**TEACHER LEADERS IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION: PROMOTING GLOBAL COMPETENCE IN STUDENTS**

by

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*I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband Derrick, my best friend and fellow world traveler. Thank you for your unwavering support. Your compassion for others and the passion in which you lead your life is an example for all.*

*I also dedicate this dissertation to all students who seek to understand, explore, and love the world. May you always seek a new adventure and look to learn from those journeys.*

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# ABSTRACT

One goal for educators today is to prepare students to succeed in a globalized world. The connection between teachers’ experiences of student educational programs abroad and teachers’ perceived growth in their instructional abilities to prepare globally competent students served as the focal point of this study. The qualitative method of grounded theory was utilized, and focus groups and interviews were conducted. Teachers who previously led students during educational programs abroad volunteered to participate in this study. Following the creation of transcripts for the focus groups and interviews, the data were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glasser, 1965), and participants confirmed the categorization of the data. Seven emergent themes were identified and included: (1) perspectives, (2) empathy, (3) global conditions and current events, (4) cultural differences, (5) intercultural communication, (6) classroom environment, and (7) intercultural lessons. From these themes, three assertions were gleaned: (1) Opportunities should be provided for teachers to reflect on their own perspectives and consider the perspectives of others; (2) Both local and global opportunities should be promoted to teachers to experience other cultures; and (3) Professional development sessions for teachers to explore global competency instruction should be offered. The seven themes support the continuation of teachers’ involvement in student study abroad programs, and the three assertions offer recommendations to equip principals with approaches for promoting teacher leadership and improving global competency instruction.

# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization and the interconnectedness of the world, school leaders in U.S. education examine many factors when preparing students for the future. Beyond increasing student test scores and achieving a higher school letter grade, principals of today strive to create schools where students become ready to compete and succeed in a global society. Principals must think critically and creatively about ways to foster this growth in students. This study seeks to expand the discussion about pathways teachers take to become instructional leaders who prepare students to succeed in a globalized world, and how principals can support teachers along this path.

The inclusion of global competence goals for students has emerged at all levels of education. At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) asserts, “Our mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access” (U.S. Department of Education, “Overview and mission statement,” n.d., para. 1). The mission of preparing students for global competitiveness is further explained by the ED in the “Framework for Developing Global and Cultural Competencies to Advance Equity, Excellence and Economic Competitiveness” (U.S. Department of Education, “Global and cultural competency,” n.d.). The ED framework emphasizes a need for students to possess a skill set to interact with others around the world in addition to understanding and appreciating different cultures and points of view. The ED claims these are essential components of global and cultural competence. The emphasis on global competency extends to educational goals at the state level. For example, Indiana places a priority on preparing globally-conscious students. The Indiana Department of Education (2019) explained the need for equipping students with these skills by stating, “Each of their future endeavors will involve a touch with a perspective different than his or her own and educators can help prepare students to be successful with those experiences” (para. 1). To further guide educators on how to prepare students to interact with people who possess different perspectives, the Indiana Department of Education (2019) created the “Content-Specific Global Learning Guide.” The guide includes ideas for school leaders and teachers on how to incorporate ideas in the classroom that promote global learning. Additionally, the guide offers resources and ideas specific to each content area. Global competency is a common thread in both federal and state dialogue; therefore, all educational leaders are required to consider how they can incorporate these learning goals into their academic programs. Educational leaders, like building principals, take an active role in promoting global learning in their schools, and their support is pivotal for global initiatives to succeed. Although principals are important to the success of these initiatives, teachers must be empowered in order for students to achieve global competency.

## Statement of the Problem

Globally competent teachers are essential for preparing students to succeed in a globalized world. Educational leaders must examine how to support teachers to be globally competent; these teachers can then empower students to be globally conscious. Teacher leadership can play an active role in promoting global competency in students. Literature supports the concept that strong and effective teacher leaders improve school culture, support other teaching staff, increase the level of rigor, and improve instruction (Ankrum, 2016). Poekert, Alexandrou, and Shannon (2016) noted that “teacher leadership is one approach with empirical evidence demonstrating its viability as a solution for sustaining systemic teacher quality” (p. 310). In addition to instructional improvements and teacher quality, teacher leadership has links to supporting students. Bae, Hayes, O’Connor, Seitz, & Distefano (2016) stated that teacher leaders can support the increasing diversity in student populations due to their expertise in student learning and their knowledge of multiple pedagogical strategies. Teacher leaders are able to make adjustments to meet the needs of all their students. If teacher leaders can facilitate instructional initiatives in classrooms and support a diverse population of students, they can partner with principals to promote global competency in students. Teacher leaders who implement curriculum that supports global learning and meets the needs of all students are in a unique position to promote global competency.

From the research, there is little question that strong teacher leaders support instructional changes (Clark, 2017; Danielson, 2006; Poekert et al., 2016; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). However, teachers must have opportunities and support to move from teacher to leader (Poekert et al., 2016), and creating opportunities for teachers to grow in their leadership skills presents a problem for principals. Angelle and Dehart (2011) found that teachers did not always have opportunities to lead, and principals played a direct role in providing these opportunities. York-Barr and Duke (2004) suggested further research was needed to find ways to combat the constraints of time, schedules, access, and space to promote the growth of teacher leaders. Kiranh (2013) added that administrators must support teachers by giving them more responsibilities and opportunities that require leadership skills. For teachers to become globally competent instructional leaders, school leaders will need to find opportunities that will foster teachers’ growth in leadership skills.

## Purpose of the Study

Strong teacher leaders enhance various aspects of schools including improved school culture, support to other teaching staff, increased level of rigor, and improved instruction (Ankrum, 2016; Bae et al., 2016; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In order to realize these benefits, educational leaders must develop leadership skills in teachers. This qualitative study explores whether teacher participation in leadership of established student initiatives, such as study abroad programs, can aid in growing teachers’ instructional leadership capabilities toward preparing globally ready students. Principals are often faced with limited resources to create opportunities for teachers to expand their leadership opportunities and develop greater instructional knowledge. Student study abroad programs offer an additional opportunity for teachers to grow as instructional leaders.

Schools reap many benefits from study abroad programs, including positive student outcomes from cultural explorations. Study abroad programs have been embraced by many school leaders who understand the importance of engaging students in the current age of globalization. Experiences abroad offer both academic and personal benefits for students (Dekaney, 2008; Dixon, 2013; Engberg, 2013; Hadis, 2005; Haynes, 2011; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Mapp, 2012; Parsons, 2010; Reynolds-Case, 2013; Tarrant & Lyons, 2012). Study abroad initiatives can support school goals in preparing globally ready students who will succeed in a more connected world (Sherer, 2016). In addition to student benefits, teachers experience positive outcomes. Teachers who travel abroad experience a wealth of benefits, from gaining a more global perspective to delivering improved classroom instruction (Danzig & Jing, 2007; DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Dixon, 2013; Lai, 2009; Walters, Green, Wang, & Walters, 2011). Teachers often take active roles in leading study abroad programs, which gives them the opportunity to develop their leadership skills. The relationship between teachers’ experiences abroad and their instructional leadership skills in preparing globally competent students is rarely examined in educational studies. This gap in the research literature presents a need for further consideration.

This study explores the relationship between teachers’ experiences as leaders on student study abroad programs and subsequent teacher adjustments to instruction in their domestic classrooms. Other studies have explored how teachers grow as professionals during study abroad programs (Danzig & Jing, 2007; DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Lai, 2009; Walters et al., 2011; Yang, 2011). The current study examines the relationship between study abroad experiences and teachers’ perceived growth in their instructional abilities to prepare globally competent students. The relationship may be illustrated by the acquisition or enhancement of classroom practices, specifically in preparing globally competent students. Study abroad experiences can also be integral in developing teacher leadership skills. The findings from this study could thus aid principals who consider study abroad programs as an avenue to provide instructional leadership opportunities for teachers.

This case study of a middle school study abroad program provides insights into the relationship between teacher leadership of student study abroad programs and teacher instructional skills. A school corporation in Northern Indiana was selected as the site for this case study due to its robust middle school study abroad program and high-performing schools. The study abroad program started in 2009 and, for over a decade, students and teachers traveled to Europe and China. The school corporation has repeatedly received an “A” rating from the Indiana Department of Education (Indiana Department of Education Compass, n.d.). The combination of a study abroad program and high-performing schools provided an ideal site for this qualitative study.

Through focus groups and semi-structured interviews, teachers who led student study abroad programs reflected on their professional growth in the area of instructional leadership, specifically in teaching students to be globally competent. In this study, themes related to teachers’ perceptions of their instructional leadership skills and their ability to teach global competency skills were identified. These themes provide a starting point for discussion about how leading study abroad programs with students can offer an opportunity for teachers to expand their instructional leadership skills.

## Research Questions

The following questions served as the focus of this qualitative study:

1. How do teachers view their own growth in respect to instructional leadership skills after leading study abroad programs with students?
2. How do teachers view their effectiveness in developing a globally competent student population after leading study abroad programs with students?

## Limitations of the Study

Prior to commencing this study, it was imperative to consider the limitations of the study. Possible limitations related to the qualitative approach, the use of self-reporting, and the scope of the study.

This study utilizes qualitative interview data from teachers to examine the connection between teachers’ experiences as leaders on student study abroad programs and subsequent teacher adjustments to their instruction. The methodology provides an opportunity for deep exploration of topics; however, qualitative data can be challenging to statistically analyze (as opposed to, for example, survey, pretest, and posttest data). This limitation is addressed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Due to the fact that components of this study rely on teachers’ perceptions, there may be a risk of accuracy in self-reporting. Because the teachers were not observed or interviewed while traveling, all data collected from the interviews are based on travelers’ perceptions of their experiences. In relation to self-reporting, Bandura (1997) stated, ‘‘When people err in self-judgment, their efficacy beliefs typically exceed their behavior’’ (p. 46). To elicit responses that accurately portray the teachers’ experiences and growth, an array of prompts was posed during the interviews. The variety of prompts provided participants more opportunities to reflect on their experiences and how these experiences shaped their thought process. However, self-reporting remains a limitation of the study.

Lastly, this study is limited to one school district and one travel abroad program. Students and teachers from three middle schools were included in this study, and this expanded the breadth of the research, yet the transferability to other contexts or school corporations is not assured. The study abroad program highlighted in this study is unique and replicating this opportunity may present challenges in different school communities. The challenge of offering these experiences at different school corporations remains a concern due to financial constraints, low community interest, and other factors.

## Summary

With the need for student global competency at the forefront of educational leaders’ minds, the search continues for ways to enhance how teachers prepare students for global success. By exploring the relationship between teachers’ involvement in student study abroad programs and their perceptions of their instructional leadership skills, this study provides educational leaders a new avenue to explore for growing teachers who can equip students with the tools to succeed globally.

# CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

## Introduction

A closer look at the literature surrounding instructional approaches for preparing students for global competitiveness, teacher leadership, and travel abroad programs provides a starting point for this study. The review begins with an exploration of the characteristics and frameworks of global competency instruction. The description of instructional leadership characteristics follows. Next, the benefits of travel abroad programs for students and educators are detailed. A description of global competency instructional approaches in tandem with an examination of the effects of study abroad programs on teachers, the research and knowledge foundation for the study, is included. A detailed investigation of the positive outcomes of study abroad programs and teachers’ perceptions of their instructional leadership abilities after their involvement in these programs follows.

## Global Competency Definition

U.S. educational leaders strive to prepare students to succeed in their future endeavors, and global competency is a requirement in educating students (Reimers, 2009). In today’s world, students will struggle to succeed if they do not have tools to help them navigate our very interconnected world. Teachers play a key role in supporting students to become globally competent. Before exploring the ways teachers may improve their instructional skills to teach global competency, a definition of global competency is required.

Global learning, cultural competency, global competency, and global citizenship are a few terms used to describe how educators approach preparing students for a globalized world. For the purpose of this study, the term “global competence” is used. The following description by Mansilla and Jackson (2011) served as a foundational definition for this research: “Global competence is the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance” (p. 97). Based on the definition, the next step is to explore the approaches to teaching students to become globally competent individuals.

## Global Competence

The need for instruction that inspires students to be globally aware arises from many demands of our world, and teachers should understand these demands. Tichnor-Wagner, Parkhouse, Glaizer, and Cain (2019) stated:

Teachers are facing increasing pressures to prepare students for today’s global, knowledge-based economy. They also must effectively teach an increasingly diverse student population affected by real-world issues that have an impact on their physical and mental health and social-emotional well-being (p. 1).

The concept of equipping teachers to prepare students for success in the world was not a recent concept in the literature. In Roose’s (2001) study of undergraduate internships and international experiences, the need for teachers to “learn habits of mind – the awareness, knowledge, confidence, risk-taking, flexibility, and commitment – to help all their future students excel and to help schools change” was highlighted (p. 48). This older research resonated with more recent research (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019). Roose (2001) stated:

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, connection, beliefs, and ways of seeing the world (p. 48).

These ideas were echoed in recent publications from the Indiana Department of Education (2019). When making the claim for global education, the Indiana Department of Education (2019) stated, “Every educator should consider how much the world beyond the classroom, neighborhood, state and country will impact each student” (para. 1). The need for preparing students for a globalized world was evident in the research (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019). As a result, educational leaders have asked how this task can be accomplished.

From governmental education groups like ED to global organizations like the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), various organizations have been taking an active role in educating students for a globalized world. Included next in this literature review is an overview of a few of the most utilized approaches to teaching global competency. A natural place to start this instructional discussion about global competency is with the major education institutions. First, U.S. Department of Education (n.d., *Global and cultural competency)* created a framework to guide school leaders and teachers. The *Framework for Developing Global and Cultural Competencies to Advance Equity, Excellence and Economic Competitiveness* has served as a support for educators to guide students in the development of global and cultural competencies and provides a foundation of discipline-specific knowledge. The framework addressed early childhood education to postsecondary education levels. It was divided into four domains: collaboration and communication, world and heritage languages, diverse perspectives, and civic and global engagement. Beyond these four domains, the framework detailed the characteristics of globally and culturally competent individuals. Characteristics included awareness of different perspectives, understanding of diverse cultures, appreciation of benefits that arise from cultural exchange, and importance of proficiencies in speaking different languages. The four domains in the framework in tandem with the characteristics of global competency have provided a useful guide for educators (U.S. Department of Education, n.d., *Global and cultural competency*).

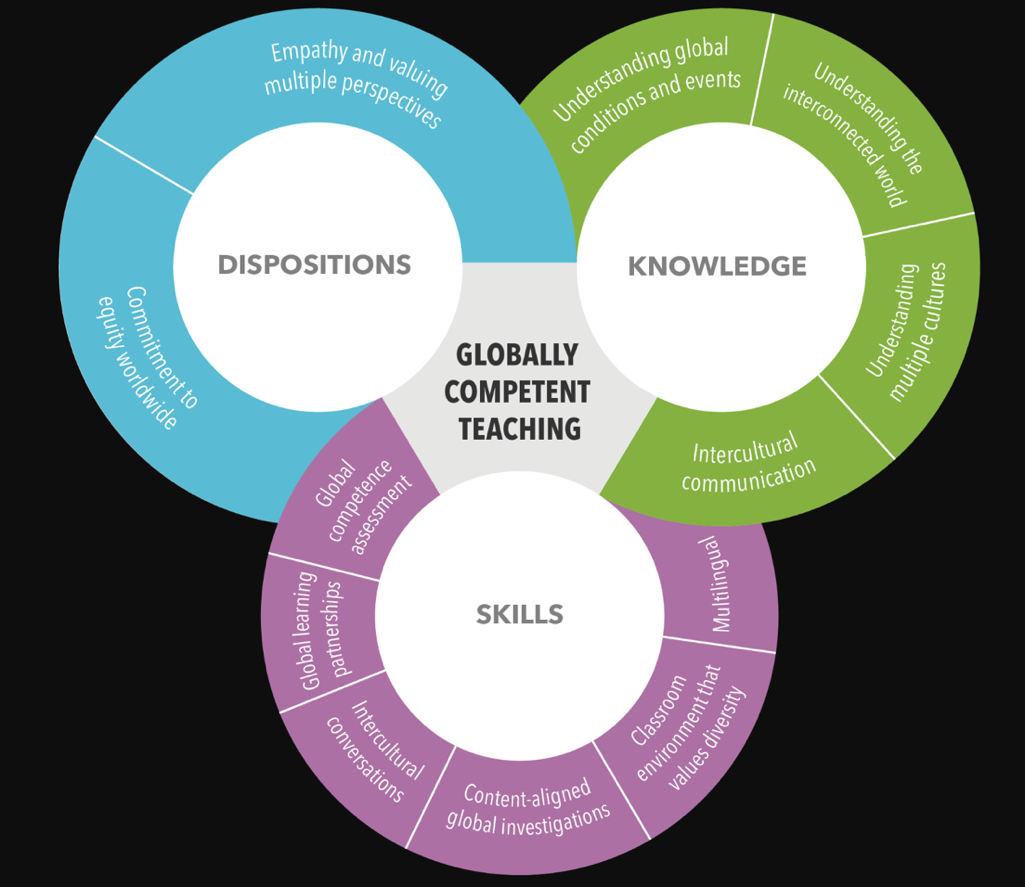
Secondly, the Indiana Department of Education has provided insights to educators on how they can prepare students for a globalized world. The Indiana Department of Education created a *Content-Specific Global Learning Guide* (2019). This document has supported teachers who incorporate global concepts into their lessons by offering examples and resources in each content area. At the beginning of the Indiana guide, the purpose was restated, and an emphasis was placed on the necessity of preparing students for the world beyond the classroom due to the need to interact with people who possess different perspectives. Next, the guide provided five reasons why global education is important. These reasons echo many of the claims stated earlier in this literature review. Different work skills needed in a global workforce and changing demographics were two reasons the Indiana Department of Education stated for needing students to demonstrate global competence. Furthermore, the guide stated what students should be able to do, including the following: demonstrate an interest in both local and global environments, understand their personal perspective and the perspectives of others, and communicate with a diverse group of people. The guide clarified the next step for students in stating students should act on their ideas to better the world, both locally and globally. The guide was divided into content areas and grade levels that included links to resources. In total, this extensive learning guide explored the rationale for global education and at the same time provided teachers with concrete ways to incorporate ideas into their instruction.

Institutions solely focused on U.S. education were not the only groups that valued global competency and offered support to teachers who strive to create instructional opportunities for students to foster global competency. The Asia Society and UNESCO were two organizations identified in the literature review that detailed expectations for global competence. A look at the perspectives and frameworks presented by these two groups offered insights into other approaches to global education.

The Asia Society’s mission statement stated they were “dedicated to promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among peoples, leaders, and institutions of Asia and the United States in a global context” (Asia Society, 2019, para. 1). The Asia Society, in keeping with the Indiana Department of Education, has emphasized students’ need for a different set of skills to succeed in today’s world. The concepts of global connections and global competency skill building were considered important for teachers to understand and implement in order to become instructional leaders who support global competency in their students. The Asia Society stated that individual actions reach around the world, and students are on a global stage. Based on this rationale, the Asia Society (2019) defined four domains of global competence: investigating the world, recognizing perspectives, communicating ideas, and taking action. From these four domains, the Asia Society created a list of global competency outcomes and rubrics that included content area and grade level resources.

UNESCO was another organization that has valued globally ready students and sought “to build peace through international cooperation in education, the sciences and culture” (UNESCO, n.d., para. 1). UNESCO offered teachers instructional supports through an education framework. This framework included three domains of learning: cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral. Both the Asia Society and UNESCO’s ideas related to global competence and available resources provided teachers with a comprehensive plan for teaching students to be globally competent.

The aforementioned frameworks and learning guides have provided components to support teachers in understanding how to prepare students to be globally competent. In the context of this study, it was imperative to explore how teachers can be instructional leaders in the area of global competency after leading student education trips abroad. However, to examine instructional leadership skills in the context of developing a globally competent student population, one framework served as a foundation: the Elements of Globally Competent Teaching framework created by Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019). This comprehensive framework was selected due to the focus on teachers’ role in promoting global competence in students. Since 2013, Tichnor-Wagner and colleagues have worked to support teachers who endeavor to teach student skills in interacting in a more connected world. Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) developed a framework for globally competent teaching and organized their ideas into a graphic representation (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The Elements of Globally Competent Teaching Framework Visual (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019).

The framework included 12 interrelated elements organized into three categories: dispositions, knowledge, and skills. To further support teachers in preparing globally competent students, Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) offered a Globally Competent Learning Continuum. The continuum was developed to provide teachers with “a self-reflection tool to drive professional growth by breaking down the broad – and sometimes daunting – construct of globally competent teaching into manageable steps for implementation and steady improvement” (p. 13). The framework was selected for this current study because it included more than a definition of globally competent students. Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) explored the role of teachers in creating lessons that encourage global competency. The current study examines how teachers grow in their instructional leadership skills in teaching students to be globally competent, and this framework explained a way teachers can accomplish this task.

## Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership has often surfaced as a popular topic among educational policymakers and influential education organizations (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). York-Barr and Duke (2004) stated that teacher leadership “has become increasingly embedded in the language and practice of educational improvement” (p. 255). Wenner and Campbell (2017) utilized the findings reported in York-Barr and Duke’s (2004) extensive literature review to enrich the dialogue about teacher leadership. Both of these published literature reviews included an abundance of research that described the characteristics of teacher leadership, yet they found that one universally accepted definition of teacher leadership eluded the research. One clear definition may not exist for teacher leadership, as found in many studies (e.g., Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Cosenza, 2015; Flood & Angelle, 2017; Greenlee, 2007; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Cheng and Szeto (2016) found the definition of teacher leadership was still evolving, and Poekert et al. (2016) claimed it was still in the early stages of development. Bae et al. (2016) supported this stance in stating that “the concept of teacher leadership is widely used, but the conceptualizations of teacher leadership are varied and often vague” (p. 908). There were various reasons given in the literature for these inconsistencies. Wenner and Campbell (2017) claimed the uncertainty came from the fact that teacher leaders could meet different needs within the school by fulfilling a variety of different positions. Conversely, other research described teacher leadership as a complex and complicated construct (Klein, Taylor, Munakata, Trabona, Rahman, & McManus, 2018). Bae et al. (2016) stated that, due to researchers utilizing various methodologies and tools to research the construct, the findings about teacher leadership varied. In other research, Hunzicker (2017) related this ambiguity to the fact that teacher leadership could be viewed as a stance and described it as a “way of thinking and being, rather than a set of behaviors” (p. 1). The broader view of teacher leadership mirrored the arguments in other research, like that of Poekert et al. (2016). Additionally, Hunzicker (2017) described the progression from teacher to teacher leader as an ongoing process. York-Barr and Duke (2004) suggested the lack of clarity may be in part due to the breadth of topics included under the category of teacher leadership. Although they (York-Barr & Duke, 2004) found the definition of teacher leadership was ambiguous, they made the following suggestion for a working definition: “teacher leadership is the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principal, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement” (p. 288). York-Barr and Duke’s (2004) comprehensive look at the literature surrounding teacher leadership has been cited in various other studies (Ankrum, 2016; Bae et al., 2016; Cosenza, 2015; Criswell et al., 2018; Greenlee, 2007; Hunzicker, 2017; Klein et al., 2018; Poekert et al., 2016; Sinha & Hanuscin, 2017; Wenner & Campbell, 2017), and their definition was often used as a starting point.

Next, it is necessary to narrow the scope of teacher leadership and build a foundational understanding of instructional teacher leadership for this study. Three common themes emerged from the research on teacher leadership: 1) characteristics of teacher leaders, 2) behaviors of teacher leaders, and 3) factors that encouraged teacher leadership. This study focuses on instructional teacher leadership, and the following portion of this literature review expands on the themes that relate to instructional teacher leadership to further the discussion of how teacher leaders can prepare students to be globally competent.

## Characteristics of Teacher Leaders

Many of the characteristics of teacher leaders in the literature were related to growth (Brondyk & Stanulis, 2014) and reflection (Danielson, 2007). Among these characteristics, embracing an attitude of continuous learning, striving to grow professionally, reflecting on their teaching, and valuing personal growth stood out as characteristics teacher leaders commonly embraced.

### Embrace an Attitude of Continuous Learning

York-Barr and Duke (2004) summarized the findings of nearly two decades of research and practice related to teacher leadership. From the extensive analyses in the research, they summarized the substantive findings in a literature review and created a conceptual framework (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). The framework’s first component listed the characteristics of teacher leaders; for example, one characteristic listed that teacher leaders were learning oriented. In other research, striving to be lifelong learners (Hunzicker, 2013) and participating in a learner-centered community (Clark, 2017) were identified as attributes of teachers who grew into teacher leaders. The aim of a qualitative study by Hunzicker (2013) was to identify the dispositions of emerging teacher leaders. Included in the study were practicing elementary and middle school teachers who were enrolled in a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education master’s program. Teachers in the study (Hunzicker, 2013) stated that being a lifelong learner was an integral part of leadership; these teachers also directly connected this belief to a student-centered mindset. This idea is explored further in the section teacher behaviors are discussed in this literature review.

### Strive to Grow Professionally

Another characteristic related to teacher leadership was striving to grow professionally. This commitment closely aligned with the characteristic of a lifelong learner. Hunzicker (2013) used written self-reflections, questionnaire responses, and a focus group to collect data about teacher leaders and, after analyzing the data, found three possible prerequisites for teacher leaders: the ability to develop collegial professional relationships, a student-centered mindset, and an ongoing pursuit of professional growth. Teacher leaders demonstrated an ongoing pursuit of professional growth by setting high personal standards and pursuing professional challenges. The emphasis on professional growth surfaced in other studies as well (Danielson, 2007; Poekert et al., 2016).

Danielson (2007) created a detailed framework with multiple domains to describe effective teachers, and it has been cited in many teacher leadership studies (Bae et al., 2016; Cosenza, 2015; Hunzicker, 2017; Klein et al., 2018; Poekert et al., 2016). Growing professionally was a vital aspect of Danielson’s (2007) framework for teaching. First, almost all of Domain 4 of their framework was dedicated to professional behaviors and actions, further supporting the important characteristic of striving to grow professionally. Domain 4, titled “Professional Responsibilities,” had a clear focus on professional growth, and was described in Domain 4e, “Growing and Developing Professionally.” Danielson included three characteristics of growing and developing professionally in the distinguished level, the highest level of performance on the framework. The three characteristics included the following descriptors: 1) teacher seeks out opportunities for professional development and makes a systemic effort to conduct action research; 2) teacher seeks feedback on teaching from both supervisors and colleagues; and 3) teacher initiates important activities to contribute to the profession. These descriptors included a wide range of activities teachers could embrace to improve their teaching, such as reading professional texts or attending professional development seminars (Danielson, 2007). According to Danielson (2007), teachers were considered as true professionals when they demonstrated these characteristics, and this growth placed them in a position to lead.

### Reflect on Their Teaching

The ability to reflect on teaching was a natural extension of professional growth, according to the literature. Without reflection, educators may fail to identify weaknesses or celebrate successes. Danielson (2007) indicated that improvement could happen when teachers translated ideas into praxis to fine-tune their craft. Within Danielson’s (2007) Domain 4, which focused on leadership, teachers’ ability to reflect on their own practice was discussed. From asking if a learning session was successful to evaluating if an assessment was effective, Danielson (2007) explained various factors of thoughtful reflection and stated that effective teachers accurately reflected on their teaching and then were able to use their analysis to adjust their instruction in future lessons. Similarly, Clark (2017) found fostering teacher reflection to be important. Elementary principals in the study were able to instill in their teachers a capacity to lead. Capacity building was defined as “a process to increase the individual and collective abilities of professional staff” (Clark, 2017, p. 5). The elementary principals provided time and created structures for teachers to reflect on curriculum, instruction, and student learning; teachers were also encouraged to reflect on their own learning. Without reflection to guide improvements, teachers could not move to a level of expertise that would allow them to be instructional leaders.

### Value Personal Growth

As found in the literature, growing professionally inspired teacher leaders, but successful teacher leaders also cared deeply about their personal growth. Personal growth was included in Poekert and colleagues’ (2016) Individual Core Competencies for teacher leaders. They (Poekert et al., 2016) defined personal growth as “confidence in one’s ability to engage in continuous self-improvement” (p. 317). Teachers in the study reflected on their personal growth and how it was demonstrated in their new sense of perseverance in the face of difficult situations. Others in the study reported taking leadership roles in different areas of their lives other than within the walls of the school. Hunzicker (2017) continued this line of thinking and stated that as teachers increased their self-confidence, self-efficacy, and self-perceptions, they moved into teacher leadership roles. Sinha and Hanuscin (2017) supported these findings and stated that teacher leaders gained confidence over time. York-Barr and Duke (2004) echoed these conclusions and found that one important outcome of teacher leadership was the growth demonstrated by the teachers themselves. It was no surprise to researchers that teacher leaders cared about their personal growth in addition to their success in the classroom.

Embracing an attitude of continuous learning, striving to grow professionally, reflecting on their teaching, and valuing personal growth were characteristics of teacher leaders supported by the research. Naturally, these characteristics translated into teacher actions and behaviors. In the following section, the behaviors teacher leaders demonstrated in the classroom are outlined.

## Behaviors of Teacher Leaders

Teachers who were identified by their peers and principals as leaders behaved in a manner that set them apart from other teachers. In their review of the literature, Wenner and Campbell (2017) found that teacher leaders did more than what was required of a typical teacher. These behaviors were found to vary from teacher to teacher, but commonalities surfaced. The similarities could be categorized into three different areas: the classroom, the school, and the school district and beyond. Since the current study focuses on teachers’ instructional leadership skills, this literature review only includes an exploration of teacher leadership behaviors within the classroom.

### Behaviors of Teacher Leaders in the Classroom

Teacher leadership has been found to begin in the classroom. Without excellence in the classroom, teachers may not successfully embrace the role of leader. Brondyk and Stanulis (2014) described teacher leaders as needing to demonstrate excellence in the classroom by showing a deep knowledge of teaching and learning. A hallmark of this excellence was teachers’ dedication to the learning and success of their students, which should be evident in all classroom activities. For students to succeed, they found teachers needed to demonstrate their ability to teach effectively (Brondyk & Stanulis, 2014). Teachers needed to have an exhaustive knowledge of instructional strategies and approaches that were informed and effective.

Of importance, it was found that teacher leaders could continue their influence in the classroom even if they took on leadership roles. Early concepts reflected the thought that to be an educational leader, teachers would have to leave the classroom or have a formal leadership title or role. More recent research has found that teachers could lead from their classrooms and did not always need a formal role to develop as leaders (Cheng & Szeto, 2016; Greenlee, 2007). Cosenza (2015) confirmed this concept and stated that teachers could become teacher leaders without leaving their classrooms. According to Cosenza (2015), this distinction was important as it could aid in keeping effective teachers in the classrooms to positively impact student learning. As stated in Wenner and Campbell’s (2017) definition of teacher leadership, teachers still needed to be active in the classroom. The identified behaviors of teacher leaders within the classroom included not only instructional expertise but also a student-centered mindset.

#### Holds a Student-Centered Mindset

Within the classroom, teacher leaders’ primary focus has found to be on their students (Hunzicker, 2013; Poekert et al., 2016). In Hunzicker’s (2017) Teacher Leader Progression and Influences Model, students played an important role in at least two sections. Hunzicker (2017) included the student-centered mindset as a disposition attribute of teacher leaders. This was supported by Hunzicker’s (2013) study, where teachers were found to be motivated by a desire to better serve their students and students were found to have benefited from teacher learning. Hunzicker (2013) found that when teachers knew of student needs, they became motivated to find resources to address those needs and to conduct action research to further understand student concerns. Additionally, Hunzicker (2017) included student advocacy in the Indicators section of the model. Creating anti-bullying programs to promote student safety and procuring bilingual and special education services were two examples of ways teachers advocated for their students. Danielson (2006) supported this student-centered viewpoint by claiming teacher leaders always focused on improving student learning. Cosenza (2015) continued the discussion about the connection between teacher leaders and student-centered mindset in a qualitative research study comparing teacher perceptions of teacher leadership to teacher leadership model standards that were created in 2011 by the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium. Specifically, Cosenza (2015) identified role modeling as one theme. Teachers articulated that a component of role modeling was to be a mentor to students. In discussing mentoring, teachers indicated being aware of their own actions and making students aware of their own potential were important components. In addition to mentoring, the teachers referred directly to their role with students by describing their actions as guiding the learning for students and taking actions to be sure the needs of their students were always addressed. While Cosenza (2015) interviewed experienced teachers about leadership, Cheng and Szeto (2016) explored the ideas novice teachers had about teacher leadership. Over a two-year period, Cheng and Szeto (2016) collected data from semi-structured interviews and documentary evidence to explore novice teachers’ perspectives on their teacher leadership roles and the role their principals took in fostering their leadership. Even the novice teachers supported the common belief that teacher leaders led with student learning as the motivator for all their actions. Teacher leaders advocated for their students within their classrooms and kept the needs of their students at the forefront (Cheng & Szeto, 2016).

#### Serves as an Instructional Leader

As the definition of teacher leadership has not been solidified, the roles teacher leaders assume also have varied. In the literature, teacher leadership roles were at times formal titles and were at other times assumed responsibilities without a title (Sinha & Hanuscin, 2017; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Regardless of a title, teacher leaders demonstrated a detailed understanding of instructional practices and served as instructional leaders (Criswell et al., 2018).

Teachers gaining a deeper understanding of teaching was one reason named by York-Barr and Duke (2004) for advancing the practice of teacher leadership. They (York-Barr & Duke, 2004) also claimed that “teacher expertise is at the foundation of increasing teacher quality and advancements in teaching and learning” (p. 258). Cosenza (2015) furthered this line of thought by detailing how teacher leaders shared their teaching successes and their instructional knowledge with their peers. Additionally, instructional leaders were not always found to hold a specific title assigned by administration; rather, they were often recognized by their colleagues as leaders without a distinctive title. According to Bae et al. (2016), teacher leaders were pedagogical experts recognized by their colleagues for what they did daily with their students in the classroom. Bae et al. (2016) expanded research on the behaviors of instructional leaders in their mixed methodology study of middle school science teachers that examined a professional development project. The researchers (Bae et al., 2016) identified three types of teacher leadership: instructional innovator, professional learning leader, and administrative teacher leader. The instructional innovator demonstrated a strength of content knowledge, a willingness to model new practices, and a practice of working directly with students.

Another aspect of instructional leaders in the literature was the way they implemented curricula within their classroom. Teacher leaders often embraced the role of instructional leader by creating engaging and effective lessons and implementing curriculum. York-Barr and Duke (2004) stated that teacher leaders influenced curriculum work within the school and even the district by assisting in identifying outcomes and standards along with selecting and creating curriculum. Although curriculum decisions often took place outside of the classroom, the execution of those decisions ultimately resided within the walls of a teacher’s classroom. Strong instructional leaders implemented curriculum with confidence and expertise (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Without evidence of strong teaching in the classroom, any discussion of teacher leadership would quickly come to an end. The research indicated that the behaviors of teacher leaders in the classroom must reflect a level of expertise and excellence (Bae et al., 2016; Cosenza, 2015; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

## Summary of Teacher Leader Characteristics and Behaviors

Even though researchers, principals, and teachers themselves have not agreed on a clear definition of teacher leadership, the research revealed insights into the characteristics and behaviors of teacher leaders. In sum, teacher leader characteristics included the following: embrace an attitude of continuous learning, strive to grow professionally, reflect on their teaching, and value personal growth. The literature noted characteristic behaviors of teacher leaders in the classroom. The findings in the literature provided principals with tools to identify teacher leaders in their schools and consider how teacher leaders could promote classroom instruction that teaches students to be globally competent. Identifying factors that encourage teacher leadership represent the next step after exploring the characteristics and behaviors of teacher leaders.

## Factors that Encourage Teacher Leadership

As stated earlier, there has not been one clear approach to promoting teacher leadership. In the literature, the very leadership process was considered as unique to each teacher (Poekert et al., 2016). The ambiguity has been seen to offer many opportunities for school leaders. Sinha and Hanuscin (2017) stated there was not one clear path or plan that resulted in teacher leadership. According to the literature, providing opportunities for leadership was only one supportive factor when considering teacher leadership. Factors that encourage teacher leadership growth included supportive school culture (Cosenza, 2015; Greenlee, 2007; Poekert et al., 2016; Wenner & Campbell, 2017; York-Barr & Duke, 2004), principal support (Cheng & Szeto, 2016), professional development (Poekert et al., 2016; Wenner & Campbell, 2017), time (Kiranh, 2013; Wenner & Campbell, 2017), and opportunity (Hunzicker, 2017; Sinha & Hanuscin, 2017). All these factors are important to growing teacher leaders, but for the purposes of this current study, principal support, time, and opportunity have been investigated.

### Principal Support

Principals set the tone in their schools and ultimately were established as the guides to creating a positive school culture. A considerable amount of teacher leadership research explored the role the principal plays in the creation of teacher leaders (Cheng and Szeto, 2016; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Cheng and Szeto (2016) contributed to this discussion by stating that with a combination of principal’s encouragement and teacher’s initiative, teachers could develop into leaders. There was an understanding that principals worked closely with teacher leaders and that those valuable relationships could promote or diminish teacher leaders. Cheng and Szeto (2016) offered a few suggestions on specific steps principals could take to support teachers. When developing teacher leaders, they (Cheng & Szeto, 2016) encouraged principals to recognize when they needed to step back and empower teachers to take an active role in the decision-making process. Drawing from their comprehensive look into teacher leader research, Wenner and Campbell (2017) stated that principal support was paramount for the successful movement of teachers into leadership roles, and they also noted principals’ contributions to the advancement of teacher leadership. Affording teacher leaders the appropriate levels of autonomy, listening to the concerns of teachers, seeking out teachers’ opinions, and understanding the responsibilities of teacher leaders were found to be a few ways principals could embolden teacher leaders (Wenner & Campbell). In a similar way, York-Barr and Duke (2004) offered further considerations for principals including supporting teachers via coaching, offering clarity in respect to teacher leader and administrator domains, and giving attention to interpersonal aspects of the relationship between teacher leaders and administrators. As noted above, many behaviors were indicated as key to principals supporting teacher leaders, and principals must put high priority on trusting relationships (Clark, 2017; Wenner & Campbell, 2017; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Principals have been found to often take active roles in programs afforded to students, such as study abroad programs.

### Time

Time was identified in the literature as necessary for the growth of teacher leadership; a lack of time could inhibit teachers from moving towards leadership roles (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Research indicated that principals should offer teachers more time to improve their leadership skills and afford them opportunities that require them to utilize leadership skills (Kiranh, 2013). As noted in the literature, offering time for leadership growth has not always been easily accomplished. Principals’ limited resources and time to specifically set aside for teacher leadership have presented obstacles to the development of teacher leaders. The next portion of this literature review emphasizes teacher leaders’ need for opportunities to hone their leadership skills.

### Opportunity

As described earlier in this literature review, teachers have not been found to become leaders quickly or by one path (Hunzicker, 2017), and there has been little research on how teacher leaders develop (Sinha & Hanuscin, 2017). Consistent support must be offered, and principals must be aware of multiple opportunities for teachers to serve as leaders (Sinha & Hanuscin). These opportunities have been indicated in moving teachers along the journey to leadership. Poekert and colleagues (2016) concluded, “We have found that in order to achieve movement from teacher to leader, teachers need support and regular opportunities to develop the knowledge, skill, and confidence to have a voice that makes the greatest impact on their context” (p. 324). Hunzicker (2017) stated leadership was a recursive and fluid process that varied for each teacher. Teachers must be offered opportunities to lead (Poekert et al., 2016) and opportunities for them to take part in school related works (Kiranh, 2013). Greenlee’s (2007) research mirrored these findings by stating teacher leaders needed opportunities to practice their leadership skills. This research supported the need for principals to offer their teachers opportunities to fine tune their leadership skills.

### Summary of Factors that Encourage Teacher Leadership

When educators have examined teachers’ paths to teacher leadership, it was imperative for them to understand the conditions and supports necessary to develop teacher leaders (Criswell et al., 2018). The previous section describes principal support, time, and opportunities as supports teachers have needed to lead. This exploration of the relevant literature helps to further the conversation about finding a deeper understanding of supports teachers need to be instructional leaders so they can promote global competence in their students.

## Study Abroad Programs

This current study explores how experiences abroad support teacher instructional leadership skills. After an examination of teacher leadership, an exploration of study abroad programs is next in this literature review. A definition of study abroad programs is presented, along with research detailing the benefits of study abroad programs and motivations for creating study abroad programs.

Costello (2015) defined study abroad as an academic experience in which students physically left their homes to participate in academic study and cultural interaction in a host country. Educators have discussed the need to equip students to interact in a global society. Within the issue of *Educational Leadership* titled *The Global-Ready Student,* Sherer (2016) addressed the need for students to be global-ready and described them as students who were willing to ask questions about the world, understand different perspectives, and participate in meaningful conversations. One article in the issue chronicled a student’s experience traveling abroad, and the student stated, “I can’t think of a better way to be ready for the challenges of today’s global society than to have learned these lessons” (Bhatt, 2016, p. 80). This is only one student’s experience, but the research in this literature review supports the importance of study abroad experiences for students and also for teachers.

The importance of preparing students for a globalized world has been a topic emphasized by many educators (Beal & Bates, 2010; Jackson, 2009; Springer, 2009). Haynes (2011) stated educators must equip students to be ready to face the challenges that accompany globalization. Hadis (2005) noted that globally-minded students demonstrated an interest in issues both local and global, and were aware of how the issues were intertwined. Osler and Starkey (2003) echoed this idea of interconnectedness. They (Osler & Starkey, 2003) stated that with globalization, there was an increased level of interdependence within the world and no individual could live isolated in one country. Due to these views, they emphasized the need to educate students in global society by promoting cosmopolitan citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2003). In a related concept, intercultural wonderment was described as the curiosity in individuals to try different experiences that expand students’ capacity to deal with discomfort and disequilibrium (Engberg & Jourian, 2015). Many of the concepts found necessary for preparing students to be globally competent could be accomplished through student experiences abroad. After time abroad, students demonstrated characteristics such as an enhanced world view (Dekaney, 2008), increased global-mindedness (Hadis, 2005), and increased cultural adaptability (Mapp, 2012). Overall, study abroad programs were found in the literature to prepare students to interact in a global society.

Student academic and personal growth have often been stated as the main reasons for creating study abroad initiatives in schools. The research has identified many benefits for students who study abroad (Dekaney, 2008; Dixon, 2013; Engberg, 2013; Hadis, 2005; Haynes, 2011; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Mapp, 2012; Parsons, 2010; Reynolds-Case, 2013; Tarrant & Lyons, 2012). Students who study abroad have been found to be more internally aware (Parsons, 2010), demonstrate intercultural communication skills (Dixon, 2013), and show intercultural knowledge (Engberg, 2013). Students exhibited academic growth after study abroad experiences in language acquisition(Cubillos & Ilvento, 2013; Dekaney, 2008; Dixon, 2013; Parsons, 2010; Reynolds-Case, 2013; Spenader, 2011). In addition to these academic gains, students also have demonstrated personal growth after these experiences (Costello, 2015). This personal growth has been characterized as increased independence (Hadis, 2005), open-mindedness (Hadis, 2005), self-awareness of one’s own cultural perspective (Dixon, 2013), self-efficacy (Cubillos & Ilvento, 2013), and stronger sense of self (Engberg, 2013).

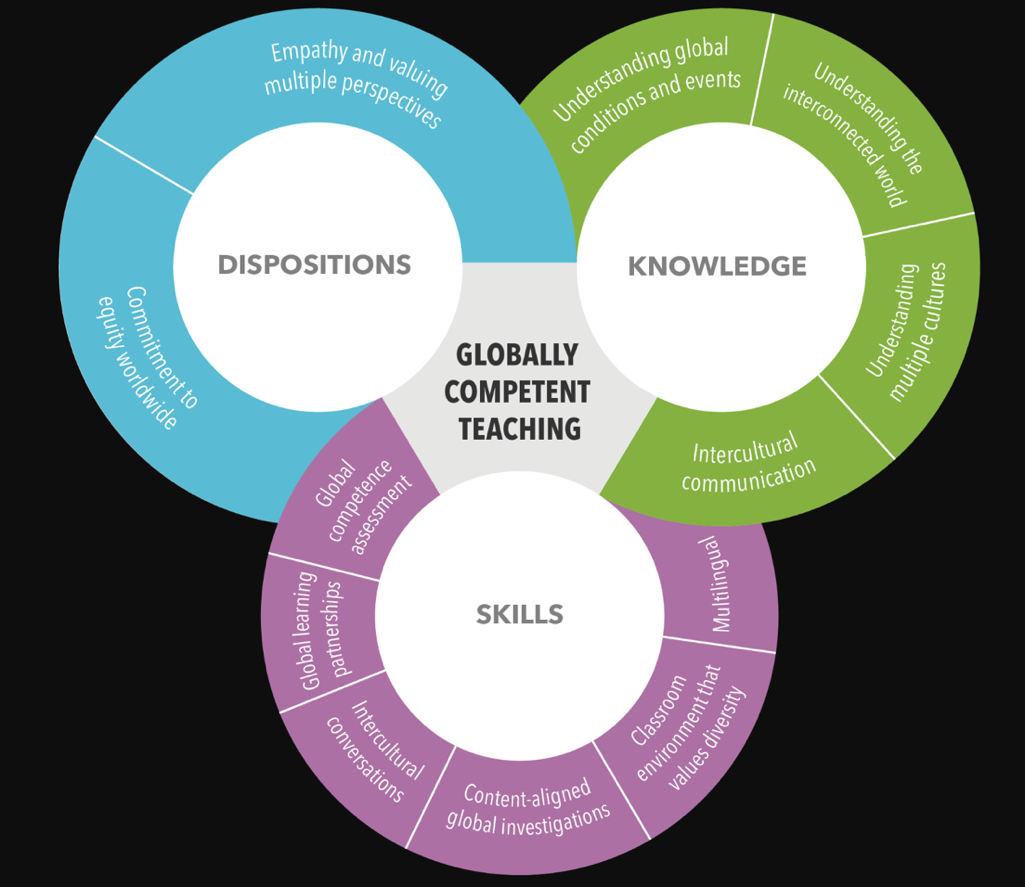
Mapp (2012) presented a rationale for the popularity for short-term programs including the financial and academic flexibility they offer. Mapp (2012) also identified positive effects for short-term programs, such as student gains in cross-cultural understanding. Tarrant and Lyons (2012) furthered this line of thinking in highlighting the importance of short-term study abroad trips in increasing global citizenship in students, noting also that these trips were the fastest growing area of international education. Perhaps due to the wealth of student benefits identified in the research (Dekaney, 2008; Dixon, 2013; Engberg, 2013; Hadis, 2005; Haynes, 2011; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Mapp, 2012; Parsons, 2010; Reynolds-Case, 2013; Tarrant & Lyons, 2012), schools have become motivated to offer students an experience that extends the classroom into other parts of the world.

In the literature, the benefits of study abroad experiences were not limited to students. The research indicated that teachers’ participation in study abroad programs provided them with an abundance of benefits and opportunities to grow their professional skills **(**Dixon, 2013; Walters et al., 2011). Due to experiences in different cultures during these programs, teachers often returned with improved skills in cultural competence and a more global mindset(Dixon, 2013; Walters et al., 2011; Yang, 2011). Zhao, Meyers, and Meyers (2009) conducted a qualitative study that investigated U.S. elementary pre-service teachers’ teaching experience in China. They (Zhao et al., 2009) found that after the teaching experiences in China, teachers grew in various areas such as understanding and respecting the Chinese culture and initiating a proactive stance as culturally responsive change agents. Phillion, Malewski, Sharma, and Wang (2009) further elaborated on these positive effects in their exploration of a global multicultural perspective that “integrates multicultural issues and global issues within a social justice framework” (p. 324). At the culmination of the study, Phillion et al. (2009) claimed that the experiences teachers had studying abroad provided a foundation for multicultural understanding. This foundation allowed teachers to better recognize the connection between their lives and other cultures.

Beyond increasing teachers’ cultural and global perspectives, researchers have documented positive outcomes from teachers’ experiences abroad that translated into success in schools. To illustrate, studies showed that the perspectives teachers gained from interacting with others of a different culture equipped the teachers with skills to better connect with the diverse student populations in their classrooms(Walters et al., 2011; Yang, 2011). Teachers have also improved their ability to reflect and grow from their experiences with skills transferred into their professional roles(Dixon, 2013; Walters et al., 2011).Other researchers (Cross & Dunn, 2016; Walters et al., 2001; Yang, 2011; Zhao et al., 2009) found that improved lesson planning and other instructional enhancements were linked to teacher experiences abroad.Furthermore, teachers have tended to view these experiences as a way to grow and expand their own personal development (Danzig & Jing, 2007; DeVillar & Jiang, 2012; Dixon, 2013;Walters et al., 2011; Yang, 2011; Zhao et al., 2009).Thus, teachers have benefited from their time abroad both in their global and cultural perspectives and also for their professional and personal growth. The evidence has compelled educational leaders to explore ways to expand teachers’ opportunities to gain these benefits.

## Globally Competent Teaching Framework

The Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) Elements of Globally Competent Teaching framework was utilized in this research (Figure 2) and provided the framework for this study. The following section of the literature review includes rationale for why this model was selected, followed by a description of the work.



**Figure 2.** Elements of Globally Competent Teaching Framework Visual (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019).

### Framework Considerations

As noted in this literature review, researchers have depicted various ways for support teaching global competency. Many of their frameworks or guides have focused on student approaches and outcomes (Reimers, 2009; Zhao, 2010). The lack of focus on the role of the teacher presented a challenge in selecting a framework for this study. Tichnor-Wagner et al.’s (2019) Elements of Globally Competent Teaching framework offered an ideal foundation for this study. First, Tichnor-Wagner et al.’s (2019) framework was selected due to the fact that it included themes that surfaced in this literature review. For example, within the framework categories, Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) included valuing different perspectives, understanding the interconnectedness of the world, and inquiring about global issues. These elements mirrored topics discussed in this literature review. Second, this visual model went beyond a student perspective of global competence by displaying the dispositions, knowledge, and skills a teacher needs to prepare globally competent students. The framework included specific elements within these three categories to further define the teacher’s role.

#### Dispositions

Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) found that the attitudes, values, and commitments that teachers possess influenced their instructional approaches, falling into the domain of dispositions. Two sub elements resided in the domain of dispositions: the first domain included empathy and valuing multiple perspectives, and the second domain included commitment to promoting equity worldwide. According to Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019), open-mindedness, empathy, and perspective consciousness were foundational to global competency instruction. When teachers understood that all people possess biases and were willing to explore their own biases, they could model empathy for their students and seek to include multiple perspectives in their classrooms. In addition to these different perspectives, a commitment to equity was foundational to global competency teaching; as Tichnor et al. (2019) stated, “The goal of equity is justice. Justice seeks to provide a world where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, and a commitment to equity is a foundational building block toward a just world” (p. 38). By modeling empathy and understanding different perspectives, in addition to seeking justice through a commitment to equity, teachers were able to engage with students in dialogue about global issues and inspire student solution-seeking.

#### Knowledge

The next domain of knowledge was divided into two broad concepts, which were “an understanding of events, conditions, systems, and structures that connect the world, and an understanding of the people who live in it” (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019, p. 55). Globally competent teachers learned how to embrace lifelong learning in an ever-changing world. They considered how world happenings influenced their students and offered a way to contextualize complex current events. Along with viewing the world through multiple lenses, globally competent teachers explored how the world is interconnected and had a deep understanding of globalization. As a second component of the knowledge domain, teachers needed to develop an understanding of themselves and consider how they experience the world (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019). Once teachers better understood the context in which they viewed the world, they could explore other cultures and better communicate with individuals from different cultures. Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) stated that through traveling, immersing oneself in diverse cultures, and identifying differences in communication, teachers understood the world better and in turn, empathized more with their students.

#### Skills

The elements within the last domain of skills outlined the actions teachers take within the classroom. While the dispositions and knowledge domains were seen to be applicable in various situations and environments, the skills domain referred directly to the classroom environment and instructional strategies (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019). As stated for the rationale of selecting this framework as a basis for this study, the important aspect to this framework was the skills section. Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) stated, “The skills section truly differentiates globally competent teaching from other models of global competence, as it integrates global dispositions and knowledge into how teachers manage their classroom environment, plan for and implement instruction, and assess student learning” (p. 10-11). Communicating in multiple languages was the first skill identified in this domain and surfaced from an understanding that the world was not monolingual (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019). Encouraging global engagement and valuing diversity were two points of emphasis when globally competent teachers created their classroom environments. When these characteristics actively played a role in the classroom, teachers demonstrated how to respect and value all people. Once this environment was created, teachers could incorporate experiences where students could explore global issues in tandem with academic standards and instructional content. Naturally, from this integration, students would have opportunities to consider global issues and then participate in intercultural conversations that promote active listening, critical thinking, and perspective recognition (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019). Teachers who excelled in globally competent instruction found ways for their students to participate in rich conversations often facilitated through intercultural and international partnerships. By creating authentic partnerships both internationally and locally, students engaged in interactions that broadened their perspectives. The last element of the skills domain included how teachers assessed students’ growth in the development of global competence. This assessment included both evaluations executed by the teacher, but also self-reflections completed by students.

Many of the themes that arose when exploring this framework also surfaced when exploring teacher leadership skills and how teachers viewed their roles when leading student study abroad programs. Student-centered mindset and instructional leadership were two concepts included in the research centered on teacher leadership, and these themes also surfaced in this global competence model. These themes are noted in the research described in this literature review. The Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) model centered on the teachers themselves rather than students or the greater educational setting. Since the current study explores teacher experiences outside the classroom and how those experiences influence their instruction, this framework served the purposes of this research better than other models or guides. Tichnor-Wagner et al.’s (2019) Elements of Globally Competent Teaching framework was selected for this study also because there were commonalties between the descriptors in the framework and other research on teacher leadership and study abroad programs. This model served to provide a pathway for teachers to enhance their instruction to better prepare globally competent students. The current study strives to understand how teachers who lead student programs abroad may be progressing along the path of instructional leadership. A review of the relevant literature resulted in identifying Tichnor-Wagner et al.’s (2019) work with global competency instruction as a framework for this study.

### Framework Limitations

As with every framework, theory, or model, the Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) model presented limitations. Tichnor-Wagner et al.’s (2019) model was newer to the literature at the time of this study and thus had not withstood years of testing and refinement. To combat this challenge, Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) detailed ways the research team developed the framework and as well as tested the content validity and internal consistency reliability. Initially, the 12 elements were identified after an extensive review of the literature, then elements further defined in a rubric for teachers. This work was reviewed by educators including 57 practicing K-12 teachers, 7 teacher educators, and 8 global education field experts. The feedback from this group of educators did not result in changes to the elements but did provide feedback to adjust the continuum. Lastly, the research team enlisted 111 practicing K-12 educators to run a pilot test of the 12 elements, in addition to the 5 developmental levels in the continuum, to evaluate the internal consistency and overall stability of framework. After the pilot, revisions were made and again, nine practicing K-12 teachers and another round of global education experts were asked to review the framework. Even though the framework was new, the research team tailored their approach to create a framework to support instruction that promotes global competency in students. Further support for utilizing this model surfaced after reviewing the content found within the model. The ideas found in the model are similar to the themes in this literature review, and mirror ideas included in many of the studies are highlighted in this literature review. In commenting on writing qualitative research, Alvermann, O’Brien, and Dillon (1996) emphasized the need for embedding research in the “substantive work of a discipline” (p. 115). It is affirming that ideas in the model were found in other research that explores global competency (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; Reimers, 2009; Roose, 2001). Since the current study explores how teachers’ experiences in study abroad programs can equip them to be instructional leaders that teach students to be globally competent, Tichnor-Wagner, et al.’s (2019) model provided an ideal framework.

## Connections Between Teacher Leadership and Study Abroad Benefits

While the focus of the current research in study abroad programs is the outcomes for teachers related to instructional leadership skills, a common approach in the research literature has been to explore the many facets of teacher leadership and the benefits of study abroad experiences for teachers independently. Despite natural connections in the research, educators have rarely discussed the opportunity of experiences abroad paired with the outcome of increasing the capacity of teacher leadership skills in the area of teaching global competency. This study offers research to fill this gap in the literature.

In the review of literature on global competency instruction, teacher leadership, and study abroad programs, some themes surfaced. Improved classroom performance by teachers and improved student outcomes were two common themes. Teacher reflection and professional growth were also highlighted in the teacher leadership and study abroad research. These connections prompt more research to examine the relationships between instructional leaders and study abroad programs. For the current era of globalization, this research considers the ways study abroad programs provide opportunities for teachers to expand their instructional leadership skills to promote global competence in students.

## Summary

A wealth of research discusses themes of instructional approaches for preparing students for global competition, teacher leadership, and study abroad programs, as found in this literature review. Rarely were these ideas considered collectively. This study addresses this gap in the research by exploring the relationship between teachers’ involvement in student study abroad programs and their instructional leadership skills in preparing students to be globally competent. This study embraces a distinctive look at teacher leadership and student educational travel that offers principals an opportunity to increase teachers’ leadership skills and aid in preparing their students to succeed in our globalized world.

# CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

By utilizing the qualitative method of grounded theory, this study investigated teacher instructional leadership skills in the context of teachers’ experiences in leading student study abroad programs. Creswell (2012) stated that grounded theory was often utilized by educational researchers, and this method served the purpose of this study by offering a way to identify themes directly from the data. Through case study methodology, this research considered teachers’ perspectives about their involvement in student study abroad programs and their instructional leadership abilities, specifically in teaching students to be globally competent individuals. Teachers’ involvement in these programs included work in preparing students for traveling, planning the logistics of the trip, and accompanying students in the study abroad session. In the following section, the design of the study is explained, including the methodology, participants, data collection methods, and data analysis methods. The chapter ends with a discussion about the limitations of the study.

## Purpose of the Study

The goal of this study was to examine the relationship between teachers’ experiences as leaders on student study abroad programs and how teachers viewed their growth as instructional leaders when preparing students to be globally competent. Teachers reflected on their experiences abroad and views of their instructional leadership skills through focus groups and face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. From the results of this research, the themes that emerged were used to evaluate how traveling abroad could foster instructional leadership capacity in teachers, specifically in respect to promoting globally competent learning in students.

## Research Questions

This study explored the following research questions:

1. How do teachers view their own growth in respect to instructional leadership skills after leading study abroad programs with students?
2. How do teachers view their effectiveness in developing a globally competent student population after leading study abroad programs with students?

## Research Design

For this study, a qualitative research approach was selected to serve the purpose of identifying a new approach when reviewing a familiar issue in tandem with understanding how individuals view their involvement in an organization (Merriam, 1995). As described in the previous chapter, increasing teacher instructional leadership skills and preparing students to succeed in a globalized world are needs in U.S. education, and new, creative approaches are required to fulfill this need.

As noted in the literature review, little research exists that examines teacher instructional leadership development in the context of traveling abroad with students; therefore, grounded theory was an ideal design to implement for this study. Creswell (2012) stated that grounded theory could be useful when the researcher wants to explain a process or identify a broad theory. Since this study explored teachers’ perceptions of their leadership skills and the potential for actualizing such skills in leadership roles, grounded theory provided a good fit. As Patton (2015) explained, “Grounded theory depends on methods that take the researcher into and close to the real word, so that the results and findings are ‘grounded’ in the empirical world” (p. 110). From this description of exploring real world situations, it is no surprise that grounded theory is a popular approach to qualitative research (Patton, 2015) and especially educational qualitative research (Creswell, 2012).

Patton (2015) and Creswell (2012) stated that specific methods and detailed procedures were required when utilizing grounded theory; the details relevant to this study are explained next. After selecting grounded theory for this study, the next step was to identify a method of qualitative analysis. The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis (Glaser, 1965) was selected due to the way it aids a researcher in creating a theory, in addition to its use in similar studies about teacher leadership (Kelin et al., 2018; Margolis & Huggins, 2012). The constant comparative method is explained further in the data analysis section later in this chapter

An exploratory case study was utilized to narrow the focus of this study. Patton’s (2015) description of a case study provided compelling evidence for utilizing this approach. He (Patton, 2015) stated that a defining characteristic of a case study was to set boundaries around an area of interest. This process of narrowing ideas can set the focus of inquiry. By investigating one study abroad program and focusing on teacher instructional leadership, the boundaries and focus were set for this case study. Next, this study can be viewed as exploratory since one of the goals of this study was to create a hypothesis that could be used in future studies (Yin, 2003). Creswell (2012) stated that by including powerful descriptions and explanations, a more detailed understanding needed to support a hypothesis would be created and would be executed by gathering the perceptions of multiple teachers. Teachers who have participated in these programs offered insights about how these experiences could be utilized to foster instructional leadership skills that promote students’ global competence.

## Context and Participants

A suburban school district in northern Indiana was selected for this study due to its well-established study abroad program for middle school students. The program offered a rare opportunity for middle school students; no other program similar to this school district’s program existed in the surrounding school corporations. This program has catered to over 300 students, parents, and staff over the past 10 years. Considering the longevity and high levels of involvement in the program, it presented an ideal opportunity for a closer look at teacher instructional leadership and study abroad programs.

Since 2009, the three middle schools in the corporation have offered this unique learning opportunity to students. The 9-10 day programs abroad were created to provide student learning opportunities that would prepare students to succeed in a globalized world. Short-term programs such as these have become increasingly popular for students (Dekaney, 2008; Mapp, 2012). During the European programs, students traveled to historical sites connected to Indiana Academic Standards. Students visiting China toured historical sites related to Indiana Academic Standards, stayed with host Chinese families, and visited Chinese schools. Prior to departure for these educational outings, students participated in academic meetings where teachers facilitated lessons on the history and culture of the places they would visit during their time abroad. For example, students were assigned a specific country, city, or monument they would see once abroad. They researched the location and shared their findings at one of the orientation meetings. They shared their research again when the whole group visited that location while abroad. Additionally, when students were preparing to travel to China, they participated in a novel study. The main character in the novel grew up in China during the Cultural Revolution, so students discussed connections of this context to their future travel. In addition to these two examples, students completed other research projects, writing pieces, and student-group collaborations. For teachers to be selected to attend these educational programs, they were required to attend all the orientation meetings in addition to writing an essay. In this essay, they described their motivation for traveling with students and their hopes for how it would impact their classrooms and themselves. Student and teacher preparation and training for both the Europe and China education programs have been similar in nature. The only difference was the additional preparation for a homestay experience for the students traveling to China. Orientation meetings were also held for parents. These meetings addressed questions about matters related to safety plans, passports, items to pack, budgets, and other topics important to parents of student travelers. Teachers who led these educational programs scheduled, organized, and facilitated these meetings with the goal of offering support to middle school travelers and their parents.

The first group of educators and students ventured abroad to visit their Chinese partner school in the spring of 2009. Out of this valuable relationship grew other experiences for students to learn about new places and diverse cultures. Through the China and Europe programs, many students, parents, and staff members have had opportunities to gain a global perspective and learn more about themselves and the world. Table 1 details the educational programs abroad and the travelers involved. The stability and expansion of this program provided an ideal site for this research.

**Table 1.** Traveler Data for School Site Educational Programs Abroad

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Program Destination | Student  Travelers | Parent  Travelers | Teacher  Travelers | Administrator Travelers |
| China 2009 | 12 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| China 2011 | 27 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| Europe 2012 | 38 | 7 | 6 | 1 |
| China 2013 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Europe 2014 | 50 | 10 | 8 | 2 |
| China 2015 | 15 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Europe 2016 | 55 | 10 | 6 | 4 |
| China 2017 | 24 | 12 | 5 | 1 |
| Europe 2018 | 38 | 13 | 6 | 3 |
| China 2019 | 27 | 4 | 4 | 1 |

Sampling for this study was purposeful, meaning the researcher selected a group of teachers who had traveled with students to offer an in-depth understanding of the research questions (Patton, 2015). For the purpose of this study, all teachers or administrators who traveled abroad with students and were still employed with the school corporation at the time of the study were included as possible participants. The total population from which to select a sample was 13, and from this population 8 teachers and 1 administrator elected to participate in the study (n = 9). A profile for each teacher is included in the data section to detail each educator’s background and experience. The profile includes each individual’s participation in study abroad programs, years of teaching experience, years taught in the school corporation, licensure, degrees held, age, and gender. Some travelers were teachers when first traveling and then became administrators. It was noted in the profile if the participant no longer taught in a classroom. To protect confidentially of the participants’ involvement in the study, pseudonyms were used.

Prior to talking with participants, approval was attained from Purdue University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Also, permission was gained from the school corporation. Communication detailing the study and requesting permission to conduct the study was sent to the superintendent of the school corporation, and he approved teachers’ and administrators’ participation in the study (Appendix F).

## Data Collection

Data were collected via focus groups and face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. Patton (2015) stated a sample size depends on the purpose of the study, what will be useful, and the time available. Taking these factors into consideration, all teacher or administrator travelers still employed in the school corporation were invited via Purdue email to participate in focus groups. A copy of this email invitation can be found in Appendix A. Along with the invitation, teachers were provided a description of the topics that would be discussed during the focus group. These descriptions are found in Appendix B. Once participants communicated an interest in participating in a focus group, meeting times were shared with interested participants. The focus groups were held in one of the middle schools within the school corporation. The schools were selected as sites for the focus groups because these locations were used for planning and preparation meetings for the study abroad programs. These familiar locations aided in putting participants at ease and encouraged candid dialogue. In the first focus group, four participants contributed to the discussion, and during the second session, five participants joined the focus group, for a total of nine participants (n = 9). Participants reviewed the Research Participant Information Sheet (Appendix C) prior to beginning the session; this document had been approved by Purdue University’s IRB. Focus groups encompassed approximately 60 minutes with one focus group lasting 55 minutes and the second session lasting 61 minutes. Both focus groups were conducted at the same middle school within the school corporation. They were held on different dates to accommodate the schedules of the participants. During these sessions, participants were asked five open-ended items (Appendix D). A natural progression of sharing surfaced during the session, and participants took turns responding to the prompts. If the groups veered off topic, either a participant would ask for the prompt to be read again or the researcher would read the prompt an additional time to remind the group of the topics to discuss. In both sessions, time was available at the end of the focus group for participants to add any additional thoughts. The entirety of the focus group sessions was audio recorded and transcribed. Participants were made aware of the recordings in the information sheet. The transcriptions were shared with participants, and they had an opportunity to comment further on their contributions. After the completion of the focus groups, data from the discussions were analyzed.

## Demographic Data for Focus Group #1

In the first focus group session conducted for this study, four teachers participated in the discussion. To ensure confidentiality, all participants were given pseudonyms. Carol, a White female, holds a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree in special education, and she had recently moved to working with preschool students after spending a majority of her career in the middle school setting. Her experience abroad included accompanying students to Europe in 2012. The second participant, Harold, a White male who taught social studies and also spent the entirety of his 21-year teaching career curriculum in the school district in this study, holds a bachelor’s degree in secondary social studies education. He was the teacher leader for three of the China programs and participated in one additional program to China and two to Europe. Evan, a White male, taught math for a total of 10 years, and holds a bachelor’s degree in math. His experience abroad includes one program to Europe in 2016. The last participant, Lily, is a White female with a bachelor’s degree in social studies education who spent seven out of her eight years of experience in the classroom in the school corporation included in this study. Participating in two programs to Europe and one program to China comprised her experiences traveling with students.

## Demographic Data for Focus Group #2

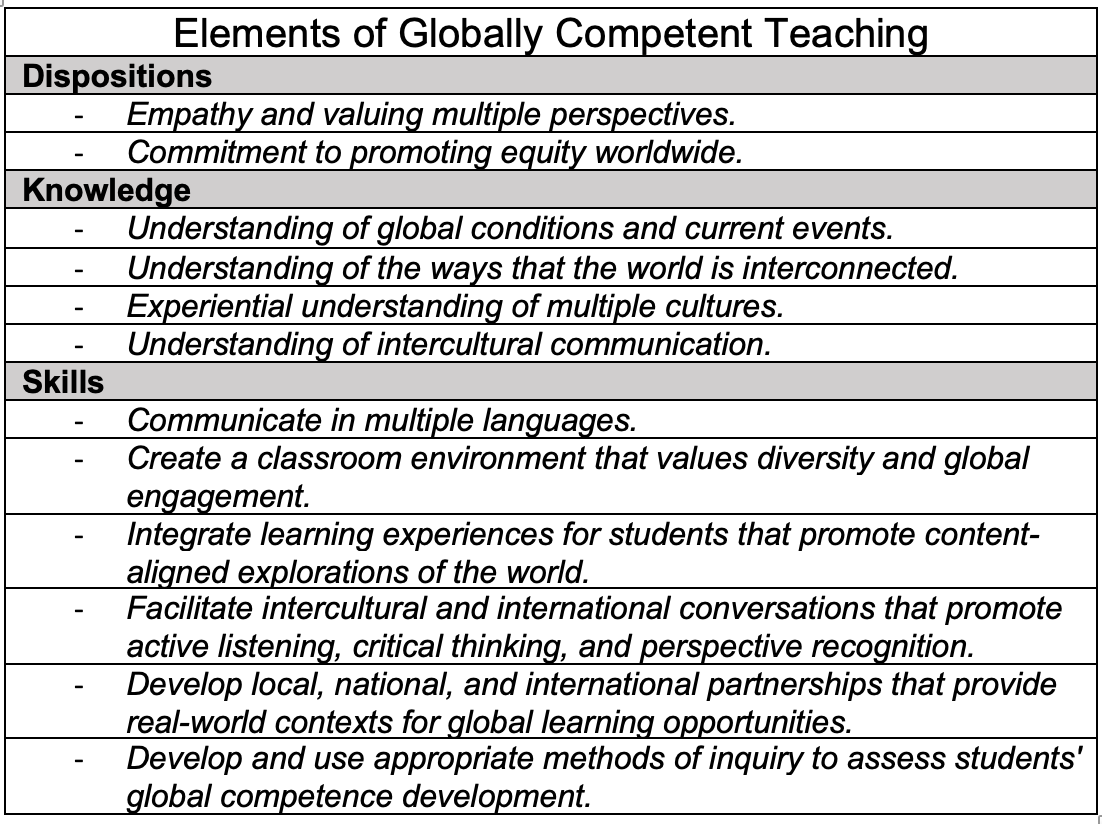
Five teachers contributed their perspectives to the second focus group session. Carter, a White male, was the most novice teacher included in this study with three years of experience as a social studies teacher, and he holds a bachelor’s degree in social studies education with a minor in global studies. He accompanied students on two programs including one to Europe and one to China. Trent, a White male with 21 years of experience in the education field, holds a bachelor’s degree in German and a master’s degree in school leadership. He served as an elementary principal at the time of the study. He traveled with students during seven educational programs to Europe. Barb, a White female, holds a bachelor’s degree, and taught physical education and health for 24 years. She traveled with students on seven different programs with all of them to Europe with the exception of one to China. She served as the teacher leader for one program to Europe. Victoria, a White female, taught choir, and she completed a bachelor’s degree in liberal arts with a focus on music and Bible prior to completing a transition to teaching program. She traveled with students to Europe in 2014 and to China in 2017. The last participant was Dave, a White male with 23 years of experience in education who holds a bachelor’s degree in science and a master’s degree in school leadership. He spent the majority of his career teaching middle school science but did serve as an assistant principal at a middle school and as an elementary principal for a period of time.

The next phase of the study was the face-to-face semi-structured interview sessions. The themes about teacher instructional leadership that emerged from the analysis of the focus group data served as prompts to ask participants in the face-to-face interviews. Additionally, components within the Elements of Globally Competent Teaching framework that did not surface during the focus groups were incorporated into the interview prompts. This provided teachers an opportunity to share insights on how they viewed their own growth in respect to developing globally competent students. The interview prompts were based on Patton’s (2015) description of standardized open-ended interviews. He described this approach by stating the researcher compiled the exact wording of the questions and listed them in a specific order in advance of the interviews. All interviewees were asked to respond to the same open-ended prompts. The list of interview items is included in Appendix E. Three participants from the focus groups were invited to participate in interviews based on multiple criteria points. The initial phase of the purposing sampling for the interviews was to select the participants that contributed greatly to the focus group sessions and demonstrated an interest in the topics discussed. Next, places traveled, years of experience in the classroom, content area, and demographics were considered to provide a diverse perspective of the topics included in this study. From these criteria points Harold, Barb, and Carter were selected to participate in the interviews. Once participants were selected, they were invited via Purdue email to participate in a 60-90 minute, face-to-face, semi-structured interview session. All three teachers consented to participate in the interviews. These interviews were held at one of the middle schools within the corporation. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

## Data Analysis

In this study, the constant comparative method of qualitative analysis was utilized. This method was selected due to the way it aids the researcher “in generating a theory which is integrated, consistent, plausible, [and] close to the data” (Glasser, 1965, p. 437). This method was selected also due to its use in similar studies about teacher leadership. Klein et al. (2018) analyzed their data using this method in a study that investigated science teacher leaders through the lens of a distributed leadership framework. Margolis and Huggins (2012) used the constant comparative method when examining teacher leadership role development in the hybrid teacher leader, sourcing teachers who both taught in the classroom and spent time leading teachers. Both of these pieces of research had a similar structure to this study, which made the selection of constant comparative method a compelling method for this study.

Creswell (2012) described the coding processas making sense out of the data by dividing it into segments, labeling the segments with codes, examining the codes for redundant ideas, and then combining the codes into broad themes (Creswell, 2012). The constant comparative method provided clear procedures for this type of analysis. There are four stages in the constant comparative method: “(1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory” (Glaser, 1965, p. 439). Preset codes derived from the Elements of Globally Competent Teaching model were used to code the data both from the focus groups and interviews. These elements are listed in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** *Elements of Globally Competent Teaching* (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019).

All data were analyzed through multiple listening sessions and reading sessions of all recordings and transcripts. Transcripts were shared with participants to review. Elements within the transcripts were color-coded to reflect the emergent themes and the domains contained within Tichnor-Wagner et al.’s (2019) Elements of Globally Competent Teaching framework. Participants were asked to note any discrepancies between their thoughts and how their contributions were categorized. Once this process was complete, emergent themes were confirmed. These emergent themes were again compared to Tichnor-Wagner et al.’s (2019) Elements of Globally Competent Teaching framework and the themes are reported in the results section of this study.

## Reliability

To ensure the reliability of this study, multiple considerations were identified including triangulation of the data, member checks, rich descriptions, and role of the researcher. Patton (2015) stated that triangulation strengthens a qualitative study, and Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, and Neville (2014) emphasized that triangulation increases the validity of research findings. When the researcher utilizes focus groups and interviews, the researcher is provided with various data points to analyze, and the data offers a deeper view of the phenomenon. Carter et al. (2014) stated that focus groups aid in acquiring more data from participants. Since participants hear comments from others, they may comment on the contributions of other participants or add a thought they might not have made individually. Patton (2015) articulated the importance of interviews and stated interviewing offers the opportunity to ask authentic, open-ended questions that allow participants to express their individual ideas and perspectives. By initiating the data collection with focus groups and following those with interviews, the findings of this study were scaffolded.

Member checks were completed as part of this study. Member checks or member reflections can offer details about differences and similarities between the thoughts of the participants and researchers (Alvermann et al., 1996). It is important that the researchers share the data with the participants so the participants can confirm the interpretations of the researcher are credible (Merriam, 1995). Member reflections are a way to attain credibility within a qualitative study by discussing the findings in the study with participants and providing opportunities for participants to take an active role in the research process (Tracy, 2010). In this study, both email and in-person conversations took place between the researcher and the teachers after the focus groups and interviews to confirm the accuracy of their statements. Transcripts were shared with participants to review. Elements within the transcripts were color-coded to reflect the emergent themes and the domains contained within Tichnor-Wagner et al.’s (2019) Elements of Globally Competent Teaching framework. Participants were asked to note any discrepancies between their thoughts and how their contributions were categorized. Teachers did not dispute any of the categorizations and agreed with the organization of their contributions. These member checks were vital to the study and demonstrated the value of the informants who supplied the data (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Another way to address reliability is by including thick descriptions and using a show versus tell approach (Merriam, 1995; Tracy, 2010). Tracy stated that researchers should include enough details so readers may come to their own conclusions. By offering rich, specific details from focus groups and the teacher interviews, this study showed a reliable picture of teachers’ perceptions of their instructional leadership abilities.

In a qualitative study, it is imperative to present details about the researcher to enable readers to understand how the researcher may have interpreted the data (Merriam, 1995). Alvermann et al. (1996) emphasized the importance of this and stated that often the perspective and biases of the researcher are not included in the methodology section of the study. The following section includes details about my experiences and how they related to this study.

Since I directed the focus groups and interviewed teachers about their experiences and perceptions, my perspectives and experiences played a role. Patton (2015) stated, “The perspective that the researcher brings to a qualitative inquiry is part of the context for the findings. You as a human being are the instrument of qualitative methods” (p. 73). As I was the instrument, I must understand how I played a role in this process. Seidman (2013) detailed how interviewers must consider their own egos and understand that the researcher is not the center of the world. Critically looking at my subjectivity is one way I addressed these considerations. My personal experiences and my involvement with these programs represent factors that create the lens through which I viewed this study.

When investigating how teachers expand their instructional leadership experiences and abilities, I could not overlook my experiences as a teacher, a teacher leader, and an administrator. I taught middle school language arts and social studies for 10 years and thrived in the classroom setting. I was eager to acquire more leadership roles and often volunteered for committees and served as a mentor for fellow colleagues. From these experiences, I hold a positive perspective of serving in teacher leadership roles and seeking out opportunities. After teaching for a year in South Korea, my views of international education and globalization colored many of my perspectives on the U.S. education system, including how we inspire and grow outstanding teachers. My role serving as the principal of one middle school in the corporation selected for this study played a considerable role in this research. All of the teacher participants in this study worked in the same corporation. Each of them was most likely evaluated by a person in my role. Even though I did not interview any of the teachers I evaluated, there remained an underlying power differential. In the past 10 years, I have participated in or directed six programs abroad with students. Many of the participants in this study were fellow travelers. These relationships may have influenced the way teachers answered questions related to these experiences. Additionally, through the China programs, I have worked to create educational partnerships with the Lishan District Educational Bureau. Collectively, these experiences played a role in my work as a researcher.

## Conclusion

This qualitative study used grounded theory to investigate teachers’ perceptions of their instructional leadership skills in teaching students to be globally competent after leading students on educational experiences abroad. A middle school study abroad program served as the context of this exploration of globally competent teaching.

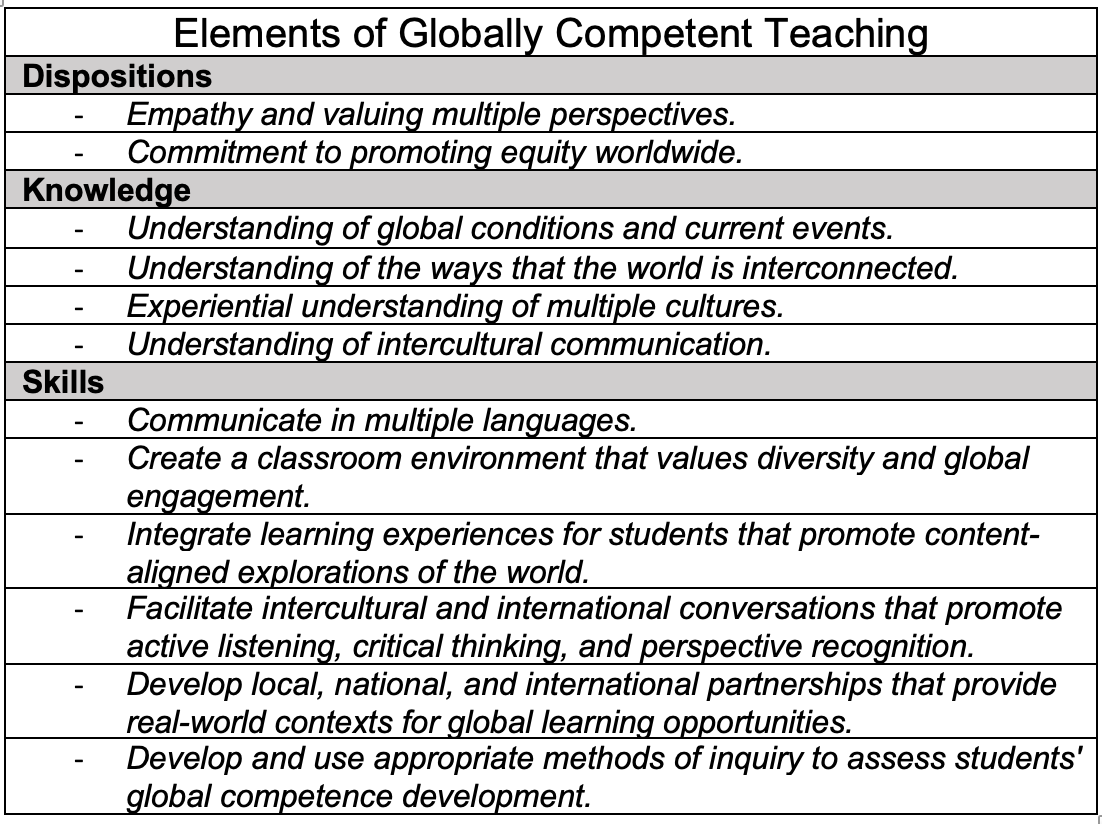
# CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

## Introduction

This study investigated teachers’ perceptions of their instructional leadership skills and their ability to teach global competency skills after participating in student study abroad programs. During focus group and semi-structured interview sessions, teachers who have participated in these educational programs reflected on their professional growth in the area of instructional leadership, specifically in teaching students to be globally competent. From the data collected during the focus groups and interviews, themes were identified, and from these themes, assertions were defined. Chapter 4 includes a review of the Elements of Globally Competent Teaching Framework (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019). These elements were used to initially analyze the data. Following the review of the elements, the data from the two focus groups and three interviews are presented. Seven themes emerged from this data and include (1) perspectives, (2) empathy, (3) global conditions and current events, (4) cultural differences, (5) intercultural communication, (6) classroom environment, and (7) intercultural lessons. From these seven themes, three assertions were identified that encompassed the most important data related to teachers’ instructional leadership skills in respect to increasing students’ global competency skills.

## Review of the Elements of Globally Competent Teaching Framework

To examine instructional leadership skills in the context of developing a globally competent student population, the Elements of Globally Competent Teaching framework (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019) served as a foundation. The data from the focus groups and interviews were analyzed using the three domains of the frameworks and the sub elements within each domain (Figure 4*)*.



**Figure 4.** Elements of Globally Competent Teaching (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019).

To review, Tichnor-Wagner, et al. (2019) defined the dispositions of teachers by stating teachers needed to possess the attitudes, values, and beliefs necessary to connect with a diverse student and family population in addition to fostering a global mindset within their students. Demonstrating empathy and valuing multiple perspectives along with a commitment to promoting equity worldwide were listed as the two elements of teacher dispositions.

Following teacher dispositions, Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) expanded the discussion by listing four areas of knowledge needed for educators to be globally competent teachers. They stated that teachers should understand the following: global conditions, current events, the interconnectedness of the world, different cultures, and intercultural communication.

The last section of the Elements of Globally Competent Teaching framework by Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) included the skills necessary for teachers to promote global competency in students. This section of the framework was the most involved and included six different elements. The first element highlighted the need for teachers to be multilingual. Classroom environments and learning experiences were discussed next, and the need for valuing diversity and the exploration of global-content connections within these contexts were detailed. The next two elements addressed the need for conversations and partnerships that promote learning opportunities for students. The last element elaborated on the need for ways to assess how students develop their global competence.

## Emergent Themes

The elements within this framework provided the foundation for the analysis of the data collected via focus groups and interviews. After listening to the audio recordings of the focus groups and the interviews multiple times and reviewing the transcripts of the focus groups and the interviews multiple times, all ideas shared that related to the elements found within Tichnor-Wagner et al.’s (2019) Elements of Globally Competent Teaching framework were sorted to show the elements that surfaced most during the sessions. From this analysis of the data, seven themes emerged and include (1) perspectives, (2) empathy, (3) global conditions and current events, (4) cultural differences, (5) intercultural communication, (6) classroom environments, and (7) intercultural lessons. The discussion of these themes is organized into the three domains of the Elements of Globally Competent Teaching Framework. Any elements of the framework that were not discussed within the focus group or interview sessions, or did not present as an emerging theme, were also included in the analysis of the data.

## Analysis of Focus Group Data

Using the constant comparative method of analysis to compare incidents applicable to each category (Glaser, 1965) allows the researcher to compare all the data collected, such as the focus group and interview data in this study, to identify emergent themes. To see how the themes emerged in both the focus groups and interviews, the findings from the focus groups and interviews are listed separately.

### Dispositions

Dispositions impact a teacher’s overall practice and influence how they teach (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019). During the focus groups, teachers were eager to share their perspectives of the world and were willing to reflect on how their experiences traveling with students impacted their perspectives. Considering different perspectives and encouraging empathy were themes that emerged during the focus groups. It is important to note, the topic of equity, one element of the dispositions domain, did not surface during the focus group sessions.

#### Perspectives

Dispositions connect directly to teachers’ personal perspectives. This personal exploration of viewpoints includes examining biases, considering conscious or subconscious stereotypes, challenging long-held beliefs, exploring misconceptions, and entertaining thoughts contrary to their own. Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) stated that while teachers explore their perspectives, teachers may challenge, critique, reconsider, and even change their own beliefs. Three teachers commented directly on how their gender and race influenced the way they view the world and their experiences abroad. Carter stated,

As a white male in the United States, going somewhere else, where that’s no longer the majority of the people you run into and English isn’t the majority of the languages you hear. It just gives you a different perspective of who you are and how you’re a much smaller piece of the puzzle.

Evan also shared his journey exploring his personal viewpoint and also his understanding of new perspectives.

When I was in Italy, I was starting to go through my own personal evolution . . . I was raised in the Midwest. My parents always voted red. [I was from a] very conservative family . . . [I was] starting to get a different worldview and different perspective. I think that was the biggest thing for me. [It] was just this big culture shift . . . just that there were other views out there.

Dave also commented on the way his perspective of a White male in a culture that was not predominantly White prompted him to consider differences between cultures. He said, “What they view as needs and wants and what’s important in their lives as being so different than what I want.” Lily took a different view. When comparing her perspectives to the perspectives of those in other cultures, she identified similarities. “They want things that are very much like as Americans we would want in our lives and our children to have,” she said. While all participants elaborated on their personal perspectives of the world, only White males that noted their gender and race as an influencing factor. Phillion et al. (2009) found that when teachers were in a different culture, they “felt that negotiating cultural differences within a global context outside the comfort of their privileged, White-middle-class norms” (p. 336) had an impact on their global competence.

When teachers considered their perspectives of the world, three participants compared their U.S. experiences to other parts of the world. Lily stated that she did not truly appreciate U.S. systems and culture until she was removed from them and experienced another country’s systems and culture. Another teacher expanded on these comparisons with a specific example. Harold articulated,

In China, thinking about the group and the community is a virtue, to the point of ridiculousness, but we, as Americans, idolize and put up on a pedestal independence. Thinking on my own and doing it myself, to the point of even failing, is more valuable than succeeding as a group. What I gathered from that is we were both wrong.

Carol also made a comparison about stereotypes. “We always have this stereotype that Parisians dislike Americans. And so that was kind of debunked. I mean, we found it somewhat, but not like how its portrayed in America.” Victoria shared she was one of the first people in her family to travel extensively outside of the United States and the study abroad experiences caused her to see different perspectives. She stated, “I think that our perspective of people who are different than us is not always the right way.” She voiced wanting to encourage others to seek out experiences abroad even if their family did not have these experiences. In both focus groups, teachers were willing to openly discuss their perspectives of the world and a wide variety of topics were included in these discussions.

#### Empathy

Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) explained empathy as understanding another person’s experiences from his or her point of view. To elaborate they (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019) stated, “To truly empathize with another person or group, we need to be able to understand their perspective, which is difficult to do because our minds, personalities, and life experiences are all so unique” (p. 22). Spending time in other cultures offers a way for teachers to recognize values held in common with others (Danzig & Jing, 2007). Teachers discussed how considering different perspectives and building relationships can result in encouraging empathy. Lily stated, “I think that relationship building is exceedingly powerful,” and Evan shared, “I think it all comes back down to the relationships that you have.”From these relationships, participants explained how their perspectives changed. Lily said, “I found that despite cultural differences, at a deeper level, people are people no matter where they live, and the similarities overwhelm any of the differences.” In these sentiments, she articulated how she could empathize with others based on the similarities she identified. Trent echoed her notions in saying, “We are human beings. We all have that connection with each other. We all breathe, and we all need food and nourishment.” Harold specifically spoke of empathy. He said that when students and adults are aware of their different surroundings, this awareness aids in building empathy.

#### Equity

According to Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019), equity is connected to the idea of justice. “Justice seeks to provide a world where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, and a commitment to equity is a foundational building block toward a just world” (p. 38). During both focus group sessions, none of the participants contributed any thoughts about equity. Although three of the male participants noted their perspectives as a White male, they did not make a direct connection to the privilege or opportunities that may accompany that perspective. Due to the lack of data collected during the focus groups related to equity, this concept was included in the interview prompts to elicit more thoughts from teachers in respect to equity and is included in the interview data analysis section of this chapter.

### Knowledge Domain

The characteristics included in the dispositions domain provide the groundwork for the knowledge domain. Globally competent teachers expand on their dispositions to “focus on reflection, synthesis, and critical analysis of resources, event and experiences” (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019, p. 55). Within the knowledge domain, there are four elements including understanding global conditions and events, understanding the interconnected world, understanding multiple cultures, and intercultural communication. By marrying their global knowledge with their content knowledge, teachers create an instructional experience for students that promotes global competence. During the focus group, three themes emerged that related to the knowledge domain: global conditions and current events, cultural differences, and intercultural communication.

#### Global Conditions and Current Events

Being a globally competent educator is to possess an awareness of happenings around the world and to contextualize these events for themselves and their students. Since the world in constantly changing, this requires teachers to be lifelong learners and to consider events through multiple lenses (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019). In respect to global conditions and current events, teachers offered specific examples of their understandings. Ideas related to politics surfaced during the discussions. When Harold reflected on different trips to China, he found it entertaining to see how they viewed Americans and specifically described the way the Chinese viewed U.S. politics. “In the first two trips their perspective on our president was totally different than the last two trips.” He described a situation where he asked his Chinese hosts, “What do you think about President Trump?” and they responded, “Yeah, we really don't like him. We really liked President Obama.” Harold expanded on political circumstances by discussing his experiences traveling to a communist country.

What was really interesting to me was, while there were obvious signs that we were in a communist country, I don’t think the kids we were traveling with had this perspective, because they didn’t grow up thinking all communist countries are bad.

Harold further expanded by saying he grew up thinking that communist countries were bad but felt that this perspective has subsided in the United States. Carter mentioned knowledge of global events like politics, but in a different context. He shared,

I think for me . . . there is quite a bit of guilt. People in other countries know more about our country then we know about theirs. When I was in Africa, the principal disclosed . . . he listed off our past presidents and knew all these things about them. And he’s like, ‘You know the president of my country, right?’ I had no idea.

Carter was referencing an experience abroad he had prior to traveling with students but expanded on how this influenced his perspectives of events around the world.

In addition to political events and understandings, Lily shared about global conditions and the changes she has observed. “Especially in some of the regions I've traveled to, the changes in culture are exciting to see.” She spoke generally about a country where she witnessed challenges within that country’s systems. “And so getting to seeing a people who still loved each other beautifully, and were still able to say we appreciate our culture, but we don't appreciate a system we're living in.” While some teachers shared in general terms, other teachers spoke of specific current events. Victoria referenced the fire in the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, France.

There are so many kids who went on that Europe trip a few years ago [and] got to go see the cathedral. And now they can say, “I was able to be there,” and as they get older, they can say, “Oh my goodness, I was there before this happened.”

#### Cultural Differences

Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) suggested one avenue for teachers to enhance their knowledge of multiple cultures is to immerse themselves in diverse communities. By accompanying students on educational programs abroad, teachers experienced different cultures in a personal and intimate way. From these experiences, teachers reflected on the differences they observed while abroad.

As with the previous theme, some teachers shared their reflections in general terms, while others provided specific examples of identifying differences in cultures. Dave stated his views changed after traveling. “Now, I look at things differently than I did before doing that experience.” He explained that in the past, when he experienced a new culture, he looked for ways to have fun, but later approached new locations in an intentional way. He said, “I think it's a little more erudite, a little more cerebral.” Carter identified how he approached new locations differently and shared he became more willing to experience different cultures. He said, “The more I've gone, the more I've seen myself kind of branch out a little bit more because I'm more comfortable.” Evan’s contributions about experiencing new cultures were holistic in nature and included the idea of differences. He said, “I've really just embraced the beauty of everything that was there from the people, the relationships, the tempo. You know, life is just so different. And that really stuck out to me a lot.”

When describing differences between cultures, the participants gave specific examples of how the culture that was new to them compared to U.S. culture or Western culture. Harold detailed a presentation by Chinese students that was performed for the U.S. students and teachers.

They did this wonderful play. It was The *Boy Who Cried Wolf*. Except the moral of the story wasn't don't lie. The moral of the story was kill the wolf with an AK-47 and be a part of the community.

Harold noted how a traditional childhood story reflects what a culture values and wants to emphasize to their youngest members. He shared that the emphasis of community in the play represented what he thought was a foundational belief of Chinese culture. Other comparisons between cultures were related to elements of everyday life. Harold suggested the importance of “making observations even in innocuous things.”

In both focus groups, food was a topic that surfaced. Harold and Trent elaborated on their experiences in visiting grocery stores and food markets while exploring a culture new to them. Victoria offered a specific example of when she visited a market with students. “The kids were just like, oh my goodness. It was very, very different to see everything that they had to offer in their local market, rather than what we would have in Walmart or Kroger.” Dave also discussed places that would be considered common in the United States, like Walmart or McDonald’s, and explained how the lack of these stores caused him to identify differences in cultures. He said, “Everything we have and what we're used to experiencing . . . that's really [what] most of the world doesn't see.”

In contrast, most participants did not discuss the similarities in cultures other than in broad terms. Lily and Trent discussed the connection between people as mentioned in the encouraging empathy section of the disposition domain. Their comments referred to humanity in broad terms compared to other comments that spoke directly about differences in cultures. Harold, the only participant to reflect on specific cultural similarities, in speaking of the economy said, “And what I saw was this vibrant, growing economy and granted it was growing because it's a communist country. They're artificially manipulating their economy . . . but how Western it looked.” Overwhelmingly, participants shared specific differences they identified when experiencing a new culture.

#### Intercultural Communication

Classrooms are comprised of diverse student learners, and teachers should be aware of language differences and differences in communication styles. Various factors contribute to understanding intercultural communication, and one is “awareness of cultural difference in verbal and nonverbal communication and the effect they have on cross-cultural interactions” (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019, p. 108). Language and communication were concepts that surfaced in both focus groups. Participants like Trent stated when in different countries, he felt it was a unique experience because he was thrown into a culture that was not English-based. Victoria also spoke of the importance of “actually being [there] in real life” and supported this notion by sharing “because you can hear different languages and you can see how people react.” Harold spoke directly about his experiences with difficulties of intercultural communication during his recent program to China. “A lot of the adults, including myself, had downloaded Google Translate, and when we were with our tour company, it wasn't a big deal.” He continued to share that using Google Translate became an issue once they traveled to their host city in northeastern China. Harold explained that when the U.S. teachers asked their Chinese host about signs or asked what something said, they would respond by saying, “Oh, no, no, we'll tell you what it says. We're here to help you.” Harold stated,

And I think part of that is in China as hosts, it's their responsibility to serve us. But I also feel that he didn't want us to know everything [that] was being said on the walls. There was a lot of propaganda.

In connection to challenges in communication, two participants expanded on how these challenges impacted students participating in the program abroad. Dave noted that even when students are in London and the language is the same, “it's still a little bit [of a] twist.” He elaborated on this and said he felt for the students that “sometimes the language barriers are too much.” He said for the students it might be difficult for “kids to be able to open up and have a conversation or be willing to struggle through.” Lastly, one teacher stated he felt negativity about not being able to communicate with people he met. When referencing his experiences in Europe, he shared that “almost everyone there has some passing form of English.” He expanded by sharing, “[I] feel bad that I haven't made more of an effort to develop those skills to be able to communicate with more people than I do.” Teachers freely discussed the importance of communication, and the challenges that accompany traveling in a country where their language was not the native language.

### Skills

The skills domain of the Elements of Globally Competent Teaching framework (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019) was the most comprehensive, and the authors parsed the skills concepts into six elements. The skills domain included the following elements: multilingual, classroom environment that values diversity, content-aligned global investigations, intercultural conversations, global learning partnerships, and global competence assessment. The skills domain spoke directly to teachers’ actions within the classroom and their instructional approaches. During the focus groups, teachers elaborated most on their classroom environments and their instruction. Multilingual, intercultural conversations, global partnerships, and global competence assessments were the skills that were mentioned the least during the focus group sessions. Two themes emerged from the analysis of the focus group data in relation to the skills domain, which were: creating a classroom environment that emphasizes relationships and respect, and teaching lessons that incorporate intercultural elements. Additionally, during the second focus group, the theme of storytelling was commented on by multiple participants.

#### Classroom Environment

A critical aspect of teachers’ ability to promote student learning is how they create a classroom environment where students feel comfortable and safe (Danielson, 2007). The classroom environment of a globally competent teacher goes beyond these characteristics and includes fostering a flexible and inclusive tone that is centered around openness, respect, and consideration of others (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019). Teachers suggested various strategies they implement to create a positive learning environment for students. Intentional relationship building was the first theme that surfaced in both focus groups. Although closely related to relationship building, the theme of creating a respectful learning environment was also discussed by the teachers. They freely discussed how their experiences of traveling with students impacted the choices they made within their classrooms to create respectful learning environments.

#### Building Relationships

To begin, Lily emphasized the importance of “cultural understandings” and through these understandings, she shared there are “beautiful ways we can connect to one another. I think that relationship building is exceedingly powerful.” Lily’s comments perfectly encompassed what other teachers shared about relationship building. Harold spoke directly about how the few Mandarin skills he acquired while traveling to China aided him in connecting with his students within his domestic classroom. He shared, “Well, I can say *thank you*, and *I don't want it*. That's it.” He explained that even knowing a few phrases resulted in conversations with his Chinese students, and he was “able to make a connection and have that relationship with the students, especially when they're an ENL student.” He further demonstrated his point with a story about a specific student who came to the United States from China and how he was able to talk with the student about places he had visited in China. Another teacher commented on the languages her students spoke. Barb said her eyes were opened after accompanying students abroad, and she became more attentive to the different languages her students spoke. Barb elaborated on how she connected with students by asking them about their culture and how she found this easier after traveling abroad with students. She stated, “I kind of never did that until I went overseas, and now, I feel like it's very easy to, you know, have those conversations with different students.” Building relationships with students by making connections was one approach teachers used to create a positive classroom environment for their students.

**Creating a Respectful Environment.** During the focus group discussions, teachers connected concepts of relationship building to respectful classroom environments. In regard to relationships with the students and the relationships students have between each other, Evan shared that there is “kind of an open mindedness or more of an empathy for your fellow peers” in his classroom. When further describing how he intentionally creates his classroom environment, he stated, “I strive to really make sure that we have a mutual respect in the classroom.” He emphasized the importance of this classroom environment so when he talks with students about different cultures or different topics, they can reflect and be self-aware. He stated that was important “to make sure that we are treating fellow humans, whether it's in our classroom or across the world, with respect.” Victoria spoke of her experiences abroad and how they impacted the way she views the students within her classroom environment.

Sometimes when we see other people that are very, very different than us, we can say, “Oh, yeah, I was really right about that.” or “Man, I was really way off base.” And so, I kind of think that that's one of the things that . . . I've been able to kind of appreciate with our students.

An environment that prioritizes respect was important to teachers in both focus groups.

#### Intercultural Lessons

Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) describe globally competent educators as those who successfully integrate global learning experiences into their everyday instruction. Instead of viewing global understandings as separate, additional items, globally competent teachers create a seamless blend of required standards and global learning opportunities. During both focus groups, all teachers commented on how their experiences accompanying students on programs abroad impacted lessons in their classrooms. Teachers offered general examples to specific lessons they taught that incorporated intercultural elements. The following section is divided by subject area to clearly show how teachers explained ways they incorporated their experiences abroad in their classrooms.

With three social studies teachers participating in the focus groups, they composed the largest group of teachers representing one subject area. They commented on how it was often very easy to incorporate their experiences abroad into their social studies lessons. Lily mentioned this happened most often during current events, religion, and political lessons. Harold shared it was easy for him to bring in his personal experiences from traveling with students due to “several of the regions that [I] have traveled to fit the curriculum.” Lily contributed various examples of ways she changed her instruction due to “more experiences with student travel.” She shared a specific experience with students in Europe. “It started by reflection and art. [If] you're going to take a kid to an art museum, let's please not waste their 20 Euro by walking in and getting nothing out of it.” She explained that while leading students through museums in Europe, she guided them in ways to better understand what they were seeing and experiencing by setting aside time for them to reflect. She shared how she applied these same reflection strategies in her social studies classroom when students looked at artwork or watched videos. For example, she incorporated reflection into a lesson that included the painting, *Washington Crossing the Delaware* by Emanuel Leutze. Lily summarized her thoughts about the reasons for these adjustments to her instruction:

It was that time of a realization for myself. . . if you're going to take the time in your travel to truly experience something, I need to take the time for my students in my classroom to experience [it]. It started with art and we're going to more things now. . . it's so easy to pull up primary sources . . . and get the gist of what this person was talking about.

She explained how she encouraged her students to reflect on “understanding the walk of life of this individual and why were they offering up this opinion at that time. . . and having [a time of] reflection and truly taking a moment to understand why that would matter.” She shared that these changes to her instruction “started out small, but that's grown over time.”

Carter shared a simple addition to his instruction that created an impact on his students. After working with students abroad, he decided to share his personal connections in lessons. “When I used to show pictures from the internet when we got to the China unit, versus now, I've been able to show pictures I took in China.” He elaborated that when students knew he took the pictures, “their questions are a lot more detailed. They want to know more.” Carter stated, “That's been really interesting to see how I can use my experiences and kind of translate it to students a little bit better.” He further explained how this related to exploring perspectives. “We talked about how our perspectives change. I'm able to use my pictures [and] my experiences to help them see their own perspectives,” he said. One example he offered was related to education.

I always like to share what it's like to be a student in these other countries . . . helping them understand if you were in China, this is what your day would look like, or this is what your classroom would look like. So, I think even though they aren't able to go themselves, I think I'm better able to help them understand or visualize through stories or through images . . . what it would be like if they had gone or if they were there now.

The social studies teachers who participated in this study detailed the ways in which their experiences traveling with students directly impacted their classrooms. All teachers incorporated their experiences in different ways within the walls of their classrooms, yet each approach was utilized to advance the depth of learning their students experienced.

Social studies teachers were not the only participants that shared ways their instruction changed. Barb described multiple lessons in her health and physical education classes she adjusted based on her experiences with students on educational programs abroad. First, she shared topics that often surfaced during her health units including religion, dating practices, family roles, and everyday life. Second, she explained how she created opportunities within the lessons for students to elaborate on how the health topics were reflected in their personal lives. She shared,

Students talk [about] how they have to act at home and then how they can open up at school [to be] a whole different person. They really have to flip roles a lot more. So, it was good for me to understand that.

Another specific example she offered was the varying roles that fathers play in different households. She acknowledged in the past she only taught from a U.S. lens, “the perspective here,” but later she included perspectives from different cultures that related to family roles. In physical education class, she implemented unique approaches to include global understandings to preexisting lessons. During the warmup running times, she would tell them to imagine they were traveling through a particular region of the world or a particular country. “While they were running, it just shocked me how much they can talk . . . like we're in Germany today. When they were running laps, I would listen to their conversations.” She stated she would select locations students had visited on the educational programs, and students who had already traveled there would share their experiences with their classmates. “So many of our kids have the opportunity to travel to a different country. The connections that the kids made were just amazing.” Although health and physical education may not initially seem like a natural fit for applying experiences abroad to impact student learning, the way Barb incorporated her global understandings into the mandated curriculum provides a model for this type of integration. Her approaches mirrored suggestions made to teachers in the integrating global learning experiences skills domain outlined by Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019).

Carol shared that while she was co-teaching in a seventh-grade language arts class, she was able to share her personal experiences to help students better understand the language arts content. During a novel study about the Holocaust, she shared personal photos she took while visiting a concentration camp in Dachau, Germany. From these sharing sessions, she felt she positively impacted students.

I think it provided them like a connection, and they were involved in asking questions. By us sharing with them about our trips or artifacts . . . it was easier for them to open up and comprehend . . . some of these books are pretty tough . . . so the kids could connect to it a little bit better.

In addition to her contributions to language arts lessons, she was also able to “help some of the social studies teachers here in the building with different things and different artifacts that I brought back.”

Teachers’ experiences abroad also impact fine arts classrooms. Victoria stated she enjoyed teaching foreign language pieces and sharing her personal experiences of other cultures. She emphasized the privilege it is for a choral director “to be able to teach a song in a language from the country that you've been in.” Teaching a French piece was a specific example she offered.

I stress to the students: we have to be correct. If we're not pronouncing things correctly, it's almost like it's a disservice to the culture. So, we have to make sure that we're doing this. And so, I really am very purposeful, especially after I went on my first trip, to make sure that when I do teach a foreign language, that I'm being very, very stylistically correct and correct when it comes to pronunciation. I let them know if we're not. This is so we make sure that we're honoring cultures.

Another teacher in this focus group had attended the concert where the students had performed the French piece, and he commented on the performance. Dave shared, “I remember when you were doing your show, and the kids were singing songs. I think it's a great matter of respect. The kids need to see that respect flows all around.”

Teachers who taught math and science had fewer examples to share about how their experiences traveling with students impacted their lessons. Evan, a math teacher, stated, “For me not too many state standards deal with foreign countries. [We] aren't trying to solve for x for those different things.” He did explain that even though he felt his content may not directly relate to other cultures, he did focus on relationships with students and tried to find common ground with them. His thoughts about relationship building were detailed in the section about classroom environments. In relation to science, Dave mentioned an experience he had in college while studying in Belize. When teaching about Indiana topography,

I told them about an example of something that I had come into when I was in Belize. One of the Mayan Indians was taking us on a tour and took us into a cave. It's the moment you can talk from experience, it becomes real.

Dave connected what he observed in Belize to what he was teaching students in his science class.

Trent, the only participant not in a teaching role at the time of the study, also emphasized the connection between his experiences traveling with students and the classroom. He shared, “Every time I go on a trip, I wish I was back in the classroom. There's so many things that I would love teaching: the cultures and world culture component.” In the past while traveling with students, he concurrently taught a world language class to seventh graders. He shared how he would share his experiences with his world language students through sharing photos. He said he would tell students, “’That's me standing right there [next] to the Eiffel Tower.’” He shared that he continued to incorporate his experiences abroad into his new role as an elementary principal. “I've talked to kiddos, even in first, second grade level, kindergarten level, about the world is a bigger place than what you guys understand it to be,” he said. Trent talked about sharing photos and discussed the questions students asked. He said, “They always wanted to know about animals, buildings and those kinds of things.”

The amount of data collected from the focus groups related to the integration of experiences abroad to classroom instruction was considerably more than for other themes. This demonstrates the importance the teachers placed on how their experiences impacted their classroom instruction.

#### Storytelling as a Way to Make Connections

While discussing how experiences traveling with students impacted classroom instruction, the theme of storytelling was mentioned by multiple times. It is important to note this theme only surfaced in the second focus group. Since two teachers commented on its importance, a review of their thoughts is included in this analysis of the data.

Dave connected storytelling to instructional strategies and explained why this was important for students and teachers.

There's a power in storytelling across all cultures. And I think that's one of the things that trips like these do for teachers and for kids, but especially teachers in the classroom. It lets us bring in a reality to the situation. You're showing yourself in the picture being there, and that's important because then you can express this is what happened when I was there. Not, well, let's read about chapter four.

He also offered a rationale about why he uses storytelling in his instruction.

I use that more in class because it seems to me, in my experience, that I can lecture for 12 minutes and they'll stay with me. I can tell a story for 30 to 45 minutes, and they’ll ask for more.

Trent agreed with Dave’s perspective and echoed his thoughts. He said, “I love that analogy with storytelling because it's so accurate. I tell stories about experiences that I've had.” Trent then explained how he would encourage students to consider gaining international experiences themselves. For over 15 years, he challenged students to travel abroad and then tell him about their stories by sending him postcards or emails detailing their experiences.

#### Intercultural Conversations and Global Learning Partnerships

Intercultural conversations are authentic interactions that result in connecting with individuals from diverse cultures. Tichnor-Wagner, et al. (2019) defined productive intercultural conversations to include active listening, critical thinking, and recognizing perspectives. Global learning partnerships can be an extension of these conversations, and these partnerships “expand students’ worldviews and open doors to opportunities for them to engage with the wider world throughout their lives and careers” (Tichnor-Wagner, et al., 2019, p. 190). Teachers can promote cultural competence through creating genuine relationships (Lai, 2009).

In contrast to the wealth of data related to instruction, few teachers spoke of facilitating intercultural conversations within their classrooms or creating global learning partnerships. The only contributions made by teachers related to these two skills elements are included next. Harold spoke of inviting a guest speaker who had traveled to Mongolia to share pictures and explain cultural traditions found in Mongolia. He shared, “That is so much more valuable than ‘Oh, we watched a video’ or ‘Here's some pictures I found on the internet’ or ‘We're reading a textbook chapter about this place.’ It makes it real to the kids.” This was the only reference during the focus groups related to intercultural conversations that had taken place. Dave suggested an idea for facilitating these conversations but had not executed the idea in his classroom. “Sometimes when you can't take your kids there, but you can bring two countries together, like two groups of kids from foreign places. I think that can be a powerful thing.” Teachers in the focus groups did not speak negatively about intercultural conversations.

The school corporation in this study had a partnership with a school district in northeastern China. Two of the teachers in the focus groups mentioned this partnership. Harold talked about visiting classrooms while in China. Dave, who was a school administrator before returning to the classroom, talked about visits from the Chinese partners.

I know that from an administrative position, we've had people from China come to us and look at our building and look at our school. They see such a vast difference. We let our kids go in the hallways. The bell rings and the kids just go. They know where to go. And that's not how it's done there, from what I understand.

Other than these brief comments about one partnership, teachers did not discuss any global learning partners. Due to the lack of data, a question referencing global partnerships was asked during the teacher interviews, and the data from those interviews is included later in this chapter.

#### Assessment of Students’ Global Competence Development

The last element in the skills domain of the Elements of Globally Competent Teaching Framework (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019) was the assessment of students’ global competency development. It is important to assess these skills to show their significance, to celebrate student growth, and to promote student self-reflection and self-evaluation (Tichnor-Wagner et al.). This topic was not mentioned in any of the focus groups. Students’ global competency skills were not defined or discussed, so it is no surprise the discussions lacked comments about the assessment of these student skills. Due to the omission of this topic, a specific question was included in the interview prompts and the resulting data is detailed later in this chapter.

## Analysis of Interview Data

After the conclusion of the focus groups, interviews were conducted to allow for a deeper exploration of teachers’ perceived growth in instructional leadership skills related to promoting global competence within their students. After the constant comparative method (Glasser, 1965) of data analysis was implemented to analyze the data from the focus groups, gaps in the data were identified. Any components from the Elements of Globally Competent Teaching Framework (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019) that did not surface during the focus groups or only garnered a few discussion points were identified. These identified elements then served as the topics for the interview prompts. The additional insights offered by teachers during these interviews provided additional data points to illustrate a deeper view of the phenomenon, which for this study included how teachers who participate in student study abroad programs perceive their instructional leadership skills. After this data was collected, it was analyzed along with the focus group data by using the constant comparative method. These multiple data points support the findings of this study due to the triangulation of the data. To review, there were seven themes that emerged from this analysis of the data: (1) perspectives, (2) empathy, (3) global conditions and current events, (4) cultural differences, (5) intercultural communication, (6) classroom environment, and (7) intercultural lessons. The following sections outline the data from the interviews that support these themes.

### Interview Participants

Three teachers were selected to participate in the interview phase of this study based on their interest level in the topics. Additionally, to provide a variety of perspectives, other factors were considered including participation in abroad programs, years of experience in the classroom, content area, and demographics details like age and race. Teachers were assigned pseudonyms during the focus groups, and these same pseudonyms were utilized in the interview data analysis section. The three teachers selected were Harold, Barb, and Carter.

### Dispositions

Perspectives and empathy were the two emergent themes that related to the dispositions domain. Teachers who participated in the interviews expanded on the ideas that were discussed during the focus groups. When speaking of perspectives, they volunteered specific examples of how they considered their own perspective and the perspective of others. They also commented on ways to encourage empathy.

#### Perspectives

When teachers spend time abroad, they often alter their preconceived stereotypes (Lai, 2009). Teachers in the interview sessions expanded on the thoughts they shared during the focus groups in respect to perspectives and stereotypes. Carter shared that in the classroom some stereotypes were shared when students learned about religion, and that he was purposeful to be respectful during these discussions. He said, “We definitely talk about it. We make sure we recognize the importance of understanding each other and understanding each other's culture and beliefs.” Harold said, “You know, it's easy for us as Americans just to kind of look at the rest of the world and label everybody else.” Harold shared about stereotypes from his personal perspective and a specific example related to Iran.

It seems like it's true that there's a tendency to stereotype specific cultures or specific countries or specific people. But understanding that, just like us, there's the government and then there's the Iranian people and you know, there's the American government and Americans, and they're not the same. I think being able to have that conversation and look at it from a different perspective and to not try to avoid generalizations. I think that having traveled has allowed me to more easily recognize stereotypes and false generalizations. I would say and while I recognize that other nations have their own agendas that are counter to the one I live in, I also feel that there's another perspective to it. That it's like, we can't just look at and go like, “Well, the United States is always right. And people that oppose us are always wrong.” I'm not absolving that nation of the choices they make. But I'm recognizing that there's another perspective to it.

Barb offered specific examples of different perspectives she considered relating to her instruction. “When we talk about peer pressure and talk about dating, it's very interesting to see the different perspectives from cultures.” She stated her students share their perspectives.

A lot of girls will tell about their traditions from being in different countries or from their parents coming from different countries. And that educates me more than I'm educating them. It's good for each student to hear from another student.

All three teachers highlighted the role their experiences abroad influenced their way of thinking. One statement Harold made sums up these similar thoughts shared by the teachers. He said, “I think having traveled to other places and met people in other countries, having had that firsthand experience has allowed me to present a perspective that Americans who haven't traveled might not.”

#### Empathy

Considering the perspectives of others and demonstrating empathy were mentioned by Harold. He stated that while traveling, he was able to see the differences in cultures compared to his “home culture” and “those differences are more apparent.” In juxtaposition of that statement, he also stated, “And understanding that at a very base level, we're all human beings.” Carter also shared, “It was eye opening to see, you know, this is what the world is like outside of our own little bubble.” In the context of his experiences traveling to other countries, he said,

It made me appreciate more the job I get to do and how I get to expose these students to these ideas. Because for a lot of them, this might be the first time they've ever thought about it or might be the first time they'd ever heard of it.

Harold also spoke of encouraging his students to think of other perspectives and to empathize with different groups of people. He offered a specific example related to teaching about religions. After some students had made generalizations about Muslims and stated that Muslims are all terrorists, Harold responded by trying to foster empathy. He shared what he discussed with his class.

They’re students right now at school, that you are friends with that are Muslim, and they're not terrorists. You know, and we can look at the people in the community that are Muslim. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the United States. So, to say that almost all are terrorist, [it] isn't true. And so confronting that, and trying to move the students from making a judgment, because that's what they see on the news, or that's what they're seeing in social media, or that's what they're hearing at home too.

From their experiences abroad, Harold and Carter provided various examples of the role empathy played in their discussions with students and their classroom environments. The study conducted by Phillion et al. (2009) also cited teachers’ ability to translate their experiences abroad into “classroom practice by examining their taken-for-granted superior positions and its relation to social justice issues in the classroom that deeply impact the learning of students from minority or diverse cultural backgrounds” (p. 336).

#### Equity

As noted in the focus group data, equity was not a topic that emerged during the discussions. Due to this, a specific question was included in the interview sessions. The three teachers in the interview sessions struggled to discuss equity in great detail. Harold shared, “When traveling to other places that are outside the United States, it's easier to see inequity and equity in another culture.” Carter reflected on equity and his experiences in China.

It's kind of just eye opening to see it now for yourself rather than on TV or looking at the numbers . . . we studied GDP in social studies but being able to see what that means . . . especially since we went to what there would be an affluent private school, but really, it wasn't anything out of the ordinary from a public school here in the United States.

Carter echoed what Harold shared by saying, “Just seeing what it really meant ‘to have’ or ‘to have not.’ Having that comparison, I think was really interesting. And something that I wish our students would recognize how privileged we are.” When Barb was asked about equity, she asked for further clarification about the question. After the question was read again and she was told it was fine if she did not have thoughts about equity, she did not comment on equity and instead shared her views on how students matured after traveling abroad. Due to the lack of depth of conversations related to equity, this would be a point to further consider when preparing teachers to be globally competent educators.

### Knowledge

Within the knowledge domain, three themes emerged when reviewing the data from the focus groups and interviews. The themes were global conditions and current events, cultural differences, and intercultural communication. As with the dispositions domain, the teachers interviewed commented on topics related to these themes and expanded on their thoughts first discussed in the focus group setting.

#### Connections to Global Conditions and Current Events

Every teacher interviewed discussed global conditions and current events. Harold provided the most insightful and detailed examples. He began by stating the importance of what is happening around the world and articulated, “I think being able to look at what's going on from one country to the next and kind of look at it from a different perspective.” He followed this by giving specific examples of his experiences in understanding global issues and how they related to current happenings around the world.

When I traveled to Communist China, the people around me have the same desires as I do. They're not the villain in this story that politicians are creating. Or when I travel to Europe, the people around me are human beings; they're not trying to take advantage of the place I come from.

He also discussed his most recent visit to China in the context of current events and noted how politics may affect future educational programs.

We were reading between the lines that it would become very political and having a bunch of Americans coming to visit the city in the middle of a trade war with the United States was no longer something that they had the political capital to spend on.

He further commented on current political changes.

It seems that in the last, just ironically, two years, almost well, three years, our attitudes towards nations that are communist have, as a nation, have become confrontational. That it seemed that a communist nation is totally opposed and at odds and they're our enemy. And having traveled to China, that's not what I see. Now, I'm not saying like the government of China and the government of the United States aren't antagonistic toward each other for a myriad of reasons, but when we're looking at the culture, they're not burning American flags, and they don't have anti-American propaganda everywhere. If you travel around Beijing, it's very much a capitalist city. There's what our government wants us to think about different nations and what other nations want their people to think about the United States. The reality is it's not that way.

#### Observations of Differences Between Cultures

Teachers who reflect on their time abroad frequently gain a greater appreciation of cultural differences (Lai, 2009). Teachers shared a great deal about the differences between cultures during the focus group sessions. During this interview sessions, Harold briefly shared, “I think this is a Chinese bureaucracy issue. What I've observed personally, is they like to conference about every small decision, and then they have to talk to people in authority to see how they want to handle it.” He noted that was a vast difference from U.S. culture. Barb also commented on cultural differences in the context of the China programs. She stated, “Some of the American stuff that happened that was shocking to them or the China stuff that happened that was shocking to Americans.” She noted that in some Chinese households there were more people living in the house than in a U.S. home, and that some students had to adjust when Chinese family members came into their rooms to talk without knocking. From specific examples shared during the interviews, it was evident that teachers understood the role cultural differences played in their interactions with others abroad.

#### Challenges of Intercultural Communication

Beyond noting the challenges of intercultural communication that were shared during the focus groups, teachers in the interview sessions made suggestions about ways to remedy the challenges. This finding is supported by research; time abroad can increase teachers’ abilities to adapt language and communication patterns to be culturally sensitive (Lai, 2009). Harold noted that when they first traveled to China in 2009, they relied heavily on the tour director and English teachers to assist in communication. He stated this changed over the years, and noted the teachers became able to overcome the difficulty. “Technology allows us to overcome most of that. I recall being with some parents when we were touring an elementary school with an administrator in Anshan, China, and we were using Google Translate.” Barb also stated that technology made communication easier. “I felt comfortable . . . with WeChat on our cell phones that makes communication very easily to understand each other.” Carter also highlighted his thoughts about the importance of communication. “I think communication is a big piece. I think communication is definitely key. You don't realize how valuable or how different communication is until you're there applying it.” Carter then shared about a specific experience where he and a few other adult travelers were hungry and struggling to order food in their hotel. He stated they “learned very quickly how to communicate whether it was through the limited Chinese we knew or whether it's through physical motions or pointing.” When summing up his thoughts about communication, he stated, “I think that's one of the most stressful parts of traveling, but it's also one of the most rewarding.” Intercultural communication was a theme that the teachers discussed in the interview sessions, and they elaborated on how intercultural communication impacted them personally.

### Skills

During the focus group sessions, teachers were eager to share about ways they applied their cultural understandings in their classrooms. Teachers who participated in the interview sessions also freely talked about how their experience traveling with students influenced their instruction. Prompts about classroom environments and lessons were posed to the participants to glean additional thoughts about instruction. Due to the lack of discussion during the focus group sessions regarding three elements within the framework, teachers were given prompts related to the elements of intercultural and international conversations, global partnerships, and the assessment of students’ global competence development. Although teachers volunteered their ideas in response to these prompts, the topics were not considered an emerging theme after the data was analyzed by the constant comparison method (Glasser, 1965). During the interview sessions, the themes of creating a classroom environment that emphasizes relationships and respect and teaching lessons that incorporate intercultural elements surfaced again as important themes.

#### Classroom Environment

Two of the teachers were eager to share about the ways they created a positive classroom environment. Carter and Harold spoke passionately about the actions they took with their students to build a strong classroom community. Carter shared, “So kind of helping them recognize that we're a community, and we're here together. So, we need to make sure we're supporting each other.” Barb discussed the environment in her classroom and outlined the ways she provided structure and predictability for her students. Following this description, she noted ideas related to building relationships and creating a respectful environment.

### Building Relationships

An inquiry-based approach provided Harold with a way to create relationships with his students. He stated, “And what I found is that my dialogue with students is very inquiry based. Yeah, so I think an inquiry-based approach is probably at the heart of how I interact with students most of the time.” Harold and Barb offered the same approach for building relationships with their students that also serves as a way for students to connect with each other. Both teachers implemented community discussion circles or class meeting circles in their classrooms. Harold described his class meeting circles by stating, “At the heart of it, it's more student centered. It offers the forum for them to have a conversation with me, and it's a less formal setting, a less institutional setting than students sitting in their chairs at desks.” Barb explained her approach by saying, “We get in a community circle and talk about whatever topic if it's relevant to anything going on society right now, which is always with health topics, there's always something.” Closely intertwined with building relationships within a classroom setting is creating an atmosphere of respect.

### Creating a Respectful Environment

Carter and Harold spoke specifically about practices they implemented in their classrooms to build an environment that promoted respect between all students. Carter gave an example of a lesson he used at the start of the year. Students discussed the reasons why social studies is an important topic to study, and he explained one reason that many students gravitated to as the most important reason.

We gave them an article, which was kind of like a blog . . . the top 10 reasons or top 10 ways you're going to use social studies. And so, I turned it into a Socratic seminar sort of circle discussion where the students would go through and they share which ones they agreed with and which ones they disagreed with. I definitely had a heavy hand in guiding the conversation and helping the students who, you know, might have struggled to understand the purpose of the activity, but I think by the end, all the students got to the place where, okay, maybe this is something that I can see value in, or I care if other people know about me, so now I should probably care if they know [about me].

Carter also stated the importance of these conversations and said, “So even if they don't find great value or don't necessarily strongly agree with any of the things we discuss, at least they're thinking about it and maybe trying to decide for themselves.” Harold also articulated the importance of a classroom of students that respect each other and stated, “I want my kids to be open minded.” He stated this environment led to students trying to understand each other.

When we're talking about ethnicity or race or religious beliefs [or] we're learning about other nations, they're more open to learning about those places and not making a quick judgment. And when someone does, they're more open to confronting that . . . inside the classroom, we can have a safe place.

Carter echoed similar thoughts and stated, “I think that kind of connects to my classroom environment where I want them to be in more open-minded and more respectful and accepting of people with differences.”

#### Intercultural Lessons

In a study of pre-service teachers’ experiences abroad and the impact these experiences had on their classrooms, DeVillar and Jiang (2012) found that teachers shared “their own experiences with their students as a way of building communicative and experiential bridges” (p. 16). All teachers interviewed freely offered specific examples from their classrooms when asked to describe how their involvement in travel abroad educational programs might influence their ability to integrate learning experiences for students that promote content-aligned explorations of the world. Harold said, “I think having an open mind and not being judgmental. I think that that attitude is something that's integrated in my instruction.” He then offered examples of specific lessons he created based on his experiences abroad including teaching students Tia Chi, sharing his personal photos in lessons, and occasionally structuring his classroom like a Chinese classroom.

Barb offered the greatest number of specific examples of the three teachers. As a health teacher, she described various multicultural elements she added into her lessons.

When we talk about nutrition, they'll bring up like different foods from different cultures. They’ll talk about nutrition for one thing. We talked about European food labels, how they have like a stop sign. It's very easy to read food labels over there . . . when we count our exercises, I will just say a language and they will count them. And they'll relate it to World Languages and being on the Europe trip . . . the differences on drugs, alcohol, and tobacco ages. And that is very interesting for the kids that German kids can drink at any age and then the smoking differences. . . when we talk about peer pressure and then talk about dating. It's very interesting to see the different perspectives from cultures on dating.

Similar to Barb, Carter found ways to incorporate his experiences into this classroom and also incorporate different languages to into lessons.

When we're doing different units, you know, in different parts of the world, I try to use greetings for my students, whether it's in my announcements or something I'm doing presenting to the class. We definitely focus on the vocabulary. Just looking up at the word wall there in my room, a lot of words that and I remind students you know, these aren't necessarily English words . . . like words, you've probably never heard of translated. So just trying to get them to understand that you know, there's a difference and there is value in and understanding the language itself.

As in the focus group, Carter commented again on using his personal photographs and how this engages the students.

But with just having the experience in China, I'm just able to show them things that we talked about in class, which is great, so we can talk about why they built the Great Wall and who built it and how long it took. And then I can say, oh, here's me on the Great Wall.

He also stated, “That's a lucky thing I have that I don't think a lot of other subjects are able to as easily convert their experience into what they're teaching in the classroom.”

#### Communicating in Multiple Languages

As noted earlier, teachers communicating in multiple language was an element of the skills domain, but this topic did not emerge as a theme during the focus group sessions; therefore, a question was asked directly related to this element during the interviews. Although teachers commented on speaking different languages, it was evident from their contributions that communicating in multiple languages was not an emerging theme.

Harold shared he did not speak a language other than English but discussed ways he used languages in his classroom. He stated,

I think integration of some language when appropriate, you know, teaching the kids Italian because I traveled to Italy . . . a little Mandarin or what little Mandarin I have . . .. You know, I think those are just little ways to engage kids.

Barb also stated she did not know another language, but after traveling to Germany multiple times, she could understand some phrases and was able to understand some song lyrics of a German song. Carter also did not speak a second language but discussed his thoughts on learning a language. He said, “I think it's different. Being here and learning a language where you're not really using it outside of the classroom, versus when you get to travel, and you're almost forced to use it.” He also voiced wanting to learn more of the languages of the places he visited.

I would love to have had more. That's probably on me more than anyone that I didn't learn more than I did. But I think having that preparation really builds the confidence. Just makes me wish I had invested more time . . . had more opportunities in learning different languages and then using it.

These three teachers incorporated minimal use of languages other than English in their classrooms, and none of the teachers were comfortable in communicating consistently in another language.

#### Intercultural Conversations

Since the element of intercultural conversations was not discussed directly in the focus group sessions, teachers in the interview sessions were prompted to describe how their involvement in travel abroad educational programs might influence their ability to facilitate these conversations. Barb gave examples of her observations during one of the China programs. At one of the Chinese schools, Chinese and U.S. students completed a technology activity together.

I know this past time these educators were very frustrated on how Americans kind of dive into things without having specific directions. . . the American kids just like they almost did it backwards. For you know, from the starting backwards to complete the task. Where the Chinese, they were very like, ‘We'll do step one, will stop, then will do step two, will stop’ . . . They both worked. It's interesting on how the kids interact different. That was very eye opening to me that both tasks were done perfectly, but kids went about it a different way.

In reference to the same program to China, Carter shared a frustration with communication.

Communication, I think, is the driving force that can either make it go really well, because we could both speak English on the bus. And we could both kind of set up, you know, what are we doing? Why are we here? What's next. But it was also kind of constraining because once they (Chinese English speakers) were gone, and we didn't have anybody to communicate with, it kind of made us have to figure out things on our own.

Beyond the frustrations, Carter stated he wanted to initiate avenues to foster intercultural conversations that could go beyond the study abroad programs.

But I would love to build a relationship and make it more of a weekly thing or allow the students somehow to have some connection. So that way, the students who didn't have the money to travel or have the opportunity could actually, you know, build something . . . It's just ‘Hey, I know somebody, and these people exist over there. And this is what their lives are like.’ And even if something simple as, ‘Oh, you know, they look kind of like me, even though we speak different languages, or they're also interested in the same things I'm interested in.’ Just bringing it to them rather than just telling them about it.

Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) elaborated on many ways to facilitate intercultural conversations with students including using local organizations or groups, utilizing professional connections, and embracing technology. During the interviews, teachers briefly touched on different ways to foster intercultural conversations, but many ideas were not fleshed out or connected to the classroom setting. This is an area of the skills domain that could be a focus when encouraging teachers to become globally competent educators.

#### Global Partnerships

The topic of global partnerships was discussed briefly during one focus group session. The school corporation in this study had an ongoing partnership with a sister school in Anshan, China. It was noted during Harold’s interview session that he felt this partnership could be changing. Beyond the current partnership, teachers offered their thoughts about global partnerships and the challenges with creating these relationships.

When discussing the current partnership with Anshan, China, Harold thought it might be ending and stated his opinions of the factors that might cause the partnership to end.

I think it's difficult to build international partnerships as a classroom teacher, because when looking at potential partners [I am] at the bottom. But maintaining any relationship becomes really strained if you're just a classroom teacher. So for example, we had had a relationship with the school district in China for 10 years, but because I'm just a classroom teacher, and the way that culture works, there always had to be an administrator connected to it, and there was nothing anyone in authority could do to change that because of the way Chinese bureaucracy and culture is. I'm not a boss. I'm just a teacher.

He also stated why he felt the relationship was changing.

I think it was totally political. The part of China we were traveling to is very conservative compared to other parts of China . . .. But it's exceedingly difficult and I think right now the climate for supporting things like that really doesn't exist.

Barb also noted changes within the partnership with the Chinese educators.

I just felt from the two trips that I went on one was just so organized . . . it was such an educational experience for everyone. Where I felt the last one, it was good for the students, but I don't feel like they got the experience of a lifetime like they had prior to.

Even though Barb felt the experiences were different and that partnership was changing, she stated that she kept in contact with two people from China via email.

When looking to create new partnerships, Harold and Carter presented two different perspectives. Harold voiced obstacles in initiating a partnership. He said, “But I think beginning one, I wouldn't even know how to start. We work through a tour company that does all the heavy lifting for us.” As included previously, he also referenced the challenges of his role as a teacher and that his position did not allow him to have enough influence in the Chinese culture to begin a new relationship. Conversely, Carter was eager to find ways to create partnerships.

Yeah, so this is kind of this is part of my dream, international intercultural conversations. I've seen or heard of other classrooms during it where they have a partner classroom somewhere else in the world. . .. Do like a Skype or some sort of video call.

#### Assessment of Students’ Global Competence

During the interviews, teachers were asked about assessing students’ global competence. This topic did not spark a great deal of conversation. Barb shared, “I will say we don't do a lot. Maybe that's something I need to think of now that we're talking about it.” Carter discussed assessment in the context of his observations during the school year.

I think that kind of connects to my classroom environment where I want them to be more open-minded and more respectful and accepting of people with differences. And I think typically [I] can see that growth because in the beginning of the year we learned Abrahamic religions, which they're more comfortable with. Now when we're learning Eastern religions, I definitely see more understanding of ‘Well, it's not what I believe, but that's okay.’ So, I do see more. They're more receptive, I guess, to ideas that might be foreign to them.

Harold spoke more to his personal experiences and opinions. “So, I feel when we're looking at global competencies and looking at understanding the world. I have become more liberal leaning in that.” He referenced a personal experience with one of his high school teachers and how that teacher was not tolerant of viewpoints other than his own. Harold shared that the experience changed the way he viewed the role of a social studies teacher. He stated, “And I think that as a social studies teacher, students should be able to articulate what they think.” Again, the topic of assessing students’ global competency was only loosely connected to Harold’s comments.

## Summary of Focus Group and Interview Data

After a deep exploration of the focus group and interview data, seven themes were identified. The themes include: (1) perspectives, (2) empathy, (3) global conditions and current events, (4) cultural differences, (5) intercultural communication, (6) classroom environment, and (7) intercultural lessons. In addition to a summary of the study, Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the assertions, an explanation of the findings, a description of the implications of the findings, and a detailed list of recommendations for future studies.

# CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Introduction

This chapter contains a review of this study, including the purpose, the study design, and the research questions. A discussion of the assertions and the findings follows, in addition to implications for student educational programs abroad, recommendations for future research related to teachers’ experiences abroad, and instructional leadership skills in respect to promoting global competency in students.

## Purpose of the Study

The connection between teachers’ experiences on student educational programs abroad and teachers’ perceived growth in their instructional abilities to prepare globally competent students served as the focal point of this study.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do teachers view their own growth in respect to instructional leadership skills after leading study abroad programs with students?
2. How do teachers view their effectiveness in developing a globally competent student population after leading study abroad programs with students?

## Study Design

The qualitative method of grounded theory was used in this study to investigate the development of teachers’ instructional leadership skills in the context of teachers’ roles in student study abroad programs. A case study was conducted and, due to its robust middle school study abroad program and its high-performing schools, a school corporation in Northern Indiana served as the research site. Two focus group sessions and three interview sessions were conducted in this qualitative study to obtain data related to instructional leadership, specifically in teaching students to be globally competent. Purposeful sampling was utilized, and all teachers within the school corporation who participated in a study abroad program were invited to participate in the study. From that set, a total of nine teachers volunteered, and all contributed to the focus groups. Three of the teachers then participated in semi-structured interviews and were selected based on the following criteria: contributions to the focus groups, participation in study abroad programs, years of teaching experience, content area taught, and demographic details. All focus groups and interviews were conducted at one of the middle schools in the school corporation included in this study. Through the focus groups and interviews, the teachers who participated in student study abroad programs relayed their experiences and articulated how those experiences impacted their classroom instruction.

All focus group and interview sessions were audio recorded and transcribed. The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis (Glaser, 1965) was utilized in this study to generate a theory closely related to the data. This was accomplished by comparing and placing the data into categories, and from these categories emergent themes were identified. Transcripts were shared with participants to review. Participants were asked to note any thoughts about how their contributions were categorized. From this process, emergent themes were confirmed.

## Discussion of the Findings

The emergent themes identified in this study were consistent with the research related to teacher leadership skills, study abroad programs, and global competency education found in chapter 2. The seven themes are: (1) perspectives, (2) empathy, (3) global conditions and current events, (4) cultural differences, (5) intercultural communication, (6) classroom environment, and (7) intercultural lessons. Three assertions were gleaned from the closely related themes, and as Alvermann et al. (1996) suggested, evidence is provided to support them. These assertions emphasize the most important factors for principals to consider when supporting teachers who have traveled with students to become instructional leaders in the area of cultural competency. Each assertion includes providing different opportunities to teachers so they can grow in different areas related to instructional leadership. The benefits of offering opportunities to teachers is supported by research related to the movement from teacher to teacher leader (Poekert et al., 2016).

### Assertion #1 – Opportunities should be provided for teachers to reflect on their own perspectives and consider the perspectives of others.

In both the focus group sessions and the interview sessions, teachers were quick to volunteer their personal perspectives. Teachers reflected on how their perspectives had changed or had broaden based on their experiences in leading students on educational programs abroad. From considering how their race and gender impacted their view of the world to exploring stereotypes prevalent in the United States, teachers demonstrated their ability to consider the lens in which they view the world. In a study of pre-service teachers’ experiences abroad, Rahatzad et al. (2013) found that teachers considered elements of their life experiences like being middle-class and White and were able to use their personal international cross-cultural experiences to deconstruct inequities. The findings in Rahatzad et al.’s (2013) study closely aligned with this research and further supports teachers’ ability to reflect on their perspectives and shift their perspectives.

In addition to exploring their own perspectives, the teachers were aware of the perspectives of others and were empathic towards others after a time of reflection. The notion of reflection as a key component of teacher leadership growth is supported in the research. Clark (2017) found fostering teacher reflection to be vital to teacher leadership, and Danielson (2007) included the importance of teachers’ ability to reflect on their own practice in her framework for teacher improvement. Providing a time for teachers to reflect on their experiences abroad results in teachers’ ability to grow professionally and personally. Poekert et al. (2016) included personal growth in their list of Individual Core Competencies for teacher leaders and, similarly, teachers in this study commented on their personal growth. Evan spoke directly about the influence these educational programs had on his personal growth. He said, “When I was in Italy, I was starting to go through my own personal evolution.” Personal reflections like these are what Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) highlighted as important steps in becoming a globally competent teacher. They stated examining biases, understanding the limitations of one’s own perspective, and changing viewpoints are steps in acquiring the dispositions needed to be a globally competent teacher (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019). Harold spoke of the change in his perspective of global issues from the perspective of growing up as the son of a service member. He stated, “I think the children of military parents are kind of super patriots. How they see things like, you know, the U.S. can do no wrong. Everybody else is the bad guy.” Harold elaborated on his changed views regarding different countries (e.g., China and Iran). Lily highlighted the ways her perspective of the United States changed after seeing the systems in a European country. She concluded, “And I'm a firm believer that you don't truly appreciate your own system or culture until you are depleted of that system or culture.” Teachers also discussed stereotypes and how their understandings of stereotypes common in the United States had changed. Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) stated that culturally competent teachers understand the importance of perspective consciousness and stereotype threats. Through reflection and the consideration of perspectives, participants demonstrated the dispositions of globally competent educators.

By providing structured time for teachers to reflect on their personal perspectives and to consider the perspectives of others, teachers can gain the dispositions to be a more globally competent teachers and better connect with their students. The importance of considering perspectives and connecting with students is supported by research. As Roose (2001) stated, teachers need to be draw to differences in their students and be willing to consider new ideas and different ways to see the world. Walters et al. (2011) and Yang (2011) also supported the notion that when teachers interact with people of different cultures, they gain perspectives that help them better connect to diverse student populations in their classrooms. This research supports the research that teachers consider their own perspectives, but also directly relates to the second assertion that teachers can improve their connections to diverse student populations.

### Assertion #2 – Both local and global opportunities should be promoted to teachers to experience other cultures.

The excitement that accompanied the focus group sessions and interview sessions demonstrated the positive impression the teachers had of leading students abroad during academic programs. All sessions included times where teachers were laughing and smiling about their experiences. In contrast, teachers also detailed difficult or scary situations while accompanying students abroad. On both ends of this emotional spectrum, teachers spoke passionately about their experiences abroad and what they learned from those experiences. From these experiences, teachers were able to speak freely about what they learned in respect to global conditions and current events, cultural differences, and intercultural communication. This knowledge provided them the tools to move towards a teacher leadership stance.

Teachers’ willingness to explore different cultures and learn from new experiences equips them with skills to lead. Both Hunzicker (2013) and Clark (2017) highlighted the attribute of a lifelong learner as a characteristic of strong teacher leaders. York-Barr and Duke (2004) found that one important outcome of teacher leadership was the growth found within the teachers themselves. After the teachers in this study participated in experiences abroad with students, they shared their eagerness to learn more about the world. This expansion of knowledge and understanding is supported in other research that examined teachers and time abroad. After teachers participated in programs abroad, Dixon (2013), Walter et al. (2001), and Yang (2011) found that teachers demonstrated improved skills in cultural competency and embraced a global mindset. Zhao et al. (2009) found that after teaching experiences in China, teachers gained a better understanding of the culture and took a stance as culturally responsive change agents. From the data collected and analyzed in this study, teachers showed growth in their understandings of different cultures, and the beneficial impact of this knowledge is supported by the research.

Although this study explored the impact of teachers accompanying and leading students abroad, it is important to note that teachers can gain knowledge from interactions with different cultures even in local settings. Opportunities for teachers to go abroad are not always available to all teachers (Rahatzad et al., 2013). Rahatzad et al. (2013) claimed “international experiences can occur within a local community since globalization has increased the mixing of people around the world” (p. 93). In this respect, it is imperative that principals support connections locally as well as abroad to expose teachers to different cultures.

### Assertion #3 – Professional development sessions for teachers to explore global competency instruction should be offered.

Tichnor-Wagner (2020) claimed, “Teachers need opportunities for deeper learning on reforms that require changes to instructional practice” (p. 22). These opportunities could include different facets of global competency such as incorporating intercultural elements in lessons. Within the focus groups, teachers commented on other ideas about incorporating cultural elements into their lessons. When Barb shared about her incorporation of geographic elements into her physical education lessons, other teachers interrupted her to ask questions about this plan. Teachers had various ideas about how they weaved their personal experiences into their lessons. Teachers initiated these lesson enhancements independently and did not cite any structured times where they were supported in incorporating their experiences in meaningful ways in their classrooms. By providing professional development sessions focused on exploring strategies and techniques to plan lessons that include intercultural elements, teachers can expand the impact of the experiences abroad and hone their instructional leadership skills.

For teachers to become instructional leaders, professional development opportunities are key to their growth (Danielson, 2007; Poekert et al., 2016). Hunzicker (2017) described the progression from teacher to teacher leader as an ongoing process, and this process can be supported by professional development sessions. When teachers participate in opportunities geared toward weaving their personal experiences abroad into their current curriculum, teachers grow as instructional leaders and specifically become more equipped to teach students to be globally competent individuals. Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) explicitly provided ways for teachers to expand the ways they teach global competency in their classrooms. In the skills domain of the Elements of Globally Competent Teaching framework, Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) stated that teachers should look through a global lens and connect global content and perspectives to already established curriculum. Research shows the teachers can grow in their leaderships skills when professional development opportunities are relevant and meaningful to teacher needs (Clark, 2017; Cheung, Reinhardt, Stone, & Little, 2018), and professional development sessions that emphasize global competency would provide that relevancy. Through these professional development sessions, teachers can embrace their experiences abroad to make a great impact on their students’ global competency.

The literature shows that principals have a direct impact on teacher leaders (Cheng & Szeto, 2016; York-Barr & Duke, 2004), and principals have the capacity to empower teachers to evolve into the role of teacher leaders(Ankrum, 2016). Principals should provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on their own perspectives and consider the perspectives of others, promote both local and global opportunities to teachers to experience other cultures, and offer professional development sessions for teachers to explore global competency instruction. When principals act on these three assertions, they can encourage teachers to grow in their instructional leadership skills, specifically when teaching students to be globally competent.

The following section addresses the research questions in relation to these findings and the thoughts of the researcher. As Alvermann et al. (1996) suggested, it is advantageous for the researcher to share how they grappled with understanding the data and allow the reader to shadow them during that journey. Tichnor-Wagner et al.’s (2019) framework is utilized to expound on the findings related to the research questions in this study.

### Research Question #1

The first research question in this study asked how teachers viewed their own growth in respect to instructional leadership skills after leading educational programs with students abroad. In both the focus groups and the one-on-one interviews, teachers were eager to share the ways their experiences influenced their instruction.

#### Dispositions

The first two themes of perspectives and empathy relate directly to the disposition domain and quickly surfaced during teachers’ discussions of their experiences abroad. Teachers elaborated on the ways their personal perspectives changed after experiencing different cultures and observing their students explore a new culture. Perspective shifts are supported in research that examined teachers’ growth after cultural immersion. In a study by Walters et al. (2011), middle school teachers who traveled to China identified how their attitudes changed after completing a digital story based on their reflective journals. Zhao et al. (2009) found that pre-service teachers believed “the experience changed their way of thinking about their own culture, a dominant culture, and ‘other’ cultures” (p. 304). Teachers easily made the connection between their perspectives and how those perspectives played a role in the way they viewed the world and their students.

While all emergent themes were connected to elements within the framework, such as perspectives and empathy, related to the dispositions domain, some elements of the framework were missing from the conversation. Although teachers shared many insights about valuing multiple perspectives and empathy, the element of commitment to worldwide equity, an element within the dispositions domain, was not discussed during the focus groups. Even after directly posing a question about equity, only two of the three teachers interviewed commented on equity, and their responses were brief. Their comments were not related to their classrooms or issues of equity around the world. Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2019) stated that teachers must be critically conscious to understand what it means to have a commitment to equity, and this involves recognizing privilege and oppression around the world. Discussing the topic of equity requires individuals to have very difficult conversations and consider ideas that may not be comfortable for them to discuss. Blankstein, Noguero, and Kelly (2016) supported these reservations in stating that equity is often a topic that is controversial and confusing. They further clarified this thought in suggesting that some individuals feel that if more is offered to disadvantaged people, then there will be less resources for advantaged people (Blankstein et al., 2016). All of these topics may inhibit teachers’ willingness to discuss a commitment to worldwide equity.

#### Knowledge

Teachers perceived vast growth within the knowledge domain. This aligns with other research that states traveling abroad gives opportunities for teacher leaders to experience different cultures (Danzig & Jing, 2007), and the emergent themes of global conditions and current events, cultural differences, and intercultural communication were related to these experiences. Teachers made direct connections between what they experienced while accompanying students abroad and how those opportunities expanded their understanding of the world. They also elaborated on the ways their understandings impacted their instructional approaches. Teachers offered their knowledge of current events and volunteered specific examples of how they incorporated their knowledge into lessons. They spoke about how they were more attuned to student diversity in their classrooms. From cultural differences like languages to family roles, teachers detailed their observations and actions they took to embrace diverse student populations. Other research supports the idea that teachers’ experiences abroad aid in teachers better supporting the needs of diverse students, and that those actions impact student learning (Bae et al., 2016; Phillion et al., 2009). These examples within the knowledge domain illustrate teachers’ ability to translate their experiences abroad into their interactions within their classrooms.

Teachers embraced many of the elements in this domain, but it is also valuable to explore what elements did not surface during the focus groups and interviews. The only element of the knowledge domain that was not included by teachers when they considered their perspectives on their instructional growth after leading students abroad was the element of understanding the interconnected world. This domain encompassed complex concepts such as globalization while also including notions like *think globally, act locally.* Tichnor-Wagner et al.’s (2019) framework was not the only research to include globalization; other research supports preparing students for a globalized world (Beal & Bates, 2010; Jackson, 2009; Springer, 2009). Globalization was not specifically mentioned in the focus groups or interviews, and only slight references to the interconnectedness of the world were discussed. This omission could be attributed to teachers’ existing knowledge base. The teachers who led study abroad programs and spent time abroad had a personal understanding of the ways the world is interconnected. The concept of globalization is one that was woven into the fabric of their experiences, and they may not have considered a stand-alone concept of global competency education. Another possibility of this exclusion may simply be that the teachers did not have a clear understanding of globalization or had not considered how their local community interacted with the greater world.

#### Skills

Teachers quickly and passionately elaborated on their perceptions of their instructional skills and how their involvement in educational programs abroad enhanced their classrooms. Danzig and Jing (2007) stated that when teachers travel to different countries it affects teachers’ subsequence work in their classrooms, which supports the finding in this study. The two emergent themes of classroom environment and intercultural lessons proved to be topics teachers were very comfortable discussing. Teachers were visibly excited to talk about how their experiences abroad impacted their instruction.

Even though teachers demonstrated the most energetic emotional response to the skills domain, the highest number of omitted elements within a domain were those from the skills domain. The skills domain contained the most elements, and the emergent themes only related to two of the six elements. Teachers rarely discussed the following elements: multilingual, intercultural conversations, global learning partnerships, and global competence assessment. As with other elements that garnered little response during the focus groups, specific questions were asked during the interviews to elicit further insights from teachers. Even with these additional prompts, teachers were not able or willing to talk deeply about these topics.

When asked about speaking multiple languages, teachers were quick to share that they did not speak another language, and only one teacher voiced a desire to acquire the ability to speak another language. Even though teachers may not desire to acquire a second language, they could benefit from considering the use of language while traveling, and this could change their view of students. Zhao et al. (2009) and Yang (2011) indicated that pre-service teachers found the language barrier difficult to overcome, but the teachers applied their personal struggles to identify with students learning the English language in their domestic classrooms.

The elements of intercultural conversations and global learning partnerships were closely intertwined in the teachers’ discussions. Teachers shared positive perceptions of these conversations and partnerships but did not articulate how to initiate or facilitate the interactions. One teacher discussed at length the difficulties he faced in creating partnerships since he was not a school administrator. In contrast, the novice teacher stated that it was his dream to connect his students with a classroom in a different part of the world, but he talked about this as a lofty dream that would most likely not happen. Another teacher shared that she kept in touch with adults she met while traveling in China and Europe, but those relationships had not permeated the walls of her classroom. It was interesting to note that if teachers did refer to intercultural conversations and global learning partnerships, they almost always viewed them in the context of global travel. One teacher volunteered the idea of having local religious leaders present in his classroom to enhance a unit on religion and provide a more authentic context for his students. This was the only suggestion made in reference to local partnerships.

Multiple possibilities may account for their omissions. First, the lack of experience these teachers had with hosting these conversations may explain their hesitancy. The school corporation that served as the research site did not have a robust domestic field trip program in the middle schools, and even though there was not a policy that prohibits field trips or visitors, it was not a common practice. All field trips and visitors were approved by the middle school principals, and as stated in Assertion #2, principals could play a pivotal role in promoting these intercultural conversations. Angelle and DeHart (2011) stated that principals’ willingness to share leadership roles with teachers is an environmental factor in prompting teacher leadership skills. By prompting and supporting teachers to create intercultural conversations and global partnerships, principals can provide opportunities for teachers to lead, thus furthering principals’ influential role in teachers’ move to a teacher leader stance (Hunzicker, 2017). Mansilla and Jackson (2011) provided ideas for learning through international collaboration, and those included video conferencing, social networking, and accessing connections via universities and local businesses. Encouraging teachers to nurture local relationships and discover local resources could provide a window for teachers to expand their leadership and global competency skills.

Second, teachers may hesitate in participating in intercultural conversations and creating global partnerships due to another obstacle. As Harold alluded to during his interview, the partnership between the school corporation and the sister school in China changed over time. This partnership was initiated by a principal that since retired, and certain relationships she nurtured were no longer a component of the program at the time of this study. Principals play an important role in fostering connections. Tichnor-Wagner (2020) called principals to “connect and collaborate globally to promote and support each student’s academic success, well-being, and global competence development” (p. 30). Since previously productive partnerships were changing, principals in this school corporation could cultivate new relationships, and their support would further solidify the impact of these partnerships. Research indicates partnerships between schools are especially valuable. In the study by Yang (2011), a partnership between a university in Canada and a training school in Hong Kong provided pre-service teachers with benefits such as enhanced teaching methods and increased cultural awareness. Principals can take an active role in facilitating partnerships as teachers should not be alone in these endeavors. Principal support is imperative for the success of fostering intercultural conversations and creating global partnerships.

Global competence assessment was the last element omitted by teachers and is included in the discussion about the findings related to the second research question.

### Research Question #2

The second research question asked specifically about global competency in students: How do teachers view their effectiveness in developing a globally competent student population after leading study abroad programs with students?

Assessing students’ global competency was not mentioned in any of the focus groups, but research indicates it is important to assess global learning (Engberg, 2013; Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). Margolis and Huggins (2012) claimed that teacher leadership role development should be studied in the context of student learning and achievement outcomes. During the interviews in the current research, teachers were asked about assessing students’ global competency directly. When teachers responded to this prompt, they disclosed general observations of students. Teachers cited noticing students being more open-minded or showing more respect toward each other, and those observations served as evidence that the teachers cited to show students’ growth in global competency skills. The three teachers interviewed acknowledged their shortcomings in their responses. One teacher stated she really should consider assessing students in this area and shared a desire to grow in this area. Teachers did not delve into their thoughts regarding assessing student global competency, which could be attributed to their lack of understanding of global competency. Alternatively, the teachers may merely have not been prompted to consider the role of assessing global competency in their classrooms.

It is not surprising that teachers did not elaborate on their views related to how students grow in their global competency, partially due to the lack of professional development offered in relation to global competency instruction. Although teachers are personally and professionally impacted by their experiences abroad and incorporate these experiences into their instruction, there is certainly a gap in their knowledge about overall global competency instruction. This is not a direct fault of the teachers, as the school corporation in this study did not offer professional development sessions related to global competency. Poekert et al. (2016) and Wenner and Campbell (2017) cited the importance of professional development opportunities when teachers are moving from teacher to teacher leader, and the current research supported Assertion #3. Poekert et al. (2016) found that students’ outcomes improve when teachers are provided a cohesive professional development programs and teachers can move from teacher to leader. The importance of professional development for the growth of teacher leaders and the growth of globally competent teachers demands further recommendations related to these findings. By offering professional development sessions to teachers, principals have an opportunity to further expand the impact of teachers’ experiences abroad by growing a student body of globally competent individuals while also supporting the growth of teacher leaders.

## Implications for Teachers’ Involvement in Study Abroad Programs

The findings from this study encourage the continuation of teachers’ involvement in study abroad programs. Other studies support teachers’ traveling to develop global competency skills (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019). Even though this study supported teachers’ involvement and showed the benefits from their involvement, there are other actions that can be taken to further the positive impact of study abroad programs, and those include professional development opportunities, reflection practices, and the use of global competence continuums.

All teachers were eager to share about their experiences abroad and the ways these experiences influenced their classrooms. It was made clear during this study that some teachers were confident about these actions but uncertain about all the facets of global competency education. Teachers discussed elements of global competency by considering their perspectives of the world and by appreciating diverse cultures, but they were unable to articulate how these ideas worked cohesively to provide a pathway for students to become globally competent. As reviewed in the section relating to professional development, teachers should be explicitly trained on the elements that represent a globally competent teacher. Implications of this study would suggest offering professional development sessions that include three opportunities: before, during, and after the study abroad program.

### Before the Study Abroad Program

Before traveling abroad with students, teachers’ understandings of global competency could be probed in an extensive teacher essay. In the study abroad program included in this study, teachers were required to complete an essay as part of the selection process to travel with students. A simple addition would include a few prompts that would illumine their expectations of the educational program and their global competency understanding. This approach was used in short-term study abroad research conducted by (Dekaney, 2008). Additionally, after teachers are selected to travel, professional learning communities (PLCs) could be created for these teachers. Mansilla and Jackson (2011) suggested using PLCs as a tool to enhance teachers’ global competency, and they mentioned holding book clubs and reviewing online cultural resources. Before traveling, it would be important to provide teachers with direct training on global competency, and Tichnor-Wagner et al.’s (2019) Elements of a Globally Competent Teacher framework could serve as the content for the direct professional development. Included in their book, *Becoming a Globally Competent Teacher,* rich descriptions of each element can be sourced in addition to continuums that coordinate with each element. Teachers could use these continuums to evaluate their ability to promote global competency. If principals offer time for teachers to collaborate during PLC meetings and global competency trainings, the impact of teachers’ experiences abroad could be maximized.

### During the Study Abroad Program

Journals are used by many researchers to gauge the learning that takes place when students and teachers are abroad (Dekaney, 2008; Lai, 2009; Phillion et al., 2009; Yang, 2011; Zhao, 2009). Lai (2009) reviewed teachers’ journals after they completed a stay in Vietnam. Phillion et al. (2009) utilized pre-service teachers’ daily reflection journals as one source of data for a study investigating how to prepare teachers for work with diverse student populations and how to develop global perspectives within these teachers. Personal growth and personal reflection can be promoted by having teachers compose journal entries during their time with students abroad. Reflection (Clark, 2017: Danielson, 2007) and personal growth (Hunzicker, 2017; Poekert et al., 2016; Sinha & Hanuscin, 2017) are other components related to teacher leadership skills.

### After the Study Abroad Program

Conducting post-travel interviews or asking teachers to create artifacts based on their experiences could provide a way to extend the positive outcomes of study abroad programs. Zhao et al. (2010) held interviews with teachers after their experiences abroad, and that same practice could be utilized by the school corporation in this study to gain insights from teachers. Another approach would mirror Walters et al.’s (2011) study of middle school teachers’ experiences in China. These teachers were given four months to review their travel journals, and they then selected excerpts to create digital stories that displayed their experiences.

Including a pre-post design in the study abroad program could serve as a way to compare feedback collected from teachers. If a similar approach to that which Mapp (2012) used in a study that explored the effects of short-term study abroad programs on students were used, it would naturally serve as an ideal fit. Students in Mapp (2012) were given the same cross-cultural adaptability survey before and after the trip, and the data were analyzed to investigate growth. These surveys would be an additional way to gather data about the impact of travel on teachers’ global competency perceptions. Lastly, teachers could revisit the Tichnor-Wagner et al.’s (2019) Elements of a Globally Competent Teacher continuums. By reviewing their placement on the continuums, teachers would be prompted to consider how their experiences traveling with students directly impact their ability to teach students to be globally competent. The post-travel actions could further attest to the growth teachers experience while abroad.

Professional development opportunities, reflection practices, and global competence continuums are all tools that can enhance the positive impacts of study abroad programs on teachers and teachers’ ability to increase the global competency skills in their students.

## Recommendations for Future Research

This study explored the impact of teachers’ experiences abroad on their instructional skills in respect to fostering global competency in their students. Lai (2009) voiced the need for learning more about teachers’ perspectives on their cultural competency to support the best ways to use experiences abroad to expand teachers’ skills. Additionally, there is a call to conduct more qualitative research on study abroad experiences (Costello, 2015).

The data in this study indicated seven themes related to teaching global competency, and from these themes, three assertions were gleaned to offer suggestions to principals in growing teachers’ leadership skills. However, more research is needed to expand on these findings. The following interconnected recommendations offer ideas for further research to support the assumptions of this study:

1. Principals should provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on their own perspectives and consider the perspectives of others.
2. Principals should promote both local and global opportunities to teachers to experience other cultures.
3. Principals should offer professional development sessions for teachers to explore global competency instruction.

The findings in this study may be confirmed and expanded by evaluating explicit teacher professional development, incorporating other data collection techniques, and broadening the scope of the research.

After the professional development sessions, research should be conducted to investigate if this knowledge base would enhance the ways teachers use their experiences abroad to impact their instruction. If these sessions, such as PLC meetings or the book clubs, were found to significantly impact teachers’ global competency instruction, principals should offer these purposeful and focused professional development sessions for teachers to further enhance their instructional leadership skills.

Including other qualitative data points and quantitative measures would also contribute to this bank of research. Journal entries, digital stories, and additional interview data suggested in the implications section could provide these additional data points. Furthermore, survey data could be collected. This data could be used in tandem with the qualitative data to offer a more complete picture of the impact of teachers’ experiences abroad on instruction. Researchers could analyze the data to gain further insights on teachers’ growth in the area of global competency and teachers’ perceptions of how their experiences abroad impact their instruction.

Lastly, as noted in the discussion regarding the limitations of this study found in Chapter 3, broadening the scope of this study would be beneficial. This study investigated one school corporation’s study abroad program. Looking at a greater number of school corporations would offer insights to further confirm or question this body of research. Additionally, this study included middle school teachers only. High school teachers would offer different perspectives and would illuminate the emergent themes as only being relevant to middle school teachers or themes that transcend grade levels.

Data from focus groups and interviews were utilized in this study to examine the relationship between teachers’ experiences abroad and global competency instruction. This body of research would be better supported by evaluating professional development sessions, gathering data through other collection measures, and broadening the scope of the study. Since the topics of teacher instructional leadership and global competency education are such broad educational topics, gathering data from various measures would aid in furthering the conversation about these important topics.

## Conclusion

Now more than ever, we understand the interconnectedness of the world and the ways in which our lives are influenced by happenings on the other side of the globe. Lai (2009) shared that when teachers spend time abroad, they often are “influenced to tolerate and accept the differences in people, pressed to go beyond the boundaries they have set for themselves, and pushed to see people and the world from a fresh and enlightened perspective” (p. 112). The role of educators is to take on these perspectives and prepare students to succeed in the future. For students to excel, they must have skills to interact with others who possess different perspectives than themselves (Indiana Department of Education, 2019) and understand different cultures (U.S. Department of Education, “Global and cultural competency,” n.d.). This study explored how teachers adjusted their instruction in their domestic classrooms based on their experiences abroad to support this growth in students, and the results of this study were highly encouraging. The instructional leadership skills identified enriched classroom practices, specifically in preparing globally competent students. When teachers are provided the time (Kiranh, 2013; Wenner & Campbell, 2017) and opportunity (Hunzicker, 2017; Sinha & Hanuscin, 2017) to grow their leaderships skills, students and schools benefit, and teacher leaders can impact change in schools (Ankrum, 2016; Brondyk & Stanulis, 2014; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). When principals encourage teachers to lead students on study abroad programs, the programs can serve as an effective tool to inspire teacher leadership growth in tandem with promoting global competency in students. Teacher leaders can promote the skills needed for students to not only succeed in a globalized world but to thrive.

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# APPENDIX A. EMAIL INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Dear Teachers,

You are receiving this invitation due to your participation as a teacher leader in a travel abroad program with your students. My name is Lavon Dean-Null and I am a doctoral candidate from Purdue University. I am looking for a sample of teachers who would be willing to participate in a focus group for a qualitative study that will explore educational travel abroad programs and teacher leadership. I am looking for teachers who have traveled overseas with students; current administrators who were teachers when traveling with students may also be considered for this study.

I will conduct a 60-minute focus group with six to eight participants. The session will take place at a local middle school. A list of topics that will be addressed during the session are listed below. Participants are asked to review these topics but will not be required to prepare any materials for the focus group. You will be asked to share demographic data prior to the session via email. Your participation and responses will remain anonymous.

If you would like to participate in this study, please respond to this email. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If selected for this study, I will communicate directly with you about a time and the location for the focus group session. If you have any questions or concerns, you can email me directly.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lavon Dean-Null

Dr. Marilyn Hirth and Dr. Lisa Snodgrass

# APPENDIX B. FOCUS GROUP TOPICS

Please review the information below prior to attending the focus group. Again, you are not required to bring any prepared materials for the focus groups other than your demographic data, which you will share via email in advance.

**Teacher Leadership Definition**

“Teacher leadership is the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principal, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 288).

**Global Competence Definition**

“Global competence is the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance” (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011).

**Topics of Discussion**

1. How you (the teacher) involvement in study abroad programs influence:
   1. Your knowledge of the world
   2. Your perspectives of the world
   3. Your classroom instruction
   4. Your students’ learning

**Demographic Data**

* 1. Gender
  2. Age
  3. Degrees held
  4. Licensure
  5. Years of teaching experience
  6. Years of teaching experience within your current school corporation
  7. Participation in educational travel abroad programs (Please list each time you have traveled with students abroad while working with your current school corporation.)

# APPENDIX C. RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

**RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

TEACHER LEADERS IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION: PROMOTING GLOBAL COMPETENCE IN STUDENTS (IRB-2019-707)

Dr. Lisa Snodgrass, PhD

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Purdue University

**Key Information**

Please take time to review this information carefully. This is a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary which means that you may choose not to participate at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may ask questions to the researchers about the study whenever you would like. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this form, be sure you understand what you will do and any possible risks or benefits.

The goal of this study is to examine the relationship between teachers’ experiences as leaders on student study abroad programs and how teachers view their growth as instructional leaders when preparing students to be globally competent. This study will include focus group and face-to-face interview sessions and is projected to be completed in three months.

**What is the purpose of this study?**

Your participation is requested as you were a teacher leader on a middle school student study abroad program. We would like to enroll 15 teachers in this study.

**What will I do if I choose to be in this study?**

If you choose to participate in this study, you will take part in a 60-minute focus group. During this time, you will be asked questions about your experiences leading middle school students during a study abroad program. The focus group session will be audio recorded. After the focus group, three participants will be selected to then meet with the researcher for a 60-90-minute face-to-face interview. During these interviews, you will be asked further questions about your role in leading middle school students during a study abroad program.

**How long will I be in the study?**

The completion of this study will be completed with three months. Within that time, you will participate in a 60-minute focus group and possibly a 60-90-minute face-to-face interview session.

**What are the possible risks or discomforts?**

This study will ask you to recall and discuss your experiences while leading middle school students during a study abroad program. These recollections and discussions may prompt emotional responses. The risk level for this study is minimal. There are no greater risks than you would encounter in daily life.

Breach of confidentiality is always a risk with data, but we will take precautions to minimize this risk as described in the confidentiality section.

**Are there any potential benefits?**

We believe you will gain insights about your instructional approaches and how you prepare students to be globally competent. Through the focus group and interview sessions, you may enjoy sharing your thoughts about the experiences you had while leading middle school study abroad programs. Our research team also hopes to learn an additional way principals can encourage teachers to growth as instructional leaders when preparing students to be globally competent.

**This section provides more information about the study**

Purdue University will not provide medical treatment or financial compensation if you are injured or become ill as a result of participating in this research project. This does not waive any of your legal rights nor release any claim you might have based on negligence.

**Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?**

The project's research records may be reviewed by the departments at Purdue University responsible for regulatory and research oversight.

Profiles of participants will include the following details: their participation in study abroad programs, years of teaching experience, years taught in the school corporation, licensure, degrees held, age, and gender. To keep the participants’ involvement in the study confidential, pseudonyms will be assigned to each participant at the start of the data collecting process, during the focus group sessions. All participants will be de-identified by using pseudonyms during both the focus groups and interviews. Only the research team will have access to research records and data. The focus group and interview sessions will be audio recorded and then transcribed. The audio recordings will be immediately destroyed after they are transcribed. The transcriptions will be housed at Purdue University in a locked cabinet in the principal investigator's office.

These records and data will be kept for three years, and after that time, they will be destroyed. Since focus groups will be utilized in this study, researchers cannot guarantee that the other study participants will not breach your confidentiality. The results of this research may be used for further research studies that focus on global competency instructional approaches or student study abroad programs. Additionally, the results of this research will be documented and shared in the form of a dissertation.

**What are my rights if I take part in this study?**

You do not have to participate in this research project. If you agree to participate, you may withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. Contact any member of the research team by email or phone to withdraw from the study. You may also withdraw data that was already collected if you choose. There are no consequences if you choose to withdraw from the study. This study will be conducted on the Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation campus. While you have a pre-existing relationship with the school corporation, please note that your decision to participate or not in this study will have no impact on your relationship to Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation.

**Who can I contact if I have questions about the study?**

If you have questions, comments or concerns about this research project, you can talk to one of the researchers. Please contact Lavon Dean-Null by email ([ldeannul@purdue.edu](mailto:ldeannul@purdue.edu)) or phone (586.242.5952) or Dr. Lisa Snodgrass by email ([lsnodgra@purdue.edu](mailto:lsnodgra@purdue.edu)) or phone (765.494.9731). Lavon Dean-Null should be your first person of contact.

To report anonymously via Purdue’s Hotline see [www.purdue.edu/hotline](http://www.purdue.edu/hotline)

If you have questions about your rights while taking part in the study or have concerns about the treatment of research participants, please call the Human Research Protection Program at (765) 494-5942, email ([irb@purdue.edu](mailto:irb@purdue.edu)) or write to:

Human Research Protection Program - Purdue University

Ernest C. Young Hall, Room 1032

155 S. Grant St.

West Lafayette, IN 47907-2114

# APPENDIX D. RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Date:

Location:

Participants (pseudonym):

Session Number:

Please describe how your involvement in study abroad educational programs influence your classroom instruction.

Please describe how your involvement in study abroad educational programs influence your students’ learning.

Please describe how your involvement in study abroad educational programs influenced your knowledge of the world.

Please describe how your involvement in study abroad educational programs influence your perspectives of the world.

Please add any additional thoughts you wish to share about the ways in which your experiences traveling with students influenced your classroom.

# APPENDIX E. INTERVIEW ITEMS

Date:

Location:

Participants (pseudonym):

Session Number:

Please describe how your involvement in travel abroad educational programs might have influenced your thoughts on equity, if at all.

During the focus group, participants mentioned challenges that accompany visiting a country where English is not the dominate language. Please describe how your involvement in travel abroad educational programs might have influence your ability to communicate in multiple languages, if at all.

Please describe how you normally create your classroom learning environment.

During the focus group, participants gave examples of lessons they taught that connect to travel abroad learning experiences. Please describe how your involvement in travel abroad educational programs might influence your ability to integrate learning experiences for students that promote content-aligned explorations of the world, if at all.

Please describe how your involvement in travel abroad educational programs might influence your ability to facilitate intercultural and international conversations, if at all.

During the focus groups, the China Exchange partnership was mentioned. Please describe what is easy or difficult about your ability to build international partnerships. Please describe how you were able to create other local, national, and international partnerships, if any.

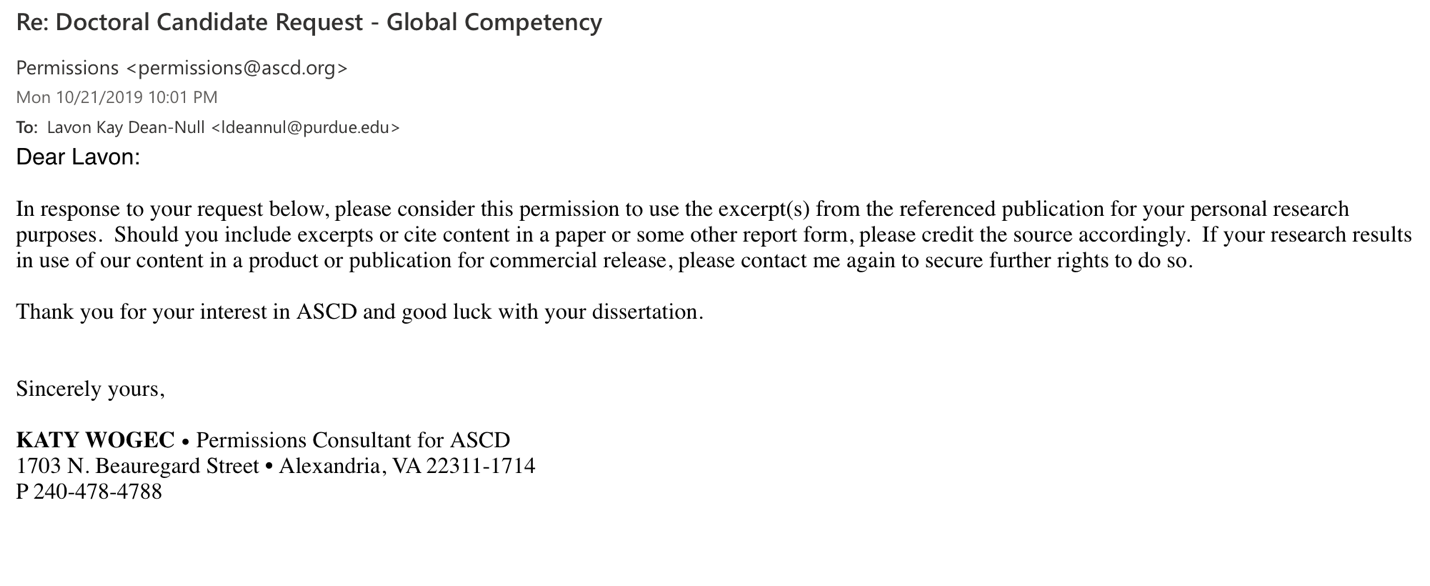
Please describe how your involvement in travel abroad educational programs might influence the way you assess students' global competence development, if at all.

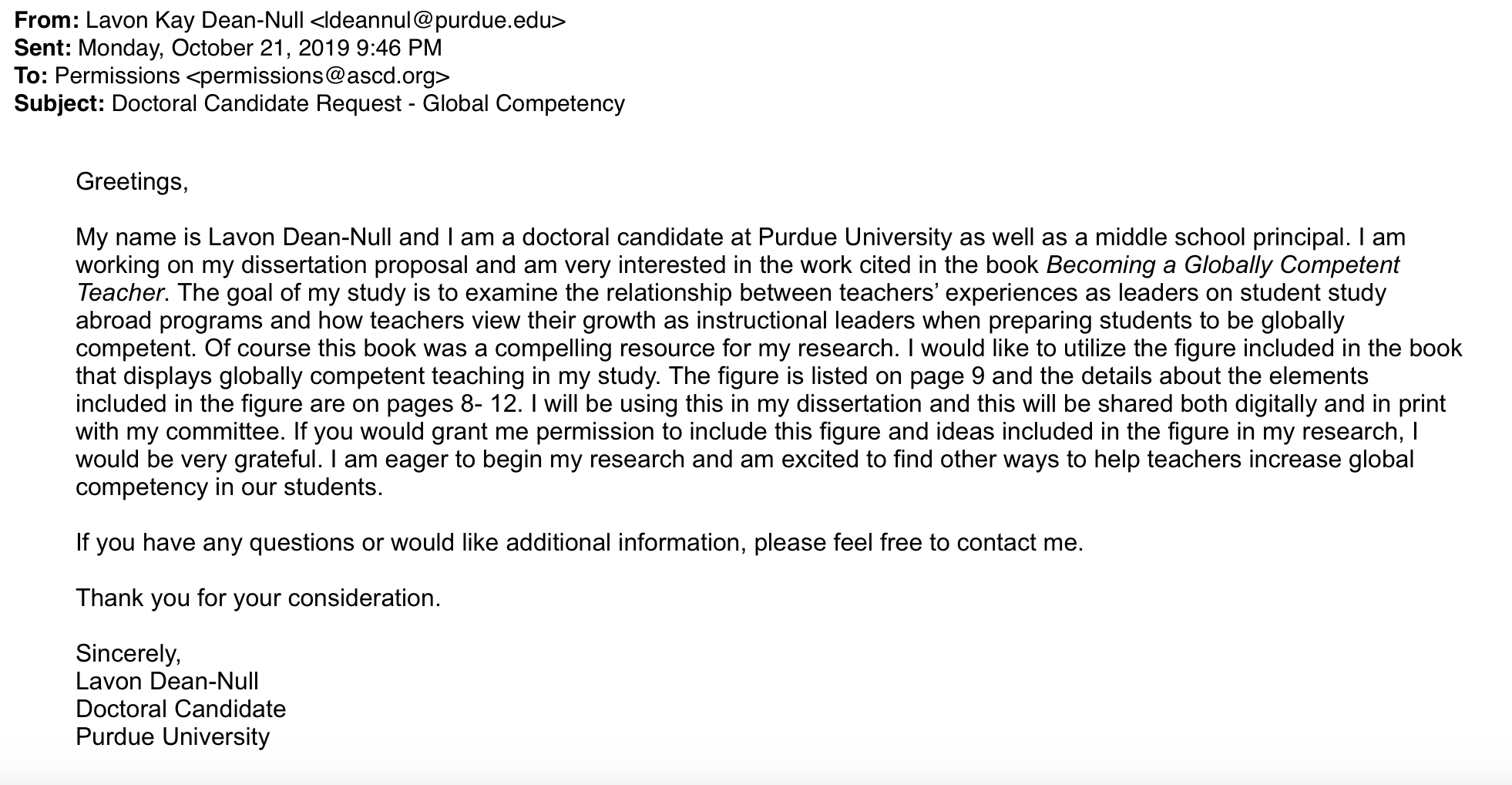
Please add any additional thoughts you wish to share about the ways in which your experiences traveling with students might have influenced your classroom, if at all.

# APPENDIX F. LETTER FROM SUPERINTENDENT OF P-H-M, PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



# APPENDIX G. LETTER FROM ASCD, PERMISSION TO USE PUBLICATIONS

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# VITA

Lavon K. Dean-Null

**EDUCATION**

2020Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

Ph.D. in Educational Leadership

2012 Indiana University, South Bend, Indiana

M.S. in Secondary Education and School Leadership

2003 Bethel University, Mishawaka, Indiana

B.A. in Elementary Education

**PROFESSIONAL EXPEREINCE**

2017 Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation, Mishawaka, Indiana

Principal, Schmucker Middle School

2016-2017 Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation, Mishawaka, Indiana

Principal, Walt Disney Elementary School

2013-2016 Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation, Mishawaka, Indiana

Assistant Principal, Grissom Middle School

2008-2013 Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation, Mishawaka, Indiana

Teacher, Discovery Middle School

2008-2009 ECC Ansan, Ansan, South Korea

Teacher, multiple grades

2003-2008 Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation, Mishawaka, Indiana

Teacher, Discovery Middle School