can be assimilated, one is forced to develop new ways of thinking, new understandings of the world to accommodate the new information. Accommodation requires opening one’s mind, expanding one’s knowledge, altering one’s perception and understanding which stimulates the brain but can also be very emotionally draining. Accommodation is a more difficult process to engage in than assimilation.
Deep and Surface Learning

The final two learning approaches discussed here have been adapted from original empirical research by Marton and Saljo (1976) and expanded on by Ramsden (1992), Biggs (1987, 1993), Entwistle (1981), and Moon (1999). They relate to assimilation and accommodation, and are known as deep and surface learning. These terms refer to the extent to which the data are absorbed and learned. During surface learning, the learner is trying to determine what the instructor wants and to provide it; the learner is likely to be extrinsically motivated, possibly by fear of failing the class, wanting to perform for the instructor for positive feedback, or simply bored with the topic and wanting to do the least amount of work possible. During deep learning, learners tend to be intrinsically motivated to seek out and accommodate new learning and knowledge. Exciting and gratifying challenges are often identified as aspects of deep learning.

Clearly the ideas of surface and deep learning relate to assimilation and accommodation. In the act of assimilation, one is adding to knowledge but not going beyond the surface to alter the foundations of understanding. During accommodation, one is altering and adding to one’s base of knowledge; it is deeply affecting what one knows and how one perceives the world.

Learning Theories Discussion

The learning theories discussed above describe different processes that occur during learning. One specifically discusses what happens physiologically within the brain during learning. Others discuss the somatic and emotional aspects involved in learning. Still others discuss what learners can do with different inputs they are receiving. Cognitive dissonance offers insight to what kind of stimuli lead to learning, specifically
the cognitive and emotional discomfort one is faced with when one receives information that is in contrast to what one knows and holds true. One is driven to bring one’s self back into an equal state. This often calls for accommodation and deep learning—the creation of a new database from which to understand the world. It can be a difficult and painful process, but one that can spur significant learning.

Emotions and feelings are critical aspects involved in learning, as well. In order for deep learning to occur, learners need to be emotionally involved with the topic (Boud, et. al., 1985; McDrury, 2003). “In our experience the most significant learning takes place during or after powerfully emotional events” (McDrury, 2003, p. 27), but not to the point where the learner shuts down.

While culture shock, cognitive dissonance, and discordant experience can lead to rich, emotive, meaningful experiences from which learning and growth can occur, it is also true that these types of situations can lead to what Caine and Caine (1991, 1997) identify as “downshifting”. They describe downshifting as “a psychophysiological response to threat associated with fatigue or perceived helplessness or both” (Caine & Caine, 1997, p. 18). Physical and mental exhaustion as well as a sense of helplessness are often associated with degrees of culture shock. During this time students are not interested in learning or engaging in experiences that lead to learning. Indeed Caine and Caine explain that, “downshifted learners then bypass much of their capacity for higher order functioning and creative thought, resulting in a less sophisticated use of the brain” (Caine & Caine, 1997, p. 41). Clearly there needs to be a balance between experiences that lead to downshifting and those that foster greater learning and understanding.
As the teachers moved through their study abroad program in East Africa, many of them experienced discomfort, turmoil, and cultural identity issues caused by cognitive dissonance due to culture shock. They were emotionally and academically immersed into the unfamiliar, and they were learning through all of their senses. To some degree every teacher who participated in the program dealt with culture shock. I believe they were also dealing mentally and emotionally with preconceived notions of Africa and Islam. Because of the design of the program, teachers faced a range of life situations, including two different homestays and a variety of other face-to-face interactions with local populations that may have contradicted their previous learning and perceptions of Africa and Islam. Through different types of activities including curriculum design and group discussions, teachers processed their experiences and thus started to transform experience into deep learning. The role of the group and the support teachers gave each other can be critical in how they adjust to life in unfamiliar situations and how they reflect and learn through these situations.

Learning theories are fascinating, extensive, and could be the basis of an entire literature review and dissertation. The theories briefly offered here are examples of how people process the input and what they do with stimuli and experience; they will be referred to again as the data are analyzed.

Summary

This chapter examined the varied bodies of literature that envelop and inform this dissertation, including global and multicultural education, study abroad, experiential education, and learning theories. Where the strands of the literature come together, a confluence is formed that helps to understand how teachers learn from an international
experience and how they use that learning in their classroom. Study abroad when combined with experiential education and reflection can provide teachers with substantial learning and insights. Teachers can, in turn, pass their learning on to their students in many ways within the contexts of both global and multicultural education.

Research indicates that a study abroad opportunity for teachers can invigorate them and propel them to teach with a more global perspective. The learning theories discussed can help us understand the cognitive processes as well as how experience can lead to learning.

In subsequent chapters the data are examined and related to the literature. Before presenting the research design and methods, and findings, a brief history of the Fulbright project, the basis of this dissertation is presented. For a more holistic understanding of the project, the next chapter briefly explains its conceptual beginnings and some of the difficulties in bringing it to light.
CHAPTER 3

BACKGROUND AND CONTENT

This chapter provides the background and context for my interest in teacher development and in the creation of the Fulbright-Hays Program which is the basis for this dissertation. As a researcher, particularly one engaged in qualitative research, it is important for me to understand my biases and subjective reasons for engaging in specific research. How then did I develop an interest in what teachers learn as they study abroad? For five and a half years, I was an Academic Director for the School for International Training’s (SIT) Study Abroad program in Nairobi, Kenya. I worked with hundreds of US students as they confronted the challenges and wonders of study abroad in East Africa. I have a passion for the whole process and the amazing and often painful lessons associated with immersion into unfamiliar cultures. It is an exciting and stimulating way to learn, and I enjoy facilitating students’ understanding and growth as they progress through a semester.

When I returned to the US and began my doctoral studies at the University of Massachusetts in the Center for International Education in January 2000, I was assigned to coordinate the Global Horizons Program. This Massachusetts state funded program was designed to support K-12 teachers in their efforts to globalize and internationalize their curricula. Through this program, I was exposed to K-12 teachers and the requirements for expanding their courses to include a more global perspective. I also took courses in social justice, education and oppression, and multicultural curriculum design. I came to realize that an international experience or a study abroad opportunity
for teachers would go a long way in helping them globalize their personal and professional perspectives, as well as help them support their diverse student populations.

**The Program Focus**

Africa and Islam were combined for a number of reasons. It made perfect sense to me that I should write a proposal to take teachers to East Africa since I had over seven years of experience in the region. I had numerous contacts there that could help me develop a very strong, experiential program. However, I was lacking a particular focus.

**Islam**

This focus occurred to me in the summer of 2002 after the completion of a highly successful weeklong summer institute for teachers entitled "Understanding Islam Through Multiple Perspectives". The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as a response to the terrorist events on September 11, 2001, had recently revised its curriculum frameworks to include elements to develop in students a broader and deeper understanding of Islam. This required that many teachers acquire knowledge of Islam.

As I prepared for the 2002 summer institute, I learned that there are many excellent curriculum materials available for teachers on many different aspects of Islam. However it became apparent that these materials were developed primarily from a Middle Eastern, often Arab perspective. Since only 12% of the world's Muslims live in the Middle East, it occurred to me that by offering an opportunity for teachers to engage with Muslim communities in East Africa would not only provide intimate access into a little-known dimension of the Muslim world; it would also offer educators first hand experience in Africa.
Africa

Africa is a region of the world that is often neglected by teachers due to lack of knowledge or, even worse, a region where negative stereotypes are reinforced in the classroom due to teachers’ lack of awareness and experience of the area. My experience in East Africa and the need for teachers to learn more about Islam and Africa became the ideal combination for a proposal for a Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad program. I identified people both in Massachusetts and in East Africa who could lend support to the creation of the proposal and subsequent program, then dove into the task of writing the proposal. The proposal was submitted in October 2002 and awarded in March 2003. We were slated to travel to Kenya and Tanzania just four months later.

Inviting Teachers

Even before the proposal was funded, we had designed flyers inviting teachers to submit applications for the trip. As soon as we heard that the program had been funded, we sent the flyers out to over 1000 teachers across the state of Massachusetts. Participants were selected on a number of criteria. First, they had to be teachers in the humanities, teaching subjects such as history, social studies, arts, and literature. They also had to have been teaching a minimum of three years. Fulbright stipulated these criteria.

We, the program developers, sought teachers who communicated an avid interest in both Africa and Islam and were actively teaching, or were about to teach, one or both of these topics. We were also looking for teachers who were identified as leaders, specifically teachers who had developed innovative curricula in the past and had shared their work with other teachers. We hoped to develop a core of master teachers on the
topic of Islam in East Africa as a result of this trip; therefore each applicant was required to submit an outline for a curriculum project to be undertaken while in East Africa. The project had to be relevant to the topic of the program and relatively small in scale.

We had over 70 applications (Appendix A) and eventually twelve teachers were selected, and twelve alternatives were chosen. We had planned three orientation sessions focusing on developing strong group dynamics, regional and topical contents, practical travel and logistical issues, and introducing the concept of reflection.

**Postponing the Program**

After two orientation sessions in the spring of 2003, the US Department of State issued travel warnings specifically to Kenya, recommending that no Americans travel there due to increased risk of terrorism. The travel warnings, and the fact that many airlines now refused to fly to Kenya, became the source of much debate between myself and the others involved in the design of the program. It was eventually decided, much to the chagrin of the teacher participants, that the trip would be postponed for a year until the summer of 2004.

The decision to postpone the program for one year led to many unforeseen ramifications. Some participants pulled out of the program due to the delay. Others took advantage of the extra time and studied Swahili and learned more about East Africa and Islam. Due to issues with the airlines, our budget was severely compromised as a result of delaying the program for one year. This of course had a direct impact on the length of time spent overseas and the design of the program.

By the time I traveled to East Africa in May of 2004 to firm up program details, I had been working on this project for nearly two years! I conceived and developed the
program. I poured my heart and soul into it and invested a great amount of time, money and emotion into the successful creation and completion of this program.

All of this serves to explain that I was, and in many ways continue to be, deeply invested in this program; this has affected how I organized the research and gathered and analyzed data for this dissertation. So it is to research design and methods that we now turn.
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The following chapter presents the general approach to the research utilized for this dissertation, including data collection and analysis. Qualitative research and primarily the case study is the research framework for this dissertation. This chapter explains the case study, its defining characteristics and its limitations. Methods of data collection including interviews, observation and participation observation are presented. Analysis, particularly the researcher as the filter for data is discussed.

I hoped to understand how a small sample of teachers’ perceptions of Islam and East Africa shifted as a result of an intensive immersion into different communities in Kenya and Tanzania. What specific experiences had the most impact on their perceptions and what was the role of the group in their learning? Did their perceptions of themselves shift as a result of their study abroad? Did any of them have discordant experiences and did these lead to accommodation and deep learning? How were experiences and learning transformed into curriculum development and subsequent student learning? I hoped to understand these and other questions through qualitative research.

Qualitative Research: The Overall Approach

Qualitative or interpretive research utilizing case study applications is the overall research approach to this dissertation. Qualitative research is a term that covers many forms of inquiry “that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomenon with as little disruption to the natural setting as possible” (Merriam, 1998,
Qualitative research is "fundamentally interpretive...it focuses on description, analysis, and interpretation" of a wide variety of data (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 11). "The qualitative researcher collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data" (Creswell, 2003, p.18). I chose a qualitative research approach because I believed it to be the best way to understand how teachers made sense of their experiences.

Qualitative methods allowed me to have in-depth structured conversations with each of the teachers and presented opportunities to observe in the classrooms of a few select teachers. Qualitative research is based on the view that "reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). The strands of this study—experiential education, study abroad, global/multicultural education—are integral parts of a social world, particularly the social world of the teachers studying abroad in East Africa. The strands of this research occurred in conjunction with each other; all highly social activities into which individuals brought meaning and constructed meaning. Together I believe that the strands of this research provide a compelling tapestry to analyze and learn from.

Case Studies

The foundation of this qualitative research is the case study. "A qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (Merriam, 1988, p. 12). Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a continued period of time (Stake, 1995). A case study can be described as an in-depth examination of a bounded system, a single unit: "The single most defining characteristic
of case study research lies in delineating the object of the study, the case” (Merriam, 1998, p. 27).

Merriam (1998) suggests that one technique to test for “boundedness” “is to ask how finite the data collection would be, that is, whether there is a limit to the number of people involved who could be interviewed or a finite amount of time for observations” (p. 27). In this study the bounded unit is the teachers who were a part of the Fulbright Group Projects Abroad program. This boundedness includes the time preceding their experience overseas, as well as time spent in Kenya and Tanzania during the summer of 2004, and the following academic year. The program is bounded by time and space with a finite number of people involved. There were ten teachers and one program director who were available for interviews and observations during the two and a half year period from the time the group first met in the spring of 2003 to the final follow up session in May 2005. I was intimately involved in this program throughout the life of the project. My involvement and the impact of my biases, perceptions, and presumptions are discussed below.

Marshall and Rossman (1998) explain that case studies entail “immersion in the setting and rests on both the researcher’s and the participants’ worldviews” (p. 61). Case studies offer an opportunity for in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for the participants. In this case, understanding how teachers’ perceptions and knowledge of Islamic communities in East Africa evolved was based on a variety of experiences throughout the program; how these were channeled into classroom activities; and how these affected a teacher’s relationship with global/multicultural education and subsequently their students. The reader is presented with a detailed description of the East
Africa program, the process of learning, the learning itself, and the transformation of learning.

The Setting

The geographical setting for this study spans the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, primarily the Boston and Amherst areas, and extends to East Africa, specifically Kenya and Tanzania. Within this setting is the Fulbright Group Projects Abroad Program. There are three very distinct phases of this program that define the case. This particular Fulbright program was designed to consist of three-to-six orientations session in Massachusetts, a four-and-a-half week study excursion to Kenya and Tanzania, a weeklong reflection and curriculum design phase at the end of the program, and three follow-up meetings during the academic year 2004-2005.

The orientation phase of the program was designed to create a cohesive bond between the group members, supply answers to technical and logistical questions, design research projects, and introduce the concept of experiential education. The in-country portion of the program intended to facilitate as much interaction with local populations as possible. There were a number of Kenyans and Tanzanians who traveled with us throughout the program, providing cross-cultural insights and understanding to group members when needed. While in East Africa, teachers attended many lectures (Appendix B), lived with urban families in Mombasa, Kenya, and with rural families in Imbaseni village, near Arusha, Tanzania, and visited a number of diverse educational settings, historic sites, private homes, and celebrations to help them better experience and understand the differing cultures and communities in urban and rural areas in these two East African nations. The three follow-up sessions upon our return were conceived as
support for teachers as they processed their experience and began to refine and implement their curriculum projects.

The Sample

The sample that defines this case study is the ten teachers who traveled to East Africa as a group, along with the two program directors. The participant group consisted of eight women and two men, all from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. There were two Latin Americans (one male from Colombia, one female from Cuba) and one African American woman. The remainder of the group consisted of one man and six women, all of whom were White. They taught a variety of subjects, including history, social studies, art, literature; one was a bilingual education teacher, one was a librarian. All grade levels, K through 12, were represented. According to Open Doors (2005), an annual review of international education published by the Institute for International Education, sixty-five percent of students who study abroad are women and eighty-four percent are Caucasian. The Fulbright group reflects these statistics. The two directors were both white females. One, myself, had many years experience in East Africa as well as in study abroad. The other director had extensive experience in the field of teacher education and training in African Studies.

Data Collection Methods

Many data collection techniques are used in case studies. The case study approach to research "does not claim any particular methods for data collection or data analysis. Any and all methods of gathering data, from testing to interviewing, can be used in case study" (Merriam, 1998, p. 28). Indeed, data for this research were collected through a
variety of methods including observation, participant observation, interviews, and materials analysis.

Although I conceived the initial proposal, developed the program, and traveled with the teachers to East Africa, the bulk of research for this dissertation was undertaken upon our return to the US during the 2004-2005 academic year. Though I was not directly focused on gathering data for this dissertation during our pre-departure orientation sessions or while we were in East Africa, I was with this group 10 to 12 hours a day almost every day while we were in East Africa. I kept a journal and was able to reference it and to call on my memories of many diverse observations and discussions I had with participants during our time there. I was also able to discuss and check these memories with the participants themselves.

Participant Observation and Direct Observation

Upon our return, I observed teachers in a number of settings: in their classrooms, during follow up curriculum design workshops, and during professional presentations to their peers. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003) “observation is fundamental to all qualitative research” (p. 194). As an observer and participant observer, I looked for use of their overseas experience in the classroom. Did their lessons, either for students or their peers, reflect learning from specific lectures, site visits, or homestay experiences? What future plans did they have to expand on their experience? Did this experience support their efforts to teach from a more multicultural or global perspective? I also looked for material artifacts teachers acquired while in East Africa and how they were used in the classroom.
“Observation takes you inside the setting: it helps you discover complexity in social settings by being there” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 194). I observed in the classrooms of five teachers. Teachers were identified for observation for specific reasons, principally for the diversity they represented in grade level, subject area, and geographic local. I observed in the elementary library and art class of a very small rural school and in a large urban 7th grade history/geography classroom, both in western Massachusetts. I visited the classrooms of three urban teachers in the greater Boston area. I observed in an inner city Boston kindergarten, a variety of K-8 art classes in the Sommerville area, in a high school literature class in Jamaica Plains. I observed in each classroom in Western Massachusetts on two different days during January 2005. I visited classrooms in the Boston area over a one-week period in March 2005. I usually sat in the back of the classroom so as not to present a distraction to students and took copious notes. Upon return home, I reread my notes and refined them. I found that gaining access to classrooms and observing teachers in action was much easier than actually getting to the classroom. Weather became a very large factor in my ability to gather data through observation. It can be very difficult to travel in New England during the winter months; schools close for snow, and teachers are sometimes absent due to illness.

Being so closely associated with all of the teachers in this project was an advantage in gaining access to their classrooms. Teachers facilitated my entry into the schools. By the time I arrived at the schools, important gatekeepers such as secretaries and principals had been alerted to my visit, and I had no problem gaining access to any school. Teachers trusted me enough to let me in, and they were also excited to be able to share with me their class presentations as well as the outcomes of their lessons and their
thoughts on refining them. I was also a participant observer during the three Fulbright group follow-up sessions and during a number of teacher training sessions facilitated by the participants. Many of the teachers designed and facilitated workshops for their peers based on their experience in East Africa. Three of the teachers developed workshops for the Global Horizons series, and I was a participant in all three (Appendix C). I made kanga\textsuperscript{2}, learned more about the Swahili, and painted Tingatinga style. I was able to observe teachers in a wide variety of settings.

**Artifacts**

I also collected and analyzed material such as curricula, lesson plans, and PowerPoint presentations. I was granted access to curriculum journals that they were required to keep while abroad, as well as access to some of their personal journal entries. Their journal assignments required that they reflect on their experiences and their learning from these experiences. In some cases I was able to analyze student work that resulted from the lessons based on the teachers’ time overseas. I analyzed students’ artwork, history, and geography assignments.

**Interviews**

In addition to participant observation and observation, I conducted formal and informal interviews. I interviewed all ten teachers and my co-director. The interview structure was a formal and informal mix. I asked similar questions during each interview, but the questions were very open ended.

\textsuperscript{2} Kangas are bold, colorful rectangular pieces of cloth. Each kanga has a saying on it. Usually this is a Swahili proverb or the saying could relate to a current political or social situation. Kangas are widely used throughout East Africa, and particularly on the coast. They are used from birth to death.
I opened each interview with some specific biographical questions and then some questions relating specifically to the school environment of each teacher. With a grand tour question, I attempted to get an overall understanding of their thinking about experiential education and the role of reflection in their learning as a result of this trip. “Grand tour questions should elicit examples, narratives, and stories” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 180). The interview design was very flexible and exploratory. Because I knew each participant so well, the interviews were generally relaxed and conversational, yet specific information was garnered from each individual. In this manner they were “guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither exact wording nor the order of the questions [will be] determined ahead of time” (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). Questions were developed ahead of time but also grew from observation and participant observation situations. Follow-up interviews occurred with each teacher I observed. New thoughts and questions developed as a result of time spent in the classrooms with teachers.

**Data Management and Analysis**

Analysis of data occurred throughout the research process. For example, I analyzed interviews to help develop questions for subsequent interviews. However, a true in-depth focused analysis began to coalesce as I organized the data. It is difficult for me, now, to uncouple organization and analysis.

There are many techniques available for analyzing data. However, I believe one of the most critical aspects of analysis is to be intimately familiar with all of the data, an intimacy that develops as a result of continued organization and re-organization of the data. Analysis began to grow as I transcribed the interviews and classroom observation
notes. It was imperative to the work that I become familiar with the data. Indeed the researcher “must know the data intimately” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 281), in order to do justice to the analysis. This is particularly imperative when the researcher is the filter for the data as in qualitative research. Familiarization with the data occurred as a result of continued reading and reorganization of the information.

There are a variety of ways to organize data. For example, the researcher can use special software programs, note cards, highlighters, etc...any tools that will help her organize and make sense of the data. I transcribed all of the interviews as well as notes from observations. The result was over 200 pages of narrative. I kept one “clean” copy of these data and used a second copy to highlight, cut up, and organize as themes surfaced. I read and reread the data with my key questions in mind such as, “How do teachers use this experience in their classrooms?”; “How does it relate to global and multicultural education?”, and “What did participants identify as the most important aspects of the experience?” This was a fairly straightforward process...I was seeking responses to questions asked and then comparing each teacher’s response to a specific question to another teacher’s response to the same question.

Emergent Themes

As I analyzed the data, two major themes surfaced. It quickly became apparent that the data could be divided into the two interconnected themes of “Experiences that led to learning” and “How learning was used”. “Experiences that led to learning” is an exploration of all the circumstances and processes, both academic and personal, that peaked a teacher’s interest and caused her to reflect, to ask more questions, and to seek out a variety of people and activities in the quest for answers. What experiences were
important to participants as opportunities for learning and growth? "How learning was used" was identified as ways in which participants used their learning in East Africa and upon their return, within and beyond their classrooms.

These two major themes are woven together by the learning and knowledge gained by each participant. This includes all of the different facts, concepts, personal changes and growth that occurred as a result of the different experiences and subsequent classroom activities. While what everyone learned is critical to their experience and growth, as well as to my research...it was not identified as a major theme, but as the thread that weaves the experience together as a whole. Nuggets of learning and growth surface as the two major themes are explored. Within these main themes, subcategories materialized which were further analyzed.

Although I attempted to cull the major categories of “experiences that led to learning” and “how learning is used” into discrete groups, in reality they are not truly separate and distinct. Like a tangle of twine these concepts often overlap with each other and are twisted together in many ways and are always connected by the learning and growth of the participants. Nevertheless, for ease of analysis, they will be treated somewhat separately. However, I believe that it is important to acknowledge that learning, how it was achieved and then put to use, is part of a larger learning cycle; in this case part of the experiential education framework. Teachers gained certain skills and knowledge while participating in this Fulbright program, they conceived and developed curricula and lesson plans, they implemented them, and learned from the overall process. It is a process of doing – reflecting – learning – and doing; that for many of the teachers in this group is a continuous cyclical, progression that guides their work.
I organized the major themes into a three ring binder, each section corresponding to a particular theme or sub-theme. As data that directly addressed a particular theme were identified, I color coded them using highlighters and organized them into the different sections of the binder, in an attempt to build a case for each theme.

An exciting aspect of qualitative research is the emergence of unexpected themes, tangential to the research questions, but generated by the participants and therefore important to them. As themes and ideas bubbled up to the surface, the act of coding categories into themes, sub-themes, interesting ideas, and concepts forced me to look at the fragments, at the details, in ways that add to my understanding of the overall picture. Unexpected themes were also organized into the appropriate section of the binder. I was then able to analyze the data within the categories and across the categories. The data were organized in such a way as to help me “formulate themes, refine concepts, and link them together to create a clear description or explanation” of the topic (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 251). By using a three ring binder, it became fairly easy to manipulate the data from one section to another or to make copies of data if they fit into more than one section.

Analytic Memos

As data became more organized, a focused analysis became feasible. Analysis was probably the most difficult and time-consuming aspect of research. To add to the depth of analysis, I wrote a number of analytic memos. Analytic memos are attempts to describe and explain in detail certain “emergent insights, potential themes, methodological questions, and links between themes and theoretical notions” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 291). I wrote one on experience and one on each aspect of Kolb’s
experiential learning cycle. These memos explored each stage in an effort to more fully understand the cycle and theory as a whole. Analytic memos were also used to explore the role of the group in learning, the importance of a homestay experience, and the concept of reflection.

So much of the learning that participants achieve during an experience abroad depends on reflection. The same is true for my learning as a researcher. According to Rossman and Rallis, “there is no substitute for the thinking and reflecting that go into these memos” (2003, p. 291). I found analytic memos to be very helpful in organizing thoughts around themes, sub themes, questions, and concepts that arose during data collection and analysis.

As I identified and reflected on the themes that emerged, I was able to present my findings in a written format. The result of the research is a rich, thick description of the study abroad program, the learning gained by teachers, and their ensuing curricula designs, illuminating the reader’s understanding of the case study.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations must be surfaced while undertaking any kind of research. Ethics need to be considered not only for how the researcher interacts with or gathers data from participants, but also for how the data are analyzed and conclusions presented. Research and the production of knowledge that accompanies the analysis of data and its presentation are saturated with ethical choices throughout.

**Power**

Much of the literature on ethics refers to the consideration of vulnerable populations such as minors, victims, people with neurological impairments, pregnant
women and fetuses, prisoners, individuals with AIDS, culturally, economically, or politically marginalized people (Creswell, 2003). The research I undertook was with professional teachers from Massachusetts. Including myself and the other co-director, there were twelve people who comprised the primary participants of the case study. Nine (75%) of the group identified as white, two (0.16%) as Latino, and one (.083%) identified as African American. The group consisted of ten women and two men. Their ages ranged from 25 to 58. All were well educated, each had a bachelor’s degree and six of the teachers had Master’s degrees. My co-director has a Ph.D. While none of the participants was extremely wealthy, all of them led working or middle class lives and half of the participants owned their own homes. I did not identify them as a particularly vulnerable population.

There were many similarities between myself as the researcher and the participants in the study. The majority of participants, like me, were white women who were products of the US public education system. We all shared, regardless of gender or ethnicity, a passion for understanding other cultures and a desire to be a part of this experience.

However, Rossman and Rallis state that “research fundamentally involves issues of power” (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 66). The critical ethical issues I faced while collecting data included power, involvement, and intimacy with the participants. I was a friend to all of the teachers in this study. I had traveled with all of them for an intensive period to East Africa, and I had known most of them for over a year and a half before conducting research. While for the most part my relationship with the teachers was advantageous to gathering data, it also was problematic at some points. For example,
during interviews some participants were worried about hurting my feelings if they had anything negative to say. I assured them that I realized that not everyone enjoyed all aspects of the program. By virtue of my experience in study abroad, and the fact that I had traveled with the teachers, I had an innate sense of what worked for people and what did not. I also noticed that during classroom observations, some teachers would ask me for input in their lessons...asking me if what they were saying was correct or if I noticed any outlandish mistakes. I believe that this behavior indicated a reference to me as an “expert” and by extension a person with power. I am not an expert on East Africa or the communities that live there, Islamic or otherwise. I was not in their classrooms to “correct” them but to observe how they used the experience.

In both cases I tried to mitigate any feelings of awkwardness or discomfort between myself and the participants by assuring them that they could say anything without offending me or hurting my feelings and by assuring them that they were the experts on their experience and in their classrooms. I presented myself as being open to listening to all they had to say and to share the transcriptions of the interviews and observations with them. I assured them that I would not use anything in my dissertation they did not want me to use. I also offered to share with them the interview transcripts as well as drafts of my work.

As my work with these teachers progressed, not only did my respect for each of them as educators and individuals grow, but also I carried with me into each interaction the understanding that they were giving of themselves and their time. Just because I had developed and directed the program did not mean they had to let me into their thoughts and classrooms. I was thankful every time a teacher opened up to me and allowed me to
gain fresh insight into the importance of an overseas experience. Ultimately I believe that I was able to gather interesting and critical data while maintaining a balance between researcher and friend.

As I reflect on this issue of ethics, I am glad that while in East Africa my role was not divided between researcher and group leader. That would have presented even more ethical dilemmas. Rossman and Rallis (1999) caution against doing research “in your own backyard” for a number of good reasons. Had I conducted research while overseas with the group, it would have been in my backyard as I was deeply embedded within the program and to a certain degree I was in a position of authority. As it was, I was able to focus my attention on providing the support that the participants needed during our time in East Africa and not imposing upon them my desires for data.

Informed Consent

Instrumental to conducting qualitative field research is informed consent. Informed consent implies that all parties involved in the study are aware of the fact that a study is taking place and they have consented to be a part of it. I contacted each of the participants and told them of my desire to include them in my research. They were all very willing to be a part of it. Each teacher was emailed an informed consent form (Appendix D) and a form was presented to each participant before each observation.

Pseudonyms

Although it might be fairly easy to find out who was on the program considering that the public has access to this information, I have use pseudonyms whenever I name the teachers. While I describe their schools and communities, I have never directly named the school of any teacher in this study. Despite this, I believe that if any of the
teachers who were part of the program read this dissertation they could easily discern their colleagues; however, the general public could not.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations involved with case study research. “Case studies can oversimplify or exaggerate a situation leading the reader to erroneous conclusions” (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 337). Readers might believe that case studies present the whole picture, rather than a part—a slice of life. I hope to illuminate to readers exactly what this case study represents, clearly delineate the boundaries of the research, and to qualify any limited generalizations.

Case studies have also been accused of lacking representativeness. They tend to be very specific to time and space, to a particular phenomenon. This particular research examines how a group of US teachers' perceptions of Africa, Islam, and Muslim communities shifted as a result of four and a half weeks in Kenya and Tanzania and subsequently how they use their experience in the classroom. It is very specific to the teachers, the experiences they had in the summer of 2004, and their unique teaching situations. It is argued that case studies are so context specific that the results “cannot be applied directly to another case because no two cases are identical” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 105). However, I believe that the results of this research could be generalized to a limited degree. “Reasoning by analogy allows the application of lessons learned in one case to another population or set of circumstances” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 105), so long as the circumstances “are sufficiently similar to the study sample” (Kennedy, 1979, as quoted in Rossman & Ralis, 2003, p. 105). The teachers involved in this research reflect the general population of people who study abroad as well as the general
population of teachers in this country. They were primarily women, Caucasian, well-educated, coming from seemingly middle class families, similar to the majority of people who study abroad in general. It is also true that as more and more programs are developed for teachers to pursue learning opportunities abroad, some of the findings of this work may be applicable to the design and development of these programs.

I also believe that the results of this work support the findings of most of the research previously conducted with teachers in relation to their time abroad and support the rationale for opportunities abroad for in-service as well as pre-service teachers. Therefore there may be opportunities for some limited generalizations. It is also possible that the results could be utilized for the improvement of study abroad programs and/or professional development programs for teachers, particularly those that transport US teachers overseas.

**Researcher Perspective**

In case studies, as with qualitative research in general, “the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis” (Merriam, 1998, p. 42). Therefore case studies are limited by researcher perspective, sensitivity, subjectivity, and integrity. I clearly have a perspective in this research. I am passionate about study abroad and through my own experience know that the participants have grown tremendously as a result of time spent in East Africa. I have been intimately involved with the all aspects of the program for over two years. I wanted the program to be a success; I wanted everyone to have a positive experience and to gain much learning as a result. I tried to be open to being both very subjective as I filtered the data—aware of my personal interpretations of it—while at the same time understanding the need to step back to gain a more objective
view. This was a struggle at times. I was very much aware of my own biases throughout this whole process but at the same time very much aware that I had to keep my subjectivities balanced with some objectivity. To help with this, I enlisted the aid of critical friends. I identified friends who could read my work and give me the objective feedback that was required. “Critical friends can help the researcher explore their preferences for certain kinds of evidence, interpretations and explanations and consider alternatives, locate blind spots and omissions, assess sampling procedures to highlight selection biases, examine judgments and make the processes of research more public” (Norris, 1997, p. 174).

Summary

Qualitative research is the overall approach to this dissertation. This chapter provided a rational for utilizing the case study as a methodological approach for this research and highlighted the methods used to gather and analyze data. Also illuminated were the limitations to this research including researcher biases inherent in qualitative work.

Before discussing the major themes that emerged from the analysis of the data, a brief introduction to each participant involved in this research as well as an overview of the in-country dimension of this program is presented. This information is offered to provide a deeper understanding of the participants and the program.
CHAPTER 5

THE PARTICIPANTS AND THE PROGRAM

Participants
As the application for the program was being developed, many discussions were had as to the preferred and desired qualities of the teacher participants. Who could benefit the most from this type of experience, and who would be able to best disseminate their learning? A diverse group that represented a mix of ages and ethnicities was desired: men and women from across the Commonwealth who taught different subjects at different grade levels. We were hoping to create a varied group of traveling learners who would bring a multitude of experiences to the program and support each other throughout the learning and curriculum development process. We preferred teachers who were already teaching about Africa and Islam and desired to learn more about these topics. Most importantly we were looking for teachers who were, in a sense, teacher leaders: teachers with the experience and abilities to take the lessons learned from the program and share them not only with their students but also with other educators. We were trying to create a cadre of master teachers on different dimensions of Islam in East Africa as a result of this trip. Each applicant was required to submit an outline for a curriculum project (Appendix E) to be undertaken while in East Africa.

Twelve participants were eventually identified. We placed another twelve on a wait list. However, four teachers from the original group dropped out due to unexpected program delays and personal life changes. We invited two from the wait list and finally traveled with ten educators from across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Below are

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brief introductions to each of the participants as well as the other people who made up our group while in East Africa, providing a broader understanding of the group and to help place it within the larger context of the program.

Katherine is a young woman in her early thirties who has been teaching English language arts at the high school level for about 6 years. She is dynamic and already identified by her district as a master teacher. She teaches in a very urban, multicultural Boston neighborhood high school. She is white, and her students are primarily students of color: African American, Hispanic, and immigrant children from around the world. She incorporates African poetry, discussions about oral tradition as an integral part of many cultures into her classes. She does not teach specifically about Islam but has many Muslim students in her classes. She took advantage of the Fulbright program postponement to work on an intensive Master of Arts in teaching program at Harvard University and to study Swahili. She hoped to focus on the issues of language and language acquisition while in East Africa. She had limited overseas travel experience.

Ally is a vibrant African American teacher who is very excited about and skilled at teaching young children. She is a kindergarten teacher in a high achieving school in an urban Boston neighborhood. Her students are overwhelmingly African American. She is forty years old and has been teaching for about 10 years. She readily incorporates African and Islamic themes into her lessons. She is very interested in examining the connections between East Africa and China and is currently writing a children’s book about a giraffe that was sent from the sultan in Malindi, East Africa to the Emperor of China in the 15th century. With other teachers, she started a new Boston public school. She has traveled extensively for both pleasure and professional development.
Bea is a Cuban born women in her mid fifties who has been teaching for over twenty years. She began as a math teacher and moved into language arts and bilingual education and now works as a bilingual literacy specialist in middle and high schools in the greater Boston area. It is her responsibility to work cooperatively with literacy teachers to create interdisciplinary curriculum units and materials. She incorporates lessons on Africa and Islam where it is appropriate. Like Ally, she started a new Boston public school. Combining her own experience as an “outsider” in the US with the experiences gained through this Fulbright, she hoped to develop a thematic unit that would appeal to a wide population of immigrant students. She has traveled extensively for brief periods of time. Twice she has taken groups of high school students to Honduras for volunteer work for one-week periods.

Nell, forty-nine, has been the librarian in a very small k-6 (sixty students) school in a tiny rural village in western Massachusetts for five years. She and all of the students in the school are white, primarily from working class families. She works closely with all the teachers at her school helping them develop curricula on Africa and Islam. She has traveled a lot and led exchange trips overseas. She is dedicated to exposing her students to the different cultures of the wider world, which she has done with great energy and creativity. She hoped to develop a hands-on teaching kit with a wide variety of materials, artifacts, and photos gathered as a result of this experience.

Kylee, 27, is a young, white teacher working in a large urban area of Western Massachusetts. She has been teaching world history, world geography, and ancient cultures to middle and high school students for three years. Her classes consist primarily of African American, Hispanic, and immigrant students. Many of her lessons focus on
ancient Africa and the spread of Islam. She hoped to further her knowledge of the Indian
Ocean trade system and have an understanding of what life is like in East Africa today.
She has traveled extensively to Eastern Europe and Turkey on study abroad trips as well
as for humanitarian aid.

Riana is in her early 40’s and has been an art teacher for 13 years. For the past 6
years she has taught art at the high school level in a small town in Western
Massachusetts. She and the majority (95%) of her students are white. As an artist, she
works in a wide range of media. She brings to her work and her life a profound sense of
spiritualness and healing. Her goals for this Fulbright trip included creating a multi-
faceted arts curriculum which focused on Islamic and East African art and developing a
program that connects youth in East Africa to youth in her home town through an on
going dialogue of their own original works of art. She has traveled extensively and has
taken students groups abroad to Italy.

Alejandro is a Colombian born, high school social studies and world history
teacher who has had extensive experience in inner city public schools in Boston. He is in
his mid 30’s and has been teaching for about 4 years. He is a member of the bilingual
education faculty at his high school. He incorporates the study of Islam and Africa in to
many of his lesson. His interest in the Fulbright program lay in understanding the
economic conditions of East Africa and its role in world affairs, and to understand how
and why a once vibrant cultural and trade center has been reduced to a deprived segment
of global society. He has traveled extensively for short periods of time to many places in
the world.
Connor, late 30's, has been teaching social studies/US history at a large suburban high school about 30 miles outside of Boston for the past seven years. His school enrolls well over 4,000 students. While he is white, the student body at his school is fairly ethnically and culturally diverse. Each social science class contains an African civilizations component as well as a world religions component. He spent nearly 10 years in the military before becoming a high school teacher. He hoped to develop a unit that examines the influence of Islam on contemporary east African culture. He has spent years of his life traveling around the world and has visited 43 countries on five continents. He is a great lover of travel and draws on these experiences in the classroom.

Sam is a fun loving, dynamic K-8 art teacher in her late 50's, who teaches at four different schools in the Boston area. She has been teaching for 13 years and works in all media. While she is white, her student population is very diverse. She was hoping to develop a unit on textiles from East Africa.

Erin is a young, vibrant, eager teacher in her mid 20's. She has been teaching middle school geography in a robust middle class neighborhood outside of Boston for three years. She, like over 90% of her students, is white. Africa is her favorite unit to teach because of its remoteness to the majority of her students’ experience and is very much aware that she and her students get most of their information about Africa from mainstream media. Her ambitions for this Fulbright included creating a PowerPoint presentation with images that violate the stereotypes and misconceptions her students have of Africa and Africans and constructing a narrative about how people in Kenya and Tanzania spend a typical day.
Although the participants were overwhelming white, this proved to be a very diverse group in terms of personal and professional experience. Indeed one of the participants stated, “I thought the group was extraordinary. At first I was a little overwhelmed by all of the personality differences and all the interests, but it sort of all blended together” (Sam personal interview). The range of schools and economic conditions represented by this group was quite broad. School sizes ranged from 60 students in a PK-6 school to a high school with over 4,000 students enrolled. Participants taught in schools representing all economic levels, from wealthy predominantly white neighborhoods, to rural working class and suburban neighborhoods, to very urban, economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. This proved to be a high functioning group, one that got a long very well and supported each other throughout the program. They were also a lot of fun to travel with.

The co-directors for this program were:

Bev, 56, with a Ph.D. in political science has worked professionally as a teacher educator with a prominent New England university for over 14 years. Training educators how to teach about Africa is the focus of her work.

Myself, 43, white, well educated. I have lived and worked in Africa for nearly 10 years. I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Mauritania, a WorldTeach volunteer in western Kenya, and I worked for the School for International Training based in Nairobi for over five years. I have extensive experience working with groups of US students in Africa.

Once in country, our group diversified and grew to include three Kenyans, two of whom traveled with us for the entire trip. Our coastal coordinator was Ali, a highly respected educator and head archeologist at the Ft. Jesus Museum in Mombasa. He is
Swahili, grew up on the island of Lamu, and now lives in Mombasa. He is a doctoral candidate at a US university. He has worked for many years with US student groups and is particularly knowledgeable about the East African coast, its cultures and history. Our program assistant was Jennifer, a Kenyan woman from Nairobi. She too has worked for many years coordinating US student groups. Because my six-year-old son was also a member of the group, Elizabeth was hired to travel with us to watch over him when I could not be there. Elizabeth, like Jennifer, was a Luyah from upcountry Kenya; neither was Muslim or Swahili.

Ali taught us and traveled with us until we reached Dar es Salaam. Jennifer and Elizabeth traveled the entire route with us. These three people were invaluable assets to the overall experience, becoming friends with the teachers, offering unique insider and outsider African views of coastal and Muslim communities, and often acting as cultural bridges between the teachers and local populations.
The Group in Jozani Mangrove Forest: Zanzibar

Figure 3
### SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER AGE</th>
<th>RACE/ETHNICITY</th>
<th>SCHOOL DISTRICT</th>
<th>GRADE LEVEL</th>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>YEARS TEACHING</th>
</tr>
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<td>Middle and high school</td>
<td>Bilingual Education</td>
<td>20+</td>
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</tr>
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<td>English</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
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<td>High School</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>sub-urban</td>
<td>Middle school</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4
The Program

The official title of the program was “Teachers to East Africa: Understanding Islam and Muslim Communities in an East African Context”. There were three distinct phases to this program: six pre-departure orientation sessions, a four-week excursion to Kenya and Tanzania, and three follow-up sessions upon our return. The orientation workshops focused primarily on group building, as well as the logistical details of travel. The follow-up sessions acted primarily as space to allow teachers to share their experiences of the trip while offering support in the development and implementation of their lessons and curricula.

The four-week in-country phase was designed to offer as many opportunities for face-to-face interactions with as many diverse Kenyans and Tanzanians as possible. Two very different homestay experiences were arranged: one for five days with urban Swahili families in Mombasa; the other for four days with very rural Muslim families in Imbaseni village in Northern Tanzania. Teachers shared breakfast and dinner with their homestay families while spending the bulk of the day attending lectures and seminars. A wide variety of lectures and panel discussions were organized throughout the trip. Tutors were arranged for each participant while we were on the island of Lamu. Tutors were chosen based on the participants’ interests, and there was an expectation that teachers would spend their free time with the tutors. Tutors were also welcome to share in all our meals. When they weren’t staying with homestays families, participants were housed in guesthouses and small hotels. As a group we spent a lot of time together so dispersing into homestays or with tutors was a great way to break up the group. There were plenty of opportunities for the group to be dispersed within any given locale. One teacher
commented that the homestays "gave us all something in common, which was a good thing, now we weren't strangers anymore. We had an experience to deal with. The homestays gave us things to talk about and made the group come together right at the beginning" (Sam personal interview). Each teacher returned to the group with new experiences and stories to share.

While our journey together started in Massachusetts, the part that everyone was really looking forward to didn't begin until we were all together in Nairobi. My son and I traveled to East Africa about six weeks in advance of the group. This was done so I could meet with all of the different people who had helped make arrangements for the program, as well as organize some Nairobi based lectures. I needed to feel confident that everything was in place prior to the arrival of the group. I traveled to each of the sites on the proposed itinerary to meet with all of the appropriate people, make hotel and homestay preparations, confirm the lecture schedule, as well as local travel arrangements. Katherine, one of the participants who was doing research for a professor at Harvard, arrived three weeks prior to the group. Excited and exhausted, the rest of the group arrived in Kenya on July 9th, 2004, and this is when the fun began!

We started our journey in Nairobi, traveled by train to Mombasa for about five days where the group immediately settled into homestays, and attended many lectures, panel discussions, and field excursions. We then traveled north to Malindi for a couple of days to visit the ruins of old Swahili city-states. We continued north to Lamu where teachers were introduced to tutors and also attended lectures and field excursions. We

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3 The one site I didn't visit before the program was Bagamoyo, a small, fascinating town north of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. Had I visited there, the trip would have been organized very differently. Because it was such an interesting place, I would have organized a more extensive visit and a longer stay.
then flew south to Zanzibar for a week exploring the island and attending lectures. We traveled by boat to Dar es Salaam and Bagamoyo for a few days before traveling by bus to Imbaseni village in the Arusha area of Northern Tanzania. Here the participants stayed with homestay families once again as well as engaging in community service opportunities, cultural celebrations, and beginning work on their curriculum projects. See the map below for our travel route.

The above is a brief introduction to the participants and a brief description of our short, yet incredibly rich time in East Africa. It was during our time in Kenya and Tanzania that many diverse opportunities that fostered and enabled growth and learning were presented. The experiences that led to learning are explored in the next chapter of this dissertation.
CHAPTER 6

EXPERIENCES THAT LED TO LEARNING

This chapter explores the experiences that led to learning. What teachers learned as a result of this program is briefly presented here as well as woven throughout this chapter and the next.

The teachers learned many things on many different levels, academically and cognitively, as well as perceptually and personally. As a result of this program participants gained cognitive knowledge of Islam and Muslim communities within selected areas of Kenya and Tanzania. Their perceptual understanding of Islam and Africans changed. Personally the participants grew as a result of this program. Many of the educators gained confidence in their teaching abilities.

The experiences that led to learning included actually being in East Africa, immersing into the cultures through homestays, panel discussions, individual tutors, and engaging in in-depth reflection with the group and on their own.

Learning

Participants learned about a variety of topics on this excursion. They learned facts and figures about East African history, society, culture, and politics. They also learned much about themselves as individuals and citizens of a larger global community as they drew connections between themselves and many of the people they met along the way.

This Fulbright journey was primarily an experiential learning opportunity:

“Experiential learning refers to learning in which the learner is directly in touch with the
realities being studied” (Montrose, 2002, p. 4). Through lectures, field excursions, panel discussions, homestays, face-to-face interactions, and independent travel, participants were exposed to and immersed into a wide variety of social, cultural, political, and historical aspects of coastal Kenya and Tanzania.

**Cognitive Learning**

Intellectual development and substantive knowledge are expected and typical outcomes of study abroad experiences, as described by many researchers (Case, 1991; Hanvey, 1976; Kaufmann, Weaver, and Martin, 1992; Kniep, 1986; Wilson, 1993) who report on the impact of an international experience. Participants gained factual information, substantive knowledge about Islam and Muslim communities along East African coast and larger concepts of Africa.

For example one participant stated, “Well now I know more about Islam in East Africa and I sure know more about Swahili history and it’s easier to make it live and I got my dhow. I find the thing I tell people when they look at it that it is referred to in Greek travel literature in the 1st century and so the Swahili were part of this larger world” (Bev personal interview). Another teacher commented that: “I learned a lot about the architecture how they built houses and how they built houses actually played into religion too. That was something I didn’t know about” (Ally personal interview). And still another stated: “I learned about Sharia and Koranic law and gained insight into what is and isn’t interpretation” (Katharine personal interview).

**Perceptual Learning**

Participants were exposed to the role of education among the Swahili, introduced to specific cultural icons such as the kanga, learned about the lives and roles of citizens in
different communities in East Africa, among many other topics. They also learned deeply about the lives of individual Kenyans and Tanzanians, particularly women. One participant in reference to a specific lecturer felt “her life experience made it clear to me the power of women within Islam, compared to whatever concept I had before the trip…primarily that Muslim women are really limited in terms of what ever they can do, this women had done so much and had not been limited by Islam” (Alejandro personal interview). Being there, as one teacher commented,

absolutely helps for me to see. One of the things that just blew me away was just being with Muslim women…and I know that the dress is so superficial and at the same time it is such a stereotype but to kind of be in that world just a little bit to be included enough that I was invited out to go shopping or invited out to go to the beach. Those kinds of things really helped me to question old stereotypes that I hold and that’s something you can’t know until you can actually meet them...while I don’t know everything at least I will have a more solid foundation and I have contacts I can call and ask (Kylee personal interview).

Another participant stated that being in Kenya and Tanzania forced her to face her lack of awareness and her own stereotypes about Africa:

I really had to confront myself and think about how much I don’t know about Africa. I knew it was not all the same country before, but I didn’t know what the hell I was talking about …but now having been to these two places and to think about how unique they are unto themselves and how different they are from one another, to really recognize that they are autonomous countries and what that means …its pretty shocking to me to think about the REAL diversity of African people, to think about African peoples as not only diverse in language and in religion and in culture, but in ethnicity (Katharine personal interview).
These are examples of shifts in perceptual understanding. Perspective consciousness has been identified as a critical component of both global and multicultural education; it is also often identified as an outcome of studying abroad. According to Hanvey (1975) and Tye (1991), perspective consciousness is defined as the development of awareness that not everyone sees and understands the world in the same way. It is the realization of and appreciation for other images of the world and an understanding that some of these multiple images of the world are profoundly different from one's own. Multicultural and “global education involve perspective taking—seeing things through the eyes and minds of others—and it means the realization that while individuals and groups may view life differently, they also have common needs and wants” (Tye, 1991, p. 5). Almost everyone entered into this experience with the stereotypical perception that Muslim women are oppressed. While this may be true in some cases, it is not true in all cases and, as a result of this experience in East Africa, a number of the participants’ perceptions of what it means to be a Muslim woman shifted. They realized that this issue is more nuanced and complex than just assuming women who are Muslim and wear hijab are oppressed.

“International experience clearly contributes to a gain in the perceptual understanding of an individual” (Wilson, 1993, p. 20). It also contributes to the deflation of relying on stereotypes and jumping to conclusions on these stereotypes. As one participant noted, “One thing I can say that I learned while I was there was not to make snap judgments about how I felt about a person and how I felt about what a person’s motivations were...to not always assume I knew all of the answers right away” (Erin personal interview).
Personal Learning

International experiences also contribute to the development of self and relationships. As cross cultural awareness increases, growth in cognition goes hand-in-hand with growth in personal awareness, one result of interaction with an unfamiliar environment. Just being in Africa amazed one participant:

At one point during this thing I thought oh my God these kids (the other participants) because they are all in their 30’s and I said to myself Sam you’re going to be 58 and at one point I said am I out of mind traipsing around Africa at my age ...apparently not...but it was funny because it never occurred to me until the middle of the trip...that oh my god look at this! How am I doing this?! And when I got back I did have people, other teachers, people my own age say to me ‘You have a lot of guts going there at your age...I could have never done that!’ (Sam personal interview).

Changes in self confidence, feelings of independence, and an increase in autonomy are often identified as outcomes of international study by almost every one who researches this aspect of education (Carlson et al, 1990; Kauffman & Weaver, 1992; McKieman, 1980; Thomlison, 1991; Vall & Tennison, 1991-2).

A sense of belonging, as well as building connections with and to community, is also often identified as a result of in depth time spent abroad (Wilson, 1993). One participant was awed by the community of women she was able to interact with and desires to strengthen the community she is a part of in the States. She describes her reaction to gender-sanctioned relationships and women:

The way they would celebrate each other in those women only zones was really touching to me. And now it is an explicit serious goal in my life to nurture my female friendships and to nurture couples friendships. I want to be a part of a community that nurtures my soul ...and I’ve
made the purposeful decision actually and broadcast it to a few of my girlfriends. I was like I just want you to know that as a part of my trip and my wanting to be a better person, I want to be a better friend to you and I want to enrich this part of my life...I mean that part of Islam, as an outsider, I thought gender sanctioned relations or whatever, that’s crazy! I do. It’s crazy as far as being a rigid doctrine that only women and women and men and men can be together but at the same time I have a lot of respect and awe for the community of women that I was able to interact with (Katharine personal interview).

Above are glimpses into the variety of facts, ideas, insights, and perspectives that the participants learned, recognized, and continue to foster as a result of this Fulbright experience. In many ways, the learning, the shifts in perspectives, the increase in confidence are supported by the study abroad literature as very typical outcomes. In this respect, the teachers in this group were no different from the many undergraduates I have worked with in similar situations. However, I believe there are subtle differences, particularly in how the learning is used. The next section discusses specific factors that participants identified as the seeds of learning and the circumstances that nurtured them.

**Experiences that Led to Learning**

Having worked in East Africa with US undergraduates for many years, I am very familiar with both the academic and personal growth that occurs as the result of a study abroad opportunity. As expected, the teachers experienced very similar academic and personal growth when compared with US undergraduates. Because I anticipated these learning outcomes, for this research I wanted to focus on the circumstances that led to learning. What were the critical experiences that led teachers to pause and reflect, to question their perceptions, assumptions, previous knowledge, and to consider what to take into their classrooms? The following section explores the experiences identified by
participants as important to their learning and growth. The primary experiences identified as crucial were being there, having homestays—living with Kenyan and Tanzanian families and a variety of other opportunities to interact with East Africans—as well as the opportunity to reflect on their experiences with the group and on their own.

**Being There**

As part of the application process candidates were asked to describe their motivations for wanting to participate in this experience. Many referred to what they currently teach in their classrooms or what they hoped to implement in their classroom and with their peers once they returned as motivation for undertaking this excursion. They identified very practical reasons for wanting to participate in this Fulbright program. Other motivations for wanting to travel for over a month in East Africa included:

- Developing knowledge and understanding of the region and of Islam: “Mainly to expand my knowledge of Africa and Islam. I felt that I had never been educated in those areas” (Sam personal interview).

- Making connections between nations (global education): “I am always trying to make connections between third world countries. This motivates me to go out and see how other people live, trying to make a connection between Africa and Latin America” (Alejandro personal interview).

- Making connections between human experiences (multicultural education): “To try to get a window into my students’ experience, both my African and my African American students’ experience” (Katharine personal interview).

- Wanting to have in-depth personal experiences:
I wanted to learn more about Africa and the idea of being supported in teaching about it was attractive and, especially having traveled in both countries before, I really looked forward to going into deeper something I had touched before. I had only stayed in guest houses before, I hadn’t really had the chance to spend time sharing meals with people in their homes and staying in their homes. So the anthropologist in me loved the chance to go deeper (Nell personal interview).

Regardless of the specific subjects taught, the small research projects they each developed, or their personal reasons, actually being in East Africa was a primary motivator for each teacher. Indeed we know that travel to unfamiliar places can herald great growth and understanding. However, just as Dewey (1997) explains that activity alone does not constitute experience, mere travel to another place does not automatically lead to learning. What makes it a learning/educational experience is not so much being there in and of itself, but the analysis of the experiences through personal and group reflection, discussion, writing or curriculum projects that helped participants transition from the experience to integrated meaning and consequent understanding. “It’s not the activity of leaving one’s homeland that creates learning, but the subsequent analysis of that activity where the real learning occurs” (Montrose, 2002, p. 7).

However, because being there was absolutely critical to the overall experience and the learning that grew out of it, the value of actually being there cannot be overlooked. East Africa, and specifically the countries of Kenya and Tanzania, provided the backdrop against which immeasurably rich and textured opportunities for learning were offered. Being there provided access to the critical experiences which the participants reflected on, analyzed, and eventually learned from.
When asked about the value of being there one participant said “You can take a course here and learn about the Swahili, you have all the resources...you could visit a mosque, you could find 10 Swahili families in Boston to stay with, but its not going to be the same because we’re going to walk out of that house and be in Boston. We’re going to have the same experience. We walked out of those houses there in Mombasa or Imbaseni and we were the mzungu, here we are just another person” (Alejandro personal interview). As this participant explains, we could have had the same lectures, visited mosques and schools, and even stayed with Swahili families in Boston, but the overall experience would have been so very different because the place itself is familiar. Being in Kenya and Tanzania provided access to stimuli, sights, sounds, smells, feels, and tastes that could not have been replicated in the US.

Being there was also significant to understanding what questions needed to be asked in order to learn. “You just don’t know what questions to ask until you are there. I mean you might think you do, like my study topic, I thought I knew what I wanted to learn about, but when I got there, I was like, ok I still want to learn about those things but now I know what questions to ask to get at that kind of learning where as before I didn’t know squat” (Katharine personal interview). Being there offered the teachers access to their interests in a multitude of ways they never had considered. Now, with just a little experience in country, they were able to ask better questions to gain more pertinent responses.

**Being There as Professional Development**

This program was conceived as a professional development opportunity for educators, with being in East Africa a critical component to teacher learning. “It just
overwhelms other professional development I’ve had because other professional
development is, literally, sitting in a room and listening to someone drone on endlessly
about something I’m probably never going to use or someone who doesn’t understand the
reality of teaching so it becomes just wasted time…so there is no comparison. This is
well beyond any professional development” (Conner personal interview). In response to a
question about professional development opportunities, another teacher commented that:

Oh my God…it’s the same thing as somebody telling you how to build something vs teaching you how to build something while building it. It had a personal flavor. I mean I could read a book about it, I could imagine it, I could have prior knowledge of it but its never the same as actually having lived in a Swahili house or having had to deal with Saba praying everyday and explaining to me all the stuff, the sharing and sleeping in her house… Just the day to day of her life which is very different than my life and also listening to all of those folks (panel discussions) A lot of things were very familiar…they have the same issues as we do here…issues of class, of religion…they are a society with many issues just like ours (Bea personal interview).

Another teacher stated,

I wouldn’t compare this experience to other professional experiences I have had…This is a major experience, a great experience in that I was able to live with people from the region, learn from them, interact with them…it was a hands on experience but it was not just a hands on experience…ok you are going to build a table or carve a piece of wood the same way we do it here in Zanzibar or Mombasa and then you’re going to go home. No you’re going to wake up early in the morning because something is going on in the community like the call to prayer or you’re gong to drink chai with the cardamom and ginger because that’s what we drink here or you’re going to have to wait for the train to arrive for another five hours because that’s how things happen here…it’s not just a hands on experience but I guess it’s a ‘life on’ or ‘live on’
experience, a full body experience (Alejandro personal interview).

Few of these teachers had ever traveled overseas for professional development. An overseas lived experience for teachers, marked by continuous analysis and reflection, is one in which “participants are likely to achieve personal and professional outcomes that could not be matched had they chosen to remain at home and completed conventional” professional development programs (Mahan, 1994, p. 15). As one teacher explained, conventional professional development programs “have one person come in that follows some kind of outline and tells you about a topic. It’s a lot of surface learning to me” (Ally personal interview).

There is much about East Africa, the countries of Kenya and Tanzania, the Swahili people and Islam that can be learned from reading books, taking classes, surfing the Web, and watching the Discovery Channel. Factual information about these places, their histories and peoples is easy to find. Being there living with local families, learning from them, sharing meals, etc. provides access to a depth of knowledge that is unobtainable from reading books, listening to professors lecture, or watching TV. As one participant stated “the history [of the region] I can get… it’s right here, you don’t have to go there to get it, but going there to see it and experience it and then getting the photographs of it just make it so much more rich” (Conner personal interview). The ability to be there and engage with Africans and others from all walks of life became the field in which the seeds for learning were planted. Being there provided the raw material that individuals and the group reflected on, tasted, mulled over, discussed, wrote about, thought about, and eventually learned from and shared with others.
Being in a variety of settings in Kenya and Tanzania provided access to a dazzling array of interactions and experiences that spurred learning on. One of the most significant settings offered to the participants was the homestay. Indeed it was primarily the homestay opportunities and other face-to-face interactions with people in East Africa that provided the essential learning opportunities that lead to deeper understanding.

**Homestays and Other Face-to-Face Opportunities**

“Only through direct human to human contact do we stop thinking of people as representatives of groups and begin to respect them as unique individuals”

(Taylor, 1994, p. 8)

The program was designed in such a way as to provide as many opportunities as possible for the participants to interact on personal levels with a variety of East Africans. From my own experience working with undergraduate students and supporting them through their homestay experiences in East Africa, I know how stressful this segment of a study abroad opportunity can be. I also know how critical it can be to learning, understanding, and both personal and academic growth.

**Homestays in the Literature.** There is still relatively little literature that directly links homestay experiences with academic learning that occurs on study abroad. Laubscher (1994) refers to homestay experiences as “out of classroom” opportunities in his book, *Encounters with difference: Student perceptions of the role of out-of-class experiences in education abroad*, and discusses their auxiliary academic importance. A few research studies have been done on the homestay aspect of international education for international students who study in Australia. Other than these examples, very little research exits on the connections and interplay between the homestay and the more typical aspects of study abroad.
Students often identify the homestay as the most anxiety-producing aspect of a program, however “often it is in the homestay that students learn the most” (Lutterman-Aguilar, 2002, p. 63), and in the end it is often identified as the highlight of the program. “The homestays were the hardest part and the best part” (Katharine personal interview).

It was my hope that by including homestay opportunities in this program the teachers would benefit both personally and professionally, using the opportunities to make connections and build personal relationships with East Africans. Real-life cross-cultural experiences enhance the creation of curriculum that integrates content and experience. It can also enhance the development of teacher-to-teacher cooperation and problem-solving skills (Merryfield, 1997).

Having an immersion experience into the lives of Muslims in East Africa offers teachers the opportunity to “not only develop their teaching proficiency but also to broaden their understanding of our world and its people. These understandings, gained through life experience, have a lasting effect on the lives and instructional decisions of the teachers” (Kissock, 1997, p.124).

Sharing homes, sharing meals, sharing in special social events—weddings and other celebrations—as well as in more mundane, everyday activities—shopping in local markets, fixing a meal, milking a cow, helping a child with homework—provided educators with opportunities to develop an understanding of diverse cultural perspectives and cross-cultural awareness, critical dimensions of global and multicultural education.

**Homestays in the Program.** We had four and a half weeks in East Africa, a relatively short period of time. In order for participants to become immersed in the cultures as much as possible within that limited time, two very different homestay periods
were planned: one at the beginning and one at the end of the trip in two very different communities. Teachers lived with families in Kenya and Tanzania for about ten days (or one third of the program). During the homestays, participants also attended lectures, panel discussions, and engaged in field trips and excursions. However, the mornings, late afternoons, and evenings were family time. Even when they were not living with local families, the teachers had opportunities to interact with Kenyans and Tanzanians everyday. For example in Lamu teachers were assigned tutors. Tutors were local people who could show the teachers around the island, invite them into their homes and places of work, share meals, and engage in discussions with them. “A highlight of the program was the host families in Mombasa and being in Lamu and having the tutor there with me was a highlight as well. I really enjoyed those two experiences” (Kylee personal interview).

Program coordinators who organized local activities and acted as cultural ambassadors were available at each destination on our journey. At any given time, two or three Kenyans traveled with us and were available for advice and conversation. Face-to-face interactions extended to a variety of Americans who have made their lives in East Africa. These people provided unique perspectives on the East African cultures we were interacting with.

The first homestay, commencing within four days of arrival, was with Swahili families in Mombasa, an urban coastal city of Kenya. For the most part, electricity was available as well as indoor plumbing and indoor kitchens with electric stoves. All of the homestay families had members who could speak English; therefore language was only a token barrier to communicating. As one participant noted,
Being in the host families and just having that language barrier out of the way was incredible. I felt like I was cheating. In Mombasa there were so many educated people speaking English and even people not terribly educated speaking very good English, it was great. There were so many things that could have been foreign or exotic that seemed very normal automatically because the language barrier was down and to me I felt like it was Christmas because I struggled for so long in Belgium to get the language to even ask basic questions. In Kenya in 15 minutes I was having serious discussions with women who were dressed in their bui bui, all in black and we were able to speak as equals without struggling. It was great (KS personal interview).

The second homestay was during the final week of the program in Imbaseni village near Arusha, Tanzania. These were not with Swahili families, but Muslim families from a variety of Tanzania’s other ethnic groups, such as the WaMeru and WaArusha. Homestays occurred with families in a very rural village, a stark contrast to the Mombasa homestays. In these homestays, nobody spoke English. This situation led to some difficulties in communication, but also to some very creative ways of communicating across languages and cultures. There was no electricity, no running water, no indoor plumbing. For most of the teachers, the Arusha homestay was very difficult, but also very fulfilling. In Arusha, “I got a chance to be really a member of the family. I milked the cow, doing all kinds of chores, spending time trying to learn the language. Trying to teach the kids at night English as they were trying to teach me Swahili” (Ally personal interview).

In many ways the two homestays could not have been more different. For some this difference was a highlight of the program: “I think the Arusha homestay was the highlight for me. The best part of the program was the difference between the urban
Mombasa homes and the rural Arusha. I think if you ever did it again you’d have to do that because I think that was just great” (Conner personal interview).

IMAGES OF HOMESTAYS: MOMBASA

Figure 6
Offering two such diverse homestays provided experience for extensive reflection on similarities and differences between Swahili and non-Swahili Muslim cultures, urban and rural differences, coastal and interior differences, as well as reflection on two
different East African nations. There was also a great variety within each homestay experience, with unique family dynamics and economic conditions.

One teacher commented that the two homestays,

weren’t easy but they were hard for different reasons because the first one you were being immersed into Islam and remembering to do all the little things, only eating with your right hand and taking off your shoes as you entered the room and just all these things were a part of being in a Muslim household and then in Usa River it wasn’t really about Islam. I never saw my family pray which was really weird but it was the poverty and the meager circumstances. So I think they were different enough that each was a culture shock for different reasons, one didn’t help you be ready for the other (Erin personal interview).

And that having two such different homestays was,

very very important. You know they produced so much anxiety. There was so much anxiety going into the homestays, but looking back I think it was really really valuable. Families were able to take us and do things with us and get us immersed in different experiences that we wouldn’t otherwise have the opportunity to do. Like I went to the market with some of the women in my family in Mombasa and I was the only white person there in the whole market and got to see how they haggle for fruits and vegetables that was something we couldn’t have done as a group it wouldn’t have been the same at all. Pretty much the entire homestay in Usa River was an eye-opener this was a family that had one room, with very few possessions and they gave me presents when I left. The father of my homestay on the night of the ngoma actually sought out someone to be a translator so he could tell me how much it had meant to them for me to be there and how much they learned from me. That was a really great experience and also in that homestay I learned what it’s like to be totally incompetent because I didn’t know how to sweep the dirt, I didn’t know how to make ugali and they were looking at me like who is this women and what is she doing...she doesn’t know how to do these things so that was a good experience to have too (Erin personal interview).
Almost every participant identified one or the other homestay as the highlight of the program. They were also described as causing the most anxiety and trepidation. This is a very similar reaction to homestays among the undergraduates I have worked with. It is difficult to move into an unfamiliar household, especially one where the cultural perspectives and understandings are so very different from one’s own. However it is often during the homestays where the seeds for learning are sown. It is here where some of the most interesting questions arise due to social misunderstandings and cultural lacunae.

**Homestays and Learning Theories**

A variety of learning theories and related conditions for learning have been presented in this dissertation. Theories that examine deep and surface learning; accommodation and assimilation of knowledge; as well as cognitive dissonance and downshifting have been discussed. Homestays or other face-to-face interactions between people from very different cultures illustrate empirical aspects of these theories. For example, one teacher commented on how typical learning or professional development is just surface learning and that this experience in East Africa, particularly the homestays provided opportunities to go deeper into topics of interest. “Nothing compares with actually experiencing it. You know it’s deeper, it is more meaningful” (Ally personal interview). During deep learning, learners tend to be intrinsically motivated to seek out and accommodate new learning and knowledge. Exciting and gratifying challenges are often identified as aspects of deep learning.

**Deep Learning.** All of the human and cultural intricacies that one “might read about in a book or in the context of a class would give me a *shallower* understanding, but
it was through the homestays that I was able to have meaningful conversations with people and if I hadn’t had those experiences then I wouldn’t have been able to have incredible learning moments” (Katharine personal interview).

This teacher proceeded to explain that constant immersion in the culture by living with families eroded any preconceived notions she held about the people she met:

It’s like standing at the ocean. I mean the waves keep coming, and as much as you want to block them, they’re going to keep on coming. Even when I did try to block them or put up my shields and say this isn’t right…it’s still coming at me and I still have to rethink why isn’t that not right? None of that’s easy and if you never went there you wouldn’t have the opportunity to work through that stuff cause you’d think what ever you’d want to. Well this is what the book says but that just can’t be right vs. being there, you really have to sort it out for yourself (Katharine personal interview).

These comments relate to the concepts of deep and surface learning put forth by Marton and Saljo (1976) and expanded on by Ramsden (1992), Biggs (1987, 1993), Entwistle (1981), and Moon (1999). Being there provided access to the surface, but it was getting to know people on more intimate and personal levels that led to opportunities for deeper learning and accommodation of knowledge.

**Cognitive Dissonance and Accommodation.** But it is often such close interactions that precipitate cognitive dissonance (or culture shock) and discordant experiences as participants struggle to fit what they are experiencing into what they already know. Continual face-to-face interactions and immersion into unfamiliar cultures begin to weigh down and overwhelm some people to the point where they experience knowledge saturation. Knowledge saturation can lead to downshifting, the psychophysiological reaction associated with fatigue or apparent helplessness as described by Caine and Caine
(1997). This situation occurred more often towards the end of the program as participants were becoming saturated with experience and tired of the day-to-day travels and schedule:

It was hard for me at the Usa River homestay. I felt a little bit isolated and uncomfortable being the only women with all the men. I mean it was difficult, it wasn’t miserable but I think also I was a little bit tired at that point...and it was such an incredible and intense experience so that it was hard and I wasn’t able to focus in on my project, so I was a bit frustrated. I think that time period was a bit difficult. Again a learning experience most certainly and nothing I regret at all, but that was probably the most difficult (Kylee personal interview).

The cross-cultural opportunities offered the rich, textured, meaningful experiences that are critical to learning. Yet attempting to accommodate experiences with what we already know can be very stressful, often leading to cognitive dissonance (Atherton, 2003; Festinger, 1957) or culture shock. Attempting to not only absorb but also understand all of the new experiences can be so overwhelming that a person shuts down and cannot take in any more information:

I definitely hit knowledge saturation. I was kind of like so knowledge saturated there was no more learning I was going to do as far as new information and I had to not focus on any new information and just try to focus on what I had already learned, the learning I was already engaged in or try to sort out what I was most interested in. I don’t know to what extent I did either of those tasks, probably not very good but I definitely was like ok I’m not going to learn any more. I’m not going to be able to absorb any more lectures that aren’t integrated into something more and so part of the way I was able to grapple with that was kind of in my mind things I was going to just kind of forget there was some information that just went in one ear and out the other but I think that if I didn’t let that happen I wouldn’t have been able to go into depth in other things that I cared more
about. So be it a good decision or a poor decision it was the decision I made (Katharine personal interview).

This quote describes well how this participant struggled with assimilation and accommodation and how much more difficult accommodation of new knowledge was for her at a certain point. She is basically full and cannot accommodate any new information that isn’t integrated (or easily assimilated) into what she already knows. She essentially downshifted due to the physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion brought on by constant force of the ocean waves.

In contrast, another participant had a much more relaxed approach to accommodating new knowledge. She noted, “some basic ideas I had were challenged, and I had to sit with that and be patient, allowing reality to become truth for me verses my idea of what reality is” (Rianna personal interview).

Being there was fundamental to the learning that occurred on the program. One could be there and just skip across the surface of the place, the cultures, and the people’s lives. One could observe, but unless one breaks through the surface and immerses into the culture more deeply, learning will be limited. Being there provided us with access to the deeper, more internal aspects of culture, in turn providing much more nutritious fodder for reflection and learning. Clearly the variety of experiences—wonderful, warm, funny or fraught with stress and tension—encountered by each participant offered innumerable opportunities for reflection. The next section discusses the importance of reflection to learning...both as a group process, as well as an individual endeavor.
Reflection

The conceptual framework for this program was experiential education. As discussed earlier, an essential aspect of this approach to learning is reflection. Indeed, many of the participants' experiences would have remained meaningless without some type of reflection. Joplin suggests, "experience alone is insufficient to be called experiential education, and it is the reflection process which turns experience into experiential education" (1995, p. 18).

For this work reflection is an important dimension to the experiential learning cycle, as presented by Kolb (1984), however there are many ways to characterize reflection. Theorists have developed elaborate definitions of reflection involving many levels and forms. For example Van Manen (1977) developed a three-tiered interpretation of reflection:

1. Technical reflection: thinking and reflection on everyday activities.
2. Practical reflection: reflection on more specific events or incidences.
3. Critical reflection: understanding through interpretation of personal experience and that of others. Why is a decision made? This is essentially reflection on reflection.

Habermas (1971), a social theorist and philosopher, identified three types of knowledge which dovetail neatly into Van Manen's three-tiered interpretation of reflection. These types of knowledge are:

1. Instrumental knowledge refers to our existing inventory of understanding,
2. Interpretational knowledge refers to how we make sense of our surroundings,
3. Critical or evaluative knowledge is used to process the first two leading to new understanding. He suggests that reflection involves how knowledge is processed and how individuals construct new understanding or build theories, precipitating a slightly different approach to reflection for each type of knowledge.

Donald Schon (1930-1997) was trained as a philosopher who wrote extensively on learning. He developed an involved understanding of reflection in professional practice which is often used in teacher education. Schon’s (1983) definition of reflection includes the concepts of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Reflection-in-action is basically thinking on one’s feet. It involves constructing new understandings that inform our actions in the present situation, connecting experiences, feelings, and theory. Reflection-on-action is done later—after the situation, by writing up thoughts, talking with colleagues, and/or discussing with supervisors. This allows us to explore why we acted as we did, what was happening in the group which helps us to develop a set of questions and ideas about our perceptions, assumptions, and practices.

These three brief examples indicate complex views of reflection, describing different types of reflection depending on its purpose. As Moon observes, “the literature contains many interpretations of the word and, immersed within this chaotic catalogue of meanings, it can be difficult to recall that there are common-sense meanings as well” (1999, p. 3). Moon offers her own ‘common sense’ definition of reflection:

Reflection is a form of mental processing—like a form of thinking—that we use to fulfill a purpose or to achieve some anticipated outcome. It is applied to relatively complicated or unstructured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution and is largely based on the further
processing of knowledge and understanding and possibly emotions that we already possess (2002, p. 2).

For the purposes of this dissertation and the work with the participants, Moon’s definition works well. Reflection was considered a process involved with thinking and learning. It emphasized the intention to learn as the result of reflection on experiences. Reflection took place as group discussions, curriculum sessions, and also as individual acts in journals, letters, and emails.

Throughout the program, reflection was occasionally a structured process, with time deliberately set aside after an experience. However, for most participants, reflection was continual and occurred as an individual, private act in journals and letters home; in small, quiet conversations among group members; as well as within the formal, structured public forum of group discussions.

I think that while we were there there were definitely times for formal and informal reflection so times when we were at the O’Neal’s where we got the chance to formally reflect and think and there were all those informal conversations when you were rooming with someone and you lay in bed and talk for two hours and that informal debriefing and sorting out. I can’t even tell you how important that was...just so vital to the experience (personal interview Katharine).

Reflection and the Group

"Knowledge is like the Baobab tree no one person can encircle it"  
Ghanaian proverb

The group was a critically important aspect of the overall program. For some, the group was a safe place that offered strength and support to the individuals as they immersed into the culture. As one participant commented:

I looked to the group as sort of moral support at times—just like I needed to get away from the group—I also
needed to get away from the families and the culture and go to a familiar setting ... I thought everybody was wonderful. The group allowed you to vent but not lose perspective. That was the way all of us were working there. I think it gave me the support to be able to tackle the other stuff (Bea personal interview).

But for most people, the group provided a space for discussion, sharing, reflection, and learning. In her work with teachers and global education, Merryfield (1997) has found sustained reflection among groups of teachers critical to learning and professional development.

There were a few participants who were uncomfortable sharing with the group and stated they would be uncomfortable with any group. One participant in particular was very uncomfortable during group discussions and rarely spoke, however he commented that, "the group was important to me because it actually allowed me to be more passive. Whereas if I had been on my own, I would have been more aggressive about finding the information I needed but because everyone was so outstanding I just sat back and gleaned so much from them so it made it easier for me" (Conner personal interview).

It was during the structured reflection time that a lot of discussions, learning, and sharing took place. Teachers shared homestay stories, asked questions, and reflected together. "I think the group was very important because any learning experience anybody had was brought back to the group even though I only had one specific experience my own I could really register if off the other people. 'Is this typical? Is this what you did?' I might have thought everyone eats their dinner at 10 o'clock until I talked to Erin who was eating at six. I mean it was very good to get that kind of
diversity so you have a little peek into ten different homes instead of one” (Kylee
personal interview).

**Images of Group Discussions**

![Image of Group Discussions]

**Figure 8**

The group discussion sessions reflected the type of learning identified as situated
cognition (Hansman, 2001) which is essentially a type of experiential education that
focuses on learners learning from each other. Situated cognition is experiential education
as a group process. “That morning we sat in Arusha and we all compared notes on what
we planned to teach...everyone’s curriculum was completely different. That was
fabulous. I know, in my notebook I have a lot of ideas from that” (Sam personal
interview). This type of collaborative learning helps participants “move beyond their own
perspectives to new understandings created through dialogue with others” (Lutterman,

Engaging in group discussions was something that some of the teachers felt
should have occurred more often throughout the program. Having group reflecting time
was:

very important. It was really nice to be able to just compare
notes on what we had observed together and hash out
interpretations. That’s one thing that I think would have been beneficial to do more of. I remember the first night that a group of us went off for dinner by ourselves. Our conversation around the dinner table was just fascinating and I felt, gee, we should spend more time just talking together ourselves rather than always hearing someone else’s interpretation. As learned as they are, we also have some valid interpretations. Learning from the group is very valuable (Nell personal interview).

Another participant commented,

What I would have enjoyed more is more time talking among ourselves as a group. We didn’t do that very much. I think about how in hindsight after most lectures or panel discussions to sit for 20 minutes and give people a chance to do reflective writing or group debriefing just a discussion a kind of continuous reflection time. I’m sorry we didn’t do it (Bev personal interview).

I agree with this. I believe we should have met more often as a group for discussions, reflections, and debriefing. Indeed other group discussion times were scheduled, but unfortunately, as Moon (1999) suggests, in a busy agenda it is the group debriefing times that tend to be cut first. However despite the fact that we could have engaged in more group discussions and conceivably learned even more, the individual members were very busy reflecting and learning on their own.

**Personal Reflection and Individual Learning**

The personal learning that resulted from individual reflection was deep and broad. Many of the connections teachers made between their experience in East Africa and their personal lives were unexpected. Highlighted here are some of the more profound ideas that a few of the participants reflected upon during and after their time in East Africa.

**Bev: Teaching about Africa.** For 14 years Bev has been responsible for teaching educators how to infuse Africa and African perspectives into their K-12 curricula. This is
something she is passionate about and very good at. However, at some point during our excursion in East Africa, she began to have doubts as to her approach to her subject matter. Indeed she began to feel overwhelmed by Africa. She had a “sense of being a fraud”, feeling that Africa was not something that could be reduced. She felt that she had “spent a lot of time explaining away Africa’s problems. Not to say that there are no problems there but explaining why they have come and that I had lost sight of people’s experiences within those situations and not just lost sight of them; I had not been faithful to them and so I was both misrepresenting people’s experiences and misrepresenting Africa”. For example when she deals with independence struggles, she usually explains them in black and white, good and bad: The ‘bad’ colonialists and the ‘good’ Africans. She came to the realization that she no longer wanted to get caught up in simplistic explanations, but be truer to people’s lives and lived experiences.

As someone who works with educators on how to teach about Africa, these are profound, difficult, and painful thoughts to wrestle with. I believe that they are a result of having so much intense immersion into selected cultures in East Africa. They were exacerbated upon her return, observing how colleagues approach the teaching of Africa. These are important thoughts to reflect on, ones that could alter her whole approach to teaching. Indeed, she is deeply reflective on how this experience will affect the design and content of her workshops for teachers.

Ally: An African American in Africa. Ally was the only African American in our group, making her experience unique compared to her peers. She traveled with expectations of returning “home” to Africa, of having a profound spiritual experience. She found this to be more difficult and distant than she had imagined. “As an African
American I thought there was going to be a welcome wagon... but you have to earn that kind of respect and trust. You’re thinking it’s just going to come, but it’s just not that way”. Ally experienced feelings of sadness, anger, and confusion while traveling in Kenya and Tanzania because her expectations of being welcomed home as a long lost sister were not met, and she did not share her feelings openly. Her expectations, experience, and response were typical of many African American students I have worked with. And like many of the African American students, she needed to find people she could relate to and who could understand her feelings. “It was hard being the only African American on the trip. It occurred to me later I was having a hard time putting it into a framework for myself”.

Fortunately for Ally, African American women who had lived and worked for many years in East Africa came to her “just as we got to certain destinations when I needed them. They always came when I needed them”.

While these women helped her to begin to make sense of her emotions and reactions, finding a framework and gaining clarity occurred after she returned to the US. Bev suggested to Ally that she read “All Gods Children Have Traveling Shoes” by Maya Angelou. Here Angelou describes her “return” to Africa. She and her son traveled to Ghana in the early 60’s to get in touch with her long dreamed-of ancestral roots, her psychological and emotional home. Unfortunately many of the Africans she met did not share these feelings, and she was subtly rejected by many of them, which of course led to disillusionment and her desire to explore her feelings and wants around this issue. It is a beautiful and difficult journey. Angelou’s experience helped Ally understand her reactions to her time in Kenya and Tanzania. She had found a frame to work with and
that’s exactly what she needed. By filtering her experience through Angelou’s story, engaging in more quiet reflection, she stated, “I felt like it changed me. It helped me to think about myself as a teacher… and an African American”. It also helped her realize that it was her responsibility to “bring this experience back into my community and to my kids and say you know you may be one in a group of 20 but you still go and you still do it and you still get what you can out of it and you meet some wonderful people along the way”.

I believe that Ally’s experience is typical of many African Americans who travel to Africa with the expectations of returning home. This is an incredibly complex issue involving history, culture, language, race relations, and deep, personal emotions.

Alekandro: Gringo vs Mzungu. Alejandro was one of two Latin Americans in our group. He was born and raised in Colombia where he learned to hate gringos—Americans who would come down to sell Coca Cola and drain the money out of the community. In Kenya he was identified as mzungu, the Swahili term for foreigner, commonly used to describe a white person. Alejandro was identified in Kenya as someone he hated in Colombia. While he only discussed his thoughts on this with the group upon our return, the group was a catalyst for his reflection.

The group was “invaluable I would say because there I was with people I considered in another stage of my life a bunch of gringos. ‘Good for nothings’, I called them when I was growing up in Latin America”. During his time in East Africa and even now when he looks at group photos, he wonders, “ok what am I now”? He is still questioning and evaluating this aspect of his experience.
Alejandro, like Ally, has been on a journey of discovery and has engaged in deep, personal reflection on who he is. He continues to reflect on his experience as he writes about it and shares with different people what it means to be an outsider, a gringo vs. mzungu, and notions of identity.

Their experiences in East Africa led these teachers to think deeply and reflect on very personal concepts of identity. To be immersed in cultures different from their own allowed these teachers to learn about these cultures and themselves in deep, personal ways and stimulated questions and raised awareness of their identities and how they carry that into their work. “Who am I?”, “Where do I belong?”, are age-old questions and I hope these educators continue to reflect on them and pass their wisdom on to their students.

Personal Reflection: Journaling

![Image of a person journaling](image)

Figure 9

There is no doubt that both personal and group reflection was fundamental to the whole program. Teachers had so many different experiences that triggered such a variety of thoughts. Some were discussed within the group, others were reflected on in private.
until teachers were ready to discuss them with others. Teachers commented, “that not a
day goes by that something does not trigger some memory. I think about it everyday”
(Bea personal interview). “I don’t know about you but I’m still reflecting back on daily
things” (Sam personal interview). Typical of study abroad, reflection and learning
continued in the US upon our return. Regardless of where and how the reflection took
place, with the group or individually, the learning was deep and will be drawn on for
many years to come.

Summary

Being in East Africa and being able to immerse themselves into the cultures
provided participants with potent generative experiences. By reflecting on these
experiences with the group and on their own, the teachers were able to learn about
themselves, Kenya and Tanzania, the Swahili and Islam. It was a powerful experience
which did not end when they returned to the US. Learning and reflection were kept alive
through follow-up meetings, curriculum design and lesson planning sessions, and, most
importantly by sharing it with their students and peers.

The heart of this work is what the teachers have done with their experiences and
learning in their classrooms, with their peers and schools, and with the wider community.
The next chapter takes a closer look at how teachers have incorporated the knowledge
gained from this experience into their professional and personal lives.
CHAPTER 7

HOW LEARNING WAS USED

This program was conceived as a professional development opportunity for teachers to learn about the lives and cultures of Muslim communities primarily along the coasts of Kenya and Tanzania. Participants agreed to develop curricula based on their experiences and collected relevant data while in East Africa.

In chapter six teachers’ motivations for wanting to be a part of this program were presented. For example, one participant felt “It was such a tremendous opportunity to go to a part of the world that I am interested in and hopefully learn a lot” (Conner personal interview). Others really focused on the Islam/Africa connection, hoping to expand their knowledge of both. “I wanted to be a part of this program mainly to expand my knowledge of Africa and Islam. I felt that I had never been educated in those areas” (Sam personal interview). Another was hoping to gain insight into her student’s lives. She traveled to East Africa “to try to get a window into my students experience both my African and my African American students experience” (Katharine personal interview). Yet another was very interested in understanding the connections between developing nations around the world.

While teachers had a variety of reasons for wanting to be a part of this program—to learn a lot about the region, to expand their knowledge of Africa and Islam, to gain a deeper appreciation of their students’ experience, to broaden their understanding of the developing world—fundamentally they all desired to bring aspects of their experience into their classrooms to share with their students to help them learn.
This group of teachers was quite varied, teaching all grades between kindergarten and 12th and many subjects including art, library, history, social studies, English language arts, and bilingual education. Teachers worked in a wide variety of communities and schools districts with a multitude of opportunities to use their East African experiences.

This chapter discusses what teachers have done with their experiences in their classrooms and their peers. It examines the obstacles that teachers faced in implementing their experiences, as well as the myriad of opportunities they created to expand on their experiences and share them with their students and school communities.

**Obstacles to Using Learning**

While each participant learned a great deal and all wished to mold their knowledge and experience into curricula and lessons, not every teacher had the opportunity to do so. In analyzing the data, it became clear that teachers faced a number of obstacles to putting their experiences to use in the classroom. These obstacles included job changes, hostile administrations, changing curricula, and primarily, lack of time.

**Job Changes, Curricula Modifications, Hostile Administrations**

Three of the teachers had their jobs change completely over the summer while they were in East Africa. Conner, a social studies teacher, returned to his urban high school to find that he was now required to teach about mezzo America, nothing concerning Islam or Africa:

That was the only negative of the whole thing because our curriculum was changed after I had been accepted into the program. My opportunity to teach what I brought back from Africa is stifled at the moment...however it looks very promising in the very near future in the next couple of
years there’re going to have another elective that will be added in for Africa and it might be an opportunity for me to either pass on that information to whoever will teach it or to be able to teach one or two of the sections in addition to my own (Conner personal interview).

Even though his administration was very supportive of his experience, “there is no way to put it into action”. His principal and department head “are thrilled to death that this will eventually be done... but it’s just the reality of the moment, there’s just no place for it”.

Bea, a bilingual education teacher, had to deal with the complete disintegration of bilingual education in Massachusetts: “Right now I’m not teaching at all. What I’m doing is a new job, my other job disappeared” (Bea personal interview). Due to the demise of bilingual education, she is currently supporting teachers who have students in their classrooms who are illiterate in their first language. She has thus far not been able to use the two lesson plans she developed based on her time in East Africa.

Alejandro, a high school social studies teacher, returned to his district to find that he had been reassigned to a new school to teach “Strategies for Success” and “Technology Literacy” classes, not social studies. Even though he wanted to bring speakers into his classes from a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds to motivate his students, his principal would not let him. The administration in his school was very hostile and set up roadblocks to developing ways to use his experience in the classroom. Alejandro reports that he and his peers at this school work in an environment that is not conducive “for the exchange of ideas and knowledge among faculty” (Alejandro personal interview). Sharing and building on his experience with his peers has been compromised.
A fourth teacher moved to the west coast and essentially spent the academic year learning the ropes at her new school; she has yet to put any of her experience into action.

Time

Aside from disappearing jobs, changing curricula, and hostile administrations, the number one obstacle teachers faced in implementing their experience was lack of time. It is trite but real to note that teachers are overworked, schedules are regimented, and classes are short. Teachers' schedules can be challenging: One participant teaches art at four different schools. Even teaching one subject in one school can be very time consuming and impinge on opportunities to develop and implement lessons based on their East African experiences.

One teacher commented on how difficult it was to find the time and opportunities to share his experiences with his peers and to incorporate them in the development of lessons or other programs. It also did not help that his school administrators were hostile to his ideas. “The time limitations, the time restrictions do not allow for much in terms of planning, in terms of teachers getting organized and using the human resources we have in the building. Not that teachers aren’t willing to do it or to have me in their classes or anything, it’s just that people are afraid” (Alejandro personal interview).

Even in schools where the administration was supportive, lack of time and overburdened schedules were still problems. Katherine, an English teacher in an urban Boston high school, teaches three out of four classes every day. Two days a week she attends required meetings, and the other three days she is allowed to use that time for grading and planning. She would like to share her experience with the staff at her school, but had difficulty finding the time. “As far as staff, the majority of people have been
interested but there is so little time that no one has really talked to me about it. I offered to do some kind of presentation but so far nobody has been interested. As far as the administration goes no one has said, ‘yeah we want to schedule a time for you do to that, that’s important’” (Katharine personal interview). Nell, a librarian at a very small rural PK-6 school, commented that “time is a huge barrier. We don’t have very much staff planning time here so that’s probably the biggest barrier. Even though I’m here all school day and the teachers are here all school day we don’t have much overlapping planning time” (Nell personal interview).

**Time and Standardized Testing**

Standardized testing also presented an obstacle, as it is very demanding of teachers’ time and limits the opportunities for teachers to work together on developing new lessons. A middle school history teacher felt her peers were supportive of her experience: they were excited that she could travel and were glad she came back safe, but their time during school was so limited that there was no opportunity to talk about the program.

My principal is always saying I can’t wait to see your pictures, but it’s been a month. Neither one of us has had time to move; we are flat out all day. My fellow teachers and I work on a team and we used to have team time three times a week now we only have it once a week because all the standardized testing ups the amount of time we need to be in the classroom so I never see my co workers. I have never felt like I know them less than I do now because we don’t see each other and it’s forcing us to work through our lunch. If we have issues we have to deal with we have to talk about them at lunch so its constant, the pressures and demands on us in that particular school are incredible so my sense is that they would love to see the pictures, they would love to hear the stories but they don’t have time and I haven’t had time (Kylee personal interview).
Students' time at this particular middle school is tightly controlled. Because of a high percentage of students with behavioral problems, students have no time between classes to visit their lockers or go to the bathroom, which means they have to do this during class time. I observed this teacher as she let three students at a time go to their lockers or the bathroom during her class. She had to stand at the door and watch them, limiting her interaction with the students in the class. "It's a really insane approach, so some of what I'll do in the future [with my experience] is a little bit curtailed by the structure of the day" (Kylee personal interview).

Stress on people's time also makes it difficult for some to continue reflecting on their experience, thus limiting their ability to develop it for use it in their classrooms. One teacher commented, "I can't even tell you how important reflection was, just so vital to the experience and since I've been back I haven't had a lot of time to do that" (Katherine personal interview). Another mentioned, "since the beginning of school, things have been so rushed I haven't had the time to actually process the experience" (Erin personal interview). Another teacher commented on how difficult it was to hold on to the experience after retuning to the constant busy culture of the US:

I feel really inspired by a lot of things that we saw so that kind of inspiration is like a little flame. I feel very strongly that I want to hold on to some of the feelings so I have to find ways to do that, to keep those things alive like just time, rejecting some of the American busy, busy, busy which is really difficult for me and trying to hold on to some of those rich moments of doing nothing because you’re not really doing nothing you’re thinking and sorting out so I have to be really purposeful about finding places to do that and that’s important to me and I don’t think I would have ever know that that was something I was going to bring home (Katharine personal interview).
Finding Time

Time is an issue for all teachers, at all grade levels; however many teachers are able to find time: “Today I became aware that the pre k needs to have a parent night and so it occurred to me that we could make it around this my time in East Africa] so I think opportunities keep appearing and it’s really clear that the more I can tie it in with other things that are already happening the better, because there is just never enough time in an elementary school to do all that everyone is charged to do throughout the year” (Nell personal interview).

Another participant, a high school world geography teacher, developed one PowerPoint slide show for her students and staff giving them an overview of the history of the area, the cross cultural connections, and a little taste of daily life. “I kinda wanted to kill two birds with one stone so it’s the same set of slides I’ll be using for the department presentation and the students, but you know the things I say will be a little bit different, but it starts out with the history if the area and some examples of the cross cultural connections over the Indian ocean and then it goes into daily life you know schools, celebrations, dress things like that and then finishes up with examples of globalization in East Africa” (Erin personal interview).

Teachers are busy professionals with pressures from the state, from the district, their administrators, peers, students, and parents. “Teachers have to do a great many things they might not do if they had a choice, but it must be acknowledged that they do some things because they want to” (Tye & Tye, 1993, p. 63). If they are dedicated to working global and multicultural perspectives into their curricula, they will find a way.
Opportunities for Using Learning

Despite the many obstacles that impeded teachers’ efforts in bringing their experiences to life in their classrooms, the majority of them were highly creative and inspiring in finding opportunities to use their new-found knowledge. The opportunities to use their time in East Africa far outweighed the difficulties teachers faced in implementing their new ideas.

Teachers returned to their schools full of ideas and excited about incorporating their experiences into their lessons. To help with this process, further reflection and structured meeting times were organized by the program. Three follow up sessions were scheduled over the academic year (2004-2005) to discuss teachers’ progress in developing and implementing lessons, as well as to provide a forum for exchanging curricula ideas. During this academic year, I conducted the formal interviews and visited classrooms for observations. Teachers impressed me as I observed them put their experience and knowledge into practice.

For teachers whose subjects or schools did not change, developing new or enhancing old lessons based on their experience was their first priority and, despite busy schedules, they found the time to create curricula. The number of lessons, projects, presentations, and workshops that resulted from this Fulbright program astonished me and exceeded my expectations. The following section profiles four teachers, illustrating the wide-ranging outcomes of this experience.
Implementing Experience

Sam: “It was an art explosion”!

Sam, a K-8 art teacher in four different schools in the Boston area, was amazed at all of the color, design, texture, and art she observed in Kenya and Tanzania. Before traveling to East Africa, she hoped to focus her curriculum project on textiles but found so much more. In fact, she commented that “it was an art explosion!” (Sam personal interview). She developed a fresh, fun curriculum based on the life and art of Edward Said Tingatinga, a Tanzanian artist who created a unique style and sold his work to tourists to support his family. The painting style he developed evolved, and now many artists in East Africa emulate his work. Sam’s lesson included a discussion of Tingatinga’s life. Her inner city students recognized the connections between their lives and the life of Tingatinga. Tingatinga used his creativity, talent, and hard work to rise from poverty to feed and support his family, only to be shot and killed by police when he was mistaken for a thief. Many of her students struggle in the same way and have lost family members to the same sort of violence. After learning about the artist, his life and work, students are invited to create their own Tingatinga painting.

Sam has also brought her photos from East Africa into her classes and lets the students look at them when they are done with their projects. “A lot of the kids sit around and look at my pictures...that’s the way I’ve opened the door” for questions and discussions. Her students are particularly intrigued by a series of photos depicting three different types of toilets. “The hot topic I’ve got to tell you is the toilet. It is a riot. They’ll look at me and go ‘what do you mean you just squat over a hole?’” (Sam personal interview). Of course the students think this is terribly funny, but what elevates
this conversation out of the gutter, so to speak, is the fact that one of her Muslim students from the Middle East “came around and said ‘We do that all over the world! You people are the only ones in this country that have toilets you sit on’”. Her students from India and parts of Africa and the Middle East have all experienced squat toilets. The pictures of toilets prompt funny, yet deeper conversations about basic needs and how they are met across cultures. Even Conner, another teacher in the group who works with much older students in advanced high school classes, noted, “they want to hear the gross stories of course. They want to know about food, bathroom issues. They are fascinated by those things” (Conner personal interview).

These are examples of how a teacher can use aspects of an experience abroad to make local and global connections in her classes in subtle, non-threatening ways. Some of Sam’s students were able to recognize their experience in the life of a Tanzania artist, struggling with poverty, using his creativity to meet his needs and support his family. All people have to go to the bathroom. And apparently topics surrounding toilets are great for initiating conversations among students about local and global similarities and differences.

Sam has started to do some interesting things with her students drawn from her time in East Africa, but what she has done has gone beyond her classroom. Sam had been an art teacher for 13 years and had never conducted a professional development workshop for her peers. Over the academic year (2004-2005), she developed and conducted three professional development workshops. “The fact that I have nerve enough to teach an art workshop which I have never done. I have never taught to my peers, so this is brand new” (Sam personal interview). Based on her work with students and her
delight with the art of Tingatinga, she developed a full-day workshop for teachers. Her
district curriculum coordinator supported this workshop both psychologically and
financially. The district covered all the expenses, including the paint and canvases, and
gave the district art teachers the day off to attend the workshop, and paid for substitutes.
This is very rare behavior for Boston Public Schools; in fact, the last time it happened
was 10 years ago. Fifteen art teachers attended this workshop with great enthusiasm.

Sam’s Tingatinga Workshop
Later in the semester Sam traveled to Western Massachusetts to offer the same workshop for Global Horizons, a state funded program to help K-12 teachers internationalize and globalize their curriculum. Four art teachers representing four school districts attended the all-day workshop. Teachers at both of the workshops thoroughly enjoyed themselves and spoke of how difficult it is to find professional development opportunities for art teachers. In addition, they were grateful, as art teachers, for the chance to earn Professional Development Points⁴ (PDP’s).

Sam also conducted an in-service class after school for her peers. She researched African pottery and encouraged the participants to work in that style. “Even if they’re not doing that kind of style, I’m going to bring in the colors of Africa” (Sam personal interview).

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⁴ Many school districts require educators to take professional development workshops and earn a specified amount of Professional Development Points to maintain their professionalism and to move up the salary scale. These workshops are rarely geared toward art teachers.
In sum, Sam has developed thoughtful, inspiring lessons and workshops from her experience in East Africa; she has reached many people, both students and peers. What she learned and absorbed in East Africa “will come into play for many years because I’m not just going to teach this stuff this year, I know these things will be fabulous forever so in that respect it will become a huge part of my curriculum” (Sam personal interview).

**Nell: “I require that I teach from a global respective”**

Nell is the librarian at a very small rural school in Western Massachusetts. There are about seven hundred and fifty people in the entire community, the vast majority of whom are of Western European descent. There are approximately 63 students in the PK-6 school with essentially no racial, ethnic, or religious diversity. Nell has taken it upon herself, as much as she can, to bring diversity into the school to introduce students to a wide variety of cultures. Being a part of the Fulbright program was so “important because having kids learn about other cultures and the world is really, really important to me and this just gives me a huge arsenal of additional tools to do that with. I mean there are artifacts that I brought back, there’s knowledge that I have, there are opportunities to use the pictures I took” (Nell personal interview).

Nell has done thoughtful, creative things with her experience upon her return, but her work in East Africa started long before she left the US. Nell worked with Island Children’s Fund (ICF), a small Vermont-based non-governmental organization to develop a service learning project involving her sixth grade students. She stated that her “greatest accomplishment connected with the Fulbright to East Africa is a service project focused on schools in the Lamu Archipelago of Kenya. As it evolved, this project
involved a number of different groups of students at two schools in the States, and three schools in Kenya” (Nell personal interview).

ICF raises funds for school children in the Lamu Archipelago, off the north coast of Kenya, and one of the program’s destinations. Long before she traveled to East Africa, Nell invited the president of ICF to speak to her 6th grade class about Lamu. There were only six students, all young women, in this 6th grade class. After these six students learned about the Lamu area and some of the school needs, they decided to try to raise funds to support the area schools.

These students produced a set of nature-themed greeting cards for their project. Each student created one design which was scanned and then printed on card stock on a school printer. They cut the printed stock, folded it into cards, and packaged the cards into sets with envelopes. The girls wrote letters to solicit donations of materials and handled sales of the cards. Their efforts resulted in sales which exceeded their expectations (Nell personal interview).

Nell’s six 6th grade students raised over $2,000.00. Working with ICF, the students were able to select the projects they wished to fund and chose to supply wells to two schools without potable water and to provide concrete floors at another school. Eventually Nell’s entire school was incorporated into this project. All of the students in the school wanted to make a more personal connection to the Kenyan students so each student (grades 1-6) made a drawing which was bound into a book to be presented during the program at one of the schools they supported.

Nell was able to travel to Lamu to meet with the Kenyan-based ICF staff, as well as the headmasters and students of the schools her Massachusetts students had chosen to support. She presented the Kenyan students with the bound copies of her students’
pictures as well as a variety of markers, pens, crayons, and papers. Nell asked the students in Lamu to draw some pictures for her to take back to her students, beautifully detailed drawings depicting life in the Lamu Archipelago. She displayed these drawings in her school early in the year and asked young students to imagine what life was like in Lamu. One drawing offered a detailed rendition of the Lamu town waterfront, illustrating people walking, riding on donkeys, on boats, on bikes, and swimming. Nell asked her students to explain how people traveled in Lamu. How did they get from place to place? Through these wonderfully detailed drawings, young students gained a bit of insight into life in Lamu.
Drawings from children in Lamu

Figure 11
The students who made the cards were honored at their 6th grade graduation with words of appreciation for their effort emailed from Lamu. Nell returned to the US with drawings from the Kenyan students, gifts of kargas for each of the girls, and a letter of thanks from ICF Kenya and the schools. All this made the whole experience very real for her young students. By this time, her sixth grade students had graduated to middle school. This provided an occasion for an assembly with the entire 7th grade class, giving classmates at this much larger regional school the opportunity to learn about a successful service learning project and about life in the area of Lamu, Kenya. It was a powerful experience to witness this project come full circle and extend way beyond the six young women who initiated it.

Over the course of the academic year, Nell continued to make use of her East African experience. For example, she created a teaching kit containing a variety of objects to help illuminate the life of a Swahili child to an elementary school child in the United States. Her multi-sensory kit includes photos, recipes, music, text books, clothing, school uniforms, and toys and games which provide glimpses into the home and school life of a Swahili child. She was also asked to speak at international clubs, other school systems, and at her local public library.
Nell worked very closely with the art teacher at her school to develop an integrated lesson on kangas. This lesson incorporated history, culture, and social studies as well as math, design, and geometry. It included a slide presentation with an explanation of kangas and their importance to the cultures of East Africa. Then the students created their own kangas with stencils on cloth including their own saying to print on the kanga. Kangas were related to t-shirts in the US, worn to declare a variety of statements and beliefs, just like kangas. Nell and the art teacher modified this curriculum into an all day teacher workshop for Global Horizons. Nell asserts that the “experience will keep coming back in lots of ways to bring in a global perspective and its clear to me that the response will go beyond the school” (Nell personal interview).
The experiences of Sam and Nell, an art teacher and a librarian, particularly intrigued me. They are, in a sense, outside the core curriculum, but their areas of expertise are critical to a well-rounded learning experience. Both of these professionals consciously labor to support their peers through their work. Over the years both of them have used art and literature to present global and multicultural perspectives through history, English, social studies, and geography, supporting other teachers’ curricula. This past academic year both Sam and Nell asked their peers to support them. Nell told her social studies teacher that she was going to be doing a lot of work around Africa and asked that the teacher do a similar section to support her. Sam, the K-8 art teacher, has always worked collaboratively to support her colleagues’ work. This past year, Sam felt confident enough to ask them to support her. She stated, “well I always support them, this time I’m going to encourage them to do the opposite and have them support me a little bit” (personal interview). This was also the first year either of them had developed and implemented teacher education workshops. As an outcome of their time in East Africa, these educators enhanced their knowledge and increased their confidence in their ability to teach from a global perspective.

**Ally: Integrating Global Connections**

Ally is a rare kindergarten teacher who believes in teaching global connections and is able to weave her East African experience into all aspects of her class. Ally is writing both a children’s book and multi-disciplinary curriculum unit, focusing on the connections between Africa and China and the influence of Islam through the Silk Routes. The book will tell the story of a giraffe that African ambassadors brought from Africa to China in the 15th century, highlighting the early contact between East Africa
and China. She had previously visited China to research that end of the story and was thrilled to be able to travel to East Africa to research the other end. Indeed that was her primary motivation for wanting to be a part of this program. While the giraffe and its story are still a priority in her life, what she brought back to her students was something completely different.

What Ally brought to her students and was able to integrate into all of the subjects (reading, writing, mathematics, science, humanities, social studies, art) was boat building! Because boats, and in particular sea-faring dhows known as mtepe, figure prominently in the book she’s writing, Ally spent considerable time in East Africa learning about them. She was struck by the beauty and diversity of these craft, their intricate, detailed decorations, their builders, sailors, and their importance to coastal cultures. The curriculum Ally developed used dhows and boat building as a doorway into the standard subjects.

She started the year by bringing “the experience into the classroom so kids could travel with me through the school year and really get to know the East African coast and really, you know, demystify the stereotypes about Africa” (personal interview). She did this with books and artifacts from East Africa. A table in her classroom features different materials from Africa for her students to look at and explore. These include story books and textbooks, a variety of model boats, necklaces, beaded baskets, postcards, stamps, kandas, kikoys, and carved wooden storytellers.

I was happy that I brought back all those artifacts and the stories of the people I met. Those really struck the kids. I did a lot of oral story telling so I was able to share the stories of the people and that’s what made it real too and the fact that I stayed with these families and introduced
those families. It became an entry way through oral story
telling, the sharing of stories. I didn’t start by asking what
do you want to know about Africa…I started by talking
about my experience and the people and it connected the
kids right away.

It was important to her that her students understood that there are people living in
Africa doing just what they do: going to school, families and parents going to work. As
Ally stated, she wanted her students to understand, “The day to day stuff not what you
read about in the newspaper or hear on the radio”. She wanted to make sure her students
saw people who are actually Muslim and to study this particular religion. In her class
several religions are represented, and her students engaged in conversation about their
different religious backgrounds. “Some kids say well I’m Catholic and some kid said I’m
Baptist and this what we do in our church. We don’t sing out loud in our church. Well
we do, we have music and drums and having that discussion kids would say going to a
mosque is like going to church. They just get that. It was real for them like they could
connect what we do… that we pray at my church and they pray at their Mosque”.

By sharing stories and photographs of the people and families she met and stayed
with, she was able to introduce the importance of boats and boat building. She began
“collaborating with a fourth grade teacher to integrate East African boat building
techniques”, and started constructing an mtepe dhow with the kindergarten students and
4/5 graders.
Boat building in Ally’s kindergarten classroom

Figure 13

Boat building can be brought into almost any subject. Boat building involves mathematics and geometry. The boat they constructed was not a tiny replica, but a four or five foot scale model. It can be the basis of science lessons on water and buoyancy. What floats, what doesn’t, and why? Learning about the significance of boats to a society involves geography and maps. Students can located the East African coast and China and can chart a course across the ocean. Spelling and vocabulary must be included. Ally has a word wall in her classroom listing the necessary vocabulary for this project. By reading stories about sea faring cultures and boat building, literature becomes integrated into the curriculum. Pamela Allen’s (1988) popular children’s book called
Who Sank the Boat, is used in many primary school classrooms to teach about bouncy, modes of transportation, and other topics. Ally used this book in her classroom and then had her class rewrite it. They entitled it: Who Built the Mtepe Boat? They illustrated it, and each student got a copy to keep. There was an art literacy aspect to the project that integrated pictures of some of the animals that she actually saw, but did not focus solely on animals. Ally said that her students “aren’t into Africa because of the animals. They were into Africa because of the stories and the people” (personal interview).

Boat building can introduce aspects of culture and religion. For example, for the eye of the dhow, a traditional Islamic symbol, is carved to decorate the boat. No dhow is complete without one. Ally and her class took a field trip to the Museum of Fine Arts and the kids got to see these paintings of different boats. And then they went into the studio to build their own and one kid came up to me and said ‘Ally, this is the mtepe I made like the one you saw in East Africa this summer’! She made the eye of the dhow out of cardboard and recyclable materials and that meant so much to me because it was totally unsolicited and just what the kids are learning through my experience is so powerful. Especially for the kids that are struggling the most academically and really need hands on learning they are going to be the ones that are really going to. I mean everyone is going to benefit, but this is the way these kids need to learn. So this is going to be a very powerful experience for them (Ally personal interview).
Connecting boat building to the curriculum in Ally's classroom

The process of building the mtepe was documented on video and will eventually be on the Web. Ally hopes to send the mtepe and the film chronicling its building back to East Africa "so kids there can see what kids on the East Coast of the United States are learning about their culture and boat building" (Ally personal interview). She and her students would give something back to the hosts and thus bring the project full circle.
The boat building project entailed a substantial commitment on Ally’s part and involved other teachers and students at her school. Despite this, she found time to collaborate “with the middle school math teacher, a Muslim woman, to integrate geometry and structures by looking at mosques in our local community, and compare them with mosques in East Africa and Western China” (Ally personal interview).

Ally arrived in East Africa as a master teacher, but her experience there helped her become an even better educator. The trip has affected how she teaches, how she approaches her subjects. “It keeps me in check in terms of what books am I using in the classroom. Am I truly representing that country or the people that I met in a way that’s authentic? It makes me think about the stereotypes and being careful around that the stereotypes around Africa” (personal interview). Understanding this, she focused her curriculum on what Africa looks like today, its modern cities and not people running around with hardly any clothes on and that bullshit stuff.

Being aware of my own anti racist practices and making sure that people and cultures are being represented in a way that shows their strength. And so I’m thinking about that every time when I’m deciding what book I’m going to read to the kids even if there’s a video I’m going to show them about Africa I need to check it out first to make sure what it is. I want kids to learn and not build on stereotypes. So that was really important to me and in the forefront of my mind (Ally personal interview).

This is why she has a class of kindergartners who are interested in Africa because of its people, not its animals.

Ally’s story represents a very powerful response to the program. This response to her overseas experience is the same that Wilson (1984) found in her work with teachers who had traveled to Nigeria. Ally is an educator who has already concerned with making
global/local connections and integrating them throughout her curriculum. Yet she was still able to get so much out of her experience in East Africa that it led to a profound growth in her approach to teaching. “I’m going to have a hell of a lot of stuff to talk about from this experience. I feel good about that. I was able to take this experience and put it into the classroom. I feel good about it and the 4th and 5th grade kids are so excited about this. Their teacher said ‘Ally, I haven’t seen so much excitement in this school. The kids are already looking up mtepe and dhows and doing research’” (Ally personal interview). Ally’s approach to teaching and interacting with her students is both multicultural and global. She will take this passion and commitment to helping develop global citizens to her new job as teacher educator for a large urban school district.

Katharine: “A sh**ty day”

While some educators developed and implemented an array of very explicit, hands-on projects, Katharine’s work with her East African experience, while very powerful, was much more subtle. A dynamic young English Language Arts educator, Katherine does not directly teach about Africa or Islam. Her primary motivation for traveling to East Africa was to gain insight into her African and African American students’ experience.

Katharine works in a large, urban high school where 99% of the student body are students of color, including African Americans and Hispanics, as well as students from the Caribbean and Africa. She is deeply concerned with being able to draw on her students’ experience in a variety of ways because “the more entry points you offer to kids to enter into whatever the content is you’re trying to teach them, the more students are going to actually learn vs. just taste” (Katharine personal interview).
While Katharine is interested in bringing the world into her curriculum, stating, “this year I integrated Africa and world issues into my grade 10 ELA classes like I never have before”, she is explicitly focused on multicultural teaching. A significant aspect of multicultural education is helping students gain an understanding of their own cultural backgrounds. She hopes to be able to do this by understanding how “the social, emotional, intellectual, linguistic, and cultural factors that different students bring to the learning environment shape, explicitly or implicitly, their ability to successfully navigate and participate in the educational experience” (Katharine personal interview). She is also aware of and sensitive to the fact that she is a white woman with little experience in her students’ world and is struggling to overcome her ignorance through reflection, discussion, and writing to continue to grow in understanding and compassion for her students.

This past year in her teaching she “attempted to be purposefully political, and to act as a social agent providing a ‘counternarrative’ to the pop culture images projected upon, to, and of people of color in the US” (Katharine personal interview). She began reading To Be Young Gifted and Black by Theresa Perry, which propelled her on a journey of “self inquiry cemented in the question: How can I, as a white female teacher, provide a counternarrative for students of color at my urban high school”? She reflected upon and wrote around that question throughout the year, trying to understand “how the process of such deliberation shaped my thinking, actions, and words in classroom and school community discourse. It has been an emotional ride for me -- a hard question to form, then constantly uncomfortable to consider again and again. I still don’t have any answers”. 

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I believe that she has always been a passionate educator seeking ways to involve students in their learning, but the Fulbright experience was a catalyst in her quest to understand her students better. “It shaped my mind in how I come to have conversations with kids and that I am thinking about some of my students’ experiences in a more compassionate way”. It has also lowered her tolerance for students who engaged in racist, ignorant behaviors in her classroom and who do not even try to understand other perspectives. If the behavior continues to disrupt the class community, she will ask that student to leave.

Katharine’s time in East Africa helped her focus on particular aspects of students experience and her perspectives on teaching:

Our time visiting in schools, and more specifically, my thinking, listening, and writing about how I perceived East African Muslim women and girls’ access to education and educational experience meaning-making—has helped me to focus in on language as gatekeepers to accessing content—and how often we speak in euphemisms, ambiguity, and culturally laden jargon that does not translate to our students—or our students have different connotative definitions for the words we use—thus misunderstand us on an emotional level, beyond intellectual misunderstanding.

Her experience also led to a profound realization of a fundamental connection between human beings. Before traveling to Kenya and Tanzania and living with families and sharing in their lives however briefly, she had been cognitively aware of the universality of human needs and choices, but her time in East Africa made it live:

Damn it, people are just people. Everybody wants what’s right and what’s better for themselves. Nobody gets up in the morning and goes, ‘God, I really want to have a shi**y day. I want things to fall apart in my world’. People make poor decisions, there are civil wars and there are all kinds of bad things...yet at the same time life is renewing itself in
really beautiful ways and that is important to remember especially with a lot of the kids that I have. To remember that they are survivors of trauma, but they are survivors. And like that human instinct and the beauty that they find in themselves and in each other and in their homes that they have left behind, for that place not to be just a trauma place, is really important. So I learned a lot about Africa in that way and a lot about myself and about people.

Katharine provides an eloquent example that expresses the dimension of global education concerned with awareness of human choice—an understanding of how different peoples make choices, given the opportunities available to them.

For Katharine, teaching is all about using her experience to excite her students and connect with them as much as she can.

The day I’ve worn kargas to school people and kids that don’t even know who I am walked up to me and are like “where did you get that and what is that?” One student who was an international student from Africa who I didn’t know was just like … ‘have you been to Kenya’? Like he instantly knew that’s from Kenya and I said yeah and he said ‘I lived in Mombasa’ and that was a whole new conversation that we otherwise would never have had.

This was a student with no classroom interaction with Katharine, yet just passing her in the hall and seeing her dressed in a kanga started a conversation and made a connection.

Like many of the other teachers, Katharine used photos to start conversations with her students:

Hanging up my photos my students all kids want to walk up and talk about them. A lot of my Hispanic students who are from Central America or Dominican Republic or students from Haiti and they can see those pictures of the village in Arusha and they are like ‘I know those homes’ and they can see those pictures and they are like ‘wow yeah you stayed there for a week with that family?’ That is an
instant connection between the two of us. They’re like ‘You’re a different person than I thought you were Ms. XXX’, and that’s really awesome. That’s been really powerful. Students are in awe, they’re interested, they feel excited, they feel affirmed, there are connections, they have questions...

Katherine’s work trying to understand her students began long before her time in East Africa, yet that experience gave her more to think about and reflect on in terms of how she can better connect with students. She now has even greater sensitivity to different cultures and has further developed her ability to be empathetic, taking on the perspective of another culture and responding in culturally appropriate ways. Her experience in East Africa, I believe, has been a vehicle for more profound learning as she continues her journey. She is considering enrolling in a doctoral degree program to become a teacher educator. While I think this would be a deep loss for her students, she would be in the position to affect even more by influencing generations of teachers to understand deeply the implications of multicultural and global education.

Summary

Global and Multicultural Lessons

As I entered into this research, I was curious to understand how important an international experience was for teachers’ ability to work within global and multicultural education and, in particular, to build skills in perspective consciousness and knowledge of global/local connections. This was especially important because the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has no specific requirements concerning global or multicultural education. One perspective is that, in Massachusetts, global education “on the whole is too low on teachers priority list...and the state curriculum frameworks encourages it to remain very
low on their priority lists” (Bev personal interview). Even schools that once supported and encouraged global/multicultural perspectives have had to cut back to make space for standardized testing. One participant noted that “They had a diverse curriculum which they had to pair down because of MCAS to be more US centered” (Conner personal interview). While there are certain subjects such as world geography and history of the ancient world that are inherently global in scope, most teachers have to take it upon themselves to present global or multicultural perspectives in their courses. As Nell stated, “I require that I teach from a global perspective” (personal interview).

As previously noted, international and cross-cultural experiences have been identified as critical aspects of teacher education as well as key elements in continued teacher development and growth. Merryfield (1997) has worked for years in the field of teacher education with a specific focus on global understanding through cross-cultural encounters. Accordingly, she perceives “cross-cultural experiences beyond the home country as profound learning experiences that help teachers construct bridges between their students’ lives and the wider world. Teachers who have experienced another culture are more likely to find ways in their daily instruction to teach local/global interconnectedness and perspective consciousness to their students” (Merryfield, 1997, p. 10). While all of the teachers in this group taught from global and/or multicultural perspectives to some degree before their time in East Africa, their cross-cultural experiences abroad contributed to their growth and development as educators.

What teachers have been able to do with their experience is truly inspiring. The four teachers profiled above developed a variety of lessons and projects reaching students, peers, and community members. They initiated a range of conversations and
discussions supporting their need to think deeply about their profession and how they can use global and multicultural perspective to connect with and influence their students. Even the teachers not profiled here used their experience to enhance their curricula.

Kylee who teaches middle school ancient civilizations felt her lessons “had a more modern look as opposed to a more historical look... that’s a piece I want to draw in. I want to have more of a personal focus looking at actual people and talking about specific peoples lives” (Kylee personal interview). Kylee developed and implemented an all-day teacher workshop focused on the Swahili and Islam in East Africa. Like Nell and Sam, Kylee taught her peers in ways she had never done before.

Teachers who faced daunting obstacles throughout the academic year after their return from East Africa, and have yet to infuse their East African experience into their lessons, continue to reflect on their time abroad and will likely eventually use it. “There are just so many things I would go into. That whole kanga issue was just fascinating to me and I would love to put together an architecture lesson” (Conner personal interview). And all of them want to use their experience to eliminate cultural stereotypes and bigotry. One teacher stated that he wants to “remove all those stereotypes and prejudice. It’s a long journey, with difficult tasks but we will keep chipping at it little by little.” Another teacher hopes “to dispel some stereotypes they [students] have about Africa and about Islam. Islam most of all. I mean, to me, before we went on the trip, it was all about Africa but it ended up being that I learned so much more about Islam than about anything else and so I think dispelling some of their stereotypes of Islam will be on the top of my list” (Erin personal interview).
Merryfield’s assertion, that “cross-cultural experiences in other parts of the world often become major catalysts in teachers becoming global educators” (1997, p.10), seems to be apt. This Fulbright program shows that teachers may become even better global educators, with enhanced ability to influence students and peers. A cross-cultural experience can help teachers become more compassionate human beings, more passionate about the work they do, and more creative in how they use their experience and knowledge.

The teachers studied here brought ideas from East Africa into their curriculum and their work with colleagues. Even without state, or sometimes school, support, these teachers were very concerned with bringing global and multicultural perspectives into their classrooms in order to broaden their students’ experience and understanding. Many teachers did this without explicitly stating that they were teaching global or multicultural education. Their dedication, ability, and creativity never ceased to inspire.

**Lingering Thoughts**

However, the analysis presented here raises in me crucial questions about race and the ethnicity of teachers and their students. To teach a multicultural/global curriculum, does it help to be a teacher of color if all your students are? Is it more difficult for a white teacher to teach all African-American, Hispanic and Asian students? How can a white teacher successfully implement a multicultural/global curriculum to all white students? Is it race, ethnicity, empathy, or a combination that supports teachers in their attempts to implement global and multicultural education?

All teachers, if they have a desire to do so, can infuse both global and multicultural perspectives into any curriculum regardless of their race and ethnicity or the
races and ethnicities of their students. Roose (2001) writes, “among practicing teachers who have had cross-cultural experiences, I believe there is a relationship between having had that experience and the ability to help all students succeed in school, regardless of their background and cultures” (p. 43). But still I wonder how race and ethnicity affect a teacher’s relationship with his/her students, especially when attempting to infuse global and multicultural perspectives into the curriculum.

Does Alejandro, because he is a Latino teacher teaching students of color, have an advantage over Katharine, who is white teaching students of color? She is trying to help her African American students develop pride in their African heritage. Obviously she has been struggling with these issues. Would it help her, would it be easier for her, if she herself were African American?

Does Katharine, who because of her experience has been able to make connections with some of her African and Hispanic students, have an advantage over Nell who can’t make connections with her African American or Hispanic students because she has none?

How does Nell’s situation, a white teacher with an all white staff teaching all white students with very little if any ethnic or religious diversity, demand that she approach global education? Is it easier for her to work with and influence students who are so much like her, who are consistently represented in textbooks and teaching materials? Does it help to have white teachers teach white students about multicultural and global issues? Will they relate better to the material if it comes from people they recognize and are culturally familiar with?
Or do race and ethnicity not matter? Is what is important is the ability for teachers to develop caring relationship with their students? It has been “noted that students, especially students of color, who have caring relationships with their teachers are more motivated and perform better academically than students who do not” (McAllister, 2002, p. 433).

Ultimately, all students need to recognize themselves in others, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. One goal is to have students look beyond superficial and artificial divisions to connect on a deeper level. These are the very goals of global/multicultural education. The teachers in this research are working very hard to reach these goals. I believe that having an international cross-cultural experience provides teachers with many more tools to access and can help teachers be more responsive to and creative with the diversity (or lack there of) in their classrooms.

Yet the questions about race and ethnicity linger. I don’t have the answers to these questions, nor did I anticipate them as I started this research. They would make for meaningful and interesting future research.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Summary

This research focused on a group of eleven educators from Massachusetts who traveled to Kenya and Tanzania for four and a half weeks during the summer of 2004 to learn more about Islam and Muslim communities. The primary purpose of this study was to understand how and what teachers take from a study abroad experience and use it in their classrooms within the contexts of global and multicultural education. A secondary purpose was to understand what critical experiences initiated reflection that led to learning. The conceptual framework for this study was experiential education. With this framework I sought to understand the learning that resulted from reflecting on experiences that occurred during the homestays and face-to-face interactions with East Africans and others.

Over the academic year 2004-2005, I collected data using qualitative methods. I interviewed each teacher and observed in five classrooms. I organized and analyzed the data looking for emergent themes. The data fell into two inextricably linked, yet analytically separable themes identified as the experiences or circumstances that led to learning and how that learning is used.

Conclusions

"Being there", homestays with other personal face-to-face encounters, and reflection, both personal and with the group, were identified as key factors that led to deep and meaningful learning. "Being there" was critical to teachers' experience because
it provided access to intimate, thought-provoking encounters with East Africans. These encounters—with homestay families, tutors, lecturers, panel participants, and others—provided the fodder for the reflection and critical analysis that led to learning. Participants engaged in reflection and discussions with each other and privately. At times the discussions and analysis were structured into the program, providing opportunities to share thoughts with the whole group, thereby learning from others’ experiences. Throughout our time in East Africa and upon our return, participants reflected in journals, curriculum development sessions, emails, and in quiet conversations over dinner and on long bus rides.

What teachers reflected on and learned ranged from very personal thoughts on identity to factual information about Kenya or Tanzania. Teachers drew inspiration from an assortment of activities, including sharing meals with families, attending celebrations, visiting schools, listening to lectures, discussions with students, field trips to museums and historical destinations, wandering through markets, and solitary walks along the beach. Each brought home an array of insights, knowledge, and confidence that they hoped to share with their students and peers. They also brought home a collection of stories, material artifacts, and photos, all of which found their way into classrooms.

Some teachers returned to the US to find that their jobs had been changed or eliminated, making it very difficult to implement the ideas they developed based on their experiences in East Africa. Others faced constraints on their time as well as hostile work environments. However, the majority persevered, developing and implementing creative, dynamic curricula. Other teachers drew more subtlety on their experience, connecting with their students in ways more meaningful than before their trip.
Study abroad is an influential experience for US undergraduates and clearly it is a powerful and important opportunity for teachers as well. A short-term intensive period abroad for teachers can help support the goals of both global and multicultural education as well contribute to in-service teacher professional development. This experience was important to teachers beyond the classroom. Teachers increased in confidence and developed workshops for their peers. This study fits comfortably within the literature that was presented: global and multicultural education, study abroad, experiential education, and learning theories.

As a result of time abroad teachers can work more directly within the contexts of multicultural and global education, particularly if the time abroad is built on experiential education. Experiential education offers a framework which includes reflection; reflection provides teachers opportunities to learn from all their experiences. Teachers’ learning experiences in East Africa reflected the many different learning theories presented in this dissertation. They experienced cognitive dissonance and downshifting. These uncomfortable situations led to deep learning and the accommodation of new knowledge.

The questions surrounding this dissertation I found most interesting were:

**What critical events led to learning?**

A variety of activities were organized for the teachers. They attended lectures and panel discussions; visited historical sites, museums, games parks, markets, schools, non-governmental organizations; and engaged in community service activities. However, the most important events and experiences—the ones which initiated questions that led to learning—came through the more intimate aspects of this program. The glimpses of
authentic life made possible through homestays and a myriad of encounters with people were most critical to learning. Living with families, sharing meals, going to celebrations, engaging in conversations and discussions with Kenyans and Tanzanians led teachers to question many of their preconceived notions concerning Islam, Africa, identity, and globalization. These interactions encouraged the educators to alter their perspectives and change their views of Africa, Africans, Islam, Muslims, and themselves by reflecting on and analyzing what they saw, smelled, felt, heard, tasted, thought, and experienced. This process led to altered perspectives and an increased desire to teach from a global and multicultural perspective. “The armchair approach (even with an outstanding book) and the classroom approach (even with lively and interactive strategies) can rarely be as powerful as reflected upon cross cultural experience” (Wilson, in Merryfield, 1997, p. 145).

Beyond the homestays and face-to-face encounters, opportunities to reflect privately and with the group through discussions and curriculum design sessions ultimately guided the teachers to new knowledge and new questions. The group was important in many ways. It acted as a safe, fun place, a space to ask “stupid” questions, and re-energize for further cross-cultural encounters. The group was a place for venting, sharing stories and curricula ideas; it multiplied learning by 10 or more. The support continued even after the group dispersed into individuals again. Members continued to meet for follow-up sessions as scheduled. On their own, members have gotten together to collaborate on international educational projects and to continue their learning and friendships.
What did teachers do with their experience?

Through hard work, with a lot of reflection and consultation with peers, the Fulbright participants developed an evocative, useful, and creative array of curricula and lesson plans, all of which incorporated aspects of global and multicultural education. From this experience, teachers gained perspective consciousness, cross-cultural awareness, an awareness of human choice, and an awareness of their own cultural backgrounds, all of which are dimensions of global and multicultural education. They were able to infuse these new views into their lessons and professional presentations.

They gained confidence in their abilities to generate professional development sessions. For the first time in their careers, some of the participants developed and implemented teacher workshops. Building on the insights gained through their time in East Africa, they incorporated colors, sounds, tastes, smells, stories, and lived experience into their work. Crucial to their lessons were the wide variety of materials, artifacts, and photographs they returned with.

Materials gathered in East Africa were a common sight in all of the classrooms I visited. Kangas, drawings, photos, and paintings hung on classroom walls were used as conversation starters, often leading to deeper conversations. Teachers returned to their schools with music, instruments, boats, textbooks, poetry, literature, clothing, school uniforms, kitchen utensils, and a variety of other objects used to initiate reflection, enliven discussion, and illustrate aspects of life and culture in East Africa.

Implications

Why is all this important? This study contributes to and supports the existing literature/research concerning global/multicultural teacher education and development. It
firmly supports the importance and relevance of international travel experience for teacher growth and professional improvement. It is important because teachers have a responsibility to teach authentically about the world, to introduce their students to the lives of others, to represent people and places honestly, and to understand their own and their students' biases. A program like this can contribute significantly to teacher knowledge and practice; it can be the momentum educators need to teach from a more global perspective. It can strengthen skills and provide resources and resolve. “In a time when most teachers work with students from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures, and all students, regardless of race and culture, must understand, work with, and depend on those who are different from themselves, we need to cultivate teachers who are not just tolerant of but attracted to differences and who want and are able to learn about new ideas, connections, beliefs, and ways of seeing the world” (Roose, 2001, p. 49).

Study abroad programs, rich with immersion experiences, offer potentially powerful opportunities for personal and professional growth. They can help teachers to embrace difference and strengthen their abilities to open their students' hearts and minds to the diversity of our world. Cross cultural international experiences “help teachers become competent in knowledge and understanding of a complex global community. Teachers need to develop this cross cultural competence if they are to be prepared to teach their students to become well-informed decision makers in a complex and interdependent world” (Merryfield, 1997, p. 97). A journey to unfamiliar cultures, with opportunities to live with families and reflect on experience, could become an important facet in teacher preparation. Educators can then become bridges between their students'
worlds and a world that is all too often misrepresented in the media and in textbooks. For an example, as a result of this program, one teacher stated that he was:

able to remove a veil to the concepts of Muslim families and Islam in general. Meaning that this tendency to think, ‘oh these people eat something different or those Muslim people watch different shows’, but sitting there and watching three Jackie Chan pictures in a row, sitting there and being asked about this rapper or that hip-hop artist...they are people just like the ones I have in the classroom, normal people like you and I and the interaction among the members of the family...I was able to see that it was not that big mythical society that has been presented to us (Alejandro personal interview).

Academic Implications

This was a case study of a specific group of people in a specific time and place. Case studies are notoriously difficult to generalize from. Would another group of teachers have the same experience? No. Each group is different, leading to different dynamics affecting the entire experience. Another group would have similar, yet different experiences. Participants would probably live in different homes, listen to different lecturers, travel with different interests, all leading to different questions to reflect on. Would another group of teachers have the same learning outcomes? No, but having worked in the field of study abroad for many years, I believe that a different group of teachers would have similar learning outcomes. Would another group of teachers implement the same lessons? Of course not. They would, however, grow personally and professionally. It is extremely difficult not to grow and change as a result of this type of experience.

However, this research supports the results of dozens of other research projects on the importance of international experience for educators. The findings of this research
are similar to the findings of other studies on teachers' experience abroad, confirming its significance for teacher education programs, both in-service and pre-service. Though specific findings may be difficult to generalize, there are some outcomes of my experience with this program that could be worthwhile for other practitioners. Through the experience I learned a great deal about how to organize this type of program.

**Pragmatic Implications**

There were many lessons I learned as a result of organizing and developing this excursion many which might be useful for others who would like to undertake this very rewarding work.

1. I knew that having participants meet with people of similar racial and ethnic backgrounds can help them put sometimes frustrating and confusing experiences and emotions into an understandable context. I have found with African American students that it can be very helpful to connect them with African Americans who have lived and worked in East Africa and can help guide them through their experience. Even white Americans (men and women) who traveled to East Africa, married into the culture and have lived there for years, offer a unique perspective to the group. This trip confirmed the importance of these types of encounters and interactions. As I developed this trip, I did not specifically consider making these types of introductions. For future trips I would actively seek out others who reflected the people in the group; I wouldn't leave it so much to chance. Crucial to this whole program was meeting as many East Africans as possible, but it is also very valuable to speak with non-Africans about their experiences, thus broadening perspectives.
2. There is no need to have a waitlist with twelve people on it. A large waitlist becomes onerous and too time consuming to manage well. Three or four people are sufficient.

3. Don’t cut the group reflection and discussion time! Be true to it and the insights that come from it. This doesn’t mean more time has to be set aside for it. People do tend to get tired of always meeting and reflecting, especially at times when they are overloaded or have downshifted and are feeling overwhelmed. But if it is at all feasible, stick with the schedule. Not everyone need actively participate at the same time, so even if half the group is having a lively discussion, the others can still gain insights and ideas…and be ready for the next discussion. Or perhaps as Bev mentioned, 20 minutes could put be put aside after each lecture or panel discussion to talk about it or do some reflective writing. There are a lot of ways to schedule reflection into a program; the hard part is actually doing it.

4. Have more free time. This is something that participants always want. Many free days were scheduled while teachers were staying with families. We asked them to spend that time with the families. Next time I would schedule free days while they were not with families. I would also schedule two or three days in a row for their own exploration. This would require that the in-country program be longer. I always wanted to have six weeks in East Africa. There was a lot of discussion about how long the program should be. The co-director, Bev, wanted the program to be four weeks in length, but I insisted on six. We settled on five, but due to travel warnings and having to postpone the trip for a year, we were in East Africa for only 4.5 weeks. Bev’s argument was that teachers would not give up their summers and travel for six weeks. But I
believe that teachers who really wanted to go abroad would make the commitment to be there six weeks. In fact Ally commented that the low point of the program "was that we didn’t have enough time. We should have been there for 8 weeks. That was a low point" (Ally personal interview). However, being there for only 4.5 weeks led me to an important insight...

5. It’s all in how you structure it. A short-term program can lead to great growth, understanding, and increased knowledge, but so much depends on how it is organized. Within the field of study abroad, there is great debate about how long abroad is long enough. Many argue that a year should be the minimum time students should study abroad. I had previously worked with students who were abroad for at least a semester. For me that was the absolute minimum; anything less would be a waste of time. The teachers were in East Africa for only four and a half weeks—such a short amount of time. Jennifer, the program assistant who has worked for many years with US students who study abroad in Kenya, commented that she thought the teachers got more out of their month in East Africa than the students do in a semester! That was great praise. While I believed that much depends on the organization of any program, experience with this program showed me that people can get a great deal out of a very compact time overseas. If the program exposes them to a rich variety of people, experiences, and places that allow immersion into the culture rather than skipping across the surface, and gives time for reflection, then learning takes place. More free time for sorting out reactions to situations could therefore be worthwhile.

6. Teachers on this program visited several schools and spoke with a number of educators and students. What they did not do was teach. Teachers would have loved to
teach a lesson or two in East Africa, to have discussions with Kenyan students, and to have more contact with their peers. Assuming this was acceptable to the schools and teachers we were visiting, I would ask participants to prepare a lesson that they could implement in different schools.

7. This program strengthened my belief in the power of homestays and personal connections. These should be the hallmark of any international teacher development program that focuses on global and multicultural education.

8. Be open to serendipity. “Be prepared for the unexpected. Serendipity is truly the operative concept in international programs and travel” (Kissock, 1997, p.141). The unplanned moments were truly inspired. Forces of the universe conspired to open doors and offer truly astonishing glimpses into culture. For example:

Kangas, the cloth women wear and is used in a variety of ways, unexpectedly, became a focal point of the program. Upon arrival, each participant received a gift of a kanga. The first lecture in Nairobi was all about kanga, its importance to East African cultures, and in particular the Swahili. A number of unrelated lectures also mentioned the importance of kanga in East Africa. A number of homestay family members demonstrated the variety of uses for kanga. While we were in Zanzibar, we came across a very small non governmental organization that turned kangas in to beautiful little dresses that were exported and sold in Europe. The women earned a good salary and extra funds were donated to the local elementary school. During our time in Arusha at the United Africa American Community Center, we painted a mural on the wall. The design of this mural was a clotheslines hanging with kangas.
Kangas were hung in every classroom I visited. They were artifacts that connected cultures. They connected Katharine and her students from East Africa, Sam and the Latina women who work at her school. Curricula, lessons, and teacher workshops about kangas were developed by a number of teachers. It was delightful how important kangas became to the program and it was completely unintentional.

As a second example of serendipity, while visiting the small village of Bwejuu on the east coast of Zanzibar, we realized that we were staying next to the football field that was prominent in the National Geographic film the *Leopards of Zanzibar*. This film chronicles the events in the life of a small Zanzibari football team with a focus on the team captain. A few of the teachers actually use this film in their classrooms. We were able to locate the “star” of the film who lived near by, share a meal with him, and have a deeply-engaging dialogue about the making of the film and how that experience affected his life.

A third example of serendipity occurred during our stay in Mombasa. We found that the Chinese Consulate had scheduled a three-day festival at the Ft. Jesus Museum, honoring the important connections between China and Kenya. For Ally with her interests in those connections, this was a fortuitous circumstance, one that would not have worked better if we had planned it. Indeed many of the participants spent time at the festival.

Serendipity brought us so many unpredictable opportunities. Plan well for the program, but be open to the unexpected.
Future Studies

My dissertation is one of many that demonstrate the critical importance of an international experience for teacher education and development. While mine is not the final word on the subject, I believe more studies would only further validate the importance of such an experience for educators. However until more in-service and pre-service teachers benefit from international cross-cultural experience, the studies will continue.

A follow-up study with these teachers in three years to understand the long term effects of this experience should be undertaken. Does the learning last? Focused research on race and ethnicity of teacher and students in global and multicultural education would be enlightening, as well as more work in the classroom with the students and how they benefit from their teacher’s international experience would be interesting. I would like to compare a classroom of students whose teacher has traveled and one whose teacher has no international experience.

Final Thoughts

It has been said that the “mere learning of cultural information does not necessarily engender empathy for the cultural other...but direct contact with individuals from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds is necessary for nurturing empathy and a deeper connection” (McAllister, 2002, p. 439), qualities identified as necessary for competently engaging in multicultural and global education.

The findings of this research confirm that a journey immersing teachers into other cultures cultivates confidence, empathy, understanding, and deeper connections. Such
journeys open minds and hearts to accept difference and improve skills and abilities to connect with students. Let the journey continue....
Appendix A

EAST AFRICA: A SUMMER STUDY TOUR FOR TEACHERS
APPLICATION FORM

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION [please type or write legibly.]

1. Name of Applicant

2. Mailing Address

3. Home Phone E-mail

4. School # of years here

5. Address

6. Work Phone E-mail

7. Name of immediate supervisor*
   *one of your recommendations MUST be from this person

8. Supervisors phone E-mail

9a. Grade(s)/subjects taught
   9b. If appropriate, specify courses taught

10. Check all that apply

   Teacher Elementary
   Administrator Middle
   Librarian Secondary
   Other (specify)

11. Previous teaching experience

   School & Location Grade(s) Subjects(s) Years from and to

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12. Optional: Your racial, ethnic, or religious background

B. EXPERIENCE [Please respond to the following – use separate sheets if necessary]

1. Overseas Travel:

2. Africa content currently included in your teaching:
   (indicate amount of time spent, topics and countries/regions)

3. Islam content currently included in your teaching:
   (indicate amount of time spent, topics and countries/regions)

4. Conferences and workshops/presentations:
   (List topic of presentation, name of conferences and year)

5. Distinctions: (list any honors, awards, recognitions, etc….)
6. Have you received a U.S. government educational exchange grant (Fulbright or other)? If so, please list the country and year.

7. Tell us in a few sentences how you came to know what you know about Africa. (For example was it through a cause? Through preparation for your teaching? Friends? Reading? Travel?)

(type on separate sheets the following)

8. What in your background and experience will ease your adaptation to an unfamiliar culture, very simple accommodations, or environment?

9. What in your background and experience will ease your living in a fairly intense program?

10. Describe the curriculum project you would like to carry out in East Africa. Include how you might benefit from resources or resources people there.

11. If you would like, please add any other comments or other information that would be helpful to the selection committee.

I certify that the information provided on this application is correct to the best of my knowledge and ability and that I agree to the terms and conditions of the award if selected. I also agree, if selected, to the following provisions:

1. To complete all project related activities a) the pre-departure orientation b) the study tour c) follow-up program.
2. To complete an individual project
3. To disseminate you East African experience in and beyond the classroom.

Signature: ____________________________ Date: __________

Printed Name: ____________________________________________
Project Information

**THE PROJECT**

This Group Project Abroad (GPA) project consists of three main phases

**Phase 1: Pre-departure preparation and orientation**

A three-day pre-departure orientation at UMASS Amherst (April 12\textsuperscript{th}, May 10\textsuperscript{th}, May 17\textsuperscript{th} all three days are Saturdays) to prepare for their field study and tour, including refinement of participants’ research curriculum development project plans. Content seminars, teaching on East Africa and Islam, preparation for project development, and health and related travel information will be covered.

**Phase 2: Study, travel, and project development in Kenya and Tanzania**

Five weeks in Kenya and Tanzania for instruction, field visits, cultural activities, and homestays (with English speaking families).

**Phase 3: Follow-up activities and dissemination**

A follow-up program at UMass-Amherst during the fall, two separate days one on a school day and the other on Saturday will complete the program. Participants will train to become competent, credible “teaching consultants” to participate in professional meeting and workshops at local, regional, state, and national levels and disseminate their materials.

**ELIGIBILITY**

Participation in the 2003 Teachers to East Africa—Kenya-Tanzania—GPA program is subject to eligibility criteria established for all federally subsidized programs: applicants must be United States citizens or permanent residents of the United States.

**SELECTION COMMITTEE**

Committee of four from UMass-Amherst and Boston University will review and select participants. Committee members are committed to providing equal access and treatment to eligible educators who are members of historically under-represented groups and minorities.

**Requirements**

1. each participant will pay a fee of $500.00 towards the cost of orientation and follow-up portions.
2. Each participant must have a valid passport and visa, be able to document good health, and provide proof of health and travel's insurance coverage.

3. Under no circumstances will a spouse, other relatives or friends of a GPA participant travel with or accompany the group on the study tour.

4. The following expenses are not covered by the US Department of Education and must be borne by the participant:
   a. The $500 fee to be paid to UMass-Amherst;
   b. Round trip transportation from participants home to UMass-Amherst campus for orientation and follow-up programs;
   c. Passport and visa fees;
   d. Inoculations and other health care expenses related to travel abroad;
   e. Personal travel done on a participant’s own time and initiative in Kenya or Tanzania;
   f. All other personal expenses
   g. Transportation to and from the departure airport (Boston or Hartford)

**NOTIFICATION DATE**
Applicants will be notified of acceptance by April 2nd.

For further information on submissions of applications contact:
Appendix B

LIST OF LECTURES AND FIELD TRIPS

Nairobi
Nairobi City Tour with Dr. Jama
Kanga’s: A doorway into Swahili Culture with Christal DeWitt at the Mohammad Amin center
Development and Underdevelopment in Kenya and Tanzania with Dr. Jama
Giraffe Center

Mombasa/Malindi/Lamu
Mombasa Cultural Orientation—Athman Lali
Tour of Ft. Jesus Museum
The Swahili—Athman Lali
Conservation of Old Town—Mombasa Kassin Omar
Chinese Cultural Celebration at Ft. Jesus
Health Issues in Mombassa—Dr. Ashrap
Islam and Islamization—Athman Lali
Swahili Wood Carving at Swahili Cultural Center—Athman Hussein
Women & Health issues on the Kenya Coast—Fatema Kaderbhai
People and the Sea in Kenya—Prof. Hydar
The History of Mijikenda & the Kaya Complex—Mr. Tinga
Women & Health issues on the Kenya Coast—Fatema Kaderbhai
Visit to MCET general discussions with panels of men and women
The Madrasa Resource Center (MRC) and local primary schools
Tour of Jumba Ruins
Tour of Gede Ruins
Islamic movements in Kenya and Sudan—Dr Paul Goldsmith
Swahili Women: Everyday Life and Beauty
Tour of Lamu Museum—Athman Lali
Dinner with board of Island Children’s Fund
School visits with Lamu Island Children’s Fund
Panel Discussion with high school students
Panel Discussion with Lamu elders
Visit with Tawasal (a civic education NGO) and Swahili poetry and song
Visit to Sheikh Khalifa High School

Zanzibar
Walking tour of Stone Town—Ali Issa
Political History of Zanzibar
Cultural History of Zanzibar through Architecture—Abdul Sheriff
Tour of Maruhubi Palace Ruins
Spice tour
Visit to Mangapwani Slave Cave
Visit to Jozani Forest and Mangroves
Visit with the players of the National Geographic film *The Leopards of Zanzibar* (unexpected)
Ngoma on beach with local dance troop
Visit with small Danish NGO and kangas (unexpected)
Taraab music, poetry, song and dance
Women in Zanzibar Dr. Narriman Jidawa
Fisheries in Zanzibar Dr. Narriman Jidawa
Aida Ayers: Artist and Muslim convert

**Dar es Salaam**
City Tour of Dar es Salaam
Dar es Salaam National Museum
Visit to Oyster Bay Tingatinga Artists
Tour of Bagamoyo: The Catholic Church Museum, driving tour to view historical architecture
Bagamoyo College of Arts

**Arusha Area**
Homestay families and expectations
curriculum discussions design ideas that/free time to work on curriculum
Visit to local Mosque for Friday prayers
Snake Park
Arusha National Park
Community Service at local school
Theater Performance at O’Neal’s
Participatory Dance Performance with the National Dance Company of Tanzania
International War Tribunal in Arusha
Film and Discussion at War Crimes Tribunal
GLOBAL HORIZONS FLYERS

Islam among the Swahili in East Africa and a visit to The Islamic Society of Western Massachusetts

A Workshop for Upper Elementary Through High School Teachers

A brief description:
Islam is the world’s second largest religion and the faith of 6 million Americans. Despite this, however, it continues to be widely misunderstood. During this workshop we will explore Islam from several different perspectives; both international and local. The workshop will include a brief discussion of the history of Islam, a presentation on Islam on the Swahili Coast of East Africa, a discussion on women in Islam with a local Muslim woman, and a trip to the Islamic Society of Western Massachusetts and a tour with members of their congregation. Lunch will be provided and will feature East African cuisine.

Kristin Hayward Strobel, a Fulbright Hays Teacher Scholar to East Africa and History teacher with Springfield Public Schools, will be leading the discussion on Islamic history and the Swahili Coast.

When: March 5, 2005 from 9:00 to 3:00pm

Where: Vansickle Middle School, Springfield, Massachusetts

Cost: $20.00 (includes lunch and materials)

For more details and to register: contact Kelly O’Brien at 413-523-8878 or email kbob@edu.umass.edu

PDP’s are available
Tingatinga
A unique East African art

A workshop for ALL teachers

Come enjoy a day of painting in the style of famous Tanzanian painter, Edward S. Tingatinga, who developed his distinctive art in the early 1960's. Learn about the life of the artist and the role of art in Tanzanian society. This is folk art, so don't be shy, everyone can do this! Bright colors, spontaneous art, guaranteed to be a pleasant day!

Paints, canvas, and brushes will be provided. Please bring a table easel (if you have one), a water container, a smock, an old cloth, a sketch pad (if you like to plan your composition), a pencil, eraser, and a piece of charcoal.

WHO: Stacey Dinarello, K-8 teacher with Boston Public Schools, Fulbright Teacher Scholar to Tanzania

WHEN: Saturday 21st May from 9am to 3pm

WHERE: 285 Hills South, UMASS-Amherst

COST: $20.00. Includes lunch and materials. Please register as soon as possible 10 PDP's available.

To learn more about Tingatinga, please visit

http://art-bin.com/art/atingae.html
MAKING KANGAS: Conversations in East Africa

"Buying a kanga: Coastal women use the cloth as a medium of silent communication, hence the need to carefully read and comprehend the different messages printed on them before choosing one."

A WORKSHOP FOR TEACHERS

What: Kangas: an East African rectangular fabric printed with beautiful bold colors and designs with a message in Swahili. The message may be personal or political. Kangas have many uses and are often worn as women's attire. Teachers in this workshop will create a kanga using simple printmaking methods appropriate for the middle grades through high school. The message of the kanga will be linked to proverbs and messages found on t-shirts. The workshop will include a lesson plan on making a kanga, and the history and anatomy of kangas.

Why: So educators will have a fun and creative way to infuse a cross-cultural perspective into art, history, and social studies classes coupled with an understanding of a unique form of dress and communication among the Swahili of East Africa.

Who: Althea Dabrowski, visual arts specialist for the Pioneer Valley Regional School District and Susan Wright, Warwick Community School Librarian and Fulbright Teacher Scholar to East Africa will facilitate.

When: Saturday 12th February 2005 from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm

Where: The Warwick Community School. 41 Winchester Rd. ~ Warwick, Massachusetts

Cost: $20.00. Includes lunch and materials. PDP's available.

To learn more about Kangas, please visit
http://www.qlcom.com/hassan/kanga_history.html
Appendix D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT
2004

Study of educator development
before and after a Fulbright program in Kenya and Tanzania

CONSENT FOR VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

I volunteer to participate in this qualitative study and understand that:

1. I will be interviewed by Kelly O’Brien using a guided interview format consisting of a number of questions.

2. The questions I will be answering address the impact of a four and a half week Fulbright program in Kenya and Tanzania. I understand that the primary purpose of this research is to understand how this educational experience impacts my professional and personal life. The results will add to the literature on the professional development of teachers.

3. The interview will be tape recorded to facilitate analysis of the data.

4. My name will not be used in any way or at any time in the paper.

5. I may withdraw from part or all of this study at any time.

6. I have the right to review material prior to the final oral exam or other publication.

7. I understand that data from this interview will be included in Kelly O’Brien’s doctoral dissertation and may also be included in manuscripts submitted to professional journals for publication.

8. I am free to participate or not to participate without prejudice.

_________________________________________  ______________________________
Researcher’s Signature                       Participant’s Signature
_________________________________________  ______________________________
Date                                       Date
Appendix E

FULBRIGHT PROJECTS

20 May 2004

Erin

I will be doing a PowerPoint presentation along the lines of "a day in the life of a child in East Africa"—the toys he would play with, what his mother/father wear, what his school is like, what he learns in history class about the region, him going to the beach to see a dhow being built, etc. Basically just an overview of the history and culture of the region supplemented by artifacts, that I can share with my (7th grade) students.

Ally

Malindi’s Story is a children’s book and multi-disciplinary curriculum unit, focusing on the connections between Africa and China and the influence of Islam through the Silk Routes. This project is a continuation of research that we began 2 years ago. From our research, we are writing a children’s book that tells the story of a giraffe that African ambassadors brought from Africa to China with the treasure ships of Zheng He, the famous Chinese Muslim explorer of the 15th century. This story highlights the early contact between East Africa and China through the presence of Chinese explorers in the Indian Ocean, East African traders and seafarers, and the impact on the trade which was thriving along the east coast of Africa for centuries before European influence.

This research has been the product of two projects coming together, The Encarta Africana Teachers Research Group and Primary Source’s New England China Network. The Encarta Africana is an encyclopedia and CD-ROM of the African Diaspora developed by Henry Louis Gates and Anthony Appiah at the W.E.B. DuBois Center at Harvard University. The Encarta project is a collaboration between Harvard, Wheelock College, and Boston Public Schools, directed by Dr. Theresa Perry. The Encarta project brings teachers together to write curriculum for the CD-ROM, in order to increase its accessibility in the classroom. The New England China Network / Primary Source is an organization whose mission it is to train teachers to use more primary and secondary sources in the classroom to teach history to uncover the stories of peoples who have been underrepresented and misrepresented throughout history.

Project work/activities for Summer 2004

This summer, we plan to travel to the East African coast to see first-hand the historic ports that were the center of Indian Ocean trade. We will learn more about how a giraffe was captured, transported across the ocean to China, and cared for along the way. We will learn about the tools that African and Arab sailors used to guide them on their journey.

Our activities while in Kenya will include:
• meeting with Dr. Athman Lali, Chief Archeologist at the Kenyan National Museum
• visiting Malindi on the Kenyan coast where our historical giraffe boarded the ship for China
• conducting research and meeting with educators at the Giraffe Centre in Nairobi
• learning about giraffes in their natural habitat
• visiting Lamu Island, a historical center of Indian Ocean industry and trade
• learning about early Swahili navigation systems and boat-building techniques
• Visiting Pate Island to interview local storytellers and oral historians about their Chinese ancestry
• taking photographs, making video and audio recordings (for web-based lessons), and collecting artifact (for teaching kits)

We will spend time in Nairobi and in locations on the Kenyan coast, including Lamu, Pate Island, and Mombasa. All of these coastal locations have repositories of archeological evidence of contact and trade between China and Africa, and the influence of Islam.

Riana

East African Art...ceramics, clay...would like to meet artists as many as possible, especially sculptors. Would like to connect her students in US with students in East Africa. I feel my best move is to connect with as many African artists, particularly, as I can. It would be great to have studio visits or time to work with an artist. This would allow me to have a greater understanding of technique, materials, styles, and symbolism in East African art - all things I could directly apply to my teaching to increase authentic awareness of East Africa.

On a personal growth note, I am very interested in alternative healing methods. This is something I hope to have the time and connections to explore.

Connor

I plan on compiling a collection of photographs related to various aspects of East African culture for use in a (or series of) visual lessons - in addition I'm also toying with the idea of a 'cultural practice' lesson in which students would have to identify the proper etiquette in several social situations.

Sam

I want my project to be about the market place and have children make African artifacts to sell in a market. My interest might shift to just painting or will include painters selling also at the market. Maybe we could do a historical look at the market place...what did the historical city sates sell and what is sold today.

Nell

My project idea is create a collection of objects, a kit, to help illuminate the life of a Swahili child to an elementary school child in the United States. I would hope the kit would provide glimpses of home life: eating, sleeping, chores, shopping, interacting with family members, play, and celebration of holidays, birthdays, and other milestones.
School and religious life would be other areas to include. I’d like the kit to be a multi-sensory as possible. Photos, recipes, tapes of music would all be things I might include.

A second area in which I have an interest is the participation of children in conservation or environmental stewardship activities. I would welcome the opportunity to learn more about such efforts, including gaining a greater understanding of the role of religion and government in encouraging such efforts. Possibly there would be an overlap between this interest and the kid’s kit.

Katharine

While in Nairobi & Arusha early (for around 20 days) I will be collecting 'artifacts' of public media (like newspaper clippings, pictures of advertisements, labels of things, whatever -- I'm open) which are a mixed of Kiswahili and English -- I am especially interested at materials directed at women & girls. My project with the group relates to this & lessons I would like to develop in book club units I will teach next year (hopefully 11th grade ELA) around the themes of "Colonization of the Mind" and "Self/Other." I made up these themes, so I'm sure they will morph as I learn more. I am interested in intergrating East African literature & theatre into these units -- including methali (proverbs), hadithi (stories), mashairi (poetry). In the book clubs kids will choose from titles including Cry, The Beloved Country, Things Fall Apart, The River Between. Again, I plan to pay special attention to materials that are directed at East African Muslim women & girls. Also, I want to buy some rap music while I am there and pay attention to how hip-hop is manifesting itself in their culture--so I want to collect common artifacts around that and music as well.

Alejandro

I intend to work on economic geography. Which region produces what, how it is marketed, and who benefits. That is, are the goods from a certain region sold locally or are they for export? How does the climate and geography impact what is produced and how it is produced? How does the process take place: through a local entity such as a cooperative? Does it depend on an outside agency (multinational or trade agreement)? I intend to document this teaching unit with pictures.

Bea

I want to develop a thematic unit appealing to all English Language Learners, Muslim and non-Muslim, in the BPS. Through pictures and historical facts, my students will be able to reflect how this new information is similar/different to their own: religion, family life, food, traditional homemade products, school life, architecture, music and musical instruments. I want all students to take this opportunity to share with and learn from their peers about their lives and customs.

Kylee

I am going to send you 2 project proposals- one will be for my classroom and the other will be for the class that I need to take in the fall. High school and particularly middle school aged children are very interested in the concrete details of history. They ask terribly difficult questions each day about the minute details of the lives of people in
the era we are studying. Going to Tanzania and Kenya will provide me with a chance to answer some of those concrete questions about the Indian Ocean trade system. I want to learn about the style of the boats that were used, who sailed them, and what languages they spoke. If at all possible I’d like to collect examples of some of the things that were traded and find out which cultures of the world traded for these things and what they were used for. I would also like to take pictures of some of the old architecture of the area and any boats that are in the old style that might still be in use. I would also like to find out more about how the monsoons really work - exactly how many months do the winds blow in one direction before they switch and how does the have an impact on the weather systems of the area. I would like to collect enough samples and stories to build a history/geography unit on the subject of Indian Ocean trade.

I am interested in knowing more about the educational goals of both Kenya and Tanzania. I’m curious about what they are emphasizing in the classrooms and about which changes they think will make the most impact on improving education for their children. I am also interested in knowing more about the history curriculum that is taught in schools there - I would like to know if they emphasize local history or if there is a heavy emphasis on European and American history. If this is the case, it would also be interesting to know if there is movement to change this somewhat. It might also be that I’ll need to focus on political leaders - in which case I might study more about the creation of Tanzania and its founding fathers.
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