ABSTRACT

HOLLAND, MARTHA ANN. The Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., a Cultural Exchange Program: A look at Participants’ Perceptions of their Role in one North Carolina School District. (Under the direction of Dr. Kenneth Brinson, Jr.)

As our society becomes more global and student population becomes increasingly diverse, it is vital that students gain a global perspective. A clear focus of education in the 21st century is the emphasis placed on diversity and educating students to be successful in a global society. Schools and their staff, particularly teachers, have the ability to impact students and influence their perspectives of other cultures. Through hiring culturally diverse teachers, such as those employed through the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange program, school systems diversify their teaching force and provide students the access to adults from other countries and cultures. This study investigated the teachers who participate in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange program in Johnston County Schools, North Carolina, specifically looking at why they chose to participate and what they perceived their impact to be on their students.

The teachers in this study were asked seven interview questions via electronic communication (e-mail). Overwhelmingly, the teachers shared that they chose to participate in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange program for their own professional growth and development. They also shared that it gave them an opportunity to be fully immersed in the English language and American culture. When asked about their impact on their students, they shared that they felt their students had learned about different cultures, but they had
also learned tolerance and appreciation of people’s differences. Most teachers also responded that they will take what they themselves have learned from this experience with them to their next experience, either returning home to teach or to another country. While most teachers shared very positive views of their experiences and their students, it has not been without its challenges. They spoke of difficulties in adapting to the specific teaching assignments, finances, and adjusting to testing and accountability efforts.
The Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., a Cultural Exchange Program:  
A look at Participants’ Perceptions of their Role in one  
North Carolina School District

by

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Chair of Advisory Committee
DEDICATION

For Papa.

In memory of and honor to my best friend, Patte. You taught me about true friendship – the kind that lasts forever, even beyond the confines of this physical world. You taught me how to win graciously and how to lose with dignity. I miss you more than I thought humanly possible. I’m sorry you couldn’t be here to witness this dream coming to fruition.
BIOGRAPHY

Martha Ann Holland, ‘Marcie,’ was born in Smithfield, North Carolina. After graduating from Bunn High School, she enrolled in North Carolina State University to study history and social studies education. Upon graduation, Marcie immediately began her master’s degree in social studies education and became a teacher at East Wake High School in Wendell, North Carolina.

As a social studies teacher, Marcie completed her Masters of Education in social studies education. It was also at this time that she became interested in cultural exchange and saw first hand how authentic cultural exchange could impact students after sponsoring an international trip with a group of students. This interest grew when she became a personnel analyst with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and worked in the field of teacher recruitment. Later, as a human resources director with Johnston County Schools, Marcie had an opportunity to work directly with the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., and to facilitate the placement of several cultural exchange teachers in the schools throughout the district.

Marcie is currently the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources for Orange County Schools in Hillsborough, North Carolina.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The compelling changes in our economy, the dawning of the Information Age, and the horrible events of September 11, 2001 and their aftermath, have created an unprecedented need to focus on international knowledge and skills. To solve most of the major problems facing our country today—from wiping out terrorism to minimizing global environmental problems to eliminating the scourge of AIDS—will require every young person to learn more about other regions, cultures, and languages. (Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, NC Center for International Understanding, 2003)

Thomas Sowell (1991) wrote, “The history of the human race has been marked by transfers of cultural advances from one civilization to another” (p. 44). In an increasingly global society, global economy, and diverse population, it is important to recognize not only the differences in our society but to also understand and appreciate them. One place where this understanding can begin is in the classroom, specifically through teacher exchange programs.

It is no secret that the number of new teachers continues to decline, while the stress level of teachers continues to rise. The turnover in many schools and school districts is problematic. Furthermore, the burnout rate in the teaching ranks also continues to increase, the effect being the loss of many very talented teachers to private business and industry or through promotions to administrative positions. Why is this happening? Can it be prevented? What can be done to correct the problem? Many explanations are offered such as a lack of commitment among teachers, inadequate training experiences, and the absence of support from administrators, co-workers, and community members. To a lesser degree, could it also be possible that the inability of teachers to relate to the diverse cultures present
in their classrooms compounds the difficulties that drive teachers from the classrooms?

A clear focus of education in the 21st century is the emphasis placed on diversity and educating students to be successful in a global society. The new teacher evaluation instrument adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education reflects this focus in the second standard, which calls for professional educators to “embrace diversity in the school community and in the world” (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2009, p. 22). Further, as keys to the development of social consciousness among young people, schools and their staff have the ability to be change agents in encouraging awareness of diversity. Through hiring culturally diverse teachers, such as those employed through the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., school systems diversify the professional make up on the organization, thereby providing the opportunity for all of those in the school community the opportunities to understand, value, and actively participate in cultural diversity (Boske, 2006).

**Purpose and Rationale of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the teachers who participate in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange program. Specifically, the study explored why the teachers chose to participate as well as their perceived impact on the students they teach.

Following World War I, the United States’ focus on international program in education began to grow (Bu, 2003). It was not until after World War II, though, that
international education exchange programs such as the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program were formed with passage of the Fulbright Act of 1946 and the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 (Coombs, 1964; Graham, 1984). At that time, international education exchange was seen as a means of improving international understanding, as well as a way to promote American democratic values (Graham, 1984). Early studies reported that short-term international travel by teachers had some impact on how participants viewed other cultures and that “cross cultural experience made a difference in their teaching” (Wilson, 1983, p. 84). International experiences were believed to lead to more enthusiasm and creativity, and teachers were more likely to share the knowledge gained through their international experience with students (Merryfield, 1998, Wilson, 1986). Educators who had international experiences also were found to convey cultural tolerance and were more likely to make connections between historical events and current social issues, as well as connect global issues with cultural phenomenon (Merryfield, 2000). The earliest cultural exchanges were through colleges and universities, with professors and college level students and did not involve secondary education (Burn, 1990). However, political changes in the 1970s and 1980s that culminated in the end of the Cold War and the opening of eastern European countries and the former Soviet Union resulted in increased training programs and school exchange programs that involved primary and secondary levels (Quigley & Hoar, 1997).

As early as 1978, Gillliom and Remy, called for new approaches to global education and stated,
By the time they reach the intermediate grades, children have developed a sense of national identity, a set of attitudes, beliefs and values about their own and other nations as international actors and about such international processes as war and peace. (p. 499)

They further suggested that teachers are a vital group to help bring about an international perspective and awareness among their students. By serving as role models and bringing their own experiences to the classroom, teachers have the ability to influence students’ attitudes, beliefs, and values of their students. In addition, the community built within a school is vital in creating a cultural awareness among students.

Studies have shown (James, 1976; Parks, 1987) that cross-cultural travel and study-abroad experiences have value. The type of contact, particularly contact that involves exchange students or teachers and host nationals actively doing things together, is believed to be a significant factor in the development of more complimentary and positive attitudes towards individuals from other cultures (Allport, 1954). In contrast, Marion (1980) studied ninety undergraduates who had been involved in a study abroad program and found that if contact is superficial, negative attitudes of different cultures may actually be reinforced rather than changed.

Despite decades of international education exchange programs and the subsequent alumni of those programs, not much has been written other than descriptions of the programs themselves. Leestma (1973) and Hayden (1981) each wrote about the lack of data and research about the exchange experience and its
participants. Thus, “the influence of cultural exchanges on teachers, their personal experiences, their curricular decisions, their philosophies or the influence on other adult agents of education has not been widely assessed or recorded” (Rapoport, 2006, p. 5).

In North Carolina, and throughout the United States, educational leaders acknowledge that students must understand and adapt to the global society in which we live. However, not every child has the opportunity to travel internationally or interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds. The teachers who participate in cultural teacher exchange, such as those in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. bring an international experience to schools in the United States. This study will provide insight into the impact of the international experiences on cultural exchange teachers and their experiences in public schools in one school district in North Carolina.

Though international teacher exchange began decades ago, little information has been shared from the perspective of the participant. This study will provide a look at the international education exchange participant’s perspective. First, the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., an international education exchange program, will be reviewed and shared. Next, the stories of the teachers participating in the exchange experience in one North Carolina school district will be shared.

This study will also add to the knowledge base of the field of teacher cultural exchange. Specifically, it will provide an in-depth look at the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., based on North Carolina. Although journal articles, news
articles, and television news casts have provided information about the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., no formal research has been written about the program.

**Development of Interest and Subjectivity Statement**

Growing up in rural North Carolina in what by most people’s standards would be poverty, I always dreamed of international travel but never really believed I would have the opportunity to do so. To have a teacher from another country while growing up would have been an experience I would have treasured. Later, as a teacher, I did all that I could to impress upon my students the need for cultural awareness, tolerance, and acceptance of other cultures. I quickly realized that what I was doing would only have a minimal impact because students needed the experience of dealing directly with another culture and I was unable to provide that. This fuels my desire to study cultural exchange of teachers and how students’ lives might be changed as a result of having an international teacher.

As a teacher, I worked in a rural high school in Wake County and had the opportunity to take a group of students on an international trip to Italy, France, and England in 1999. In planning for the trip, the parents and students repeatedly made the comment that this opportunity was an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that these students most likely would otherwise not get to experience. International travel was not something they had previously considered for themselves. After our group returned, we gathered socially to share pictures and recap several stories from our
experience and again we all agreed that this was an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that allowed each of us a personal, direct experience with other cultures. In 1999, I was a specialist in the Licensure Section and was first introduced to the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. when I processed the teacher licenses for the international teachers employed through the Program. This was the first time that I knew that a program of this kind existed and I was intrigued about how it worked. In 2000, I transferred to the School Personnel Support section as a personnel analyst and worked with the State’s teachers-on-loan team in teacher recruitment. It was in this role that I first met the founders and leadership team of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. I quickly recognized that, through international teacher exchange, the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. was offering an international and cultural experience to students in North Carolina who, like my former students, may not otherwise have an opportunity to experience.

Through this position and my subsequent position as Director of Human Resources with Johnston County Schools, I developed a friendship with the current Chief Executive Officer of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., David Young. I, through working with the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. and the numerous teachers in Johnston County Schools, have developed a strong belief in the program and its purpose, cultural exchange. I further believe that the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers do have an impact on the students they teach and possibly the entire school community in which they teach just by the simple fact that they are cultural exchange teachers and are unlike the people they
interact with on a daily basis. My subjectivity will be a limitation of this study and will need to be addressed throughout the data collection and interpretation process.

**Definition of Terms**

The following definitions of terms will be used in the research for the purpose of this study. In other situations, they may have different meanings.

*Cross-cultural*, as in cross cultural contact, refers to the interactions between individuals from two different cultural backgrounds.

*Culture* refers to the common norms, values, and attitudes of a group of people.

*Cultural exchange, international exchange, and educational exchange* are terms used interchangeably throughout this research that refer to an event in which an educator leaves a teaching job in his or her home country to teach in the United States through sponsorship by a specific cultural exchange program, the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. These are long term exchanges lasting for at least one school year, where the teacher then returns home to share what he or she has learned while teaching in the United States, specifically in North Carolina, thereby completing the exchange. For this study, the term cultural exchange will be used.

*Cultural exchange program, teacher cultural exchange program, and teacher exchange program* are terms that represent the specific organization or company
that makes cultural exchange, international exchange, and education exchange possible through promotion, sponsorship, and financial investment.

Global society refers to the interdependence of countries, their businesses and communities, on one another for resources and support. For this study, it specifically relates to the knowledge and skills that students need to gain through their education, specifically from their teachers, in order to be successful contributors.

Intercultural competence is defined as “the cognitive, behavioral, and affective skills that enable an individual to interact effectively and appropriately with culturally diverse individuals or groups in myriad contexts” (Emert, 2008, p. 20).

Significance of the Study

As our society becomes more global and student population becomes increasingly diverse, it is vital that students gain a global perspective. Historically, cultural exchange has occurred through both formal and informal means, through the work of international missionaries for religious reasons, and through educators’ and students’ use of government supported programs like the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program. International teacher exchange is one way in which students can be introduced to diverse cultures, which is the intent of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. Though researchers have looked at other programs and provided information on the framework and organization of exchange programs, none has provided insight from the perspective of the cultural exchange program
participants. This study will look specifically at the cultural exchange teachers placed through the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. and teaching in Johnston County Schools, and will provide information directly from their perspectives regarding their choices to participate in cultural exchange.

Research Questions

Numerous questions arise when exploring teacher cultural exchange. Through the exploration of the following research questions, this study will present information about teacher cultural exchange through the information shared by the teachers participating in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange program. As previously discussed, international teacher exchange began decades ago, yet little has been written detailing the perspective of the participants (Hayden, 1981, Leestma, 1973). This study seeks to fill that gap by asking the teachers in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., to share their stories and experiences.

- Why does a teacher choose to participate in a cultural exchange program such as the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc.?
- Based on the teachers’ perceptions, how has the cultural exchange experience had an impact on the students, the school community, and the teachers themselves?
Specific interview questions being asked in order to acquire details needed to answer the overall research questions are provided in Chapter 3 when discussing data collection.

**Overview of Methodology**

The research tradition being used in this study will be qualitative; specifically the case study method will be utilized. Thomas (1998) and Yin (2003) contend that case studies may include description, explanation, evaluation and prediction. Data will be collected through electronic interviews with the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange teachers working Johnston County Schools who voluntarily agree to participate.

**Organization of the Study**

This study is organized as follows: Chapter 2 provides a review of related literature, including a historical look at cultural exchange in the United States, information on some of the first teacher exchange programs, and an overview of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. from an administrative view point, including how the program works in Johnston County Schools. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology and includes the procedures that were used to collect data. Chapter 4 provides the study’s findings including a discussion of significant findings relating to the research questions. Chapter 5 discusses implications of the findings for research and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Introduction

The global society in which we live requires everyone to not only have an understanding of different cultures, but also to have the skills to resolve issues in international and diverse settings (O’Neill, 2008). In this study, I provide an overview of the Visiting International Faculty (VIF) Program, Inc. and its role in Johnston County Schools. Therefore, this chapter outlines the history of cultural exchange, reviews the literature that focuses on the role of the classroom teacher in relation to cultural exchange, and provides details of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc.

The History of Cultural and Educational Exchange in the United States

Cultural exchange is not a new phenomenon. One could argue that the first cultural exchanges took place through religious missionaries who, throughout the centuries, have sought to educate other cultures about their religions, and thus bringing progress to the societies they visited. Missionaries, as part of their work, often built schools and offered training opportunities to the uneducated (Bu, 2003). These efforts were for the transmission of religious values, though, and not wholly intended as educational exchanges.

As early as 1898, leaders in the United States such as W.E.B. DuBois and William James (Nichols, 2009) promoted cultural exchange, based on their mutual believe that these exchanges, “rather than imperial and military ones, were the best
future course to secure progress, peace, and to advance democratic values” (p. 14).

However, it was not until the end of the First World War, that significant attention to international education and cultural exchange increased (Bu, 2003; Thomson & Laves, 1964). The first attempts at international cultural exchange began with the Fulbright Act of 1946 and the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 (Richmond, 1987). Interest and participation in cultural exchange opportunities grew among educators who traveled abroad to not only promote American democratic values, but also to educate United States citizens who were in a global community. It became imperative after the Cold War ended due to the growing interdependence of all countries (Graham, 1984). Educator exchange, which led to more authentic exchange of educational practices, became one of the more effective methods to achieve the goal of better understanding (Burn, 1990).

For the most part, teachers’ travel abroad was for short periods of time in the beginning, but it was found to have made a difference in the way these teachers taught (Wilson, 1983). For example, “Teachers with international experiences make connections across cultures and civilizations and across global issues instead of teaching them separately” (Rapoport, 2006, p. 2). Gilliom and Remy (1978) called for new approaches to global education and stated:

By the time they reach the intermediate grades, children have developed a sense of national identity, a set of attitudes, beliefs and values about their own and other nations as international actors and about such international processes as war and peace. (p. 499)
They further suggested that teachers are a vital group to help bring about an international perspective. Teachers, who can provide this perspective by serving as role models and by bringing their experiences to the classroom, have the ability to influence the attitudes, beliefs and values of their students. In addition, the community built within a school is vital in creating a cultural awareness among students. Studies have shown (James, 1976; Parks, 1987) that cross-cultural travel and study-abroad experiences have value. The type of contact, particularly contact that involves exchange students or teachers and host nationals actively doing things together, is believed to be a significant factor in the development of more complimentary and positive attitudes toward individuals from other cultures (Allport, 1954). Emert (2008) calls the phenomenon “intercultural competence.” Specifically, it is the cognitive, behavioral, and affective skills that enable an individual to interact effectively and appropriately with culturally diverse individuals or groups in a variety of contexts. “Developing intercultural competence takes personal experience with cultural diversity and reflection on those experiences to expand one’s own cultural mindset to include other ways of being and acting in the world” (Emert, 2008, pp. 9-10).

The potential benefits of cross-cultural contact are many. Each incidence of contact, whether it is in an educational setting such as through cultural exchange teachers or through study abroad trips for students, holds the potential for enhanced mutual understanding and the development of on-going relationships. Ellingsworth (1985) expressed concern regarding the lack of data in the area of understanding
the experiences of teachers in an unfamiliar cultural setting. He found that studying
the actual exchange teachers was an outstanding source of data and insight that
needed more research. Further, Emert (2008) claimed that “Studies on the value of
study or teaching abroad for teachers are limited…but there is evidence of the
positive benefits of taking part in sojourns abroad for teachers” (p. 4).

Training programs and opportunities for cultural exchange for educators
developed slowly and initially referred to the exchange of professors and
researchers at the college or university level rather than at the elementary or
secondary level (Alsup, 2001). The focus shifted in the 1980s, the result of political
changes in eastern European countries, as exchange opportunities were more
accessible for elementary and secondary teachers (Quigley & Hoar, 1997). Further,
the 1990s saw the development of curriculum focused on teaching democratic goals
and objectives and on expanding civic education. Though some thought that the
exchanges were not sustainable the vast majority of the research showed that the
result of this new method of cultural exchange and the new curricula was positive
(Craddock & Harf, 2004).

Despite the fact that cultural exchange has been taking place since the
1940s, there is not a great deal of research related to the impact of the exchanges or
the influence of the exchanges on the schools and communities where the
participants taught or worked. Both Leestma (1973) and Hayden (1981) explained
independently that there was a significant lack of understanding regarding the value
of cultural exchange, specifically about the long term effects on education and on the
individuals directly involved in the exchange. Craddock and Harf (2004) declared that “without research and assessment, those who are involved in both the support and practice of promoting democratic education [through international programs] rely on anecdotal and intuitive analysis to inform their activities and planning” (p. 2).

The earliest cultural and educational exchanges ended with the outbreak of World War II. Following the end of the war though, exchange again became a focus, with one of the first programs being the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program that was begun after the Fulbright Act in 1946. This program, still in place today, seeks to exchange United States teachers at all educational levels with teachers in foreign countries who teach the same subject(s) at the same level(s) (Medalis, 2009). The exchange opportunity varies in length from six weeks to one year. At its innception, the intent of the program was to foster cultural exchange; this same mission remains active. According to the Fulbright Program’s website (http://www.fulbrightonline.org), the Program “aims to increase mutual understanding between the peoples of the United States and other countries through the exchange of persons, knowledge and skills.”

The Fulbright Program was later expanded with the passage of the Smith-Mundt Act in 1948. This renewed efforts to promote cultural and educational exchanges and was described as “revolutionary” by George Allen, Assistant Secretary of State in 1948 (Hixson, 1997). A next key step in cultural exchange promoted by the United States government came with passage of the Fulbright-Hays Act in 1961, which emphasized a “mutual understanding between the people of the
United States and the people of other countries” (Bu, 2003, p. 233). This continued under the leadership of President Lyndon Johnson. In his message to Congress on February 2, 1966, President Johnson promoted the strengthening of international educational cooperation, the importance of exchanges with students and teacher of other countries, assistance to the progress of education in developing nations, and building new bridges of international understanding (Vestal, 1994). Johnson, a former school teacher, heralded a “Great Society,” one that could be developed and strengthened through international education, and his was probably the first time in United States history that “secondary school teacher exchange and school-to-school exchange were mentioned and specifically highlighted” in such a high ranking official document (Rapoport, 2006). Congress passed Johnson’s International Education Act on October 21, 1966 (Graham, 1984).

**Overview of Teacher Exchange Programs**

The earliest teacher exchange program in the United States was the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program that was begun after the Fulbright Act in 1946 (Breen, 1965). This program, still in place today, seeks to exchange United States teachers with teachers in foreign countries who teach the same subject(s) at the same level(s). The exchange opportunity varies in length from six weeks to one year. At its conception, the intent of the program was and remains cultural exchange. Similarly to the Visiting International Faculty Program, the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program seeks to have teachers teach in a foreign country for a period of
time and then return to their home country and share their experiences within their home schools and communities. (http://www.fulbrightexchanges.org/)

Just as the teachers who participate in the Fulbright Exchange do so under the auspice of the United States Department of State’s Cultural Exchange program, which requires an individual to have a J-1 visa, teachers in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. must have a J-1 visa to participate in the program. The J-1 visa is specific to cultural exchange and is administered by the Office of Private Sector Exchange in the United States Department of Labor. (http://exchanges.state.gov/jexchanges/index.html) Per the United States Department of Labor’s web page, the cultural exchange programs are “…carried out pursuant to the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961…. The Act promotes mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through educational and cultural exchanges.” (http://exchanges.state.gov/jexchanges/index.html)

There are several programs and independent agencies, including the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., approved by the United States Department of State as sponsors for exchange visitors. For the purpose of this research, a complete list of all approved sponsors has not been found in print or electronically. However, in reviewing other dissertations, some programs have been reviewed and written about by other researchers and information on those programs is provided next. Also, there are other companies operating in North Carolina and a brief overview of those is also provided.
A second teacher exchange program is the Nebraska/Australia Teacher Exchange Program. In this program, United States teachers traveled to Australia to teach for one year. Fourteen Nebraskan teachers felt they had become Australians during their time there after overcoming their initial culture shock (Freberg, 1994).

In the United States/German School Teachers Exchange Program, United States teachers changed places with German teachers for one year (Duggan, 1998). Cross cultural awareness and knowledge exchange were seen as benefits among teachers and students who were surveyed as part of the researcher’s review.

Texas-Spain Visiting Teachers Program focused on the needs of bilingual students and the increasing bilingual population in Texas public schools. In this instance, Spanish teachers were placed in public schools throughout Texas to serve primarily as a bilingual teacher and resource for the school. In this study, the research discovered that both Spanish and American teachers who were interviewed felt that the program was more of a recruitment program for Texas’ teacher shortage and not truly as a cultural exchange program (Moss, 2001).

Two additional exchange programs currently operate in North Carolina. However, little information is available on either of the companies, International Teacher Exchange Services (ITES), and Educational Partners International, LLC. International Teacher Exchange Services, based in Charlotte, North Carolina, has provided an informational packet to the Johnston County Schools district, and it includes copies of two press releases. The first announces the company’s designation as an approved exchange program by the United States Department of
State dated June 11, 2008. The second, dated August 9, 2008, announces the arrival of the first teachers to North and South Carolina. Additional information provided by the company’s web site (www.itesonline.com) provides information for perspective teachers, interested schools or school districts, and an overview of the program.

There is even less information available about Educational Partners International, LLC. The company’s web site (www.teachwithepi.com) provides a limited amount of information. On the “About” page, it states “Educational Partners International, LLC or ‘EPI’ recruits and places highly-qualified, experienced teachers who meet the credential requirements for teaching positions in North Carolina.” It also provides details regarding the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program, which is the title of the cultural exchange program operated by the United States Department of State, under which these and similar companies, including the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., operate.

**Related Literature**

It has been recognized for nearly a century that students in United States schools need to be culturally aware and knowledgeable of other peoples and their cultures in order to be prepared for a more global society and economy. Efforts to assist schools in achieving this goal began as early as 1946 with the Fulbright Act and continued through more specific exchange programs with Germany and Australia. Because developments outside of the United States affect the lives of
United States citizens on a daily basis, students need to be taught from an international perspective. The role the schools must play in preparing the leaders of the next generation, especially in the area of cultural awareness, is ever increasing. Today’s students will become tomorrow’s policy makers, and they will need skills that allow them to successfully function in on an international and global community level. To neglect the international aspect of education is to practically guarantee that the future citizens of the United States will be unprepared to be effective citizens (Collins, 1990).

In an increasingly global society, global economy, and diverse population, it is important to not only recognize the differences in our society but to also understand and appreciate them. Further, “it is now possible for more people than ever to collaborate and compete in real time with more other people on more different kinds of work from more different corners of the plan and on a more equal footing than at any previous time in the history of the world – using computers, e-mail, networks, teleconferencing, and dynamic new software” (Friedman, 2005, p. 8). Despite the advances in the world’s communication systems and more than 2,000 study abroad programs, a significant number of students never leave their own communities, much less travel abroad (Dale, 1988). One place where this understanding and collaboration can begin is in the classroom, specifically through teacher exchange programs.
The Role of the Classroom Teacher

Classroom teachers take on the role of a variety of characters in any given day. They act as instructors, teaching the knowledge students need to know as defined by standards and core competency guidelines. They act as facilitators, encouraging the development of skills such as critical thinking, problem solving and social cognition. They are curriculum leaders, influencing students’ learning through the subjects they teach and the topics within those subjects that they choose to and to share or not to share with students. They act as counselors and occasionally as parents for students who need assistance outside of academia. Madeline Cartwright, (1993) a former principal, insisted that the teacher and the school must address anything that prevents a child from learning. For example, if students are hungry or sick, these issues impede students’ learning and the problems must be addressed and eliminated. They also work to develop partnerships with family and community members, encouraging them to actively participate with students and school staff in the learning process (McCaleb, 1994). More than ever before, teachers are responsible for helping young people develop culturally appropriate behaviors, skills, and attitudes (Cushner, 1997; Cushner& Mahon, 2002). As teachers take the lead in this effort, they must “come out from behind closed doors and reach out to one another...” (Hart, 2010, p. 12).

In each of these areas, teachers have some level of confidence in their own abilities to meet the needs of their students. Through their own educational process, teachers are exposed to the use of course outlines, standards and objectives, and
have a firm grounding in the subject matter they will teach. Teachers also are taught about child and adolescent development so that they can better understand the psychological and emotional conditions of their students. Even after they become teachers in their own classrooms, the criteria on which they are evaluated includes indicators of successful relationships with parents and community members, so that if they are ill-prepared to handle these, there are ways in which school systems can help them develop professionally in these areas.

An increasing focus for many teachers today is the need to relate better to diverse students, parents, and communities. Donald Hones (1999) further describes the role of the classroom teacher as cultural storyteller, cultural healer, and cultural worker. As such, teachers are called upon to foster relationships between schools and homes of diverse families, which may include differences of color, ethnicity, religion, and even language barriers.

In the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards, a publication of the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission, the professional standards for North Carolina’s teachers, adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in 2007, are outlined. Within Standard II: Teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students, one key element is that teachers are to “embrace diversity in the school community and in the world” (p.2). This element is further characterized as:

- Teachers demonstrate their knowledge of the history of diverse cultures and their role in shaping global issues. They actively select materials and develop lessons that counteract stereotypes and incorporate histories and contributions of all cultures.
• Teachers recognize the influence of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and other aspects of culture on a student’s development and personality.
• Teachers strive to understand how a student’s culture and background may influence his or her school performance. Teachers consider and incorporate different points of view in their instruction.
  o Demonstrate knowledge of diverse cultures
  o Select materials and develop lessons that counteract stereotypes and incorporate contributions.
  o Recognize the influences on a child’s development, personality, and performance.
  o Consider and incorporate different points of view. (p. 2)

Educators need to be mindful that they cannot know the cultural background of every student and should strive to actively explore ways to incorporate culturally relevant topics and methods in their classrooms. Schools, in an effort to adapt to the demands placed on them by society’s changes are seeking new and creative programs that can help them to meet the needs of children (Walker, 1989).

Gloria Ladson-Billings (2001) states, “One of the current concerns plaguing the nation’s schools is how to find teachers who are capable of teaching successfully in diverse classrooms” (p. 12). Teachers prepared in traditional teacher education programs at colleges and universities across the nation are taught primarily by white, middle aged instructors. Of the approximately thirty-five thousand education faculty in the United States, 88 percent of the full-time education faculties are white; 81 percent are between the ages of forty-five and sixty (or older) (Farkas, 2000). Inferring that these numbers prove anything about teacher education faculty and teacher education programs may be considered reaching, but it does make one question the motivation of teacher education programs to prepare graduates to teach culturally diverse students.
The facts about the cultural diversity of the student population are staggering. Demographically, public schools and their surrounding communities are changing. According to the United States Bureau of the Census (Johnson, 2002) population projections by race/ethnicity between 1988 and 2050 show an astounding change across the board in non-white ethnic groups. For example, the Hispanic population in the United States is projected to have a 238% increase by 2050. Asians and Pacific Islanders are projected to increase by 412%. James Johnson, Jr. (2002) describes the demographic changes as the “browning” and “greying” of America and North Carolina. He contends that North Carolina is a primary destination for internal, meaning from within the United States, and external, from outside of the United States, immigration. In North Carolina, the percentage of immigrants from 1995 to 1999 increased by 73%, the greatest increase in the nation. From April 1, 1990 to April 1, 2000, 65% of the population growth in the United States occurred in non-white populations. In North Carolina, for the same decade, 52% of the increase in population was due to non-white population growth (United States Bureau of the Census, 2000).

Between 1991 and 1999, the number of language minority school-aged children in the United States rose from 8 million to approximately 15 million, and the number of students classified as limited English-proficient increased from 5.3 million to 10 million (Escamilla, 1999). One obvious problem this may create is a teacher’s ability to effectively and clearly communicate with students, despite a teacher’s best efforts and intentions to provide the best instruction for all students. It may also
prevent open communication between teachers and parents, which in turn results in an absence of parental involvement. These statistics about demographic changes in the United States and North Carolina reiterate the fact that our classrooms are changing. In order to keep up with the changing faces of the students in our public school classrooms, teachers should be challenged to deliver instruction in an effective manner that takes into consideration the various backgrounds, prior experiences, diverse value orientations, and patterns of interactions of their students.

At present, there appears to be no solution to the problem educators are faced with when challenged to make appropriate instructional decisions that positively affect how students view their own culture, the cultures of other people, and issues and conflicts of an increasing global society. Business and industry further complicate the matter by calling for educational institutions to prepare individuals to work in a global economy. The composition of the population in the United States, specifically in North Carolina, continues to change. Teacher preparation programs that serve the most heavily affected areas are not often quick to respond to the school systems’ needs and thus appear unresponsive when called upon to train teachers to have the skills and understanding required to provide adequate instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

International content taught only as part of the classroom curriculum cannot impart the level of global awareness that can be achieved through international experiences. Experiential learning is defined as “learning in which the learner is
directly in touch with the realities being studied” (Keeton & Tate, 1978). It is also seen as the link that connects the classroom to the real world (Kolb, 1984). Further, it supplements formal education and assists in personal and professional development. School systems struggle to find professional development programs for teachers and support programs for parents in order to meet the immediate needs of their students, which include authentic, experiential learning.

Authentic learning occurs when students are exposed to diverse cultures and have opportunities to work with individuals from different cultures (Johnson & Johnson, 1992). In addition, students’ cross-cultural experiences should be long-term and ongoing rather than superficial or shallow experiences that do not allow them time to build relationships with culturally diverse individuals (Bennett, 1993). In this way, students have an opportunity to learn to view people around the world from both insider and outsider perspectives, resulting in the “development of open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, and resistance to stereotyping” (Merryfield, 2002). It is this type of opportunity that the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. seeks to provide for the students in North Carolina’s public schools.

*Teacher Perception*

As this study looks at the perceptions of the participants in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange program, it is important to discuss perception and what that entails. Perception is defined as “a person’s belief or opinion based on his or her experiences” (Wu, 2010, p. 10). More specifically,
“people behave according to how they see themselves and the situation in which they are involved” (Carolan, 2008, p. 52). Purkey and Schmidt (1987) provided a list of fourteen (14) assumptions regarding perception, with the overarching conclusion being that an individual’s actions are best understood and “make[s] great sense when understood from the vantage point of the ‘internal’ view of the experiencing person” (p. 30).

Broniak (1997) explains that perception is three dimensional; it involves the physical world in which we live, our experience in the physical world, and the meanings that we give to that experience (p. 144). Slavin (2000) explains perception similarly in defining perception as a person’s interpretation of stimuli which, when received are processed by the mind in the context of the person’s current circumstances. It is also influenced by “our mental state, past experiences, knowledge, [and] motivations” (Carolan, 2008, p. 54).

In this particular study, the teacher’s perceptions are how they themselves feel and behave as a result of their personal experiences as cultural exchange teachers. This is built upon their personal observations as well as interactions with individuals within and out of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., the schools and staff with which they interact within Johnston County Schools, their students, parents, and other community members. Thus, the teachers’ perceptions influence their judgments, biases, and attitudes, which also then influence their behaviors.
The Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc.

The focus of this research is the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., which, according to the company’s “Fact Sheet” which is presented as a PDF document available for download, is largest teacher cultural exchange program in the United States today. (“About VIF,” n.d.) Specifically, the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. will be studied through the cultural exchange teachers who teach in Johnston County Schools, North Carolina.

The Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. was founded in 1987 in Chapel Hill, North Carolina by Fred Young and his son, Alan Young. Initially, the program focused on bringing international professors to universities for the purpose of enrichment and cultural exchange. In 1986, the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., sponsored their first public school teachers and brought twelve (12) foreign language teachers to teach in ten (10) North Carolina School districts. During the next ten (10) years, the program flourished and by 1997, the Program’s numbers had grown to about 600 participants, a significant increase given that the first year there were only twelve (12). The program reached its current size of about 1,900 participants in 2002 and has maintained this number despite challenges including increased requirements following 9/11 and the economic downturn.

Currently the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. recruits in about 60 countries worldwide. For foreign language candidates, they focus primarily in Latin America and Europe, where they can find Spanish, French, and even Mandarin Chinese, teachers. For core content subjects, such as math, science, English, and
elementary education, candidates are sought in countries where they will have more advanced English-speaking skills such as Canada, the United Kingdom, Jamaica, and South Africa.

As a designated teacher exchange program of the United States Department of State, the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. has the authority to recruit and sponsor teachers for the cultural exchange visa, designated as a J-1 visa. This authority is given by the United States Department of State based upon the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Action of 1961, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. (http://exchanges.state.gov/education/jexchanges/background.htm) It is through this program that teachers from other countries may come to the United States temporarily to teach. Designated programs, such as Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., facilitate this process. It is an expectation of the program that, once the exchange is complete, participants return to their home countries.

In order to maintain sponsorship status, an agency such as Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. must have in place the program components to support the exchange process and program. These components are identified as Accreditation and Licensure, Staffing and Support Services, Appointment of Officers, Screening and Selection of Program Participants, Insurance, Orientation, Pre-Arrival Information, Monitoring of Participants, Accountability to the Department of State, Annual Report, Changes in Participants’ J-1 Status, Early Termination Notice, Serious Problems or Controversy, and Program Category Requirements. One additional component, Appointment of Officers, is addressed in the company’s
internal organization and is not reflected in the direct services provided by the company.

In reviewing the details of the company, David Young, CEO of the company, wrote in an email dated February 20, 2008,

In its simplest form, VIF recruits international teachers, matches them with willing host schools, relocates the teachers to the United States, and then supports both parties with logistics, cultural acclimation, and instructional transition. These broad categories consist of an array of services that Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. provides to teachers and/or schools.

In the outline he provided, I have identified the United States Department of State component(s) that corresponds to each service identified (in italics):

- **Organization** *(Accountability to the Department of State; Annual Report; Program Category Requirements)*
  - VIF maintains J-1 sponsorship status with the United States Department of State, including:
    - Annual reports
    - Visa procurement
    - Visits to selected United States embassies abroad to educate consular officials about the program
    - All required activities required under J-1 regulations
    - Staffing levels commensurate to program population (about 20 teachers per staff member)

- **Recruitment** *(Screening and Selection of Program Participants; Accreditation and Licenture; Staffing and Support Services)*
  - VIF advertises around the world for qualified teachers.
  - VIF has established partnerships with Ministries of Education in many countries
  - VIF has established partnerships with major teacher preparation universities around the world.
  - VIF conducts information sessions year-round in dozens of countries
  - VIF has offices and/or staff in key regions around the world
- VIF utilizes its network of 8,000 alumni to identify additional new candidates
- VIF conducts the following screening process:
  - Application review (over 30,000 per year)
  - Telephone screenings
  - English proficiency screenings
  - Licensure screening, HQ and state requirements
  - Criminal Record Checks
  - Personal Interview (in-country)
  - Reference Checks
  - Employment Verification
  - Experience Calculations
  - Final Review and Approval
  - Placement Recommendation
  - Regional Pool Allocation

### Placement (Screening and Selection of Program Participants; Monitoring of Participants)
- VIF provides all contractual documents required for teachers/districts
- VIF recommends candidates to schools that best fit teacher skills, subject, and preferences and vice versa.
- VIF has a team of former educators who work directly with schools and districts to select teachers.
- VIF built and maintains a database of accepted candidates and participating districts in order to make matches quickly and efficiently.
- VIF organizes occasional trips for districts to hire teachers in-person.
- VIF arranges telephone interviews between candidates and schools.
- VIF coordinates all communications regarding offers/contracts/arrival dates/etc.
- VIF completes all documentation for licensure and ensures that all teachers obtain full licenses under state and federal statutes.
- VIF completes formal experience calculations that districts use to determine teacher pay.
- VIF provides districts with financial guidelines and is available to train Finance staff upon request.
- In many districts, VIF provides payroll and tax services under a contract services agreement.
- Schools receive program handbooks/guidelines with recommendations for successful hosting.
- **Relocation** *(Pre-Arrival Information; Orientation; Staffing and Support Services; Insurance)*
  - VIF provides the work authorization that permits teachers to be legally employed.
  - VIF arranges for air travel for each teacher.
  - VIF provides pre-departure training for each teacher to ensure they are aware of all details/requirements.
  - VIF provides airport pick-up and transfer to initial lodging, per teacher.
  - VIF provides initial lodging and comprehensive arrival orientation training, consisting of:
    - Instructional training
    - Benefits enrollment
    - Driver training and testing
    - Social introduction to district representatives and other participants
    - Cultural Acclimation Training
    - Cultural Instruction Training – CAP, Cultural Ambassador Program
  - VIF provides, at no cost, the following benefits for teachers:
    - Health Insurance – BCBS
    - Air Fare
    - Interest-free relocation loan to assist with initial costs
    - Ongoing Professional Development
    - Social Events
    - Subsidized Master of Arts Programs
    - Certification/Licensure
  - VIF offers additional options for:
    - Automobile leases/rentals/purchases
    - Automobile insurance
    - Automobile delivery to host school
    - Professional liability coverage
    - Dental insurance

- **Ongoing Support** *(Monitoring of Participants; Staffing and Support Services; Serious Problems or Controversy; Changes in the Participants’ J-1 Status)*
  - VIF arranges for new arrivals to be delivered to their district following orientation.
  - Each teacher is provided with a Local Advisor who:
    - Arranges for initial temporary housing in the host school community
    - Provides a local orientation
o Assists with the location of apartments or other housing options
o Assists with other initial relocation needs such as furniture, social outlets, directions, etc.

- VIF continues to support teachers once they have arrived to their host schools by:
  o Conducting in-school visits
  o Intervening, if necessary, should a teacher require additional support
  o Access to a community webpage that connects them to VIF and other participants
  o 24/7 telephone support
  o Monthly e-newsletters
  o Career services – assistance finding employment after their 3-year tenures end
  o Rewards and recognition – Cultural Educator Awards
  o Referral Programs
  o Alumni Programs

- Beginning in 2008-09, VIF began providing teachers cell phones and service plans upon arrival to ensure an instant connection to each other, their schools, home, and VIF offices.

These processes have been developed throughout the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc.’s tenure as a cultural exchange program. They have been developed to provide teachers with a foundation that can assist them as they begin their journeys in our school systems. Through the orientation process and continuing support network, the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. provides an immediate and on-going structured service for their teachers.

The teachers employed through the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. are issued J-1 visas through the United States Department of State. This allows them to work as teachers for a maximum of three years, after which they return to their home countries. In this capacity, the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. provides high quality instructors for classrooms who also provide
direct interaction with people from other cultures. The intention is also that when Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc.’s teachers return to their home countries, they will share their experiences with their students, thus completing a circle of cultural exchange. The anticipated outcome of this interaction is that students become more tolerant and aware of other cultures and thus have a foundation that prepares them for operating in a global economy and global society.

The Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc.’s first international educators worked as foreign language teachers, specifically Spanish and French, in North Carolina in 1989. Since that time, the Program has expanded to seven other states and during the 2001-2002 school year, it employed approximately 1,700 teachers in these states, 900 of which served in North Carolina. These teachers also serve in nearly every subject area including elementary education, special education, and English.

On the Visiting International Faculty Program’s webpage, http://www.vifprogram.com, there is a page dedicated to articles and reports of the successes of their teachers throughout the United States. In many of these articles, school administrators, teachers, and students provide anecdotal support for the Program’s goal of promoting cultural awareness. Through my research, I hope to share the perspective of these teachers and their views of the program in which they are participating. I do not intend to analyze the effect of the program or the impact of the teachers on their school communities or vice versa. Rather, this study is designed to provide an overview of the program, including why the teachers chose
to participate and their perceived impact on their students, colleagues, and school community in one school district, Johnston County Schools, North Carolina.

Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. in Johnston County Schools

Johnston County, located in central North Carolina, is the eighth largest county geographically and one of the top 10 largest school districts in the state (Statistical Profile, 2008, pp. 15 – 17). Additionally, the county has experienced an increase in its Hispanic and Latino origin residents as evidenced in the 2010 census, which showed a 5% increase since 2000, from 7.74% to 12.9% (US Census Bureau QuickFacts, www.quickfacts.census.gov). In recent years, due to an increasing population and an improving economy in neighboring Wake County, Johnston County has experienced a boom in population and an increase in diversity among its growing population. This is similar to the effects in several school systems throughout North Carolina (Charney, 2009). Then Human Resources Director, Hilda White, confirmed via electronic mail on October 10, 2007, that Johnston County Schools first looked to the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. in 1998 to assist in recruiting teachers for primarily foreign languages and the English as a Second Language program. A thorough search has been conducted to try to get details on how Johnston County Schools first heard of and began working with the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. The vast majority of individuals who were working with Human Resources during the period in which Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers first came to Johnston County Schools are no longer
with the system. Attempts have been made to locate some of those individuals but have been unsuccessful. Joyce Wade, Associate Superintendent for Human Resources, was in her current role at that time. In a personal discussion with Joyce Wade on October 10, 2007, she recalled being involved, but has no recollection of how she came to know of the program. Further, the Board of Education minutes dating back to 1997 have been reviewed. The earliest mention of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. appeared in the January 16, 2001 Regular Session Minutes. In the minutes, the Human Resources department had prepared and presented an updated Recruitment and Retention Plan in which they stated that the department would “Continue using the VIF program to secure teachers in critical needs subjects” (Volume 26, p. 496).

Johnston County Schools’ Human Resources records show that the first year in which Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers were employed by the school system was during the 1999-2000 school year. In that first year, five (5) Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange teachers taught in Johnston County Schools’ district. The first teachers were from Canada and South American countries, though specific countries were not identified. As the number of teachers grew, so did the number of countries from which the teachers were recruited. The following table provides data for each school year, including the number of Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers employed and the countries they represented.
Table 1

Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. Teachers employed by Johnston County Schools each school year and the countries the teachers represent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Number of Teachers Employed</th>
<th>Countries Represented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999 – 2000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Canada, South America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 – 2001</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Canada, South America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 – 2002</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Canada, South America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 – 2003</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Australia, Chile, Colombia, England, Jamaica, the Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 – 2004</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Colombia, England, Ireland, Portugal, South Africa, Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 – 2005</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Argentina, Australia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, England, Ireland, Jamaica, the Netherlands, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 – 2006</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Argentina, Australia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, England, Ireland, Jamaica, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 – 2007</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Argentina, Australia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ireland, Jamaica, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 – 2008</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Peru, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 – 2009</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 – 2010</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, Spain, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 – 2011</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, Spain, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 – 2012</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Spain, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As evidenced by the table, the number of teachers grew to its highest number of 52 during the 2005 – 2006 school year and has declined to the current number of 28 during the 2011 - 2012 school year.
The Employment Process

One concern for school systems with respect to employing international teachers is that of the employment process (Mulder, 2009). However, employing teachers through the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. in the Johnston County Schools’ system is fairly uncomplicated. Procedurally, a pool of Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teaching candidates is available for selection by principals or school system representatives each year. When the decision is made to select a Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teacher for a school or specific position, the school system representative contacts the Regional Director for Johnston County Schools and requests a list of candidates and links to their electronic applications and video clips. The Regional Director then emails the school system representative a list. In most cases, the school system’s representative conducts the initial screening. Candidates’ applications are reviewed for relevant experience, educational background, and the written essay submitted by the applicant is reviewed for content. The video clip is also viewed and the candidate’s response to specific questions is considered. During this review, the personality of the candidate is also assessed to a certain extent. There is no formal protocol for this process. If the candidate has relevant experience and seems to be a fit for the school system, the candidate information is then shared with the appropriate principal(s). In some cases, when the position is very specific, such as in the English as a Second Language Program, the school system’s Director of English as a Second Language and Migrant Education is involved in the selection
process. When a principal or the central services representative decides to offer a position to a specific candidate, the central services representative emails the Regional Director and either makes a district-wide offer or a school-specific offer. The Regional Director submits the offer to the Visiting International Faculty Program’s Placement Services department, who in turn communicates the offer to the candidate. If the candidate accepts the offer, a placement confirmation is emailed to the central services representative.

Once the candidates are chosen and placed, the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. arranges their arrival to the United States and to Johnston County Schools. Initially, the teachers spend a week in an orientation conducted by the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. During this orientation, the teachers are guided through a myriad of activities to prepare them to live and work in North Carolina. One of the first tasks they must accomplish is to complete the driving test and get a North Carolina driver’s license. If they are unable to pass the test and get a driver’s license, the candidate is typically not allowed to stay and is forced to leave the program.

It is during this time that the teachers are introduced to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, the teacher evaluation process, and are familiarized with performance expectations with regards to classroom discipline and parent-community relationships. The skills that the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. focuses on for new teachers, as outlined in their Orientation Handbook, are as follows:
Skill 1: Adapting successfully to the United States school environment
Skill 2: Using effective teaching strategies to address the individual needs of students
Skill 3: Being prepared for classroom instruction
Skill 4: Using effective assessment strategies
Skill 5: Practicing effective classroom management
Skill 6: Emphasizing effective parent communications
Skill 7: Being prepared for the beginning of the school year.


Each of these skills assist the new teachers in adapting to processes and procedures of working in public schools in North Carolina or any other state in which the teachers might be placed.

Once in Johnston County, they are met by their local advisors who are second and third year Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers in Johnston County Schools and have been chosen by Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. to work with the new teachers. The local advisors assist them in finding housing, arranging for furniture and other household items, and helping them get acclimated to the area. They are also introduced to the Human Resources Director who coordinates the program for the school system. As an introduction to the school system, they go through the school system sign-up process and are given information about the system and about their individual schools.
Since Johnston County Schools began employing Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers, the program has been very successful, as is evident in the fact that the system continues to employ Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers and their numbers are fairly high each year. However, there has been the occasional incident when a Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teacher was not compatible with the school system and either chose to leave or was asked to leave. In these instances, the transition for the teacher and the school system has been handled through Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. and has been straightforward. If it is an issue of incompatibility with the school system, Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. attempts to place the teacher in another district, either in North Carolina or another state. If it is a performance or misconduct issue, the teacher is given a maximum of 30 days to tie up any loose ends and return home, as is required by the J-1 Visa exchange status.

**Summary**

In this chapter, the history of cultural and educational exchanges has been detailed, including an overview of relevant legislation beginning with the Fulbright Act of 1946 and Smith-Mundt Act of 1948. These two pieces of legislation were essentially the beginning of international teacher cultural exchange in the United States. This chapter also contains information on international teacher exchange programs operating in North Carolina. Specifically, the Visiting International Faculty
Program, Inc. is detailed and information is shared about how this program operates and provides teachers to schools in North Carolina.

Related literature is also reviewed in this chapter. Research recognizes that schools must play a role in providing students with diverse experiences that will assist them in developing skills to be successful in our global society. An international cultural exchange teacher can provide an authentic learning experience for students that native United States teachers are unable to provide. Further, with the changing demographics among school aged children, a more diverse teaching population is needed and made possible through international cultural teacher exchange. Finally, an overview of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. in Johnston County Schools is provided. Details about how and when the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. first begin, as well as how the program has grown, are shared.

The following chapter outlines the research method used in this study. Subsequent chapters provide data analysis, specifically common themes, in relation to the research questions being studied.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to look at cultural exchange teachers employed through the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. and teaching in Johnston County Schools, and discover what impact the teachers believe they have on their students and school communities. For this purpose, qualitative research methods lend themselves best as qualitative research focuses on understanding and explaining the meanings people form when developing values and perspectives needed to live their lives (Hatch, 2002). The specific qualitative research method being used is the case study.

This case study focuses on the experiences of the teachers participating in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange program in Johnston County Schools, Smithfield, NC. A case study design allows a researcher to learn about a distinct phenomenon (Gall et al., 2003). Gall et al. describes case study research as “the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon” (p. 436). Through the detailed description of the phenomenon, case study data can provide meaning and context to the particular situation that is not possible with quantitative data collection (Gall et al., 2003).

Research Design of the Study

The aim of qualitative research is to understand a specific situation, event, interaction or group, and one major benefit of this technique is that “it perceives
people as human beings rather than as statistics or mere representations" (Ozbarlas, 2008, p. 61). Marshall and Rossman (1989) suggest that this procedure requires complete immersion on the part of the researcher in the life of the setting or subjects chosen for the study. Through interactions, the researcher seeks and obtains the perspectives and meanings of the chosen subject. Merriam (1988) explains that qualitative research is more focused on the process rather than the outcomes and is based on thick description and rich narrative taken directly from the subjects’ own words, behaviors, and pictures. The way in which people make sense of their lives, experiences and the structure of their world is the real focus of the qualitative researcher. Theory comes from the data rather than trying to fit the data to a prescribed theory (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987).

The case study has been presented as the principal system for forming educational theory, which explains educational policy and assists in making educational practice better (Bassey, 1999). Case studies are the preferred research strategy when “how”, “what”, and “why” questions are being asked, when the researcher has little control over the event or when the research is being carried out in a real life context (Burns, 1990; Yin, 2003). The overarching definition of a case study is “an empirical study that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin, 1988, p. 23).
A more complex, specific definition is divided into two parts, scope and inquiry (Yin, 2003). The scope of the case study “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). The inquiry stage of the case study involves data collection and analysis, which copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, . . . relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and . . . benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (pp. 13-14) Therefore, the case study cannot be seen only as a method of data collection. It is also more than just one part of a larger research project.

Case study research has many faces. Thomas (1998) and Yin (2003) contend that case studies may include description, explanation, evaluation and prediction. Stake (1995) includes three others types of case studies which he calls intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. Intrinsic is defined as a study conducted when the researcher has a personal interest in the case; instrumental studies are used to understand more than what is obvious to the observer; and collective cases are used when groups of cases are studied together (Stake, 1995). Regardless of the specific type, case study researchers use multi-perspective data collection sources and analyses of data, seeking to give voice to the subjects as well as to related groups or subjects and the interactions between them. It is an “intensive, holistic
description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (Merriman, 1988, p. 21).

The case study approach is appropriate for this study as the research questions focus on the how, what, and why questions surrounding the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. and its teachers. The overall intent of the study is to share the perspectives of the teachers who participate in the cultural exchange program operated by the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc, specifically in the Johnston County Schools system in North Carolina.

**Interviews in Case Studies**

Interviewing is typically considered to be a face-to-face conversation in which one individual is questioned by another. For the purpose of research, the foundation and purpose of an interview is grounded in a theoretical model. This is unchanged when the interview format is electronic rather than face to face (Bampton & Cowton, 2002; Hamilton & Bowers, 2006).

Of significance importance in conducting interviews, whether face-to-face or electronic, is the rapport between the interviewer and the individual being interviewed. Using an electronic format for interviews enhances this rapport due to the subjects’ ability to control the timeliness of their response (Ehrhardt, 2008). While electronic interviews may have some of the same characteristics of electronic surveys, this study used open ended questions for respondents, therefore maintaining the traditional interview format.
Another element of the typical interview that can be modified is the pace of the questions. In face-to-face interviews, questions are asked one at a time. By using email, several questions can be posed at once, giving the subject a clear understanding and direction of the inquiry. (Bampton & Cowton, 2002).

A benefit of email interviews for the researcher is the fact that transcription errors are practically impossible, unlike the traditional interview where the researcher either audio tapes, video tapes, or scripts the dialog (Bampton & Cowton, 2002). Also, the discomfort many feel in face to face interviews or while being recorded is avoided (Ehrhardt, 2008).

Email interviews are also beneficial for the participants completing the interview questions. By having the questions in writing, the participants have the opportunity to review the questions as often as needed to ensure an accurate and thorough response (Mann & Stewart, 2000). The participants may also review and edit his or her response prior to returning it electronically to the researcher. In this specific instance, email interviews are of greater benefit for both the participant and the researcher due to the likelihood of a language barrier given that many international educators are not native English speakers.

Despite all of the positive elements to using electronic interviews, there are limitations to this method of data collection. On a basic level, there is the possibility that the participants will not be adept at using email (Falconer, 2003). Further, using electronic communication rather than face-to-face interviews means that body language and personal nuances will not be observed by the researcher.
Data Collection Procedures

The study was conducted through electronic (email) correspondence interviews with all of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange teachers from a variety of other countries currently serving in the Johnston County Schools system in North Carolina during the winter of 2012. The maximum number of participants was 28 as that is the current number of Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers serving in Johnston County Schools at the time of this study. A total of twelve chose to participate in the electronic interviews.

Participants were contacted via email initially and invited to participate in the study. Email addresses are provided for all of Johnston County Schools’ teachers, and as such, this researcher had access to their email addresses. Those who agreed to participate were then mailed an informed consent form. Initially, 24 agreed to participate, though two declined later due to personal reasons. Thus, a total of 22 consent forms were mailed. Those who returned the informed consent form indicated their agreement to participate were then emailed the list of research questions with guidance for responding via email to this researcher. Samples of the emails are provided in Appendices C and D. Confidentiality, which is critical in any study (Patton, 2002), was maintained throughout the data collection process. All identifying information for participants was kept confidential during the communication and data collection, and was kept in a secure location during data collection and analysis, accessible only to the researcher.
In the 2011 – 2012 school year, there are currently 28 Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers teaching in 17 different schools within the Johnston County Schools’ district. All 28 were invited to participate; four declined immediately and two more later declined due to personal reasons. In the end, only twelve (12) Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers completed the electronic interviews. The first contact, made via email in October 2011, outlined the overall intent of the study and formally invited each contact to participate, signifying their interest with an email response. Individuals were asked to respond within one week (five days) of the original notice. Individuals who did respond were contacted a second time by email. If no response was received, the researcher attempted to contact the teacher at their school by phone to ask if they would be willing to participate. Notes were taken by the researcher of the time and date of the call, and the response by the teacher if the teacher was reached. In some instances, the researcher had to leave a message asking for the teacher to return the call. Not all teachers responded to the email or returned the researcher’s phone call. Once a complete list of all participants was prepared, each participant was mailed a consent form, along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope, so that the form could be signed and returned.

Demographic data, including the participant’s home country, teaching licensure area(s), native language if other than English, the year of participation in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. and the subject(s) and grade level(s) being taught was requested of and provided by the Human Resources Department.
in Johnston County Schools. All of this information is public information per North Carolina’s Public Records Law, and is maintained in a spreadsheet by the Human Resources Department. Access to this information was requested as part of the consent form provided to participants.

As participants returned their consent forms, they received an electronic (email) list of the interview questions and were asked to respond to each via email within two weeks (fourteen days) from date of receipt. Individuals received a reminder email if their response was not received in the time requested. Once again, follow up phone calls were made to those who did respond.

Participants were given the opportunity to have their names withheld from the final report. It is believed, however, that the participant’s names and other demographic information serves to enrich the data being presented and in changing or withholding names and current assignments takes away from the cultural aspect of the information being shared. If participants wished to participate anonymously, they had the opportunity to do so as is shown in the Informed Consent Form (Appendix B). None of the participants requested to have their name and demographic information withheld or changed in the presentation of the data.

**Interview Questions**

“At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (Seidman, 2006, p. 9). To gather data that provides understanding, interview
questions are focused on why the teachers chose to participate in the cultural exchange program, why they chose North Carolina, what their expectations or hopes were, what their fears might be or have been, and what their experiences have been in teaching in their respective schools. Patton (2002) advises that the interviewer develop questions that are focused on experiences and behaviors, opinions and beliefs, feelings, knowledge, sensory, and background and demographic questions. It is based on these guidelines, combined with information gathered as part of the literature review, that the specific questions for this study were developed so as to gather the necessary information to answer the overriding research questions presented earlier in this work.

A total of seven (7) questions were asked of study participants. Questions one and two are introductory questions that focus on the participant’s motivation. The remaining five questions were developed as a result of recommendations of prior researchers who studied international educator exchange. Specifically, A. Rapoport (2006) studied cultural exchange and its impact on educators’ pedagogical and curricular choices in civic education. As a result of the study, Rapoport recommended that future research look at the mechanics of international educator exchange programs, and at the short term and long term effects of the programs for participants (p. 217). Also, Emert (2008) looked at American teachers who taught in foreign countries through the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program. Emert stated that there is a gap in the research on experiences of teachers who have participated in long term educator exchange programs (p. 5). Each of the questions posed in this
study sought to add to the literature as recommended in each of these prior studies.

Specific questions for this study include:

1. Why did you choose to participate in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc.?  
2. What led you to Johnston County Schools?  
3. What were your initial expectations for this experience?  
4. How has the reality of the experience been different from what you initially expected?  
5. What impact do you believe you have had on your students?  
6. What do you hope your students have learned from the experience of having an international teacher?  
7. Has this experience influenced your future plans? If so, how?

Responses from participants were reviewed as they were returned and common themes and trends were coded for analysis. In using electronic interviews, transcription errors were avoided as participants were their own transcribers. Though it might have been necessary to contact participants a second time to request clarification, it was not necessary to do so as the original responses were clear and additional explanation was not needed. The data has been compiled in the next chapter into a rich, descriptive narrative that provides insight into international cultural exchange teacher participants’ lives. As stated earlier, this is one area of this field of study that is lacking.
Data Analysis

Activities involving data collection and analysis occur simultaneously and are seen as on-going processes throughout the course of the investigation (Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1988). Structure and meaning of the accumulation of the data is developed during data analysis. The primary themes were categorized and coded. Data, which was collected through electronic interviews, did not have to be transcribed by the researcher.

The constant comparative method of data analysis (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993) was used in reviewing and analyzing the data presented through the electronic interviews. This data analysis technique is one in which the researcher compares one section of data with another to reveal any similarities as well as uncover any differences.

Analysis began immediately with receipt of the first electronic response. First, as interviews were returned, they were printed and read for understanding. Also during this first reading, the researcher made sure that the questions were answered fully by the respondent to determine if follow up communication was needed. Based on information received, it was not necessary to send a follow up email communication for clarification purposes to any of the respondents.

During the first reading, the responses helped the researcher develop a holistic picture (Faulconer, 2003, p. 41). Next, the responses were read a second time in order to find common or shared perspectives of the participants. Common themes were noted throughout the printed interview responses and cross referenced
with those of other respondents. Emerging themes or patterns in responses were noted on the printed copies using either notations or colored highlighting. Notes were then compiled and organized around each of the seven interview questions. This content analysis technique was used as it “takes a volume of qualitative materials and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings (Patton, 2002, p. 453.) Analysis continued throughout the process. Themes and information were repeatedly reviewed to in order to substantiate or discount any findings (Riddick, 2009, p. 60).

Validity and Reliability

With all research, the validity and reliability of the findings is an important consideration. Qualitative research, though designed to understand a specific phenomenon, must meet the standards for validity and reliability (Carlin, 2008). Jacelon and O’Dell (2005) used the term trustworthiness in place of validity in qualitative research. Other terms used in place of validity and reliability in qualitative research are credibility, dependability, and transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Glesne (1999) believes that the integrity of the results and interpretations of a study depend upon the thorough consideration given to establishing trustworthiness.

To ensure trustworthiness, and thus validity and reliability, the data were reviewed multiples times. The bias and role of the researcher were constantly considered and reviewed.
Limitations of this Study

With nearly 1,000 Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers working throughout North Carolina, collecting responses and analyzing the subsequent data using a qualitative case study would be too labor intensive. Therefore, this study is limited to the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers in Johnston County Schools.

Additionally, there are other international teachers who are not associated with the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. These teachers are not included in this research. Therefore, any summary information should not be generalized as representative of all international educators. Nor should any of the findings relative to the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. itself be used to evaluate, by comparison, any other programs that operate similar programs.

A third limitation is that of the researcher. In the beginning of this research, I served as the primary contact for the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. with Johnston County Schools. This could be a limitation given my biases towards both the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., as well as Johnston County Schools. However, a year prior to collecting the data, I left my position with Johnston County Schools to assume a leadership role in a different school system. However, officials with Johnston County Schools agreed to allow me to conduct my study with the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers in the district to complete this research project.
Another limitation of this study is the data collection through electronic interviews. As previously discussed, the use of electronic interviews, specifically through email, could be hampered if the participants are not completely adept at the use of email. Also, using electronic communication to conduct the interview means that the researcher did not see the body language or face to face nuances of the participants normally observed in traditional face to face interviews.

Finally, an additional limitation is the researcher’s personal involvement with the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., and a friendship with the individuals who own and operate the Program. This creates a personal bias on my part regarding both the importance of and benefits of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers in North Carolina.

Summary

In studying the cultural exchange teachers in Johnston County Schools employed through the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., the qualitative case study technique was used to collect data. Qualitative research methods lend themselves best to this type of research as it provides the researcher an in-depth, rich description of the participants’ views and constructs of their lives. All current Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange teachers currently teaching in Johnston County Schools were asked to participate. Data was collected using electronic (email) interviews and responses were reviewed, with emerging themes and patterns documented and discussed in subsequent chapters.
Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to provide information related to the participants of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., who serve as teachers in the Johnston County Schools’ system. Of the twenty eight (28) Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers currently teaching in Johnston County Schools for the 2011-2012 school year, twenty four (24) initially agreed to participate in the study. After initially agreeing to participate, two (2) later withdrew due to personal reasons. Consent forms were mailed to each individual who agreed to participate, including a self-addressed stamped return envelope. Two reminder emails were sent to individuals who did not return the signed consent forms initially. Phone calls to the schools were also made if signed consent forms were not received following the second reminder email.

Once signed consent forms were received, the electronic interviews were sent to the participants. As with the consent reminders, two reminder emails were sent to participants who received the electronic interviews but did not respond in a timely manner. Reminder phone calls were also made to the participants at their respective schools, requesting completion of the electronic interviews. In the end, a total of twelve (12) teachers responded to the electronic interviews, and the data from those interviews are presented in this chapter.

The findings are focused on the major themes that emerged as the data were reviewed for commonalities. Quotes and verbatim excerpts from the electronic
interviews are used to present and support the findings. As previously noted, most
of the participants in the study are not native English speakers. Therefore, some of
their responses contained grammatical or spelling errors. In the interest of retaining
the true flavor of the responses, corrections were not made in presenting their
responses. In keeping with the tenets of qualitative research, the direct quotes of
the interviewees provide the most accurate illustrations of the participants’ thoughts
and perceptions regarding their experiences. Thus, the bulk of the data presented is
directly quoted from the interviewee responses.

This chapter provides demographic information of the participants, and the
findings are organized and presented around the essential concepts of the questions
asked: Why participate?; Why Johnston County Schools?; Initial Expectations and
Reality?; Perceived impact made on students?; Hope students have learned?; and
Future Plans? Though seven (7) questions were asked, most participants combined
their responses to the third and fourth questions about initial expectations and the
reality of their experiences. Therefore, responses and information provided
regarding these two questions are combined to provide a richer, descriptive picture
of their experiences.

Following the overview of the participants’ responses that are similar, there is
a brief discussion of responses that were provided that represent unique
perspectives by the teachers. I have categorized them as outliers, to use a
quantitative term, as these are discrepant responses from the other participants’
responses. In presenting this data, the respondent’s names and other possible
identifiers are not provided so as to provide them some anonymity as they shared personal information regarding their personal situations.

**Participants**

There are a total of 28 Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers currently teaching in Johnston County Schools, of which twelve responded to the electronic interviews. In reviewing the interview responses, I found that the participants fell into one of two groups, one that is primarily positive in all responses, and a second whose responses, while not negative, are all framed within the context of how their current situation or circumstance could be better. I feel that these responses give the impression that they are making the best of their situation. In each of the two different groups, I looked to see if there were any common features among the respondents that might account for their different views or perspectives, such as gender or year of participation on the program, but there does not appear to be any. Rather, there is a general cross section of teachers in both categories.

One group of participants’ responses was all primarily positive. Though they noted that they had experienced some challenges in coming to teach through the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. or in the positions they had accepted in Johnston County Schools, they overall described their experiences positively. They generally did not offer or present ways in which their circumstances or situation might be made better. The second group was what I describe as those who are making the best of their situation. Their responses were not necessarily negative,
but they were not overly positive either. Their responses focused on how they are making the best of their situations though they point out how it might have been better if it were different for whatever reasons. Throughout the responses, none were overly negative about the Visiting International Faculty Program Inc. or about Johnston County Schools. However, a few did share significant concerns about salaries, including low pay, and their disappointment about the lack of salary increases in recent years. They also shared their opinions about high stakes accountability and testing, including paperwork and administrative responsibilities of teachers. Each of these will be shared more later in this chapter as the teacher’s specific statements are shared.

One other unique perspective shared by the teachers is that of their surprise as the large number of Spanish-speaking students with whom they work. Though they shared that they had not expected this, many spoke of their belief that they were able to have an impact on this particular subset of students with whom they work because they were able to connect with these students differently than their American counterparts. For example, when asked about her perceived impact on her students, Soraya shared that her students “…can relate to me as with their parents….”

Interestingly, in looking at the overall make-up of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers currently teaching in Johnston County Schools, 24 of the 28 are either teachers of Spanish, Spanish Immersion, or English as a Second Language. Of the twelve who participated in this study, there are only three who
teach in other areas. Although this is not a function of this study, a question might be asked of the district whether or not this is intentional on the part of the district, or if other factors such as teacher shortages and budget are what influence the district’s hiring in these fields. And if so, would the district hire more international teachers in other subject areas if there were no limitations or significant needs?

Finally, only two participants referenced their families when responding to the interview questions. Both Judy and Maria speak of their children and describe this experience as an opportunity for them to learn and experience American culture as well. Judy described it as an “enriching experience, not only for me but also for my family, especially my daughters.” Similarly, Maris shared that she brought her children with her and that this is “…a wonderful opportunity for developing their skills and be immerse in the culture.”

The table below presents the basic demographic information of the participating Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers who completed the interviews. The table contains the participants’ first name, their gender, home country, native language, the year in which they are currently participating in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., the subject(s) they are currently teaching, and the grade levels at which they currently teach. The participants were given the opportunity to have their names withheld and pseudonyms used when they initially agreed to participate. None of the respondents asked to have their names withheld.
Table 2.1

Study Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Home Country</th>
<th>Native Language</th>
<th>Year in VIF</th>
<th>Subject(s) Currently Teaching</th>
<th>Grade Level(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
<td>Grades K-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleidimar</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
<td>Grades 9 - 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
<td>Grades K-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alverna</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Fourth Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>Grades 6 - 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonya</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
<td>Grades K-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leydi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
<td>Grades K-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariela</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Grades K-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Grades K-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
<td>Grades K-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soraya</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
<td>Grades K-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
<td>Grades K-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As stated earlier, the study findings are primarily organized around each of the interview questions. In most instances, the shared responses of the participants are provided verbatim so as to allow their voices to be heard as they share their experiences.

**Why participate?**

Overwhelmingly, the participants indicated that their primary reason for participating in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. was to learn more about another culture. This response is not surprising, given that one of the main
goals of the program is for the participants to learn about American culture so that they may later share it with the students they teach in their home countries. Maria also shared that she brought her children with her and that this experience is “…a wonderful opportunity for developing their skills and be immerse in the culture.” In further explaining, though, one theme emerged in several responses in that the teachers felt it was important to be completely immersed in the American culture emanates in order to really understand it, implying that what they know of American culture from what they might have seen on television, on the Internet, or personally visiting for short periods of time, does not lead to a complete understanding of the American culture.

Other reasons the respondents shared is that their participation is for their own professional growth and development, particularly the English language teachers. Francisco stated

To get international experience is very important for language teachers. To teach in a USA school will give me better chances to get better teaching positions in the future, plus being involved in the culture is an amazing personal achievement.

Judy echoed this sentiment, and further explained that it is required for English teachers in her country to have experience in an English-speaking country.

For an English teacher (I am an English teacher in my country, that is my degree) one of the requirements is to have been abroad in an English
speaking country, using the language in real context, and now almost every school and university is looking for that kind of teachers.

Leydi also shared this same concept when explaining that

When I decided to become an English teacher, I thought it was very important to have some kind of experience living abroad in order to expand my knowledge of the language I was teaching and some of the culture related to the places where the language is spoken.

John stated “I participated in the VIF program because this is a great opportunity for teachers to get a relevant international teaching experience. As a matter of fact, I think this is the best professional development ever.”

As each of these teachers has expressed, they see having experience in and English-speaking country as vital, or even required, for their profession. It is interesting that their countries value this type of authentic experience, while this practice does not appear to be the same of American teachers who are teachers of foreign language such as Spanish and French. In my 10 plus years of experience in human resources and in hiring foreign language teachers, I do not recall ever asking a candidate if he or she has travelled to a country where that language is dominant, much less required it of a candidate.

One respondent also explained that his interest in the program goes beyond the culture and the professional development. Juan explained that he had researched language acquisition and second language learning in his home country. One reason he chose to participate in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc.
is his specific interest in English as a foreign language. He stated “I was curious to know how ESL worked in a vast country as the US, so I applied to the VIF program as an ESL teacher.” Similarly, though not an English as a Second Language teacher, Sharon also shared that she too wanted to “…see how another countries school/educational system works.”

Finally, three participants spoke specifically about why they chose the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. for this experience rather than another cultural exchange organization. Sonia shared that the “…VIF Program is well known in my country and … it offers teachers, like me, the opportunity to come to the USA to work legally.” Francisco said, “Of all of the programs that offer this opportunity VIF is the one that offers more guaranties, they are pretty clear and want us to know what to expect once we are here.” Judy explained that she learned of the cultural exchange opportunity and the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. from colleagues in the school where she taught in Colombia. They “…had had the experience with VIF and came back to the school I was working in and they said they had had a great experience.”

Why Johnston County Schools?

When asked why the participants chose to teach in Johnston County Schools, the responses were all similar and can be categorized into two groups, those who were assigned by the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., and those who were interviewed by a principal or other representative from Johnston County.
Schools and were offered the position. Many described their placement and selection process similarly to that of Cleidimar, who shared that

During the selection process, they asked me if I had any preference in choosing the state to work in. I said that I was open to any opportunity. I actually did not choose to come to JCS. VIF made the recommendation to the country and I was chosen....

Likewise, Judy stated that, “Actually VIF is the one that makes that decision.” She went on to further explain that she did have some choice about the type of place where she would like to live and that

During the process of selection, they asked me if I would prefer to live in a big city or small town. So based on my background knowledge and conceptions about the life in USA I decided that a small town would be better for me and my family.

Several also explained that, once an offer is received, the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. encourages the teachers to accept the offer. Francisco explains

With the competition we have to get a position here, choosing is a luxury we cannot afford. I accepted the first offer I had, and it happened to be here. I have to say that luckily it turned to be a good one and that makes me happy.”

Juan is also pleased with his placement in Johnston County Schools. He states, “I have always worked as Elementary Teacher in my county, and Johnston
County Schools was offering this ESL Position for a man in Elementary which was ideal for me since I was looking for this.”

Others, such as Alverna explained that Johnston County Schools was not her first choice because, “…there are other states and school districts that offered better packages but my first job offer came from JCS and I accepted it.” However, in the course of answering additional questions, Alverna described working with “some of the world’s best teachers.” It can be surmised, therefore, that though the package offered by Johnston County Schools is not the one she might have initially chosen, it has been a good experience.

For those who participated in interviews with administrators in Johnston County Schools, such as Mariela and Leydi, they too were encouraged by the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. to accept offers when they were made. Sharon shared, “All I did was to do an interview with the principal who demonstrated an interest in my credentials provided by VIF. The school is apparently in Johnston County. I did the interview he was impressed and made his selection then.”

It is very interesting to me to see that most of the teachers who responded to this question indicate that they felt they did not have much choice in their placements. In my past experience working with the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. the teachers often had multiple offers from districts and/or schools within districts from which to choose. Several factors have led to this change in opportunities including the current budget situation faced by many districts that have resulted in cuts in teaching positions across the state. As previously presented, the
number of Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers in Johnston County Schools once reached a high of fifty-two (52), but this was during a time when there was more of a teacher shortage across many subject areas. With reductions in positions, it is likely that most districts, including Johnston County Schools, do not employ as many of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers except in high needs areas.

To determine whether or not this was unique to Johnston County Schools only or an overall decline in the number of Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers throughout the state, I contacted David Young, Chief Executive Officer, Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., to inquire about the current status of placement of cultural exchange teachers in North Carolina. Mr. Young confirmed that the placement of Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers has declined since the budget reductions began. Specifically, he shared that in the 2007 – 2008 school year, more than 873 Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers were placed in North Carolina. In the current school year, 2011 – 2012, there are only 456 (personal communication, February 23, 2012). This represents an overall 48% decline in the number of Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange teachers placed in North Carolina over the past four years.

**Initial Expectations and Reality**

In asking the participants about their initial expectations of this experience, many of them responded by explaining how their experience has been different from
what they thought it would be. Therefore, their responses to the questions What were your initial expectations for this experience? and How has the reality of the experience been different from what you initially expected? are combined here.

The initial expectations of the experience for the participants are not surprising. Most expected differences and to have to learn about the culture, as well as learn more of the language. They also anticipated differences in the educational system. Accordingly, Sharon explained that she expected differences but that she “came with an open mind.” Juan “wanted to be immersed in an English Speaking school.” Soraya explained that she’d had a family member participate in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., so she knew what to expect. What she was surprised by, though, was the condition of the school in which she teaches. She states, “I am quite surprised to see how the facilities are beautifully kept. The school where I work is really nice, it has what you need….” Judy shared that she “thought it was going to be easier….I thought I would be able to study and have time for my family and myself.” Though she did not specifically say it, it does appear that her job requires more of her time and attention than she had initially expected.

It is in describing the reality of their experiences that one can see more of what they might have initially expected though they did not share it in response to the specific question. When asked how their reality is different from what they initially expected, many of the teachers, especially the English as a second language teachers, express concerns about their need for more guidance and instruction in how to teach in their programs. Soraya states, “I used to work as a homeroom
teacher and now I am an ESL which means I pull out students or I co-teach. This has been really frustrating because I did not know anything about it.” Similarly, Leydi states

Everything has been new for me so I’ve been learning a lot and this is exactly what I expected. Nonetheless, I haven’t received the instruction and guidance needed for my work as I was expecting it which had led me to try to learn and find out about how everything works by myself.

Not unlike other beginning teachers, these teachers have encountered teaching placements and experiences for which they were not prepared, even though they may have taught for year prior to coming to teach in Johnston County Schools. In this sense, though they might be experienced compared to a first year American trained teacher, they are novice teachers just the same. Also, even though the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. provides a week long orientation for the teachers once they arrive in the United States, they cannot fully prepare the teachers for the unique teaching situation of each individual teacher.

Others, however, share a different perspective. Maria explains that “Everything is wonderful, the experience and the opportunities are great, there’s no difference regarding what I expected at the beginning and what I’m living currently,” and Francisco states, “I do have to say that this experience has been as good as it can get, and everything has worked out as planned.”

Other differences shared revolve around their daily responsibilities in addition to teaching. Cleidimar states, “I was not expecting to perform so many other duties
not related to teaching or to do too much paperwork. I did not expect that
accountability played such an important role in American education.” Alverna
expresses the same sentiment in that, “I initially thought I would spend more time
being a teacher but was surprised that I have to spend more time administering tests
and doing paperwork.” Also, “too much emphasis is being placed on testing.
Students are not trusted they are treated as statistics, and teachers are totally
responsible for all students success with very little help from home.” Sharon and
Soraya echo Alverna’s sentiment that contact and communication with parents or
adults in the home is important but is often lacking.

Additionally, participants referred to the low pay of teachers in North Carolina.
Alvera L. states, “I am also sadden by how poorly paid teachers are in NC and
distraught by the fact that VIF teachers in NC never get an increase after acquiring
their masters degree.” Likewise, Sonia M. stated, “I thought I was going to be very
well paid…,” and “I have had the big surprise that the salaries haven’t been raised in
four years….” The salary schedule paid to participants in the Visiting International
Faculty Program, Inc., is set by the company and is structured much like that of the
State’s teacher salary schedule, though it is true that the Visiting International
Faculty Program, Inc. teachers do not receive the ten percent salary differential if
they have or earn a master’s or additional degree. Interestingly, these are not unlike
what this researcher would expect to hear from any American teacher if asked the
same questions. This is something that could be explored in more depth but is
outside the scope of this study.
One unique perspective is that of Soraya regarding the demographic make-up of her students. She states

I thought the kids were going to be more like American native but my school has a population of 80% Latin American families. Most of them come from illegal farmers who have between 3 and 6 kids. Some parents don’t know how to read or write in their native language and neither in English. So, the kids really need the ESL teachers to help them master the skills necessary to succeed in the academic life in English.

As previously presented in Chapter 2, Johnston County has experienced an increase the number of Hispanic families as reported in the 2010 census. This has, in turn, resulted in an increase in the number of Hispanic students in the school system.

Perceived impact made on students

It is clear from the common responses that most participants shared that they believe they have had a positive impact on the students they taught during their cultural exchange experience, both academically and culturally. At the most basic academic level, Judy believes that she has positively influenced her students simply because they “have had the opportunity to learn Spanish from a native Spanish speaking person and that is valuable.”

Being a native speaker is also seen as a benefit to Soraya and John, who believe that having a native speaker as a teacher has had a significant impact on the
Latin American students they teach. John has seen an improvement in the English skills of his students, while Soraya says more specifically that

…it has been a great influence for them to have a Latin American person come and talk to them. They can relate to me as with their parents but also to make the connection with the North American culture. It has impacted them in all aspects of their lives such as emotional, academically and others.

Academically, she believes that her students

…can feel confident about coming to school and feeling behind, and they can see the progress they make when in the class. They have also learned that there are other ways of doing things or even thinking which in turn make them open minded.

Alverna states

It is every teacher’s hope that he or she has impacted the lives of her students and it is also my hope that I have inspired and touched the lives of all the students entrusted in my care to be lifelong learners.

Likewise, Leydi says

My students seem to enjoy my classes and some of them have started to show some improvement regarding the difficulties they initially had. Some teachers have told me how they have noticed the students are doing better and are achieving the skills for the grade level.

Francisco believes that he has made an impact both academically and culturally, claiming “Besides helping my students with their academic difficulties I have also
taken my time to talk to them about others cultures.” Mariela states, “I hope that the impact that I have had on my students is a positive one. The opportunity of being exposed to a foreign language and learn about other cultures are positive aspects for the students.” Sharon says, “I have exposed them to and given them a taste of my Jamaican culture, in the way I speak, teach, mannerism and day to day related and communicating with them.” Maria states, “The cultural exchange has been great, I can take advantage of my culture and talk about related topics that have to do with their culture, too. I have also learned from them.” In this, the exchange of culture is at its greatest, when both the international teacher and her students are benefiting from learning from one another.

With a real focus on making a cultural impact, Juan states “Since I arrived at this school my prior goal is to expand students’ minds towards the world.” To do so, Juan

…include[s] cultural aspects in my lessons to raise awareness about the importance of recognizing the uniqueness of all the cultures around the world. I focus on avoiding stereotypes and prejudices which are a sample of disrespect and intolerance. In this sense, I hit students' lives.

By incorporating cultural aspects in his lessons and throughout daily activities, Juan believes he is able to influence students to be more culturally aware and tolerant of cultural differences.
Hope students have learned?

Overwhelmingly, the participants had similar hopes for what their students have learned from them through this experience. Primarily, they hope that their students have learned respect and tolerance for different peoples and cultures from around the world. Fransisco hopes that his students “have learned that taking the best of each culture and getting to understand and respect why others act differently makes of us better human beings.” Cleidimar hopes, “they have learned to be more knowledgeable of other cultures and, mostly important, to be tolerant to others and to respect differences.” Sharon goes a little further in explaining that she hopes that “they have learnt about another culture, while appreciating their own…” Mariela hopes

…that my students remember everything that I have taught them, and that they can have a wider vision of the world around them. That they understand that out there are people that speak other languages, have other customs but we are all valuable and special.

Alverna hopes that her students “have seen the world through the eyes of their teachers.” Also, she hopes they will remember that “they live in a competitive world that is constantly changing, and that they must be tolerant of other people’s culture.” Judy feels that her students “have learned that there is a world beyond USA and Mexico,” implying that many American students may believe that all Spanish-speaking people are from Mexico, and do not realize that there are many more countries in the world where Spanish is spoken. She, as a non-Mexican native
Spanish speaker, has opened their eyes to the world beyond the country that borders the United States. She further explains “I hope they know that if they study hard and go to college they can do something with their lives, they can make a difference.”

As she works primarily with Latin American students, Soraya wants her students to know that “they are equal to the other kinds in the way that they have the same rights and knowledge and opportunities.” Also, she hopes that they remain aware of the fact that they “come from another culture that is rich and beautiful.” She states that knowing this “can bring them to another level of understanding in this world of borders and racism.” Similarly, Leydi hopes that her students …have learned that teachers worry about them and want them to learn…especially from being with a teacher that has their same native language and tries to make learning and understanding easier for them so they can succeed at school.

Also, she states that she hopes they have learned that “our experience in school gets richer thanks to all the culture from our countries that we both, teachers and students, bring into the classroom and how we can all grow and learn together just by sharing our cultural backgrounds.” Juan hopes that he has helped educate his students in content, but “also in shaping personalities and minds based on culture aspects.”

Going beyond the classroom and the students, two participants speak to the impact they have made on their adult colleagues as well. Cleidimar shares
I think I have greatly impacted not only my students, but the American and international teachers I have worked with at the schools I have taught at. I believe they have learned a lot about my country (Brazil), about my culture. I feel that they've become more interested in learning about other countries now.

Likewise, Judy states that

…not only my students have learned that, my colleagues too. They have seen the cultural differences and similarities. They have learned a piece of our own culture. I mean, at Selma E. they have a teacher from Venezuela, one from Costa Rica and myself from Colombia.

It is interesting that they speak of the American teachers, but also reference the other cultural exchange, or international, teachers with whom they work. They have had an opportunity to share their culture with teachers of many different cultures, not just the American teachers. And they feel that they have all learned from one another.

**Future Plans**

As with most of the other responses, the responses to the question about this experience influencing the participants’ future plans, have common themes and brings the study back almost full circle. Whereas in the beginning the participants shared that they saw participating in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. as an opportunity to learn about another culture and to grow professionally and
personally, this is how they view their futures as well. Francisco shares that this experience has influenced his future. He states “After living this experience I really want to go and teach in other countries, live their cultures and make new friends.” Maria wants to “continue to growing as a professional….” Sharon states that this experience “has motivated me to travel to other countries worldwide in a quest for knowledge an experiencing various cultures, while deepening my appreciation and love for my own culture.” Soraya hopes to be able to apply what she has learned as part of this experience “in another foreign country by becoming a really international teacher.” Similarly, Leydi shares that

Since I have only been here for three months, I continue planning on staying in the program as much as I can so I can really adapt to the culture and be immersed in it as much as possible and really expand on my teaching experience and grow personally and professionally.”

Many respondents spoke of returning to their home countries and their plans to use what they learned there. Alverna states that

This experience has positively influenced my future plans; I hope to take the knowledge gained to help other educators in my own country achieve their full potential. With added credential, experience and the opportunity to collaborate with some of the world’s best teachers I am hoping also to be apart of administrative team internationally or in my own country.

John wants “to go back to my home country and share this experience….” Mariela even contributes this experience to improved chances at securing a job when she
returns home, because as a professional I know I will have very good possibilities to find a really good job when I return to my country.” Similarly, Maria feels that this experience has been positive and it “has opened my mind and I’m sure that a lot of doors will be opened in my home country when I return because of this experience.”

Cleidimar had the most to say about the experience and its influence on her future. She shared that

Interestingly, I learned more about myself and my culture living here. I have also met wonderful American people as well as people from all over the world. I have made friends and I have traveled to their countries to visit them. I have plans to visit other friends who have already returned to their countries. With this experience, the desire and curiosity to see the world, to understand another culture and to share your own has been increased.

It is clear that whatever plans the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers have in mind for their future, they will take with them what they have learned through their experience as cultural exchange teachers.

**Outliers**

Throughout the review of all of the interview responses, there were a few items that stood out as outliers, because they are discrepant responses that stood out among those previously discussed. This is not to say that these experiences may not be applicable to others. Rather, they are experiences that were shared that are unique among the gathered responses. Even though they are not common
perspectives that were shared among multiple participants, these deserve to be shared. Because they are unique, the specific statements are not attributed to the individual who shared them so as to afford these individuals some anonymity and protection from possible criticism.

In response to the question regarding the teacher’s perceived impact on his or her students, one respondent shared his belief that though his students were open to learning other languages and the benefits of doing so, his colleagues did not share this belief. He believed that teachers he worked with did not see the value of students’ knowing a different language and that

I have to admit that it has been very disappointing to realize that a great number of North American teachers see the effects of bilingualism as a negative factor. They will say it is wonderful but they do not want or are not ready to modify their lessons, differential their teaching practices to help those students whose first language is other than English.

He went on to explain that “Helping these students is my job…” and the perception of his colleagues does not change that. This is an interesting view and is, in this researcher’s opinion, not an uncommon belief among American teachers and is not unique to those in Johnston County Schools. It does, though, seem contradictory to the viewed shared earlier in the review of Judy and Cleidimar who expressed that their colleagues have embraced their cultural differences. It would be an interesting point to further investigate among schools with and without foreign language programs, dual language programs, and schools with high numbers of non-English
speaking students to ascertain the view of American teachers of these programs in their schools.

A second unique and interesting point shared in response to question regarding the teacher’s initial expectations. She shared that she was aware that she had learned through contact with other Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers that “…they send us to really far away, small type of towns.” She went on to share that

The town where I live does not even have a Walmart, we have to go next town so it is kind of lonely and there is nothing to do while in my country I lived in a really big city. Here if you don’t have a car you are lost because there isn’t any means of public transportation.

Having worked with placing Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers for many years, this is a view I had never considered. In coming to the United States through the cultural exchange program, teachers are required to pass both a written and driving test in order to get a drivers’ license in order to remain in the program. This requirement, coupled with the fact that each year cars were delivered to the school system’s central office prior to the new teachers’ arrival, it was assumed that all of the teachers would have their own cars to drive.

The third unique perspective emerged among the responses was in answer to the question about how the reality of the experience had been different from what the teacher expected. In addition to sharing a common response about the large number of Spanish-speaking students encountered in American schools, the teacher
went on to share that she was surprised by the living conditions of many Hispanic families: “something that shocked me a lot was the hard situation that many Hispanic families are facing here. I always thought that because they were in this country their life quality was better.” After reading and re-reading this teacher’s comment, my mind is full of questions. Is it widely believed among people in predominantly Hispanic or latin American countries that living conditions are better here than in their own country, no matter what the circumstances? Is it only the perception of the professional Hispanic workers such as teachers who perceive other Hispanic families that they encounter as living in worse conditions because they themselves may have a high class of living? Or, do these Hispanic families who live in what this teacher describes as “hard” see themselves as having a hard life compared to the lives they lived in their home countries? Obviously, this is far outside of the scope of this study but is very interesting to consider.

The fourth and final unique, or outlying, perspective shared is a personal one and was referenced by one respondent multiple times in answer to different interview questions. On several occasions, this participant spoke of how much more difficult this experience has been than expected due to personal reasons. The difficulties are not attributed to the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. or to Johnston County Schools, but rather to the circumstances in general. The respondent share “Well, I thought it was going to be easier. I have been through a lot of issues of all kinds.” In other instances, the respondent talked of hoping to be
able to save money and return to visit family and friends at home during the summer. The respondent shared

- Expenses are really high. Family is far away so we are here on our own.
- Friends are not really friends. We do not have anybody to count on. It is not easy to travel to our country. Job is not easy.

My initial thoughts of this response were those of sympathy. I heard sadness, as a lamenting of the condition of this teacher and the difficulty of the situation. I could picture this teacher picking up everything and leaving family and friends behind for what would be a very exciting and prosperous experience, only to find it to be hard and challenging in ways unimagined. In almost a reverse, though, this same person later shared that the experience has been “really enriching” and the challenges “makes us stronger.” This paints a picture of the courage it took for not only this teacher, but all of the others, to embark on this adventure of cultural exchange, for whatever reason, and to come to our country to teach our children.

Summary

This study sought to look at the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. participants and their experiences as international teachers. Overwhelmingly, their experience has been focused on cultural exchange at its base, as noted in their responses regarding the impact they believe they have had and what they hope their students have learned from having an international teacher. They have sought first to experience the American culture and learn about our educational system, while
also conveying to the students they teach information about their own cultures. Their overarching hope is that their students will learn respect and tolerance of other cultures. While some did express frustrations similar to those of American teachers, specifically related to testing and accountability and to the low pay of teachers, they all ultimately felt that the experience has been a positive one in which they have grown professionally and are better for it. Their future plans have been influenced by this experience, and they hope to pass along what they have learned in future jobs back in their home countries or possibly in other countries.

The findings of this study indicate that the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers are seeking to fulfill the intent of the cultural exchange program, which includes sharing their home culture with their American students and attaining American cultural knowledge to that they can share with their students when they return home. Overall, their experiences have been positive, though not all of their experiences have been perfect. Further, they have experienced frustrations with parts of their jobs that American teachers also struggle with including salary concerns, paperwork and administrative responsibilities, and high states accountability and testing.

Additionally, although most did not have full control over their placement in Johnston County Schools, they were positive about their placement and pleased with their schools. One aspect of teaching in Johnston County Schools for which many were not prepared was the presence of a high number of Spanish-speaking
students, though they recognized that they could positively influence these students by teaching and sharing their culture with them.

Finally, four unique and outlying views were shared as part of the data results. These each represent perspective that deviate from the common themes and viewpoints shared among the respondents in the interviews. They each brought a different point of view to different study questions; and because of their personal nature, they were not attributed to the individual participant so as to allow some anonymity.

In the final chapter, a summary of this study, as well as my conclusions and recommendations for further study are presented.
Chapter 5: Summary, Discussion, and Recommendations

Introduction

Cultural exchange, which has been taking place since the 1940s, has at its heart international understanding and cultural awareness. Early politicians, as evidenced by legislation including the Fulbright Act of 1946 and the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948, recognized education as a field capable of impacting young people’s perspectives and achieve cultural awareness. There are several items that point to a focus on student awareness of cultural differences, including the teacher evaluation instrument that references teachers imparting global awareness on their students. Today, educators across all levels, from pre-kindergarten to higher education, speak of the need for students to be globally competent and have skills necessary to work and be productive in a global society. However, not every child has the opportunity to travel internationally or interact with individuals from different countries. It is in this way that the teachers of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. are able to fulfill the idea of cultural exchange.

The goal of this study was to investigate the teachers who participate in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange program, focusing on why they chose to participate and their perceived impact on the students they teach. Data were collected through electronic interviews conducted with Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers currently teaching in Johnston County Schools, North Carolina. This chapter provides a summary of the research, conclusions drawn from the results and general recommendations for further study.
**Summary of Findings**

Two primary questions were posed in the beginning of this study that provided the framework for the research. They are 1) Why does a teacher choose to participate in a cultural exchange program such as the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc.?; and, 2) Based on the teachers’ perceptions, how has the cultural exchange experience had an impact on the students, the school community, and the teachers themselves?

As a review, it is important to understand perception as a concept in light of this being based on the perception of one group of teachers in a unique circumstance. As previously explained in Chapter 2, perception is the reality that a person develops based on his or her experiences and subsequent behaviors. In this particular study, the teacher’s perceptions are how they themselves feel and behave as a result of their personal experiences as cultural exchange teachers. This is built upon their personal observations as well as interactions with individuals within and out of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., the schools and staff with which they interact within Johnston County Schools, their students, parents, and other community members.

Based on the responses to the seven interview questions, the following conclusions can be drawn in answer to these two research questions.
Why does a teacher choose to participate in a cultural exchange program such as the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc.?

The teachers who took part in this study shared that they chose to participate in the cultural exchange program for one primary reason, which they expressed in two different ways. Overall, their choice to participate was based on seeking a way to grown professionally. Teacher expressed that by being fully immersed in the American culture, and subsequently in the English language, they attained direct and first-hand knowledge of both the people and the English language. Additionally, as most of the teachers are not native English speakers, they are able to hone their skills in the language and instruction of the language. Several respondents indicated that this was a critical component in their decision to participate because it would benefit them in their chosen career.

A by-product of participating in the cultural exchange program through the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. is the opportunity for the teachers to earn master's degree in their discipline through agreements between the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. and different universities. Most responded that they had already earned their degree, were in the process of doing so, or were planning to begin in the near future. This opportunity, too, is a way in which the teachers are able to grow professionally.

Regardless of their specific reason or explanation for seeking this professional growth opportunity, each indicated that this experience has influenced their future plans. They plan to take what they have learned, either academically or
instructionally, and use their new skills in future teaching positions in their home countries or possibly other countries.

Based on the teachers’ perceptions, how has the cultural exchange experience had an impact on the students, the school community, and the teachers themselves?

The teachers in this study believe that they have had an impact on the students they have taught in both academics and in cultural awareness. Academically, most teachers felt that they have had an impact on all of their students, particularly those who are non-native English speakers. While most of the teachers in this study are English as a second language or foreign language teachers, their responses often included how they are able to connect with their non-American students on a different level than their American counterparts. The Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers recognize that this interaction is a benefit they offer to their students.

In almost all of the responses, the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers use their classrooms as platforms to promote cultural awareness and share their culture with their students. They do so by incorporating information into their lessons or by presenting special lessons about their own cultures. The teachers also believe that their students, regardless of ethnicity, have learned and become more culturally aware simply by having an international teacher. They learn from their teachers who are different in the way they speak, their mannerisms, and different teaching techniques. Students, who are naturally curious, will ask their
teachers questions about themselves because they look different or have a different accent. This, the teachers believe, helps open the door for them to promote diversity and cultural awareness among their students.

Another way in which cultural exchange takes place is through the teachers’ interactions with their colleagues and others with whom they work. Though only one of the teachers shared specifically that she felt she had an impact on her colleagues, it is likely that others have as well. It is implied in one teacher’s responses when acknowledging that colleagues did not support second language acquisition for students, though they did share on the surface that they thought it was worthwhile. Their actions, however, spoke differently of their feelings as they did not attempt to differentiate their lessons or find ways specifically to help non-native speakers.

Finally, a way in which the teachers believe they have had an impact is in their interactions with parents, particularly those of their non-English speaking students. In their interactions with their Hispanic or Spanish-speaking parents, they are able to connect the school to the home in a way that many American teachers are unable to do simply due to cultural differences.

When asked about what they hope their students have learned, many of the teachers expressed ways they believed they had an impact on their students. They discussed that their students had learned to appreciate what they have, as people in other countries and from other cultures may not be as fortunate. They also speak of their students learning to be more tolerant and respectful of others, and to value the differences of others as special. Finally, they hope that one way in which they have
had an impact on their students is for their students to know that their teachers care about them.

Alignment to Existing Research

As discussed in the earlier literature review in Chapter 2, there are very few studies that consider the views and perspectives of the teachers who participate in cultural exchange programs. Reviewing the data presented in this study with regard to other research does allow some additional understanding of the teachers’ perspectives and their fulfillment of the cultural exchange premise of sharing and gaining cultural knowledge.

First, as Rapoport (2006) noted, “Teachers with international experiences make connections across cultures and civilizations and across global issues...” (p. 2). Similarly, teachers have the ability to influence the attitudes, beliefs, and values of their students as they are role models for their students (Gillom and Remy, 1978). As the data present, the teachers used their classrooms and teaching as platforms for integrating and sharing cultural aspects with their students. They believe that in sharing their own culture they are able to teach their students regardless of their background, to be more tolerant and respectful of people from different backgrounds, as well as appreciate their own culture in light of differences.

Additionally, Emert’s (2008) phenomenon of intercultural competence is represented in the teachers’ responses. As previously defined, intercultural competence is the “cognitive, behavioral, and affective skills that enable an
individual to interact effectively and appropriately with culturally diverse individuals or 
groups in myriad contexts” (p.243). As Emert explained, to develop intercultural 
competence, a person must have personal experience with and reflect upon 
experiences within cultural diversity that impact one’s own behavior. Several of the 
respondents shared that their experience as a cultural exchange teacher had 
influenced their future plans and their intent to share what they have learned of the 
American culture in their new experiences.

Also, the teachers shared how their experiences were different from what 
they initially expected and that this had shaped their views of their students, 
colleagues, and school community. This is most evident in the shared experiences 
of the teachers who work primarily with English as a second language students. 
Most acknowledged that they were not prepared for the high number of Hispanic 
students they would be teaching or the Hispanic families with whom they would 
interact and assist. The teachers recognized that they had to modify their teaching 
techniques and adjust their perspectives in order to provide the best and most 
effective support for their students and families.

Similarly, the research related to the role of the classroom teacher is 
supported in the data provided by this study. Donald Hones (1999) described the 
role of the classroom teacher as cultural storyteller, cultural healer, and cultural 
worker. As such, teachers are called upon to foster relationships between schools 
and homes of diverse families, which may include differences of color, ethnicity, 
religion, and even language barriers. Many of the Visiting International Faculty
Program, Inc. teachers in this study spoke of their relationships with their students and their families, particularly those of Hispanic and Latino origin, to which they believed they provided a special connection with the school and school community.

Finally, Craddock and Harf (2004) wrote that “without research and assessment, those who are involved in both the support and practice of promoting democratic education [through international programs] rely on anecdotal and intuitive analysis to inform their activities and planning” (p. 2). Also, Ellingsworth (1985) shared the same concerns regarding the lack of data in the area of understanding the experiences of teachers in unfamiliar cultural settings and recommended studying the exchange teachers to gain more insight. The data presented in this study contribute to the research by providing specific and detailed insight into the views of the cultural exchange teachers themselves.

**Conclusions**

The teachers who participate in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange program do so with the intent of sharing their culture with the American students they teach. At the same time, they are seeking to grow professionally in their careers and want to take what they have learned with them in to their future endeavors, whether that is back to their home countries or possibly other countries. Though less than half of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers currently teaching in Johnston County Schools chose to participate in the electronic interviews, their responses provided rich details about their
expectations, real experiences, and their hopes for their students. Based on the
data collected through electronic interviews with the Visiting International Faculty
Program, Inc. cultural exchange teachers in Johnston County Schools, the following
conclusions can be made:

*Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers promote cultural exchange*

These teachers believe they have made a difference in the lives of their
students simply by bringing their own perspective in to their classrooms and school
communities, either through teaching or simply by being themselves. They also, as
most work with non-native English speakers or in foreign language classrooms, have
provided a unique skill in that they are primarily not native English speakers either.
Though they did not initially expect to work with so many non-native English
speakers, they see their presence as a positive for these students and their parents.

*Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange teachers hope to learn
as much as they teach*

Almost all of the respondents shared that they sought out the cultural
exchange opportunity to grow professionally and to enhance their skills in their
chosen career. Anecdotally, people have said that the best way to learn another
language is to live in a country where that language is spoken. This is supported by
the data shared with the teachers in this study who, as most are English as a second
language teachers or foreign language teachers, openly confirm that being
immersed in American society and interacting daily with native English speakers they can best learn English. They also imply that better English skills are a desired trait in teachers of English in their home countries, so they recognize this as a benefit for them as they look to return to teaching in their home countries.

*It is not all positive*

Predominantly the responses from the teachers were positive regarding their experience and their interactions. However, a few did note that there are some underlying concerns about their experiences. First, there is the idea that Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers are not well paid. At least two teachers indicated that they expected to make more and are disappointed that there are not salary raises for teachers. Part of this is an issue of the State budget situation; another is due to the structure of the teacher salary schedule established for cultural exchange teachers, including the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers. Though some of the teachers may bring with them many years of experience and advanced degrees, they may not be paid at the same level as their American counterparts with the same credentials.

A second concern is the perceived lack of genuine support from colleagues for foreign language or English as a second language teachers and students. One respondent shared that, though American teachers might say that they recognize the importance of students knowing another language other than English, they do not modify their own instruction for students, particularly English-language learners. It is
not clear, however, if the teachers described by this respondent are intentionally ignoring the needs of their students, or if they are not able to do so because they do not know how.

In Johnston County Schools, cultural exchange may not be the only reason to hire Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers, but native Spanish speakers are valued

As previously mentioned, twenty four (24) of the twenty eight (28) Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers currently serving in Johnston County Schools are either foreign language teachers or English as a second language teachers. It is also previously discussed that Johnston County Schools, several years ago, witnessed a large influx of Spanish-speaking students due to the changing demographics of the county and state. Although the twenty four (24) Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers in this case does not comprise all of the foreign language or English as a second language teachers in Johnston County Schools, it can be surmised that native speakers are valued in this capacity by district and school administration.

In this same vein, Johnston County Schools has few teachers who teach subjects other than foreign language or English as a second language. A conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the focus of the district in hiring Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers is because they have a need for bilingual Spanish-English teachers, more so than they are seeking to promote
cultural exchange for their schools and communities. It can further be deduced that colleges and universities are not producing enough American bilingual Spanish-English teachers to meet the need of a school district such as Johnston County.

**Implications for Practice**

Based on the literature review and the findings from this study of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange program, there are implications for current practice that could, if put in to action, be beneficial to the Program, the participants, and the school systems who employ cultural exchange teachers.

First, some of the English as a second language teachers expressed that they were not prepared for the teaching assignments to which they were assigned. They spoke of being ‘home room’ teachers in their home countries as they were teachers of English, so they had their own classrooms and taught independently of other teachers. However, their English as a second language teaching positions in Johnston County Schools require them to serve as inclusion, resource, or co-teachers. They had to adapt to work with another teacher, usually in that teacher’s classroom, to provide support for their students who were identified as English language learners. One recommendation for the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. is to provide training in co-teaching for these teachers when they arrive so that they are better prepared for a different teaching technique.

A second consideration is that of a strong, on-going induction and mentoring program for Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers. It is the practice of
the school system to assign a ‘buddy’ teacher to be a resource and point of contact for the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers. However, as North Carolina State Board of Education Policy only requires mentor teachers for beginning teachers, defined as teachers in their first three years of teaching, most districts do not provide the more structured mentor program for the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers because they are experienced teachers with more than three years of experience.

A key component of a successful mentor program is that of the relationship that must exist between the mentor and mentee. Therefore, it would be critical that the mentors be prepared for working with a cultural exchange teacher who is new to the school, the American culture, and to the particular assignment. Additionally, the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. would need to be open and accepting of the mentor's support and assistance, rather than resistant as an experienced teacher might be.

A third implication for practice is related to the recruitment and placement of cultural exchange teachers in Johnston County Schools' school system. As noted previously, of the 28 Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers teaching in Johnston County in the 2011 – 2012 school year, 24 are foreign language teachers or English as a second language teachers. Considering that the majority of the cultural exchange teachers are native Spanish speakers, combined with the overall decline in the number of these teachers in Johnston County Schools over the past few years (Table 1), the question is whether or not the school system would hire
more Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers in various subject areas and grade levels if there were not limitations due to budget or significant needs, such as the need for native Spanish speaker due to a high number of English language learners in the schools.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This case study illustrates one aspect of cultural exchange through one group of teachers serving in Johnston County Schools, North Carolina, through the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange program. In this study and beyond, there are questions that warrant asking and need more inquiry, for example:

- Are the experiences of the teachers participating in cultural exchange through the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. similar to or different from those of cultural exchange teachers employed through other similar companies?
- Are the experiences of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers in Johnston County Schools similar to those who are working on other school systems in North Carolina?
- Do students attribute any change in their own cultural or diversity perspectives to having a cultural exchange teacher?
- What value do parents, community members, or business partners place on having cultural exchange teachers in public schools in this age of a global society?
There are other aspects to consider as well when considering the impact of a cultural exchange teacher on students. In this day of accountability, for example, it would be interesting to compare achievement levels of students who have cultural exchange teachers to those who do not and see if there is any discernible difference. Also, are cultural exchange teachers having long lasting effects on students, particularly if they first have a cultural exchange teacher in an elementary setting? If they do learn tolerance and respect for different cultures, is it sustained for their life time, or would it be necessary to have a second or third cultural exchange teacher at different grade levels to reinforce what is learned at a young age in order for it to be sustained?

One final consideration is that of the electronic interview process. There are several pros and cons, as previously discussed in Chapter 3, regarding the electronic interview process that could have had an impact on the data presented here. Therefore, a future study could yield different results if conducted in a traditional face-to-face interview style.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study’s results do have some limitations. For example, it is conducted in only one school district in one state in which the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange teachers are employed. Also, as a case study is described as an “intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instances, phenomenon, or social unit” (Merriman, 1988, p. 21), the conclusions drawn here
cannot be generalized. While they do represent the experience and perceptions of
the twelve (12) participants who chose to participate, they cannot, be said to
represent all Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers in Johnston
County Schools, in North Carolina, or in the United States.

A second limitation of this study is the method used to collect the interview
data. In this particular study, a benefit of electronic interviews is that of preventing
concerns of language barriers; subjects are allowed to take time to articulate their
thoughts in writing rather than feeling the pressure of providing an immediate oral
response that might not be clear. However, it is also a limitation in that the
interviewer is not able to read facial expressions or pick up other more subtle
nuances during the face to face exchange. As follow up questions were not asked,
there is the consideration that more information could have been gained through a
face-to-face interview that would be more conversational that direct response.

Another possible limitation is the fact that I was involved in and facilitated the
hiring process of some of the individuals who participated in the study. This could
have resulted in their withholding information to questions that might have proven
interesting and relevant in this study.

Finally, my own background and involvement with the Visiting International
Faculty Program, Inc., as well as my former employment with Johnston County
Schools, could make me unconsciously biased regarding the information shared in
the interviews. Despite being fully aware of my personal biases, I did my best to
remain focused on the interview responses without putting any emphasis on the information than what was presented by the respondent.

**Discussion**

International teacher exchange began decades ago and there are several programs that are in place to facilitate the exchange, such as Fulbright and the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. However, there is little data on the participants of such programs, and more on the programs themselves. This study focused primarily on the participants in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. and their perceptions of their circumstances and impact on the students with whom they work.

The case study results give rich data regarding the teachers and their efforts to promote cultural awareness and diversity within their classrooms, among their colleagues, and throughout their school communities. They shared that they answered their students’ questions about their home countries and cultures and used their instruction to provide cross-cultural awareness. A couple of the teachers also intimated that just by being different themselves from the students they teach, they are creating awareness and tolerance of the differences the people in the world.

The teachers also shared that one of their primary goals in choosing to participate in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange program is for their own edification. They wanted, and in some cases felt it was necessary to advance in their career, to learn first-hand and be fully immersed in the
American culture. As teachers of English in their home countries, this experience would give them an advantage in their future endeavors. They spoke of the schools and universities in their home countries valuing, or even requiring, an American experience when considering applicants for jobs.

One of the most interesting aspects of the data is the story that evolved through the teachers sharing their experiences with the non-English speaking students and their families. As native Spanish speakers, many of the teachers who participated in this study were hired to teach Spanish or serve as English as a second language teachers in Johnston County Schools. As shared in Chapter 2, Johnston County and the school system have experienced an increase in the Hispanic and Latino population. The Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers were surprised by the high number of non-English speaking students. They also were surprised by the conditions in which these students and their families live. The teacher, however, saw themselves as providing a unique service, through building a relationship based on understanding and common backgrounds, to these students and their families. Though they did not say it specifically, it is what one might call the 'like me' concept where it is easier for a person to relate to and interact with someone who is more like me. It is likely that the students and their families have difficulty navigating the educational system on all levels, from something as basic as registering a new student to something more complex as the student discipline policy. However, if they are able to talk with someone in their native
language, who might also understand the cultural mores of their families, can assist them in working through the system so that they are more successful.

Finally, there is still a great deal of discussion about the efficacy of an electronic interview format verses the traditional face-to-face interview. The pros and cons of each have been previously discussed in Chapter 3. It is important his researcher's opinion that the electronic interview’s positive aspects outweigh the possible cons in this specific instance. First, the teachers were given an opportunity to answer the questions in their free time, rather than a scheduled interview time. As teachers are very busy professionals, scheduling and conducting a face-to-face interview might have been a challenge. Further, as most of the respondents were not native English speakers, a face-to-face interview could have been difficult for both the interviewer and interviewee. Finally, as noted in the data presented, a few of the teachers shared personal, and sometimes difficult, situations and circumstances in their responses. As Lee (2000) noted, a lack of direct contact allows the individual being interviewed a certain level of anonymity, which could result in more honest and open sharing.

**Summary**

In this final chapter, I offered my analysis and interpretation of the data obtained in the course of the study of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange teachers currently teaching in Johnston County Schools, North Carolina. I summarized and reviewed findings that answered questions applicable
to the study of the perceived impact of the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange teachers on their students. I also made recommendations for further study, as well as outlined some limitations of this particular study.
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Appendix A: Email Invitation to Participate

From: "Marcie Holland" <maholland71@gmail.com>
To: <maholland71@gmail.com>
Sent: 
Subject: Invitation to Participate

Hello,

I am a doctoral candidate at North Carolina State University working on my research dissertation and invite you to participate in my study. I am conducting a case study review of participants in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. I would be asking you to complete an electronic (e-mail) interview, answering questions about your experience as a Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teacher. My design is to have all current Johnston County Schools’ Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. teachers participate.

As a matter of notification, I feel that I must explain that I am a former employee of Johnston County Schools. Prior to July 2010, I worked in Human Resources in Johnston County Schools. However, I am no longer employed with Johnston County Schools. Further, your participation in this study is not a job requirement.

Please reply to this email and let me know if you are interested in receiving more information about participation. I would greatly appreciate your assistance and support.

Sincerely,

Marcie Holland
Email: maholland71@gmail.com
Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

You are invited to take part in research involving the study of Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange teachers who are currently teaching in Johnston County Schools. You were selected as a possible participant because you have been teaching in Johnston County Schools as a cultural exchange teacher through the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Participation is not a job requirement.

This study is being conducted by Martha (Marcie) Holland as the dissertation portion of her doctoral program in Education Research and Policy Studies in the Leadership, Policy, and Adult and Higher Education Department at North Carolina State University.

Purpose of this study:
The purpose of this study is to obtain information from the teachers who choose to participate in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. cultural exchange program. Specifically, it will collect information regarding why an individual chooses to participate and the perceived impact the individual has on his/her students.

Procedures:
If you agree to take part in this study, I will ask you to do this following:

1) You will give me permission to contact the Human Resources department in Johnston County Schools to obtain the following public information from your record:
   a. Your home country
   b. Your native language if not English
   c. North Carolina teaching licensure area(s)
   d. Current year of participation in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc.
   e. Current school site
   f. Current grade level(s) and subject(s) being taught
2) You will be asked to answer seven (7) interview questions via email regarding your experience as a cultural exchange teacher. I will ask that you respond within 14 days of receipt of the electronic interview.
3) If I do not receive a your answers to the electronic interview questions, I will send an email reminder. If a response is not provided following the second email, I will call you at your school to remind you to submit your electronic interview answers.
4) If necessary, I may contact you a second time to ask follow up questions for clarification regarding your responses to the original interview questions. This will be through email.
**Risks of Being in this Study:** There are no risks foreseen in this study.

**Confidentiality:**
All information collected from you will be handled with confidence. Unless you specifically request that your name and school site be withheld, your first name and the first initial of your last name, along with your school site, will be used in the final report prepared for this study. Information will only be used as it is explained in this consent form.

Your decision to participate or not will not be provided to anyone. Individuals who choose not to participate will not be identified in the study report.

You are being asked to respond to questions about your work. To protect your privacy it is recommended that you complete your interview in a private area and close down your browser if you have to leave the computer at any time.

**Voluntary Nature of this Study:**
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not have any impact on you, your involvement with the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc., or your employment with Johnston County Schools as a cultural exchange teacher.

**Contact and Questions:**
The success of this study is dependent upon your participation. I sincerely request your involvement. If you have any questions, please contact me, Marcie Holland, by email at maholland71@gmail.com (alternate: mahollan@ncsu.edu) or by telephone at (919) 812.1627.

You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

__________________________________________________________________

**Statement of Consent:**
I have read the above information. I have asked any questions and I have received answers. I consent to participate in this study.

Printed Name of Participant ________________________________

Signature of Participant ____________________________ Date _____________

Signature of Researcher ___________________________ Date _____________
Appendix C: Email Interview

From: "Marcie Holland" <maholland71@gmail.com>
To: <maholland71@gmail.com>
Sent: Interview

Dear

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my study regarding the participants experience in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. Below are the interview questions for response. Please answer each of the following regarding your personal experience as a cultural exchange teacher in Johnston County Schools with the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. If necessary, I may contact you via email as a follow up for clarification of any of your answers. I am requesting that you submit your responses within fourteen (14) days of this email.

Thank you again for your assistance. I look forward to receiving your responses. If you have any questions or need clarification, please contact me.

1. Why did you choose to participate in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc.?
2. What led you to Johnston County Schools?
3. What were your initial expectations for this experience?
4. How has the reality of the experience been different from what you initially expected?
5. What impact do you believe you have had on your students?
6. What do you hope your students have learned from the experience of having an international teacher?
7. Has this experience influenced your future plans? If so, how?

Sincerely,

Marcie Holland
Email: maholland71@gmail.com
Appendix D: Email Interview Reminder

From: "Marcie Holland" <maholland71@gmail.com>
To: <maholland71@gmail.com>
Sent: Interview

Dear

This email is a second attempt to obtain your answers to the following electronic interview questions. As a reminder, you agreed to participate in my study seeking information about the participants in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. Below are the interview questions for response. Please answer each of the following regarding your personal experience as a cultural exchange teacher in Johnston County Schools with the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc. If necessary, I may contact you via email as a follow up for clarification of any of your answers.

Thank you again for your assistance. I look forward to receiving your responses. If you have any questions or need clarification, please contact me. I am asking that you return the interview questions within five (5) business days.

1. Why did you choose to participate in the Visiting International Faculty Program, Inc.?
2. What led you to Johnston County Schools?
3. What were your initial expectations for this experience?
4. How has the reality of the experience been different from what you initially expected?
5. What impact do you believe you have had on your students?
6. What do you hope your students have learned from the experience of having an international teacher?
7. Has this experience influenced your future plans? If so, how?

Sincerely,

Marcie Holland
Email: maholland71@gmail.com
Appendix E: Script for phone conversation for participation

Hello. This is Marcie Holland, doctoral student at North Carolina State University. I recently sent you an email inviting you to participate in a research study I am conducting for my doctoral program. I have not received a response from you regarding your interest in participating or your wish to decline participating. Did you receive my email?

If yes, I will ask: Do you have any questions about the information shared in the email and the study?
   If there are questions, I will answer those, following the information provided in the email. If there are not any questions, I will ask if the teacher is willing to participate.
   If yes, I will ask that the participant respond to the email confirming their willingness to participate.
   If no, I will thank the teacher for his/her time and end the call.

If no, I will ask to confirm his/her email address. If the email address is not correct, I will explain that I will be sending an email about the study and ask that the individual respond regarding his/her interest in participating. If the email address is correct, I will ask if there is an alternate email address that he/she might provide so that I may send the email regarding the study. If there is not an alternate email address, I will explain that I will send the email again. If the email does not go through, the email and paperwork may be faxed or mailed to the teacher at the school site. School fax numbers and addresses are available on the Internet.
Appendix F: Script for phone conversation for interview response

Hello, this is Marcie Holland. I am contacting you regarding the electronic interview I sent you on X date via email. I have not received your response to the interview questions. I also sent a reminder email on X date. Did you receive each of these emails?

If yes, I will ask: Do you have any questions about the interview questions? If there are questions, I will answer those, following the information provided in the email. If there are not any questions, I will ask if the teacher is willing to participate. If yes, I will ask that the participant when I might expect his/her response to the interview questions.
I will thank the teacher and end the call.

If no, I will ask to confirm his/her email address. If I have used the correct email but the information did not reach the teacher, I will ask the teacher if he/she has an alternative email address that he/she is willing to share so that I may send the electronic interview question to that email address. If not, I will offer to fax or mail the electronic interview to the teacher at his/her school. School fax numbers and addresses are available on the Internet.