

# Handbook of Research on Efficacy and Implementation of Study Abroad Programs for P-12 Teachers

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# Chapter 15

## The Cambridge Schools Experience: Developing Literacy Educators within an International School–University Partnership

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### ABSTRACT

*Clinical field experiences are essential components of teacher education programs. Though largely missing from most teacher education programs, cross-cultural field experiences aid teacher development by broadening their perspectives of diversity, teaching, and learning. This chapter explores the experiences of both preservice and in-service teachers who participated in a four-week intensive field experience in Cambridge, England. The Cambridge Schools Experience (CSE) curriculum emphasizes: 1) noticing and naming literacy practices, 2) deepening understandings of literacy teaching and learning, 3) being responsive in the moment, and 4) being a collaborative educator. Along with findings from the study, we discuss the program structure, as well as barriers to implementation and suggestions for overcoming those barriers to ensure program longevity.*

### INTRODUCTION

The clinical field experience is an integral component of many teacher education programs. Although the expectations and requirements vary between university programs, the experience typically involves preservice teachers observing and participating in a traditional classroom setting under the supervision of university faculty and experienced classroom teachers. Oftentimes, the structure of the program experiences and requirements are based around the needs of the faculty and university (Lawrence & Butler, 2010). During these experiences, preservice teachers have the opportunity to “learn by doing,” by ap-

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plying educational theory and college coursework in context. Field experiences remain constant within the same public school district, or at times within the same school with occasional classroom changes.

Research emphasizes the importance of early, diverse learning experiences in preparing potential teachers for the demands of teaching (Coffey, 2010). Recent literature suggests the significance of providing prospective teachers with coursework and experiences connected to community and culture to broaden their perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of the many ways that learning takes place (Coffey, 2010; Hallman, 2012).

Extending teacher education programs' commitment to preparing teacher candidates for environments that are not only part of schools, but situated within global communities, becomes a commitment to preparing beginning teachers for understanding that teaching and schooling extend beyond the walls of the classroom and into the world (Hallman, 2012). Missing altogether from many traditional field experiences is a more diverse, global, cross-cultural field experience.

## **Cross-Cultural Field Experiences**

Basic university courses on multiculturalism do not adequately prepare preservice teachers with practical knowledge bases needed to instruct culturally diverse student learners (Evans, 2013). The National Education Association (NEA) asserts teachers must be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop global competencies in American students (NEA, 2010). As American society becomes more culturally and linguistically diverse and as global concerns and events continue to impact the economy, the environment, health and wellness, and education, it is imperative students develop global perspectives and competencies necessary to understand the impact of one's actions, and to think critically about global issues, participate in positive solutions for global concerns, and appreciate cultural diversity (NEA, 2010). In order to prepare preservice teachers for a global community, teacher preparation programs must integrate global perspectives and competencies into coursework and field experiences. A cross-cultural field experience aids preservice teacher development by broadening their perspectives of diversity, multiculturalism, teaching, and learning (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Dunn, Dotson, Cross, Kesner, & Lundahl, 2014; Kabilan, 2013; Phillion, Malewski, Sharma, & Wang, 2009).

Alternative field experiences increase preservice teacher confidence, comfort, and self-awareness in knowledge of diverse families and their role in serving the community to improve instruction. The cross-cultural field experience exposes preservice teachers to global contexts. As a result, preservice pedagogical knowledge is transformed to include instructional practices for the cognitive development and academic success of diverse student learners. In this chapter, we discuss our experiences preparing preservice and inservice teachers in a cross-cultural field experience in Cambridge, England. We share our experiences utilizing co-teaching models with a literacy education focus, and describe what our research teaches us about these experiences, as well as ways to build from them.

## **Peer Placements and Co-Teaching**

National education and teacher preparation organizations have acknowledged the necessity of developing collaborative professionals. Co-teaching is a type of collaborative partnership requiring two educators to work together to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners. Although co-teaching originated in the field of special education (Badiali & Titus, 2010), different co-teaching structures are becoming more common in clinically rich teacher education programs as a way to support and apprentice prospective

teachers into the field. Mentor teachers co-teach with preservice teachers during their field experience to both model effective teaching practices and to provide necessary scaffolding for the preservice teacher. Another type of partnering that is not as prevalent in the literature is peer placements. Peer-placement is the partnering of two interns in a classroom with one mentor teacher. Research suggests peer-placements, or collaborative placements, may lead to supportive relationships, effective planning and lesson implementation, the development of more creative lessons, more frequent feedback from peers, increased confidence in teaching, and more thoughtful reflections about teaching practices (Gardiner & Robinson, 2011).

## **School-University Partnerships**

With the shift toward more clinically rich teacher preparation programs, the concept of school-university partnerships has experienced a revival. Goodlad (1994) posits school-university partnerships result in the simultaneous renewal of both parties when constructed in a mutually beneficial and strategic manner. This co-construction includes shared commitments toward developing preservice teachers, meaningful, job-embedded professional development for classroom teachers, and research (including teacher research) to study the impact of the relationship on all stakeholders. To date, little literature exists on the potential practice of developing international school-university partnerships. However, this is an essential next step for both theory and practice if we are to develop clinically-rich cross-cultural field experiences necessary to develop preservice teachers as global citizens.

## **Literacies: Teaching and Learning**

The clinical field experience for preservice teachers varies depending on the teacher education program structure, school placement, mentor teacher, and in-field support. Along those lines, what preservice teachers learn in coursework is often at odds with what they observe in the field. As an example, coursework expands the definition of literacy to encompass the interrelated, multiple literacies and meaning-making practices occurring in a variety of spaces and content areas throughout the day. Furthermore, literacy coursework promotes developing positive literacy dispositions through read alouds, dramatic responses, literature circles, discourse practices, and varied texts. However, many U.S. adopted curricula and literacy programs currently used in schools are heavily structured and scripted and focused on a reductionist form of instruction, preventing preservice teachers from experiencing theory in practice. As such, the development of preservice teacher's pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) differs as well, and is influenced by previous experiences and societal beliefs about schooling. While there is often a disconnect between the theories learned in university coursework and the literacy practices of the elementary classroom (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Kosnik & Beck, 2008), PCK is developed and nurtured through field experiences, focused coaching and supervision, and connected coursework. Immersion into the classroom during CSE provides a framework for participants to develop and enact their literacy PCK within a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

## **Background**

The Cambridge School Experience (CSE) is a four-week field experience for undergraduate early childhood and elementary education students, as well as graduate students in reading education. Formerly the

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British Schools Experience (BSE), this internship program began in the mid-1990s and featured schools in both London and Brighton (a seaside resort city south of London situated in East Sussex, England), but since 1998 the program has operated exclusively from Cambridge (Department of Childhood Education, 2015). This intensive internship places up to 22 students with mentor teachers in primary (elementary) schools where they prepare and implement original lessons while documenting their experiences related to the educational culture, climate, and customs of their placement schools. CSE is currently designed in collaboration with four international partnership primary schools. These schools are public primary schools supported by the Cambridgeshire County (UK) Council. The four school partners represent unique contexts, which provide ample opportunities for preservice and in-service teachers to engage with children from linguistically, religiously, and economically diverse backgrounds, including one school where 37 home languages other than English are spoken. CSE aims to develop the literacy pedagogical content knowledge of the preservice teachers enrolled by disrupting their cultural understandings, creating dissonance between their perceived and lived experiences, and providing ample support to reflect on these new experiences and consider their implications on teaching practices broadly.

In the early years of the program under the BSE model, faculty members serving as program directors, agreed to a two-year commitment. In the first year, the prior year's director mentored the new faculty member, and in the second year the faculty member then became the mentor for the newly appointed staff (Brindley, Quinn, & Morton, 2009). As the program grew in those early years, so did requirements for directors. Faculty supervisors soon were required to have experience with field supervision, work in one of our U.S. university partnership schools, successful records of mentorship and coaching PSTs, and research agenda(s) related to PST education (Parker & Schneider, 2013).

Based on the new requirements, the faculty program directors developed a more focused and strategic supervision plan for students in the 2014 CSE. Whereas faculty previously visited each student's classroom once per week, and offered two formal evaluations of their teaching, the shift in 2014 placed each faculty member in the classroom at least twice per week, for a minimum of two classroom visits per preservice teacher per week. Following each lesson observed, faculty members would send immediate feedback to students, and either formal or informal conversations would occur once the students returned home in the evening, where faculty and students live together during the experience. In addition, faculty and students engaged in two content-focused coaching cycles. These cycles required students to pre-plan lessons with CSE faculty, video their lesson, code their lesson using content-specific scaffolds, and then conference with a faculty member who also coded the lesson and offered feedback on both instruction and content. Gelfuso and Dennis (2014) found this approach to support preservice teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, and ability to utilize student data to make instructional decisions.

Due to university budget cuts, the 2015 CSE program was provided funds for only one faculty member and a graduate assistant, changing the nature of the traditional two-year rotation of faculty; the lead faculty member from 2014 attended as the only faculty member in 2015. As a result, the faculty member made a number of changes to the program. Previously, CSE worked with as many as 10 schools in one summer, with roughly two students at each site. The schools were spread across Cambridgeshire, making meaningful visits to more than two per day difficult. In an effort to develop international school-university partnerships, the first change to CSE was to make purposeful decisions regarding our school partners. As such, the faculty program director reached out to four schools with whom we had strong relationships, and discussed placing more students at each site with the goal of developing partnerships focused on simultaneous renewal (Goodlad, 1994). The four schools agreed to host additional students at their sites, and welcomed the co-construction of formal partnerships. With only four schools to visit

each week, the faculty program director and graduate assistant were able to spend a minimum of a full day at each site each week, providing time for conversation with preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and the school faculty. We also added weekly site-based seminars in addition to the weekly whole group seminars, allowing for more context-specific, small group conversations that guided whole group seminar discussions.

A consistent faculty program director and 1-2 doctoral students, serving as instructional coaches, support the pre- and in-service teachers enrolled in the program. Preservice teacher participants are working toward certification in either early childhood or elementary education, and the in-service teacher participants are working toward Master's-level certification as reading specialists. The program strives to:

1. Include “direct and ample” opportunities for preservice and in-service teachers to interact with students;
2. Integrate fieldwork and university coursework in order for preservice and in-service teachers to better negotiate theory and practice; and
3. Provide opportunities to engage in structured reflective tasks where cognitive dissonance can be articulated in a supportive environment” (Lawrence & Butler, 2010p. 157).

The following goals have been developed as a result of the CSE's mission to provide integrated, clinically rich experiences:

- Learning to live and work within different and diverse contexts.
- Understanding the demands of the profession while developing as literacy teachers and learners.
- Engaging in content-focused coaching experiences.
- Collaborating with peer and mentor co-teachers.
- Designing and implementing service learning opportunities with international partners and their local communities.
- Tiered support structure – Faculty Program Director develops, supports, and maintains program for all students, including graduate assistants, who then provide support to Master's level and undergraduate participants.
- Program development- faculty and doctoral students (iterative program development).
- Partnership schools and International partnerships (consistent faculty to build and maintain partnerships).

## **Structure of the Current Program**

Faculty preparation for CSE participation begins in September with recruitment sessions and the distribution of a recruitment video to course instructors. Applications to the program are due by mid-October, and students are notified of their acceptance by November 1. Program directors begin to prepare students fully to teach and live in Cambridge with five three-hour seminars from November through April. At the program's inception, seminars of this nature were relegated to three weekly meetings the month prior to departure. Though seminar content, which addresses teaching practices in England, the National Curriculum, travel within the United Kingdom, language differences, and program logistics, remain the same as those early years; the differences represent the evolution of a program committed to the development of pedagogical excellence in an ever changing educational landscape. Current seminars include sessions

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on team building, co-teaching, and literacy coaching where students plan lessons with the support of the instructional coaches. Following the seminars, but prior to departure, participants are asked to sit for an interview focused on their understandings of literacy teaching and learning and co-teaching.

While in Cambridge, students are in classrooms all day Monday through Friday, meet with their school groups weekly, as well as in a weekly whole group seminar. Furthermore, students work directly with instructional literacy coaches in the classroom and engage in two clinical video coaching rounds over the four-week experience. Assignments for the course include developing lesson plans, identifying literacy practices in the field, and reflecting on their own literacy practices and identity. During the last week, we conduct an interview to understand the experience of the participants and how their thinking about literacy practices and co-teach partnerships has shifted. We interview participants once more during the fall semester to determine the impact of the international field experience on their thinking about a literacy classroom once re-engaged in U.S. public elementary schools.

## **Recruitment**

Recruitment for the summer program begins in August at the start of the academic year, with applications due by mid-October. A representative from the program visits all sections of a mandatory education course to talk to students face-to-face about the program. A recruitment flyer and video are also available to course instructors to post for students in their courses. A selection committee consisting of a faculty member and graduate assistants review candidate applications and determine who meets the criteria for acceptance (Table 1). Students are then notified of their acceptance by November 1. Once the maximum number of students has been accepted, other qualifying students are placed on a waiting list. Between November and December, students are asked to commit to the program by submitting a non-refundable deposit to the Education Abroad Office on campus. If any students are unable to commit to the program, their spot is opened to someone from the waiting list.

*Table 1. Criteria for acceptance into the Cambridge Schools Experience program*

<b>Undergraduate/Master of the Arts of Teaching Students</b>	<b>Master of the Arts in Reading Education students</b>	<b>Doctoral Students</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enrolled in College of Education as either a junior (undergraduate) or first year (MAT) student in early childhood or elementary education</li> <li>● Maintain GPA of 3.0</li> <li>● Successful completion of first field experience</li> <li>● Letter of recommendation</li> <li>● Complete series of open-ended questions relating to characteristics of students studying abroad</li> <li>● If needed, participate in an interview with program director(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Eligible for Practicum in Reading course during summer semester</li> <li>● Maintain GPA of 3.0</li> <li>● Letter of recommendation</li> <li>● Complete series of open-ended questions relating to characteristics of students studying abroad</li> <li>● If needed, participate in an interview with program director(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meeting with major professor and faculty program director to determine fit in the program</li> <li>● Submit a research proposal that connects lines of inquiry with study abroad experience</li> <li>● Agree to support field supervision of undergraduate/MAT students in Cambridge</li> <li>● Letter of recommendation</li> <li>● Complete series of open-ended questions relating to characteristics of students studying abroad</li> <li>● If needed, participate in an interview with program director(s)</li> </ul>



## Participants

Participants in the program include students in the College of Education who are enrolled in a two-year undergraduate elementary or early childhood education program, a four-semester MAT (Master of Arts in Teaching) program, and an MA (Master of the Arts) in reading education. The elementary education program at our university is divided into two clinically rich pathways: cohort and residency. Both elementary education pathways and the early childhood cohort begin field experiences during their first semester in the program in a partnership school, though time and intensity in the field varies by program. They are likely to remain at that school, engaged in field experiences, over the course of the two-year program. MAT students have an earned bachelor's degree in a non-elementary area and wish to become certified to teach in an elementary classroom. Residency and MAT students engage in a yearlong practicum at a partnership school. The MA in reading education is an entirely online program, except for those students who elect to complete their 3-credit practicum to CSE. All participants attend CSE during the summer prior to their final year in the program. The intensive four-week program is considered an alternative field experience.

## Pre-Departure Seminars

Once accepted, students are required to attend a three-hour seminar each month prior to departure in order to learn more about the local culture, school culture, teaching practices, and teaching standards. During these seminars, students plan lessons with the support of instructional coaches, providing them the opportunity to gather materials they may need prior to departure. Students also complete coursework throughout the semester leading up to the experience, which helps situate them as both learners and teachers within the Cambridgeshire school culture (Table 2).

Table 2. Seminar discussion topics

Time frame	Topic
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orientation to the program</li> <li>• Logistics</li> <li>• Orientation to the culture</li> </ul>
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 Pillars and definitions of literacy</li> <li>• Co-teaching introduction</li> <li>• Group community building</li> <li>• The British culture</li> </ul>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noticing and naming literacy practices</li> <li>• Literacy standards and UK National Curriculum</li> <li>• Lesson planning with coaches and peers</li> <li>• Peer placement assignments</li> <li>• Group community building</li> </ul>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy standards</li> <li>• Lesson planning with coaches and peers</li> <li>• Peer collaboration</li> </ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources for planning</li> <li>• What to expect</li> <li>• Preparing to travel</li> <li>• Group community building</li> </ul>

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The CSE curriculum emphasizes:

1. Noticing and naming literacy practices,
2. Deepening understandings of literacy teaching and learning,
3. Being responsive in the moment, and
4. Being a collaborative educator.

These four themes are the focus of the preservice teachers, the Master's students, and the instructional coaches, though the areas look different based on the individual roles (pre/in-service teacher or instructional coach) (see Appendix 1 for a sample section of the themes). Essentially, the four areas spiral with the PSTs noticing and naming instructional practices in order to develop as teachers of reading, the Master's students noticing and naming instructional practices in order to develop as school-based literacy coaches, and the coaches noticing and naming instructional practices in order to develop as teacher educators. Each informs the others in different ways, and each is informed by the practices at the local school.

### **Schedule in Cambridge**

While in Cambridge, preservice teachers are placed in a classroom in one of our four partnership schools, with mentor teachers who volunteer to participate in the CSE program. They are expected to engage in the field experience all day Monday through Friday for the entire four weeks, and participate in any planning meetings that may occur, even if it is after the school day has ended. Participants also meet as a school groups for seminar weekly. This allows the opportunity for participants to talk in a small group about specific things that are directly related to their school placement. All participants and coaches also meet weekly in a whole group seminar where emphasis is placed on literacy practices that occur throughout the school day.

While in the field, students work often with instructional coaches. This includes two clinical video coaching rounds over the four-week experience. Coaches also participate in both site based and whole group seminars and are available to assist students with lesson planning as needed. Student interviews about their experiences are conducted prior to departure, while abroad, and upon return. We will share results from these in this chapter.

### **Orientation to the Culture**

During pre-departure seminars, interns are exposed to aspects of the British culture and the ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity of the host schools. London, as a 'world city', attracts individuals and businesses from around the globe. Nearly every race, culture and religion is represented and more than 300 languages are spoken in the city alone. The rest of Britain has also experienced an increase in diversity. According to the 2011 census, there was an increase in ethnic diversity and foreign-born residents, a shift in religious classification, and an increase in the number of languages spoken across the country. This range can be found in the hosting school system as well. Portions of the seminars include topics on dialect and language differences, local cuisine, customs, dress, safety, transportation, and personal and professional interactions. The purpose of these seminars are to begin to broaden the participants understanding of global perspectives.

## **Pairing Participants**

Teacher candidates are paired with their peers for the CSE experience in order to provide one another support with planning, co-teaching, and collaboration. Some pairs are placed in the same classroom, while others are placed at the same school, in the same grade level. During the first spring seminar, students are asked to complete a survey (Appendix 2) indicating their personality type, work preference, conflict resolution style, teaching philosophy, strengths, and weaknesses. We also determine grade range preferences (K-1, 2-3, 4-5) during the seminar. Survey results are printed and the team meets to discuss pairings for co-teaching and collaboration. We begin the pairing process by writing the participants' names and grade ranges on individual cards and then sort by grade ranges, giving us three initial groups. Within each group, we begin to sort by the indicated survey preferences. As we place pairs together, we ask ourselves questions such as: Should we place someone with a strength in math with someone who is stronger in literacy? We negotiate placements until we have pairs we feel are suited for collaboration. The process is completed early in the spring semester to allow the pairs to begin some initial collaborations and relationship building prior to the field experience.

## **MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER**

Research has been an integral component of the study abroad field experience program, beginning with the inception of the British Schools Experience in the 1990s and continuing through with the current rendition of the Cambridge Schools Experience we explore in this chapter. Previously, research focused on professional identity (Brindley, Quinn, & Morton, 2009), cultural competencies (Brindley, Quinn, & Morton, 2009), preservice teacher perspectives of British customs and practices (Flannery Quinn, Morton, & Brindley, 2011), and the experience of university supervisors in a study abroad program (Schneider & Parker, 2013). This research, along with other studies, has emphasized the complexities and advantages of engaging in a study abroad field experience from the perspectives of both students and faculty. This study expands and extends previous research by focusing on the development of literacy teaching and learning in a study abroad field experience.

Our current research explores and investigates the many facets of becoming a literacy educator. This includes developing a deeper understanding of literacy teaching and learning, becoming a responsive teacher of literacy, fostering cultural competencies in order to meet diverse needs, and learning how to collaboratively plan and co-teach lessons. As such, our overarching purpose is to explore and understand preservice teacher's notions of becoming a literacy educator. Questions driving the inquiry involve perceptions of literacy, the noticing and naming of literacy practices, coaching practices, and co-teaching structures.

This qualitative study took place through a teacher preparation program at a university in the southeastern United States. IRB consent was obtained from all participants prior to the pre-departure seminars. The study spanned a year, from initial participant acceptance and preparation through post interview and follow-up meetings. Participants included 13 elementary undergraduates, 1 early childhood undergraduate, 1 elementary MAT student, and 2 MA reading students. Our research team included an associate professor that served as the program director, and three doctoral candidates. As a team, we met bi-weekly to plan seminar content, discuss data collection, and analyze data as the study progressed. Each member of the team attended the summer experience and served as coaches and leaders for the participants.

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Teacher candidates participated in five pre-departure seminars during the fall and spring semesters of their junior year and engaged in a four-week, full-time field experience during the summer prior to their final year. We collected a range of data in the form of audio-recorded interviews, lesson plan participant-produced artifacts, video observations, anecdotal observation notes, social media photos of literacy practices, weekly seminar transcripts collected during the summer experience, and researcher journal entries. We collected additional post interview data once prior to returning to the United States and again in the fall semester after the experience.

We analyzed data throughout the study in order to develop our thinking and modify content as necessary. Team members transcribed audio from interviews and seminars. Analysis of transcripts began with team members independently reading and coding a single participant's transcript. We met to review independent codes and then negotiated and combined codes into larger themes. We repeated this procedure with the next transcript to determine if we agreed on our established coding scheme. We continued the process with the remaining transcripts and followed a similar process with artifacts and field notes. As we analyzed the data, we found changes in the way the interns expressed their understanding and beliefs of literacy and literacy practices, and perceptions of collaborative partnerships.

### **Literacy Practices**

Pre departure interviews exposed the participants' surface level understanding of literacy and literacy practices. Many of the interns described literacy as the "reading and writing" that takes place during a designated block of time, following a prescribed format. Others mentioned their inexperience seeing literacy because of their placement in a math or science classroom. After the experience however, participants began to describe literacy differently. They noticed literacy and literacy practices throughout the classroom and across the school day. Although some participants still had difficulty articulating how they defined "literacy," and their role as a literacy educator, we noticed a difference in their confidence talking about literacy practices and noticing where and when literacy takes place. One participant stated, "I now see literacy taking place everyday. Literacy is everywhere." Another was able to list the following literacy practices taking place during maths: "understanding vocabulary, making text to world connections, kinesthetic learning, and drawing and labeling" of mathematical concepts. A third commented on the literacy practices taking place as students stepped outside the classroom to "venture into the woods." She wondered how she could "bring students outdoors to play and explore literacy," once she returned home. We attribute this shift in thinking to the difference in structures between their current US field placements and the Cambridgeshire placements. We also credit the shift in thinking to the intensive, collaborative coaching that takes place throughout the experience. This experience allows the participants to step outside of their current context and the restrictions of a standardized curriculum to recognize good literacy practices seamlessly embedded throughout the day.

### **Collaborative Partnerships**

Further analysis revealed a difference in how the participant's viewed co-teaching and collaborative practices. A core goal of the CSE field experience is to develop collaborative professionals. Collaboration includes teaching alongside peers, working with a mentor teacher, and collaborating with peers and/or coaches. Prior to the experience, we asked our participants how they felt about co-teaching and partnering. Several mentioned the advantages of partnering with someone for planning and teaching

because you can “bounce ideas off of one another.” Many felt the other person could support them if they didn’t know what to do. Collaboration was perceived as a support for inexperience rather than an asset for student learning. Others thought it was helpful to have someone else assist with classroom management. We also realized that many thought the idea of “teaming,” or sharing the responsibility of taking the lead during instruction, would be ideal. In general, participants shared a similar positive outlook on the potential for co-teaching and collaborative work with their peers, coach, and mentor prior to the experience.

Post interviews revealed participant’s awareness of the advantages of co-teaching and partnering, as well as the complications and complexities. Participants recognized collaboration and co-teaching take time and effort. They also realized the necessity of building a relationship or rapport with their co-teach or collaborative partner. Although many of the teams worked effectively and found ways to manage conflicts, other teams struggled to come to an agreement on how something should be taught or what resources to use as they tried to work together to plan or facilitate a lesson. One stated, “we didn’t see eye-to-eye on anything.” Along those lines, participants realized that some co-teach models work better than others depending on the type of classroom, the lesson, and the personalities of the teachers. While initially participants wanted to “team” with each other, one mentioned during an interview the value of “parallel teaching,” when partners split the room and teach the same objective simultaneously, but with different methods or strategies. She suggested the parallel teaching model was more beneficial for students when partners have different ideas, strengths, or perspectives about the content and approach. Also noted was a participant’s realization that collaboration is complex and requires mutual understanding and ownership of roles and responsibilities. She stated, “I am to support and lead equally, forming a partnership that is best suited for the students. On a team, it is my job to pull my own weight.” Another pointed out that her role in a partnership is to “...contribute ideas and opinions that would be helpful to the team...[and to] support them with what they may need.” This is in contrast to the original statements of participants seeking support from a partner for their own sake rather than for the benefit of the students or other team members. The data suggests, pairing participants to co-teach and collaborate fosters a sense of responsibility to students and partners, while also encouraging preservice teachers to appreciate the complexities of working as a team.

## **Issues, Controversies, Problems**

In this section, we discuss how we foster the relationships with our school sites, and some of the barriers we have encountered in doing so, financial concerns, and administrative support to maintain quality programs. We will also present some solutions and recommendations for those planning their own study abroad field experience.

Partnerships of any kind require consistent collaboration and mutually beneficial relationships. This can be difficult with any school-university partnership, but particularly those communicating internationally. Great care must be taken to ensure that the study abroad program adds value to the school sites to the same extent it adds value to the university participants. In order to develop more purposeful partnerships with our Cambridgeshire school sites, the faculty program director traveled to the United Kingdom in the fall semester for face-to-face meetings with the Head Teacher of each of the four sites, as well as any integral staff identified by the Head Teacher. At these meetings, the faculty program director shared her vision for the program moving forward, and asked those in attendance to share their visions for developing a cross-cultural field experience that lends itself to partnerships. It was at this meeting that each of

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the four sites joined a school-university partnership. Although these meetings were one step in building partnerships with the four sites, the face-to-face interaction was essential in establishing a shared vision for our work, and made it possible to continue the conversations virtually. However, the faculty program director's visit to the U.K. was personally funded. Although it was essential in enacting the vision of program, it is neither a sustainable practice, nor one to which all program directors can commit.

As university budgets are further squeezed, study abroad programs become more difficult to fund, and often more expensive for student participants. Student costs begin mounting from the day they are accepted. In addition to a non-refundable deposit to hold their spot in the program, students have six months to plan for program costs plus tuition for other courses they are taking, airfare, meals, toiletries, and miscellaneous activities. Likewise, faculty must also prepare for additional costs accrued while living abroad. Keeping the programs from becoming cost prohibitive is an annual challenge for faculty-led study abroad experiences. And, from a budget perspective, arranging the program so doctoral students are able to approach it as an assistantship is also complex.

In a similar vein, developing strong study abroad programs requires support and buy-in from administration. A clinically rich study abroad field experience requires more time and effort than is traditionally awarded to faculty. For example, CSE is considered a 3-credit summer course for the program director. However, recruitment begins in September, participants are selected by November, and we then require monthly seminars to prepare participants for the program. In addition, our work includes mentoring at multiple levels, including faculty support of the doctoral students. Throughout the year, the program director works on curriculum development, partnership communication and sustainability, budgeting and logistics, and meets with and responds to students when questions arise about program costs or requirements. In our case, the work that occurs from September through May is bundled into the 3-credit summer course, in terms of faculty load. Although many faculty willingly add this work to their fall and spring semester requirements, it is a potential issue for sustainability.

Similarly, prior to departure, faculty and support staff (graduate assistants) spend considerable time preparing for a clinically rich experience. Our team met bi-weekly, beginning in the fall prior to departure and continuing until the following fall, to discuss logistics, seminar content, and research endeavors. Logistics included recruiting potential candidates, narrowing the candidate pool, collecting paperwork, securing room and board, determining room assignments, and pairing participants for co-teaching and collaboration. Preparing for seminars included deciding on relevant topics, identifying necessary curriculum content, finding resources, and planning team-building experiences.

Although each aspect of this program is essential to its success, these are concerns of sustainability, as they may not be easily transferrable to a new faculty program director.

## **SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Although much has been written on school-university partnerships in the United States, developing international partnerships of this nature must be further explored in order for the practice to be replicated, or scaled up, in other sites. Open and flexible communication is essential to the work of maintaining these partnerships, and an openness to revising plans to fit the needs of the international schools sites is necessary for both partners to learn and grow. Connecting with university faculty based in or near the study abroad sites may provide insight into expanding the partnerships, based on the local context, especially if they have relationships with area schools.

At the home campus, study abroad directors might consider pairing with faculty members outside of their discipline to build more holistic cultural experiences for students. In our case, we might consider partnering with the English literature program at our university. This would expand our participants knowledge of English history related to literature, and support that program's understanding of how one might bring such literature to life in the primary classroom to engage and entertain children. Also at home, faculty directors working with school-university partnerships can leverage their experiences both for professional development for teachers and to encourage teachers to engage in study abroad opportunities as mentors and support staff.

To ensure longevity of study abroad programs, college administration must be aware of the complexities of the work, and recognize the benefits of the experience for students, as well as faculty research agendas. In order for the latter to be apparent, research by faculty and graduate assistants must be ongoing and answer questions of interest in both local and international settings. That research can also be expanded as professional development for stakeholders within the international partnership to share the influence of the partnership on developing pre- and in-service teachers. Further research into the influence of study abroad programs on the international school site would benefit the field as well.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

Throughout this chapter, we have examined preservice teachers' shifting perceptions and beliefs of literacy and literacy practices as a result of engaging in an international field experience. We have also elaborated on the process of planning and organizing a clinically rich study abroad experience and specific concerns and challenges inherent in maintaining a study abroad program on an inadequate budget and with limited support. Here we will discuss possible research directions within the domain of our topic.

### **What's Involved in Developing and Maintaining an International School-University Partnership?**

Absent from the literature is research on the development and maintenance of international school-university partnerships. Although we briefly discussed the idea of an international partnership, we wonder about the process and effort involved in establishing and sustaining quality international partnerships. Furthermore, we wonder about the perspectives and perceptions of all the participants involved in the partnership and how the partnership benefits the host schools. An essential core belief of school-university partnerships is the mutually beneficial relationship between partners and a shared commitment to innovative practices. Questions that emerge from our wondering include: What are the perspectives of the international hosting schools and mentor teachers? And, what are the benefits of participating in an international partnership? In what ways does international partnership align with the essential core beliefs of a Professional Development School (PDS) model? And, how would ongoing, reciprocal professional development practice occur in an international school-university partnership? Without answers to these questions, it is difficult to understand the impact of engaging in an international school-university partnership or whether this could be considered a true professional development school context.

Understanding and investigating this unique field experience and partnership takes considerable time, effort, and administrative support from the involved participants. Studies in this area must describe the facets of an international PDS context and document the experiences of those involved in the partner-

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ship. Answers to these questions will provide insight on how an international partnership impacts and promotes innovative teaching practices, how community is fostered across schools and partners, and what types of mutually beneficial professional development opportunities are effective or possible. Moreover, it will shed light on the enacted practices associated with a PDS model within an international context.

### **How Does an International School-University Partnership Support the Acquisition of Global Competencies?**

A second area that deserves further consideration and exploration is the impact of an international school-university partnership on the development of global competencies and perspectives. Although we spent time preparing participants for a global experience and immersing them in an authentic international context, we did not fully explore how our participants thought about and understand global issues in relation to literacy practices or what impact the experience has on their perspectives of cultural diversity once they return stateside. Dunn et al. (2014) tackled similar questions when they compared two different study abroad experiences. From the participants' experiences, they noted the importance of developing intentional and "interactive" assignments to learn about the culture and engaging in critical discussions about culture and diversity during and after the experience. After analyzing our data, we realize that we must be more intentional in developing students' global awareness while teaching in the Cambridge School Experience, by supporting active observation and conversations about the many dimensions of diversity and their affect on the classroom environment.

It's clear, faculty and coaches leading the study abroad experience need to have knowledge and awareness of global cultures in order to develop competencies in the participants. We wonder how the international school-university partnership might help facilitate and support this during their time in the schools and during seminars. How can the international mentor teachers, administrators, and stakeholders help support and promote the development of a multicultural mindset? What types of mutually beneficial professional development programs can develop global competencies in preservice and inservice teachers? What are the perspectives of the international host schools on globalization and global competencies? What knowledge and skills do lead faculty need to possess in order to plan for and provide support to interns engaging in a study abroad?

### **How Does a Cross-Cultural Field Experience Inform Preservice Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Literacy?**

A focus on literacy teaching and learning is an intentional component of the Cambridge Schools Experience. Equal attention to the influence of this focus on literacy within our research agenda is essential to understanding whether exposure and coaching to literacy practices in an international setting supports the development of preservice teachers' PCK. Does specific attention on three areas of literacy teaching:

1. Noticing and naming literacy practices,
2. Deepening understandings of literacy teaching and learning,
3. Being responsive in the moment, accelerate the development of preservice and inservice teachers as literacy educators?



In what ways do mentor teachers in international host schools support this development? Do the discursive practices of teachers in a cross-cultural field experience influence teacher (pre- and in-service) teacher development? How do we capture the importance of these experiences to demonstrate literacy in practice when U.S.-based accountability measures are removed from the context?

## CONCLUSION

Throughout the chapter, we provided evidence to support the need for preservice teachers to engage in a clinically-rich international field placement in order to effectively make theory to practice connections focused on literacy instruction and student learning. Pre-departure seminars, intensive time in the field, faculty support, content focused coaching, and the support provided through peer placements contribute greatly to this learning. While these facets of the program support preservice teacher development and potentially impact global competencies, they also require a considerable amount of time, preparation, and development by the faculty program director and graduate assistants, and administrative support of the institution. The success of the program greatly depends on the willingness of the institution to support the faculty director in the development of an international partnership. A robust research agenda that studies the influence of the practices presented adds to the efficacy of a cross-cultural teacher education field experience, and supports the premise that teachers who engage in study abroad opportunities will enact globally competent practices in their home classrooms.

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## KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Clinically Rich:** A term used to describe teacher preparation programs that embed theoretical learning in K-12 classrooms, ensuring that field experiences support preservice teachers' ability to make theory to practice connections.

**Content-Focused Coaching:** Support provided to preservice teachers in lesson planning and development, implementation, and post-lesson feedback with an emphasis on literacy practices. This support is offered by faculty and advanced graduate students with specific expertise in literacy teaching and learning.

**Co-Teaching:** Two or more educators collaboratively working together to plan and deliver instruction to a group of students.

**Global Competencies:** Developing knowledge and appreciation of diverse groups and global contexts.

**Literacies:** A contemporary belief of teaching and learning that views literacy as central to all content areas.

**Literacy Teacher Education:** Preparation of preservice teachers in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening across all subject areas.

**Mentor Teacher:** An experienced in-service teacher who provides mentorship, support, and modeling to preservice teachers while hosting them during their field experience.

**Peer Placement:** Pairing two preservice teachers with a mentor teacher, in a single classroom, during their field experience.

## APPENDIX 1

Table 3.

Themes	PSTs	MA Reading	PhD
<b>Theme 1:</b> Observing literacy instruction	Noticing and naming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional practices of mentor teachers</li> <li>• Evidence of literacy learning by children</li> </ul>	Noticing and naming elements of instructional talk by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor teachers</li> <li>• Content coaches</li> <li>• Novice teachers (coaches role in drawing attention to the literacy practices and helping them name them)</li> </ul> What is my role in noticing and naming literacy strategies/practices of children/mentor teachers' use in the classroom? For novice teachers?	Noticing and naming elements of instructional talk by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor teachers</li> <li>• Content coaches</li> <li>• PSTs</li> </ul>
<b>Documentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T-chart with practices and evidence on one side, thoughts and questions on the other</li> <li>• Instagram posts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T-chart with instructional talk one side, thoughts and questions on the other (instructional journal/data collection)</li> <li>• Instagram posts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher journal</li> <li>• Revised interview questions</li> <li>• Instagram posts</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 2

Co-teaching survey- personally

1. When do you work best? Explain.
2. What are your pet peeves?
3. What one word would you use to describe yourself?

Co-teaching survey- professionally

4. What is your learning preference?
5. What is your teaching philosophy/ teaching and management style?
6. If your colleague is teaching a concept incorrectly or a problem arises, how and when would you address it?
7. How would you like to be approached when a problem arises?

Additional questions

8. What questions would you ask a colleague you would be working with in a co-teach situation?
9. What are your strengths?
10. What are your weaknesses?

Logistics

11. Which grade levels interest you? (check all that apply)
  - a. K-1
  - b. 2-3
  - c. 4-5
12. Room choice (check all that apply)
  - a. Single
  - b. Double
  - c. Triple
13. Who would you like to room with? (at least two names)