ERLEBNIS- A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE STREAM OF

EXPERIENCE AND IDEATION OF THREE ADULT EDUCATORS

LIVING AND WORKING IN TURKEY

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my mother Cristina

and my little women: my daughters, Madelyn, Elyse, and Lorin.

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To my husband:

Bebek, ez te hez dikem.

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ABSTRACT

In our globalized world, opportunities for educators to live and work abroad have increased. In this qualitative study, I examined the intercultural experiences of three adult educators living and teaching in Turkey. The study was conducted with the help of three United States citizens who taught English as a foreign language in Istanbul, Turkey. Using transformative learning theory as a starting point, and phenomenological research methods to gather, analyze, and synthesize the data, I found three composite themes: motivation to live and teach abroad; identity issues and transformation; and negotiating the intercultural experience. I applied Taylor's (1994) learning model of becoming interculturally competent to help make sense of the learning processes of the intercultural experiences of the participants involved in this study.

"Wisdom begins in wonder."-- Socrates

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Socrates is purported to have asked: How can we find truth? What does it mean to know something? (Noddings, 2007). As he explored these and other questions, Socrates identified gaps between one's self and the idealized self. It is believed that those who can make the distinction take the first step toward the process of transformation (Tarnopolsky, 2010). His motto, "Know thyself," implies that self-knowledge is fundamental, and perhaps constituent of other types of knowledge (Noddings, 2007, p. 6). Plato insisted that knowledge was possible through reason and not experience because it is the senses that awaken reason to a realization of what it already possesses. The universals are instinctive, not learned. (Plato, 2004). While Plato posited that the aim of philosophy was to see further than the shroud of experience, it was to distinguish between the true reality of Forms.

It was Aristotle who contended that true wisdom comes from examining the objects of experience. But for Aristotle, the pursuit of knowledge lies in reflection, so reflection must be the highest endeavor of human life (Plato, 2004). These notions of self-knowledge and the development of knowledge through reflection are at the heart of this study.

In our transnational world, many educators are making the bold decision to leave the comforts of home in order to live and teach abroad. Many of them will find themselves engaged with people—people of different backgrounds, different faiths, and

different cultural norms. That being said, have we ever stopped to think how the sojourner might negotiate his/her sets of beliefs, feelings, and assumptions in these new and different surroundings? My goal here was to examine several individuals' personal transformations, occasioned by their living and working abroad. This examination could add to our understanding of learning in relation to individual transformation.

<div align="center">**Research Question**</div>

The overarching interest for me was: Might living and working abroad provide a transformative learning experience for a person, regarding his/her outlook or understanding? The framing of my original research question was based on Mezirow's (1978; 1990; 1991; 1997; 2000a; 2000b; 2003) transformative learning theory which, briefly holds that "learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (Mezirow, 1996, p.162); the learning experience(s), pertinent to the learner, construct "new meaning through personal reflection" (Tennant, 1991, p. 197). The approach to this study was Husserlian in nature; therefore, it was important to understand the experiences that brought to light ideation, "the transformation of individual or empirical experience into essential insights" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 27). The phenomenon of living and working abroad served as a suitable starting point for such an investigation. Such a situation is founded upon an intercultural experience that seeks valid determinations that are open for researchers to substantiate (Husserl, 1931). My goal was to examine and seek a deeper understanding of the experiences of those living and working abroad and the meanings they attached and/or derived from living and

working in a different culture. A phenomenological approach is well suited to for such a study as it is "committed to descriptions of experience," (Moustakas, 1994, p. 58). It is from direct perceptions and observations that the most significant understandings are presented "until a unified vision of the essences of a phenomenon or experience is achieved" (p. 58).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and examine, in an intercultural context, the experiences of educators who are living and working abroad. In the initial stages, I had intended to use the literature addressing transformative learning theory. As an adult educator who lived and worked abroad, I understood there were opportunities regarding intercultural experiences to be examined more thoroughly. In fact, I witnessed and experienced opportunities where adult learning theories could be applied, such as andragogy and transformative learning theory. In conversations and observations of teachers living and working abroad with me, in the same host country, I was reminded of what Lyon (2001) discussed when she emphasized the need for more research of professionals working abroad. She cited Osland (1995) and her belief that usually expatriates only share information regarding their sojourn among one another. As Lyon (2001) asserted, "apart from these interactions, there are few resources, formal or informal, to help expatriates make sense of the radical changes that working abroad can make in their lives" (p. 119). In my experience, this is true. Often times, my colleagues would be discussing issues of diversity faced in the classroom and how they did or did not approached the situation. Other times, my colleagues would talk about

interactions they had with people of our host culture, and their reactions left me bewildered. Some of my colleagues could not negotiate the events taking place, and instead returned home. Taylor (1998) pointed out that meaning structures we know as beliefs, attitudes and emotional reactions are rooted in the individual's cultural and contextual experiences and impact how one acts and interprets those incidents. In this regard, like Taylor (1994, 1998), I felt that transformative learning theory ought to appropriate for developing a deeper understanding of the learning that might come through intercultural experiences. When I use the word intercultural, it is important that I define culture and how it should be understood throughout my study. With that said, let us first consider the term culture.

Culture has been defined by orators such as Aristotle, philosophers such as Hobbes and Rousseau, and anthropologists such as Boaz and Mead. However, for this study, I sought to think about intercultural differently.

For instance, Scollon, Scollon, and Jones (2012) asked us to consider the word culture as a verb, because "the way that you do it might be different at different times and in different circumstances" (p. 5). Geertz (1973), stated that "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun" and that "those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (pp.4-5). If we consider Geertz's (1973) definition of culture as applied to adult education, more specifically, the classroom, "adult educators can obtain a clearer understanding of how congruent learner and teacher

perspectives are" (Guy, 1999, p. 14). Additionally, the act of spinning webs and being

suspended in them coincides with the notion that culture is something that we do.

If we think of "inter" as between or among, and we define culture as something

that you do, the word intercultural, for the purposes of this study would reflect something

done between two distinct groups. This notion of utilizing the term intercultural as a verb,

would make way for us to focus on the things that people are doing with one another.

Furthermore, reflecting on the intercultural experiences of a person and of persons

might serve as a spark for adult educators to "engage in a process of self-examination

about their own cultural identity" in order to better understand their own "cultural beliefs,

assumptions, values, attitudes, and behaviors" (Guy, 1999, p. 15); the threads involved in

unraveling. Agar (1994) described how "when you 'unravel' the ways that you and they

are not alike until you find a place where you and they *are* alike" (p. 72) then the

potential transformation of one's outlook and understanding of the intercultural

experience is what takes us through the transformative process (Taylor, 1998). In other

words, understanding the differences that exist amongst people involved in intercultural

experiences, even in diverse populations, we should look with a deeper appreciation to

those people who do not share in our own cultural beliefs, assumptions, values, attitudes

and behavior. In doing so, we can develop a deeper understanding of ourselves by going

through the process of carefully examining ways in which we might be alike. This

requires a more profound understanding of one's self in order to transcend and move

away from the simple conclusion that sums up our notion of others as different from me.

As adult educators, we are reminded of Freire's (1998) assertion that made it impossible for one to envision him/herself as a subject in the development of becoming without being receptive and prepared for transformation simultaneously; we must be aware of our *unfinishedness*.

Theoretical Framework

For Mezirow, transformative learning theory (1978; 1990; 1991; 1997; 2000a; 2000b; 2003) is "the process of learning through critical self-reflection which results in the reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more inclusive discriminating and integrative understanding of one's experience" (p. xvi). In line with the aforementioned process of self-examination and development, Mezirow contended that in thoroughly analyzing our cultural beliefs, assumptions, values, attitudes, and behaviors, we might experience a formidable perspective shift.

Mezirow's (1978) initial research was conducted on women who attended college after having been out of school for an extended period of time. His study revealed that his participants had undergone considerable changes in their meaning perspectives and their ways of being. Since then, Mezirow (2000a) has detailed how that transformative learning occurs through a process of critical self-reflection, reflective dialogue, and reflective action. In fact, Mezirow (1978) developed a model (Figure 1) listing the ten steps that a transformative learner might experience.

Mezirow (2000a, 2009) said that these steps might occur in different ways and in different orders. They may be cyclical or recursive and a learner may start anywhere in the steps and not include them all. Merriam (2004) pointed out how the reflective process

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becomes vital at two different time in Mezirow's (2000a) 10-phase process of transformational learning—after experiencing a "disorienting dilemma" that sets the process in motion, and when the learner conducts a self-examination that is often accompanied by "feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame"(Mezirow, 2000a, p. 22).

Reflecting on experience is a key factor in my research in accordance with my constructionist stance which posits that "all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty, 1998, p.42). In fact, meaning or truth cannot be described simply as objective or subjective, according to a constructionism epistemology, "we do not create meaning; we construct it" (Crotty, 1998, pp. 43-44). Accepting that subject and object are always united is to reject objectivism and subjectivism; bringing to the forefront interaction between subject and object.

This vital point brings to mind and calls upon the consideration of Freire's model of praxis. Freire (1970) defined praxis as reflection where:

> People develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world
> with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as
> static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation…the form of action
> they adopt is to a large extent a function of how they perceive themselves in the
> world. (p. 83)

Human and social reality was addressed by Mezirow (1991), when he affirmed that although constructivist beliefs inspired his transformative learning theory, fervor lay

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in the fact that "meanings exist within ourselves rather than in external forms such as books and that personal meanings that we attribute to our experience are acquired and validated through human interaction and experience" (p. xiv). Taylor (2000) found that current research information was retrospective, subject to the participant's preferred vision of the experience and may not be accurate.

However, to reflect critically both on how we view the world and our construction of that reality requires one to consider the two types of experiences Kahneman and Riis (2005) spoke of. The two types of experiences are the "remembering self" and the "experiencing self" (pp. 285- 286). It was a goal of my study to be completely, "open, receptive and naïve" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 22) when listening to the research participants' experiences from the "remembering self" (Kahneman & Riis, 2005, p. 285) so as to stay true to the philosophical system rooted in "subjective openness" (p. 22).

The remembering self is "relatively stable and permanent. It is a basic fact of the human condition that memories are what we get to keep from our experience, and the only perspective that we can adopt as we think about our lives is therefore that of the "remembering self" (Kahneman & Riis, 2005, p. 286). The experiencing self that lives each of these moments barely has time to exist (p. 285).

Farber (1991) suggested that "reflecting upon all knowledge and experience, with the idea of the 'self-giveness' in experience of what is meant, may well have an emancipating effect" (p. 234); the liberation that might enable us to embrace a more profound outlook of our world. In other words, reflection on the experiences that live in our memories are indeed a part of the process involved in learning about ourselves, which

is part of the reformulation of a meaning perspective as Mezirow suggested. In addition, Mälkki and Green (2014) pointed out the importance of developing "praxis for transformative learning" that seeks to understand the transformative learning process from a phenomenological point of view, highlighting how it would improve the consideration and application of that understanding in the "lived, educational moment" (p. 6). With that said, transformative learning theory was, for me, a point of departure. The reflection on intercultural experiences was a key factor to be considered in this phenomenological research study.

Definition of Terms

Epoché: Setting aside prejudgments and engaging with the research phenomenon, also known as bracketing, in an unbiased, receptive way (Moustakas, 1994, p. 180).

Ideation: A cognitive process of eidetic intuition. The process that results in the intuition of an *eidos*, an essence; bringing to presence of an object—the *eidos.* (Fuchs, 1976)

Intercultural: Actions and measures that are done between two distinct groups or individuals (Scollon, Scollon, & Jones, 2012).

Intercultural competence: "An adaptive capacity based on an inclusive and integrative world view which allows participants to effectively accommodate the demands of living in a host culture" (Taylor, 1994, p. 154).

Intercultural Learning: Essentially about change, moving places, encountering people, learning across cultures, and above all, about becoming more aware of the self, Other, and of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all (Gill, 2007).

Intercultural Transformation: "The gradual change that takes place in the internal conditions of individuals as they participate in extensive intercultural communication activities" (Kim, 1988, p. 299)

Transformation: a non-reversible shift in a person's meaning perspective, likely toward greater inclusiveness, discrimination, openness, and autonomy (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2000a).

Organization of Dissertation

My dissertation will be divided into six chapters. Chapter One provided a brief introduction to my study and the design of my study, including the research question, purpose of the study, theoretical framework, and proposed research methods. Chapter Two is the literature review, broken up into seven sections detailing literature on transformative learning theory. The seven sections are: 1) The Development of Transformative Learning Theory; 2) Transformative Learning as a Frame of Reference; 3) Development and Learning in Transformative Learning; 4) The Comprehensive Aspect of Transformative Learning; 5) Transformative Learning in an Intercultural Setting; and 6) Transformative Learning and Culture and 7) Intercultural Competence. Chapter Three outlines the research methods and describes the research participants and their selection criteria; data collection methods; data analysis methods; validation strategies, and the role and background of the researcher. Chapter Four highlights the composite textural-structural descriptions that synthesize the meanings and essences of the data. The composite textural-structural descriptions are described as emergent themes that represent the group as a whole, they are: Motivation to Live and Teach Abroad;

Negotiating Intercultural Experiences; and Identity Issues and Transformation. Themes

that emerged from the data analysis will be examined using six components that Taylor

(1994) used to measure learning to live successfully in a host culture and through the use

of direct quotes from the participants. Chapter Five presents the summary of the study,

implications for research and practice, and outcomes.

Limitations of the Study

Some of the limitations of this study included the following:

1. Time spent with participants—perhaps more time could have been spent with

the participants conducting classroom observations and shadowing them in Istanbul.

Although I was familiar with the participants and had spent some time with them prior to

the interviews, for the purposes of the study, it would have been beneficial to follow them

around town to observe how they negotiated their intercultural experiences.

Additionally, I had suggested to the participants that classroom observations would be

conducted; however, when the participants asked the schools for permission, it was not

granted. The administrators said only the assigned teachers and students enrolled in the

class could enter the classroom.

2. Interviewing students of the participants—If possible, triangulating the data by

including interviews from the students' perspective might shed light on some of the

issues faced in the classroom. Understanding from the students' point-of-view how the

teachers negotiated issues of diversity might have afforded the opportunity to share this

feedback with the teachers so that they might be able to learn and develop a deeper

awareness needed when working abroad. The main focus of this study was on the

individual transformation of the participants. Only after sifting through all the data was I able to discover how interviewing the participants' students might add another dimension to this study. However, time constraints, administrative permission from the schools where the teachers were employed, IRB requirements and scheduling conflicts, did not allow for this particular step to be included in this study.

3. A longitudinal perspective—a longitudinal study that follows the three participants after some time might have shed light on the impact that their intercultural experience had on their outlook or world-view and actions after returning to the United States, if they had. This would also provide more information regarding the evolving intercultural identity that Taylor (1994) alluded to. It would be interesting to know how the development of intercultural competency affected them most: personally, professionally, or perhaps both.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The literature review for this study will be presented in seven sections: 1) An Overview of Transformative Learning Theory; 2) Transformative Learning as a Frame of Reference; 3) Development and Learning in Transformative Learning; 4) The Comprehensive Aspect of Transformative Learning; 5) Transformative Learning in an Intercultural Setting; 6) Transformative learning and Culture and 7) Intercultural Competence.

The purpose of this review served to highlight the literature that existed on transformative learning theory and its critiques in order to better serve as an indicator for addressing the research question of this study and what I found from the analysis of the data. Lather (1999) asserted that "a review is not exhaustive; it is situated, partial, perspectival" (p. 3). For the purposes of this study, my review of the literature did reveal what studies had done in relation to some of the composite themes that emerged in the data analysis because very few studies mirrored that of this particular study, I found it necessary to establish research that at least recognized the context and rationalized the significance of the study (Hart, 1999). Therefore, in this literature review, I examined both the theoretical and methodological techniques used in some of the research studies (Hart, 1999), keeping in mind Lather (1999) contended "a review is gatekeeping, policing, and productive rather than merely mirroring" (p.3).

An Overview of Transformative Learning Theory

Mezirow (2000a) referred to transformative learning as "the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action" (pp. 7-8). In fact, transformative learning "produces more far-reaching changes in the learners than does learning in general and . . . these changes have a significant impact on the learner's subsequent experiences. In short, transformational learning shapes people; they are different afterward, in ways both they and others can recognize" (Clark, 1993, p. 47).

In an effort to expand on and understand how transformative learning affects education let us consider the initial research conducted by Mezirow (1978). Mezirow studied women who attended college after having been out of school for an extended period of time. As a result, his study revealed that his participants had undergone considerable changes in their meaning perspectives and their ways of being. By way of his model, Mezirow (2000a) detailed how that transformative learning occurred. This model listed ten steps that a transformative learner might experience. Mezirow (2000a, 2009) said these steps might occur in different ways and in different sequences. They may be cyclical or recursive and a learner may start anywhere along the steps and not include them all. Taylor's (2000) critical review of transformative learning theory research found that although the theory might be applied to a variety of situations, not all of the research provides data supporting Mezirow's (1978) model (Figure 1). Mezirow's

transformative learning theory (1978; 1990; 1991; 1997; 2000a; 2000b; 2003) reflects "the process of learning through critical self-reflection which results in the reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more inclusive discriminating and integrative understanding of one's experience" (Mezirow, 1990, p. xvi).

Brookfield (2000b) noted how "an act of learning can be called transformative only if it involves a fundamental questioning and reordering of how one thinks or acts" (p. 139). Feinstein (2004) added that critical reflection *and* reflective discourse "are two processes that are used to facilitate transformative learning. Without these processes, it is unlikely that an act of learning will be truly transformative" (p. 109).

According to Kitchenham (2008), the influences on his early theory of transformative learning were Kuhn, Freire, and Habermas. Mezirow (1991) spoke of two types of shift meaning making structures. The two structures he spoke of were "meaning schemas" and "meaning perspectives." His idea of a transformed meaning perspective is partially derived from Kuhn's (1962) idea of a paradigm shift (Mezirow, 1991). Concerning the domains of learning, Mezirow (1991) described transformations in meaning perspectives occurring either in the instrumental domain, or the communicative domain, an idea borrowed and expanded from Habermas (e.g.1971).

Mezirow was also influenced by Paulo Freire (1970). Freire developed the idea of a banking metaphor of knowledge. Banking knowledge suggests that students become dependent on the teacher for knowledge and not to learn to think for themselves, thus forming a reliance on someone else. The antidote for banking knowledge became known

as conscientization. Conscientization requires the development of a conscious that has the power to transform reality (Freire, 1970, p.19).

Described as cognitive and rational (Cranton & Taylor, 2012), research regarding transformative learning theory, such as Taylor (2007) and other studies (e.g. King 1999, 2000, 2003, Christopher *et al.* 2001, Cragg *et al.*2001, Eisen 2001, Lyon 2001, Carter 2002), have articulated the nature of perspective transformation and meaning scheme change from a transformative learning theory point of view. However, other scholars have viewed transformative learning in a variety of ways (Cranton & Taylor, 2012). Illeris (2004) suggested transformative learning theory brings forth other areas of learning and non-learning to question. Illeris (2004) saw "an urgent need for a new and comprehensive understanding of learning as not just a cognitive matter but also the total personal development of capacities related to all functions and spheres of human life" (p.80).

Mälkki and Green (2014) pointed out the "severe critique" of transformative learning theory received by other scholars (p. 7). For example, Newman (2012) critiqued transformative learning calling into question some of the discrepancies found in the literature of transformative learning theory and suggests that the theory's name be changed to "good learning" (p. 36). He disagreed with the use of the term, *transformation*. However, Mälkki and Green (2014) defended the use of the term and argued that transformation "is by definition a change in the form (see Illeris, 2014; Keegan, 2000), in the configuration of self, not a jump from one form to another" (p. 18).

Newman (2012) mentioned that six errors arise when examining transformative learning theory, these include:

1. "False premise—that transformative learning differs from other learning in kind rather than degree" (p. 40);

2. "The failure to make a clear distinction between identity and consciousness" (p. 42);

3. "False assumption that learning can be a finite experience—despite caveats that the 10 phases do not occur in the order given, the process is presented as having a clear start, and a clear finish" (p. 43);

4. "The discourse said to be 'central to the process' of transformative learning (Cranton, 2006)— referring to Mezirow's (2009) seven conditions that participants ideally require to engage in discourse" (p. 44);

5. "Mobilization is mistaken for transformation—a person or group of people engages in learning and subsequently takes action: and this change in behavior is seen as evidence of a transformation in understanding" (p. 46); and

6. "Spirituality is thrown into the mix as if its inclusion were unproblematic" (p. 46).

Cranton and Taylor (2012) asserted that there are certain situations where transformative learning has more potential for development, "or it may be that good teaching always has the potential to foster transformative learning and transformation is dependent on the readiness of the learners" (p. 15). They addressed some of these issues brought up by Newman (2012) in their handbook on transformative learning theory.

Cranton and Taylor (2012) responded by affirming that it would be helpful to distinguish the teaching methods that prove more valuable for adult education. Furthermore, they noted how "exploring the practice of fostering transformative learning has been at the forefront among scholars particularly over the last ten years" (Cranton & Taylor, 2012, p. 14).

Newman (2012) admitted that transformative learning theory continues to be written about but argued that "the literature has grown repetitive and the theory too generalized" (p. 49) Merriam and Nsteane (2008) discussed Taylor's (2000) review of 46 studies that used Mezirow's transformative learning theory. Taylor (2003) expanded on this review by adding 20 more studies. Additionally, Kitchenham (2008) highlighted the definitive framework that researchers and scholars have been working to elucidate how transformative learning theory impacts adult education (Cranton, 1996, 2001; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Cranton & King, 2003; Cranton & Roy, 2003; Taylor, 1997, 1998, 2000). Altogether, this shows continued interest in Mezirow's framework, making transformational learning one of the most researched theories in the field of adult education. It should be noted that since its inception, transformative learning theory has been so significant in the field that "it seems to have replaced andragogy as the dominant educational philosophy of adult education" (Taylor, 2008, p. 12). However, Newman (2012) contended "andragogy was promoted as an explication of all learning in adulthood, whereas transformative learning theory began as an explanation of a particular part of adult learning" (p. 49).

Transformative Learning as a Frame of Reference

Taylor (2008) discussed alternative theoretical ideas, current research findings, and propositions to put into practice. He discussed the frames of reference for said structures of assumptions and expectations that frame an individual's indirect point of view and affects his/her thinking, beliefs, and actions. The revision of a frame of reference, along with reflection on experience may occur. Such transformation is a perspective transformation- a paradigmatic shift that can lead to a "more fully developed frame of reference… one that is more (a) inclusive, (b) differentiating, (c) permeable, (d) critically reflective, and (e) integrative of experience" (Mezirow, 1996, p.163).

Taylor (2008) suggested that there are a variety of alternative conceptions of transformative learning theory that refer to similar ideas and address factors often overlooked in the dominant theory of transformation—such as the role of spirituality, positionality, emancipatory learning, and neurobiology. Taylor (2008) noted how although most research continues to be situated in higher education settings, the focus has shifted from the possibility of a transformation in relationship to a particular life event toward other issues that help shape the transformative experience, such as critical reflection, holistic approaches, and relationships. He went further noting how transformative learning theory continues to grow as an area of study in adult learning, it has significant implications for the practice of adult education. There is still more to know about the practice of transformative learning in the classroom, such as the student's role in fostering transformative learning.

Taylor (2008) asserted that there is a need to understand the marginal consequences of fostering transformative learning in the classroom and is concerned with how the students' transformation might influence other students in the classroom, the teacher, and the educational institution. He was also interested in those who play a significant role in the student's life. Taylor (2008) held that fundamental support is needed if educators plan to foster transformative learning as a worthwhile teaching approach with adult learners. He reminded the reader that transformative learning is about educating from a particular worldview and the approach is not an easy way to teach. Therefore, the title of a "transformative educator" should not be taken lightly or without considerable self-reflection.

Development and Learning in Transformative Learning

Merriam (2004) highlighted the relationship between development and learning as a clear connection in Mezirow's theory of transformational learning. However, she suggested "one must already be at a mature level of cognitive functioning to engage in the transformational learning process" (p. 60). In other words, in order for there to be an authentic experience of transformational learning, the one partaking in the transformative learning process must be able to "critically reflect and engage in rational discourse; both of these activities are characteristic of higher levels of cognitive functioning" (p.60). Merriam maintained that although transformative learning appears to lead to a more mature, more developed level of thinking, it might be that in order to engage in the process in the first place requires "a certain level of development and in particular, cognitive development" (p.61) is required. She cited Tennant (1993) who cautioned that

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what constitutes psychological development is itself a social construction; that is, in any society at any particular point in time, there are normative expectations about "what it means to be enlightened or developmentally more mature" (p. 41). Merriam remarked that this notion "leads to questions about the possibility of transformational learning in our lives and our adult students' lives" (p.65).

Merriam (2004) explained how critical reflection on experiences is key to transformational learning. She explained the different types of reflection Mezirow (1991) wrote about which are: content reflection—thinking about the actual experience itself; process reflection—thinking about how to handle the experience; and premise reflection—examining long-held, socially constructed assumptions, beliefs and values about the experience or problem.

Merriam (2004) also discussed other cognitive development models, those of Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986), Kegan (1994), King and Kitchener (1994), Piaget (1972), and Perry (1970). She stated that they all assume that being able to critically reflect on fundamental assumptions requires one to be at the more developed stages. Merriam reviewed studies that have used the various cognitive models stating that the aforementioned models find that "many adults do not operate at higher levels of cognitive functioning" (p. 63).

In her conclusion, Merriam (2004) suggested that mature cognitive development is foundational to engaging in critical reflection and the rational discourse needed for transformational learning. Leaving one to question:

how "mature" or "cognitively developed" must one be to have a transformational

learning experience? How related are the "preconditions" of education,

socioeconomic class, gender, and so on to transformational learning? Is a Western

(male?) model of cognitive development with its pinnacle of independent,

autonomous, critically reflective thought the only place to situate transformational

learning? What about "connected knowing" and "interdependence" being the

goal of mature thought? (pp. 65-66).

Merriam (2004) encouraged consideration of these questions given "the plethora

of research studies using Mezirow's theory as the theoretical framework (e.g. Taylor,

2000; 2003) (p. 66). Additionally, she asserted that "cognitive development (as is

manifest in critical reflection and rational discourse) as a necessary condition for

transformational learning should continue to be examined" (p. 66).

The Comprehensive Aspect of Transformative Learning

In discussing transformative learning as part of a more comprehensive learning

theory, Illeris (2004) outlined a contemporary and comprehensive theory of learning that

has been developed to match the modern concept of competence and includes not only

cognitive learning but also emotional and social dimensions. She discussed different

kinds of learning and suggested a framework consisting of four learning types including,

the most complex, transformative learning.

Illeris (2004) pointed out that transformative learning may be described as an

extensive and comprehensive type of learning. It is primarily a cognitive process, but

important emotional changes are often involved. With that, other types of learning and

learning dimensions other than the cognitive need to be explored. It is important to ask about the way in which transformative learning is related to other types of learning.

Some of the main themes Illeris (2004) discussed are: "A theory of learning and competence" where he discussed the shift of focus from such key concepts as education and qualification to learning and competence. Consideration of these necessitates the need for a new and comprehensive understanding of learning as not just cognitive, but of personal development. This serves as the background and attempt to develop a new and more inclusive theory of learning.

Illeris (2004) discussed two different types of processes: external interaction process between the learner and his or her own social, cultural and material environment and an internal psychological process of elaboration and acquisition where new impulses are connected with the results of prior learning. He portrayed the three learning processes and dimensions as: cognition, emotion and environment and discusses the four types of learning described by Piaget (1952) and explained how and why he believed that transformative learning was the most comprehensive type of learning, because it includes simultaneous restructuring in all three learning dimension. With respect to transformative learning, Illeris (2004) asserted that transformative learning makes important contributions to the understanding of the scope and possibilities of human learning and that it is important to achieve a complete understanding of what is happening and what is possible in the transformative learning processes. And in the case of non-learning, Illeris concluded that the mainly cognitive approach of transformative

learning should be supplemented by an interest in the emotional and social dimensions to portray the results of habits of expectations and sets of assumptions (Illeris, 2004).

Transformative Learning in an Intercultural Setting

Lyon (2001) conducted a qualitative study of 12 women in adult and higher education who travelled and worked abroad for an extended period of time. She herself had taught in Malaysia and Jordan and travelled extensively throughout other countries. On her journeys, she met many other people with similar experiences as hers and who "provided new knowledge to the literature bases of transformative learning, women working overseas, and cross-cultural learning" (p. 118). Lyon (2001) pointed out that there was a need for her interpretive study given the number of women from various countries working worldwide in host countries. Additionally, she mentioned other American colleagues who inquired about how they might afford an opportunity to work overseas and also wanted to know what happens once they are living and working abroad. Her study was based on Mezirow's (1978, 1991) transformative learning theory. Lyon (2001) discussed the need for more literature addressing the work of professionals abroad. She referred to Osland (1995), who reported that usually expatriates only share information regarding their sojourn amongst one another. Therefore, as Lyon (2001) asserted "apart from these interactions, there are few resources, formal or informal, to help expatriates make sense of the radical changes that working abroad can make in their lives" (p. 119).

Lyon (2001) highlighted that the experiences of living and working abroad were not limited to the time spent overseas, but also included the departure and re-entry stages.

Second, she addressed the four stages of trigger events in relation to the chronological context of the experience—the departure stage, the first three months of the overseas living experience, the period after first three months of the experience, and re-entry. She spoke about four corresponding stages of relationships—negotiating personal and professional relationships, which she said resulted in transformative learning. She noted how the participants in her study demonstrated self-determination in following through with their experiences, especially during the departure and re-entry stages. Lyon confirmed that her study added to the body of literature for transformative learning theory because it provided an outlet to a deeper awareness of how adults make meaning from their experiences.

Chang, Chen, Huang and Yuan (2012) explored the international service experiences of 10 Taiwanese international service participants and the factors that encouraged transformation, using transformative learning theory and social psychology as their theoretical lens. The authors' primary concern was to know why international service is likely to produce a transformative outcome. They noted how the previous literature suggested that international service brings forth personal transformation. However, what the literature did not explain was why cross-cultural service increases a person's transformative learning experience; leaving an "unopened-box, containing an unsolved mystery" (p. 231). Using three perspectives—person interaction, schema adjustment and the Johari Window, the study highlighted three areas of enhanced person-environment transformation in cross-cultural settings: exploring the unknown, relearning the basic levels and the unknown self. Chang, Chen, Huang and Yuan (2012) agreed that

indeed, a dramatic difference between the participants' old and new experiences went beyond their existing cognitive framework resulting in a positive, transformative learning experience.

Transformative Learning and Culture

Transformational learning has been critiqued for its Western, rational, and cognitive orientation (Merriam & Ntseane, 2008). However, a qualitative study was conducted in the African nation of Botswana and examines how that culture shaped the transformative learning process (Merriam & Ntseane, 2008). After conducting in-depth interviews on 12 adults who admitted to experiencing profound shifts in personal perspectives or worldviews, it was hoped that by studying transformational learning in a non-Western culture—Botswana—would provide a lens for examining how culture shapes the process (Merriam & Ntseane, 2008). Issues of spirituality and the metaphysical world, community responsibilities and relationships, and gender roles were three culturally specific factors embedded in how the participants conceptualized and made sense of their experiences and impacted their new outlooks (Merriam & Ntseane, 2008).

Merriam & Ntseane (2008), looked to understand Mezirow's theory and how "frames of reference often represent cultural paradigms (collectively held frames of reference)—learning that is unintentionally assimilated from the culture" (Mezirow, 2000b, p. 16). These assumptions may be psychological, sociolinguistic, moral-ethical, epistemic, aesthetic, or philosophical in nature. Merriam & Nsteane (2008) pointed out that questions regarding the role of context, the nature of mechanisms in transformative

learning, the significance of emotion, spirituality, and relationships in transformative

learning and the role of culture and transformation, needed to be addressed. Taylor

(2007) conducted a review of the empirical studies on transformational learning and

concluded that "the role of culture . . . and transformative learning continues to be poorly

understood" (p. 178). This led to the purpose of the study and why the authors aimed at

examining the role of culture.

In their analysis, Merriam & Ntseane (2008) found that the participants'

experiences in dealing with a life event that triggered the transformational learning

process filled with the "disorienting dilemma" (Mezirow, 2000b) such as: death of a

child, illness, car accident, betrayal, "was found to be loosely isomorphic with the

process transformative learning theory proposed (p. 189). While the study examined how

cultural context shaped transformational learning, for the authors, it was only a beginning

(Merriam & Ntseane, 2008). Those cultural values that shaped some of the assumptions,

new outlooks and behaviors that followed called into question some aspects of Mezirow's

theory (Merriam & Ntseane, 2008).

Taylor (2007) noted in his recent review of 41 studies of transformational learning

that some characteristics of the experience "transcended context, such as greater self-

directedness, assertiveness, self-confidence and self-esteem, which support the emphasis

of autonomy found in Mezirow's (2000a) interpretation of transformative learning" (p.

184); however, most of these 41 studies were conducted in the United States and a few in

other Western countries. While the study conducted by (Merriam & Ntseane, 2008)

highlighted the transformed perspective of some of the Botswana participants, it also

suggested accounting for the cultural context of transformational learning that would better allow for spiritual and intellectual meaning making at both the individual and the collective level (Merriam & Ntseane, 2008).

In another study, Thomas & Ryan (2008) conducted a qualitative study of ten white, divorced women between the ages of 48 to 73 years-old, to understand from their own personal perspectives, the resistance and development opportunities divorced women experience. The authors searched to understand the transition that women experience as a result of the divorce process and the opportunities for growth.

Thomas & Ryan (2008) used Mezirow's (2000a) theory of transformative learning to organize the findings in order to comprehend the growth through transitional phases. Mezirow (2000a) believed people "transform" or are transformed through learning experiences encountered in life. Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), guided the authors attempt at using inductive methods to focus on the experiences of the divorced women.

Thomas & Ryan (2008) described the experiences and development of role socialization, support, and growth. The divorce process was different for all 10 women, yet there were many similarities shared; however, after reflecting on life experiences the women began to recognize growth in almost every area of life (Thomas & Ryan, 2008).

"Some women discovered the single lifestyle was fulfilling, satisfying, enjoyable, exhilarating, and challenging. Growth came when the participants realized marriage was not about their preconceived ideas of love, companionship, security,

and retirement; marriage was about the relationship between spouses" (Thomas & Ryan, 2008, p. 220-221).

According to Thomas & Ryan (2008), after feeling defeated because of their divorces, new identities and self-perceptions emerged and feelings of success surfaced. As the women moved through the phases of transformation (Mezirow, 2000a) "they gained self-assurance, self-reliance, and esteem from their children and others" (Thomas & Ryan, 2008, p. 221). The divorce experience provided opportunities for growth and proved to be life changing. The women's experiences involved the transformative phases described by Mezirow (2000a) and the findings from the study supported the transformative learning theory as a framework to examine the phases of divorce (Thomas & Ryan, 2008).

In a unique qualitative study with 14 university extension participants, Lange (2004) set out to study the impact of critical transformative learning processes for revitalizing citizen action. Lange (2004) said it is vital to address this issue because it establishes that "transformation is not just an epistemological process involving a change in worldview and habits of thinking; it is also an ontological process where participants experience a change in their being in the world including their forms of relatedness" (Lange, 2004, p. 137). Lange (2004) had the participants examine their work and living while she studied the process of critical transformative learning.

According to Lange (2004), given a sense of ineffectiveness in the public sphere and the mounting time at work and demanding pressures experienced in all spheres of life, most of these middle-class participants had imposed their ethical identities and civic

responsibilities onto their job. Lange (2004) addressed life issues such as transitioning to a new job, adjusting to a new work/life balance, and addressing more meaningful work situations.

However, Lange (2004) said that "throughout the course, the participants clearly stated that they did not transform their fundamental principles and values as transformative learning theory often supposes" (p. 130). In fact, the participants stated that their ethics did not require any type of transformation only a restoration to the right place in society. Lange (2004) said that most of the participants held the belief that if they could find the right job they would be able to make a difference in society and implement their professional and personal beliefs, "this belief was held by the various levels of workers—from managers and professionals to support staff" (p. 136).

Lange (2004) affirmed that the participants in this study demonstrated a distinctive learning process that was restorative as well as transformative. Lange (2004) concludes that there is a lack of literature on the learning processes that bridge the dialectic of transformative and restorative learning.

Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence is "an adaptive capacity based on an inclusive and integrative world view which allows participants to effectively accommodate the demands of living in a host culture" (Taylor, 1994, p. 154). Taylor (1994), concerned with the number of Americans needing to live and work outside of the United States, but not successfully completing their sojourn, decided to conduct a qualitative study to explore the issue. Taylor's study had a "two-fold purpose: (a) to delineate the learning

process of intercultural competency, and (b) to explore the theory of perspective transformation as a possible explanation for the learning and changes participants' experience" (p. 154). The twelve participants were deemed "interculturally competent" as part of the selection criteria and spoke the host language as his/her primary form of communication in the host country. What Taylor measured from a learning perspective was the intercultural competence that is derived from an intercultural experience.

Taylor (1994) used a three-step phenomenological approach to analyzing the data. The study generated a model of six steps, used to help understand the process of becoming interculturally competent. Additionally, it highlighted parts of Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation, and partially explained the learning process of intercultural competency. Taylor derived two conclusions from his study. The first conclusion confirmed that a similar pattern of learning emerged in becoming interculturally competent, despite the study's participants' diverse backgrounds and host culture. Secondly, Taylor asserted that transformative learning theory only partially explained "the learning process of becoming interculturally competent" (p.168).

Turturean (2012) discussed the need to discover the structure of intercultural competency in order to promote it and apply it in an educational context among university teachers and undergraduate students. In her article, she highlighted the relevance and impact that teacher training had on the quality of education and pointed out what Gliga (2002) asserted—training educators to have the skills needed to comfortably conduct class and situations that may arise while teaching is as vital to the continuing education of teachers. Turturean (2012) stated that while competence requires some

innate traits, competence can be developed after partaking in learning activities. She said

that a university teacher's intercultural competence should include the ability to facilitate

communication among students and to promote acceptance, recognition of others,

compassion, and reverence for the beliefs and values that give life to other cultures. But,

she admitted that the university teacher must be the first to demonstrate said qualities and

traits both with colleagues and students.

She presented the Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence developed by

Deardorff (2006) that illustrated the essential elements of intercultural competence—

attitude, skills, knowledge, and character specific traits. The model implied that all the

elements could assist in the development of intercultural competence but only in

circumstances where individuals interrelate with minority cultures. Turturean (2012)

explained that intercultural education could not be achieved if the university students and

teachers did not believe in the objectives and principles that promote intercultural

education. She went on to say that teachers and students must demonstrate open-

mindedness for uncertainty, behavioral flexibility, amiability and interest in others,

understanding, absolute acceptance, and meta-communication skills. She admitted that

promoting intercultural competence is a trying task, but as university teachers it is our

duty to convince undergraduate students to acknowledge otherness, and encourage

students to identify themselves in relation to others.

Moeller and Osborn (2014) said that the construct of intercultural competence has

developed into intercultural *communicative* competence since it emphasizes prosperous

interactions with others while conversing in the target language. Uso-Juan and Martinez-

Flor (2008) stated that intercultural communicative competence integrates the essence of communicative competence and intercultural competence. The World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (NSFLEP, 2014) defined culturally appropriate interactions as "knowing how, when and why to say what to whom" (p.11), offering an interconnectedness between language and culture. Gabrovec (2007) agreed that "language and non-verbal communication are charged with the social and cultural values of a society" (p. 19). Moeller and Osborn (2014) offered a metaphor by Byram (1997) that elucidated how a tourist only has to transmit linguistic knowledge, while the sojourner must be able to *communicate* with those in its host country. Moeller and Osborn (2014) said in regards to foreign language learning, the goal is that educators develop sojourners and not tourists in order to assist learners in becoming more responsive to other cultures and languages which leads to more fruitful intercultural relationships.

The authors asserted "a speaker of a foreign language who is interculturally competent possesses both communicative competence in that language as well as particular skills, attitudes, values, and knowledge about a culture" (p. 670). Furthermore, they acknowledged that a foreign language speaker who exhibits intercultural communicative competence acquires an "insider's view of another's culture while also deepening the understanding of his or her own culture" (p. 670).

Moeller and Osborn (2014) analyzed major theoretical frameworks stating that it is vital for teachers to have an understanding of these frameworks in order to create a classroom environment for building intercultural communicative competence. They

reviewed three main frameworks of intercultural communicative competence, that of

Byram (1997), Deardorff (2006), and Borghetti (2011). Byram (1997) based his model

on three factors: knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Additionally, there are two knowledge

categories within his model they are: knowledge about one's own country and social

groups—developed through experience; and knowledge of the interlocutor's country—

relational and developed intentionally.

Deardorff's (2006) Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence developed from

definitions gathered from scholars in the field of intercultural competence. Her model

stressed that learners enter the model at different levels depending on their current level

of intercultural competence, with attitude serving as the most fundamental characteristic.

Learners then develop knowledge and comprehension that Deardorff described as two

interacting components. According to her model, the more components gained the more

possibility for interculturally competent outcomes. The model also stressed intercultural

competence attainment where the learners first desire internal outcomes such as

adaptability, flexibility, ethnorelative view and understanding. Then, the internal

aspiration culminates into the ideal external outcome that involves proper and effective

behavior, and communication in intercultural encounters (Deardorff, 2006). Furthermore,

while the model may present itself as a process, Deardorff said that the process is cyclical

and illustrates the difficulty of becoming interculturally competent.

Borghetti (2011) developed a model for intercultural communicative competence

in response to the concern for educators who "are supposed to propose stated educational

goals and even didactic objectives without having access to equally clear methodological

direction" (p. 141). Borghetti's model begins with cognitive processes set to assist

educators in developing a climate of trust in the classroom that affords the learners the

opportunity to engage comfortably in more emotional tasks. Borghetti's model

emphasized the attainment of affective processes called, "key moments" (p. 150). These

key moments mark the beginning of motivation of different forms of emotional

intelligence. Borghetti (2011) explained the difference in knowledge building and

understanding stating that through empathy and self-awareness, understanding and proper

communication affords one to reach a more meaningful insight of unfamiliar people,

behavior, and situations that might impact one's own identity construction. The two final

components of the model are skills and awareness. Skills serve as the "bridge connecting

competence to performance" (p. 152), and self-awareness tends to metacognition and a

personal understanding of one's own limitations, inclinations, and capabilities.

Moeller and Osborn (2014) asserted that while each of the models provided

distinct features, the general structures of intercultural communicative competence can be

summarized as: "knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 675). These three pillars afford a

person to think and act in a more interculturally competent manner, especially while

using a target language.

Cheng (2012) addressed issues of cultural competence in relation to English

education in the fields of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), stating that due to

globalisation, little qualitative research had been conducted on EFL teachers' beliefs and

their effects on classroom procedures. Through in-depth interviews and analysis of

teaching materials, the study explored the intercultural competence of five Taiwanese

EFL teachers in higher education institutes of technology.

Cheng (2011) noted how English has become the *lingua franca* and globalisation

has impacted EFL education. While this might be true, Cheng (2012) highlighted the

danger and potential to overlook the importance of the otherness—"with the rising

influence of globalisation, the culture related to English refers to not only the target

culture(s) of the language but also the broader inclusion of the world as a complete entity;

thus, taking foreign language education and integrating it among worldwide cultures and

relating it to learners' cultural backgrounds at the micro and macro level" (p.164).

Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) suggested that in order to be interculturally

competent, one must be interested in other cultures and sensitive enough to understand

and take note of the cultural differences. But it does not end there. One must be willing

to modify how they behave out of respect for the inhabitants of other cultures. Sercu

(2005) added that intercultural competence is made up of three main components, they

are: knowledge, attitudes, and skills/behavior. He went on to say that teachers in

particular find themselves "faced with the challenge of promoting intercultural

competence through their teaching. This is true for teachers of a diversity of subjects, and

definitely true for teachers of foreign languages. Foreign language is, by definition,

intercultural" (p.1).

Cheng (2012) underlined that EFL education should consider the significance of

intercultural encounters in addition to language fluency because without a methodical

understanding of other cultures, as well as intercultural competence, intercultural

communicative encounters will prove too difficult and stressful to manage. Unfortunately, many teachers ignore the importance of intercultural knowledge in language education (Cheng, 2012). Cooper (1990) and Dreher (2002) claimed that educators' attitudes connect with educators' conduct and decision-making in classrooms and impacts students' learning outcomes.

The participants in Cheng's (2012) study were two male and three female teachers, most of them born and raised in Taiwan, except for one what was from the United States. The data collected included in-depth, semi-structured interviews, including relevant documents and teaching materials. Based on a naturalist-interpretive paradigm, the findings indicated several themes such as: intercultural competence as a mixture of cultures, a phenomenon, and an invisible force; intercultural competence develops naturally; intercultural competence is ultimately about world culture and diversity among cultures in the world; intercultural competence contends with people from different cultures and; addresses the indistinct notion of cultural self-awareness. The study showed that the EFL teachers did not possess theoretical frameworks for intercultural competence and that the teachers' textbooks subjugated and inhibited classroom procedures. The study's participants understanding of intercultural competence was vague. Kurogi (1998) provided a partial explanation for EFL teachers' lack of intercultural competence and understanding, acknowledging that most EFL teacher education programs consider intercultural competence unimportant. As for cultural self-awareness, the stress on American culture caused students to lose interest in other cultures, as well as their own.

Cheng (2012) claimed several pedagogical implications of this study. First, EFL teachers should be more aware of the impact of cultural self-awareness in foreign language acquisition—without a careful understanding of one's own culture, intercultural competence cannot be developed. Second, educators should serve as facilitators so as to guide students' participation in class. Third, teachers should not rely heavily on their textbooks—language should be viewed as a means to exploring the world around them. Lastly, the study identified the gap between the participants' beliefs and their classroom practices supporting the fact that teacher education should serve as the primary stage for intercultural competence awareness.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, although Mezirow first proposed his transformation theory in 1978 many years later we can see that the theory has inspired a multitude of research projects and philosophically based studies-- empirical research, philosophical critiques, books, articles, and conference proceedings. Together, this research built a widespread body of literature around Mezirow's theory. While Mezirow's theory is about how adults interpret their life experiences, and how they are able to make meaning, it is hopeful that the literature shed light upon what some scholars in the field of adult education have to say regarding the theory of transformative learning. Cranton & Taylor (2012) said "researchers should not rely solely on literature reviews to establish their study's contribution to the advancement of the field (. . .) much can be learned by returning to the original research and interpreting it anew" (p. 13).

Sykes (2014) highlighted that much of the literature emphasized individual reflections, while other researchers focused on the role of social interaction, including culture (Brooks, 2000), emotions (Dirkx, 2006) and social representation of the self (Taylor, 2008). In relation to my study, after reviewing the literature, I found very few studies have been conducted on the transformative learning experiences of United States (U.S.) citizens living and working abroad using a phenomenological research method, with the exception of Mälkki and Green (2014).

Mälkki and Green (2014) reviewed 10 empirical studies on transformative learning, through a phenomenological approach of a first-person point of view, rather than a third-person point of view in order to better understand the "micro-processes involved in transformative learning" (p. 5) Mälkki and Green (2014) conducted this study based on Taylor's (2007) call to focus more on the microprocesses of transformative learning rather than focusing on transformative learning exclusively.

Therefore, I utilized transformative learning theory as a starting off point and as a guide. I examined and reexamined transformative learning theory as I analyzed my gathered data from this study, particularly that having to do with intercultural encounters and their possible transformational effect. With that said, this literature review examined theoretical, practical, and critiques of transformative learning and areas for further study in order to uncover more diverse ways of learning, knowing, and interpreting our experiences.

Furthermore, regarding intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence, Shaklee and Merz (2012) noted that the most predominate groups choosing

to teach in international schools are from western nations. However, little is known regarding their prior training in intercultural communications skills or their international experiences. The authors also pointed out that many of these educators might posses a bachelor's degree; however, some will have teaching credentials; some will have teaching experience in their own country; and some will have no teaching credentials or experience at all. What is known is that many of those choosing to teach internationally "are generally eager, adventurous, curious, risk-takers who specifically target international schools with an eye for a career in teaching" (p. 13). Nonetheless, understanding the characteristics and experiences of international educators is fundamental to discerning the effect that teachers have on international students.

Levy (2010) suggested that the western world only prepares its educators to educate within their own native country. Shaklee and Merz (2012) said it is vital that international educators increase understanding and continue to elaborate the significance of intercultural competence. Lastly, Shaklee and Merz (2012) highlighted the fact that international educators "need to understand and develop their own intercultural communication skills before they can enhance it in their students" (p. 18). Certainly, intercultural competence is vital to fruitful intercultural encounters.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methods

Phenomenological Research Method

The phenomenological research method to this study of people's subjective and daily experiences is centered on the theory of phenomenology. Phenomenology is an understanding of meaningful, concrete relations, implicit in the original description of experience in the context of a particular situation (Moustakas, 1994). The primary target of phenomenological knowledge consists of a yield to experience so as to gain an all-inclusive account of the phenomenon being investigated in order to provide a solid basis for a philosophical exploration that represents the principles of the experience(s) (Moustakas, 1994). The maxim of phenomenology is said to be "to the things themselves," (p. 26) because it is through this philosophical approach that what is present provides the incentive for experience and for producing new knowledge. In other words, phenomena are "the building blocks of human science and the basis for all knowledge" (p. 26).

Husserl (1931) founded the theory of phenomenology and believed his work would be taken for granted by those who didn't understand or comprehend the despair of "one who has the misfortune to be in love with philosophy" (p. 29). Husserl was a student of Franz Brentano and it was Brentano (1973) who outlined some characteristics of consciousness that guided Husserl's development of phenomenology. Brentano (1973) observed the intentionality of our consciousness and how it was directed towards objects. One fact that Husserl did disagree with was Brentano's notion on the latter. According to

Husserl (1970), a relationship between perception and reference does not always exist. In other words, it does not make a difference if the object exists or if it doesn't exist, "things can emerge in our consciousness in an empty manner and thus our experience moves toward filling them by virtue of looking and looking again," (Moustakas, 1994, p. 50). According to Descartes (1912/1988), "the object is said to possess objective reality insofar as it exists by representation in thought . . . ; for objective reality (i.e. the reality of representation is in truth a subjective reality" (p. 249). Accepting that subject and object are always united is to embrace the concept of rejecting objectivism and subjectivism; thus, bringing to the forefront, interaction between subject and object.

In the truly Husserlian approach, the researcher engages in disciplined and systematic efforts to set aside pre-judgments of the phenomenon to be investigated. This is known as the *epoché* process. When done well, this process provides the researcher the opportunity to engage in the study free from preconceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the phenomenon from prior experiences in order to be wholly open, amenable, and naïve when listening to and hearing participants describe their experience of the phenomenon being investigated (Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenology invites us to "call into question our whole culture, our manner of seeing the world and being in the world in the way we have learned it growing up" (Wolff, 1984, p. 192). In doing so, the threads of our perceived notions are slackened and they allow us to transcend "like sparks from a fire" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xiii). Therefore, phenomenology is considered to be a first-person exercise; "Each of us must explore our own experience, not the experience of others" (Crotty, 1998, p. 84). As

Merleau-Ponty (1962) said, "we need to recognise our experience as the source which stares us in the face and as the ultimate court of appeal in our knowledge of things" (p. 23). Husserl (1931) claimed that phenomenology was a place to start, and rejected the belief that objects in the external world exist independently and that the information about objects is reliable. He argued that people can be certain about how things appear in, or present themselves to, their consciousness (Eagleton, 1983; Fouche, 1993). In many ways phenomenology is a method that entails a re-examination of experiences of various intentions along the way; it is a "touchstone" (Crotty, 1998, p. 84).

Armstrong (1976) noted how "the phenomenological reduction is a change of attitude that throws suspicion on everyday experiences" (p. 252). In other words, if we set aside what is known and reflect on our direct experiences of a phenomenon then it might be possible to create a new meaning or experience a substantial enrichment of what was known (Crotty, 1996). The "primordial phenomena" must be bracketed to the best of our ability to "let the experience of phenomena speak to us at first hand" (Crotty, 1996, p. 79).

Bracketing is a methodological device of phenomenological inquiry that requires that one deliberately puts aside one's own belief about the phenomenon under study or what one might already be familiar with about the subject prior to and throughout the phenomenological exploration (Carpenter, 2007). Phenomenology invites us to make sense of the objects in the world we engage with because at the heart of phenomenology is intentionality. Intentionality is a term developed from the Scholastic philosophy of the renowned nineteenth-century psychologist and philosopher Franz Brentano. He was the

teacher of Edmund Husserl, who later became the founder of phenomenology. The use

of intentionality comes from the Latin word, *tendere*, which means 'to tend'- in the sense

of 'moving towards' (Crotty, 1998, p. 44). What intentionality does is that it brings

forward the interaction between subject and object (Crotty, 1998). Intentionality

concentrates on the indispensable relationship between "conscious subjects and their

objects. . . . Between us as human beings and our world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 79).

Heidegger (1962) described our cultural understandings as a "seduction and a

dictatorship" meaning that we should be suspicious of culture because our culture, our

meaning system might limit us and set boundaries (pp. 164, 213). Therefore,

phenomenology "will be as much a construction as the sense we have laid aside, but as

reinterpretation-- as new meaning, or fuller meaning, or renewed meaning" (Crotty, 1998,

p. 82).

Husserl (1931) encouraged us as individuals to "set aside all previous habits of

thought. . . . to learn to see what stands before our eyes" (p. 80). Our cultural

understandings, as Heidegger (1962) asserted, might serve as a "dictatorship."

Nonetheless, if we consider that culture strongly influences our manner of seeing the

world and being in it, "the way we have learned it growing up" (Wolff, 1984, p. 192)

then we can begin to build a bridge between cultures by breaking down boundaries that

some phenomenologist (Heron, 1992; Husserl, 1931; Marton, 1986; Sadler, 1969;

Spiegelber, 1982; Wolff, 1984) say are "circumscribing" (Crotty, 1998, p. 81).

Circumscribing means the imposing boundaries of our cultural understandings and our

system of symbols and meanings that exclude other sets of meanings, which can harbor forms of oppression (Crotty, 1998).

In line with the phenomenological research method, this study was qualitative and explored the learning and learning processes that may occur through intercultural experiences. Qualitative research is a set of interpretive activities that seek the situated *meaning* behind actions and behavior (Cassell & Symon, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Gephart, 2004; Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004; Miles & Huberman, 1994), and relies heavily on the researcher as a *unique interpreter* of the data (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). Therefore, certain epiphanies are referred to in relation to the data gathered. "Epiphanies are self-claimed phenomena in which one person may consider an experience transformative while another may not" (Ellis et al., 2010). These epiphanies reveal ways a person could negotiate "intense situations" and "effects that linger—recollections, memories, images, feelings—long after a crucial incident is supposedly finished" (Bochner, 1984, p.595).

There were general principles to be used in phenomenological-based research so to ensure that "subjective character of the experience is not prejudiced," (Crotty, 1998, p. 83). Phenomenology "puts in place a number of procedures to prevent, or at least minimise, the imposition of the researcher's own knowledge" (Crotty, 1998, p. 83). In fact, when conducting a phenomenological study von Eckartsberg (1986) described three steps that should be considered in the design of the study, they are:

1. The problem and question formulation.
2. The data-generating situation.

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3. The data analysis (Moustakas, 1994, p. 15).

These steps are part of a framework that is thought of as an "attempt to recover a fresh perception of existence, one unprejudiced by acculturation" (Sadler, 1969, p. 377).

This study focused on the reflections and understandings of lived intercultural experiences. This investigative study allowed the research process to emerge "as an exploration, via personal experiences, or prevailing cultural understandings" (Crotty, 1998, p. 81). In the data gathering process, by way of thorough questioning, the experiences of the individuals were carefully examined to fully understand all the aspects of the stream of experience and ideation. The stream of experience defined by Husserl (1931) described a reflective process where the phases of experience (*Erlebnis*) and its intentionalities could be understood and analyzed. The "transformation of individual or empirical experience into essential insights occurs through a special process that Husserl calls 'ideation'" (Kockelmans, 1967, p. 80).

Interview Questions

The Outline Summary of the Phenomenological Model (Moustakas, 1994, p. 181) highlighted the processes that should be followed when conducting a phenomenological study. The Outline Summary of the Phenomenological Model suggested that the first step in collecting data is to formulate the question and define the terms of the question. Additionally, it suggested developing guiding questions or topics to assist in the phenomenological research interview. With that in mind, I utilized the nine cultural learning dimensions (Paige et al., 2006), as a guide. The nine learning dimensions are:

1. Adapting to culturally different surroundings;

2. Dealing with difficult times in another culture;

3. Interpreting culture;

4. Communicating across cultures;

5. Communication styles;

6. Non-verbal communication;

7. Interacting with people in another culture;

8. The living situation; and

9. Returning home (Paige et al., 2006).

In interviews, I made use of the nine cultural learning dimensions. I asked each participant:

- What participants say prompted them to live and teach abroad;

- What, if anything, they did to prepare for his/her time abroad;

- What the participants' initial perceptions were of the new setting;

- How participants' self-knowledge affected their outlook and understanding of the new milieu;

- How the participants framed their intercultural experience(s);

- What challenges, if any, the participant faced in the new setting;

- How the participants resolved any challenges they faced;

- What deeper understanding or appreciation, if any, resulted from the intercultural experience; and

- Whether the participants felt any type of transformation as a result of their intercultural experience(s)?

I drew upon the nine research questions as a guide when conducting the interviews. The questions offered an overarching theme to which the particular sessions were geared, because "the map is not the terrain," (D. Waite, personal communication, August 5, 2009) signifying that, as researchers, we might have a guide or a place to start but, once we get into the field and begin the data collection process, there may be obstacles, issues, or even other truths that come to light of thorough questioning and data collection. As a result, I was prepared to make amendments to my initial plans in order to provide more reliable and valid data in this research study. Additionally, this process provided me the opportunity to allow new questions and information gathered in the process to shape the questions as the research project unfolded (Stake, 2010). To ensure that I would not bias the subjective nature of the participants' experience(s) (Crotty, 1998, p. 83) my interviews were semi-structured (Lester, 1999), and I asked open-ended questions. Our interviews did not have a time limit, but most of them lasted one to two hours (Englander, 2012, p. 19). I asked the participants to provide pictures or artifacts, if they wished, to initiate discussions or trigger memories for further discussion (Delany, 2004; Didion, 2005; Goodall, 2006; Herrmann, 2005); however, none were provided. The interview sessions took place face-to-face in Istanbul, Turkey at locales selected by each interviewee in order to provide the most convenient and comfortable setting for the participants.

Strategies for Data Collection

In order to identify, understand, and describe the subjective nature of the participants' experiences of living and working abroad, I employed a triangulation of

sources (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1999). I conducted three themed interviews with each

participant. Each themed interview was arranged according to the participants' schedule

and availability.

The participants were eager to help. The interviews flowed very naturally, and

the interview questions served as a useful guide. I determined when to move on to the

next question depending on need or when the current topic was exhausted, or when the

participant didn't provide more or any new perspectives on the subject (Groenewald,

2004). According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), the qualitative approach to

interviewing attempts to comprehend the subjects' point of view in order to discover the

meaning of their experiences and to reveal their lived understandings prior to systematic

explanations. Similarly, the phenomenological model requires that the researcher engage

in the *epoché* process "as a way of creating an atmosphere and rapport for conducting the

interview (Moustakas, 1994, p. 181).

The notion of understanding the subjective experiences of the participants

prompted me to consider interviewing as a qualitative research data collection technique

that enabled me, the researcher, to examine more than one could observe. While "a good

interviewer is also a good observer" (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p.116), the truth is that we

cannot observe things like feelings, thoughts, and intentions (Patton, 2002). But, the

qualitative approach is an attempt at understanding not just one, but multiple realities

(Creswell, 2003). In other words, utilizing qualitative study methods affords the

researcher the opportunity to examine various facets of the participants' point of view,

experiences and the phenomenon under investigation through careful interview

questioning, thorough data collection, and insightful data analysis.

According to the phenomenological model (Moustakas, 1994), when collecting

data through the use of interviews, in order to obtain descriptions of the experience, the

researcher should consider the following:

a. Informal interviewing;

b. Open-ended questions; and

c. Topical-guided interviews (p. 181).

The use of open-ended questions in the semi-structured interviews gave me a

place to start and allowed me to break up my interviews into themed sessions. The first

session(s) were themed "initial perceptions and the new milieu." The next interview

session was themed "framing the intercultural experience," and the last interview session

was themed "the personal transformation through the intercultural experience."

The sessions were set up in order to interview the participants in a sequential

manner that allowed us to travel by way of the participant's reflections from the

beginning of his/her time spent in the new setting. We began by getting a sense of his/her

initial feelings, outlook, and understanding of the new environment. We then moved on

to the core part of his/her time spent in Istanbul, Turkey in order to understand what types

of challenges, daily experiences, new-found perspectives he/she was experiencing. Then

we moved on to the time that he/she left and returned to his/her hometown (if they had

returned at all). What did he/she make of the time spent there? What new understandings

or transformations came from the intercultural experience? What now?

Before, during and after each interview I wrote field notes for use along with the interview data, so as to identify themes and inform my research. Four different types of field notes were written: "Observational notes—'what happened notes'; Theoretical notes— 'attempts to derive meaning; Methodological notes—'reminders, instructions or critique' to oneself on the process; and Analytical memos—end of a field-day summary or progress reviews" (Groenwald, 2004, pp. 15-16; Sanjek, 1990). I also kept a reflective journal. Reflective journaling provided a more rich and detailed data set (Yin, 1989) that included research journals used throughout the research process and a re-collection of my own personal reflections and experiences on my time living and working abroad in Istanbul, Turkey. The use of reflective journaling provided evidence of how the research unfolded via my "presuppositions, choices, experiences, and actions during the research process" (Mruck & Breuer, 2003, p. 3). This served as a place to set aside any prejudgments and as an outlet for expressing any feelings when collecting data, in line with the phenomenological process.

Focus Group

I had initially thought to interview four potential participants, three from Istanbul, Turkey and one from Rome, Italy. However, my committee and chair suggested that I select three participants from Istanbul, Turkey, and then moderate a focus group. Originally, after all individual interviews had taken place, a focus group interview session was to be held with all three participants, in a less structured approach in line with the focus group research in social sciences (Morgan, 2002). A focus group is "an informal discussion among a group of selected individuals about a particular topic" (Wilkinson,

2004). According to Morgan (2002), there are two types of focus groups: a structured

approach, used mainly in market research, and a semi-structured approach one employed

in the social sciences. Using a focus group in social science research helps the researcher

understand the participants' meanings and interpretations. Morgan (2002), contended that

based on the research topic and theoretical framework, both methods can be utilized

within the social sciences. A focus group is "a means to set up a negotiation of meanings

through intra- and inter-personal debates" (Cook & Crang, 1995, p. 56). Additionally,

Morgan (1997), stated that when selecting participants for a focus group, it is often more

useful to consider reducing the sample bias rather than achieving generalizability. It has

also been suggested that a focus group ought to consist of strangers (Morgan & Krueger,

1993). While there are some who say that interviewing people who are familiar with one

another might help the researcher deal with issues of self-disclosure (Jarrett, 1993), this

was not true for this study. In fact, all three participants were acquainted with one

another, but refused to participate in a focus group because of their familiarity with one

another. The female participant was not comfortable speaking about certain topics with

the two male participants present, and vice-versa, one of the male participants did not feel

comfortable participating in a focus group interview with a female present, given some of

the facts he wished to disclose. While all the various strategies utilized in focus group

interview principles and moderator participation (Morgan, 1992) were considered, to best

suit the needs of the research and keeping in line with best practices, standards, and

protocols in qualitative interviewing, no focus group was conducted in order to honor the

participants' preferences.

The Participants

For this research, I choose to use purposive sampling (Welman & Kruger, 1999). I selected three participants based on the needs of the research (Babbie, 1995; Englander, 2012; Giorgi, 2006, 2009; Greig & Taylor, 1999; Hycner, 1985; Kvale 1983; Moustatakas, 1994; Schwandt, 1997). In order to adhere to recommendations of the phenomenological method in human sciences, I utilized three participants (Englander, 2012). The use of three participants allowed me to take a broad view of the results (Giorgi, 2009), which falls in line with the Husserlian (1998/1913) approach to a phenomenological study that was built upon the notion that generalizations arise from the meaning-structure of a phenomenon.

I selected participants who "had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched" (Kruger, 1988 p. 150). With this in mind, the participants were carefully selected to represent significant research parameters in order to center the attention on the participant, his/her experiences, and the evidence that would address the purpose of the study (Soy, 1997). The criteria were as follows:

1. Each participant declared the United States as his/her place of citizenship before his/her time abroad;

2. Each participant was an adult over the age of 25 during their time abroad;

3. Each participant lived and worked abroad for at least two years; and

4. Each participant worked as an educator during his/her time abroad.

Through this qualitative study, my goal was to provide rich data through the in-depth analysis of the person's experiences of living and working abroad. I selected three

participants who fit the criteria of my purposive and theoretical framework sample.

Purposive selection of the participants was based on preliminary data gathered from a

brief questionnaire that I distributed to English teachers I knew were living and working

abroad in Istanbul, Turkey and who met the aforementioned criteria.

The theoretical framework sample means that when selecting subjects for a

phenomenological research study, the researcher has to ask the question, "Does the

participant have the experience that I am looking for?" (Englander, 2012). And, in this

case, all the participants did have the background and experience of living and working

abroad, which is what prompted me to invite them as participants in this study.

Mya

The first participant, Mya (pseudonym), is a 27-year-old female from Cincinnati,

Ohio. She has lived and worked in Istanbul, Turkey for over two years teaching English

as a foreign language at a language school in the city. At times, she performs as a guest

reggae DJ at a nightclub in Istanbul. After spending some time in Istanbul, she decided

to move to South Korea for a year, where she also taught English as a foreign language.

However, she decided to return to Turkey and continued teaching English as a foreign

language. She is not married and has no children, but enjoys going out on dates or

hanging out with friends at the local *meyhanes* (a traditional Turkish restaurant or bar),

sightseeing, visiting museums, and dancing at a local reggae nightclub in Istanbul.

Joseph

The second participant, Joseph (pseudonym), is a 41-year-old male, also from

Cincinnati, Ohio. He has been living and working in Istanbul, Turkey, for over six years

teaching English as a foreign language at a language school in the city. He travels to

Amsterdam and Geneva every spring and summer for various music festivals and to visit

friends. Also, during the summertime, when he has a holiday from work, he returns to

the United States to visit with his family and friends. He is married to a Turkish woman,

and they have two children (a girl and a boy) together.

Jake

The third participant, Jake (pseudonym), is a 37-year-old male from Honolulu,

Hawaii. He has been living and working in Istanbul, Turkey, for over eight years now,

teaching English as a foreign language at a university in the city. He can speak Turkish

fluently. He likes watching sports, travelling, and hanging out with his fiancé and friends.

He is divorced from his first wife, but is now engaged to a girl from Iran. Neither of them

have any children.

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Data Collection Protocols

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As part of the phenomenological model (Moustakas, 1994), and any type of

qualitative research study, the researcher must develop a criterion for selecting

participants that includes:

    a. Establishing a contract;

    b. Obtaining informed consent;

    c. Ensuring confidentiality;

    d. Agreeing to place and time commitments; and

    e. Obtaining permission to record and publish. (p. 181)

Therefore, before beginning the interviews, I provided full disclosures to each participant. The disclosures provided information regarding the following: the nature of the study, what would happen if he/she agreed to take part in this research study, the possible discomforts and risks for the participant, the benefits to taking part in the research, privacy and confidentiality and that the results of this study might be published and presented. Any personal information that might identify the participant in any form would be masked in order to ensure confidentiality.

Data collected from each participant remained confidential through the use of pseudonyms. The method used for data collection was interviews. Therefore, the majority of the data collected was primary data; responses relating to the aforementioned research questions. I worked to maintain confidentiality by ensuring that the data did not contain any identifying information. Also, no video or pictorial artifacts of the participants were collected for data. I transcribed the interviews myself to immerse myself in the data and ensure the reliability of the transcriptions. I conducted member checks after the data were gathered and transcribed to ensure that my analysis corresponded to what the participant meant to say (Harper & Cole, 2012).

Data Analysis

A Modification of van Kaam's Method

Qualitative data analysis is an interactive and reflexive process that begins as data are being collected rather than after data collection has ceased (Schutt, 2008). The researcher mixes and matches specific analysis methods as required by the research problem to be investigated and the setting in which it is to be studied (p. 355). With that

said, a modification (Moustakas, 1994) of van Kaam's (1959, 1966) phenomenological

method was used for the analysis of the data, with additional validation steps included.

Epoché Process

The *epoché* process requires the researcher to examine the data with openness,

where every phrase and statement is given equal importance without prejudice or

personal bias (Moustakas, 1994). The *epoché* process "is the first step in coming to know

things" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90).

The first step involved in the process required me to read all transcripts and study

them multiple times in order to develop a thorough understanding of the phenomenon

being examined. While there is no mention in the literature of how many times, exactly,

the transcripts should be read, I read the transcripts each in their entirety, and referred to

them numerous times throughout the analysis process. Part of the process required

reflection and data immersion: "I look and describe; look again and describe; look again

and describe; always with references to textural qualities" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90). Data

immersion required me to read and study the interview transcripts more than one time, so

that I could truly understand and develop an overall sense of the phenomenon being

investigated.

Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction

This is the initial stage where a prereflective description of things "just as they

appear" and a "reduction to what is horizonal and thematic" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 91),

contributes to what is known as Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction.

Schmitt (1968) described Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction as such because it involves the exposure of the ego where everything has meaning. This makes the process "Transcendental." It is at this point where everything in our world then becomes phenomena, "Phenomenological," all while being reduced, "Reduction" to our own experiences; taking us back to "the way things are." Thus, the analysis then becomes the maxim of phenomenology, "to the things themselves" (p.30). The modified version of van Kaam's method required me to use the complete interview transcriptions of each participant and begin with listing and preliminary grouping (Moustakas, 1994); also known as horizonalization.

Horizonalization

Horizonalization and reduction is "a never-ending process and, though we may reach a stopping point and discontinue our perception of something, the possibility for discovery is unlimited" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 95). Horizonalization is another aspect of the Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction. In a phenomenological study, horizonalization requires that the researcher be open to every testimonial or piece of data. In doing so, the researcher gives value to the statements provided by the participants. If you think about it, horizons are limitless, even where one ends, another one begins. Similarly, in a phenomenological study, this facet of data analysis is important because "we can never exhaust completely our experience of things no matter how many times we reconsider them or view them" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 95).

Reduction and Elimination of Data

The next step is the reduction and elimination of data. Before eliminating data, I asked, "Does it contain a moment of the experience that is a necessary and sufficient constituent for understanding it?" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121). Part of the Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction requires that the researcher give value to all statements and phrases from the interview transcripts. Therefore, I had to identify and mark any significant statements and phrases relevant to the phenomenon being investigated. Then, I composed a list for each participant, delineating all the statements and phrases identified for each individual. At this point, I reviewed each list in order to omit any redundant statements or phrases and wrote out a new list of relevant statements.

Clustering and Thematizing the Invariant Constituents

The next step involved clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents. These clusters are the main themes of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). All relevant data were arranged into a list, where any relevant statements made by the participants were categorized into themes, omitting any statements that overlapped or repeated others. Constructing meaning and interpretation of the data required "an interweaving of person, conscious experience, and phenomenon" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 96). The task of deriving meaning from the exhaustive and thorough analysis of the participant's statements required the careful construction of lists during the horizonalization, which I then transformed into meaning units and interpretations. Then I carefully reviewed the meaning units in an attempt to develop themes associated with the phenomenon being investigated.

Final Identification of the Meaning Units and Themes: Validation

The final identification of the meaning units and themes required that I check

three things for validation:

1. Are the meaning units expressed explicitly in the interview transcriptions?

2. Are they compatible, if not explicitly expressed? and,

3. If they are not explicit or compatible, then they are not relevant and should

   be deleted. (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121).

After I identified the themes, the task of deriving meaning from the thorough and

careful analysis of those themes was established.

External Validation: Member Checks

At this point, I conducted an external validation exercise with the participants: the

member checks. After sifting through the data and creating lists that reflected the analysis

and interpretation of the meaning of the participants' narratives, the use of member

checks provided validation and confirmation that the analysis accurately depicted what

the participants meant to say. I conducted follow-up interviews with each participant

face-to-face and presented each list for his/her review and confirmation. At this point, the

researcher should make any needed modifications and adjustments; however, in my

study, all three participants provided positive feedback and validation. No major

revisions were required.

Conducting member checks helped me improve the accuracy of the analysis and

provided support for what the participant really meant to say (Harper & Cole, 2012).

While each participant agreed that the results adequately portrayed his/her reflections, for

validation purposes, the meaning units again needed to be analyzed, organized and compared against the original protocols.

Individual Textural Description and Individual Structural Description

After receiving external validation and confirmation from the participants, I began the formulation of the individual textural description of the experience (Moustakas, 1994); using verbatim examples from the transcribed interviews. The individual textural description "describes the experience from many sides, angles, and views until a sense of fulfillment is reached" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 78). After I constructed the individual textural description, I wrote out the individual structural description of the experience for each participant.

According to Keen (1975) the individual structural description is what can only be obtained through reflection. Moustakas (1994) added that the individual structural description "involves the conscious act of thinking and judging, imagining and recollecting" (p. 79). I kept the individual structural description to a minimum. I thought it best for my study to keep this brief, since the participants provided a plethora of experiences with first-hand explanations in their interviews. Only when clarification was needed did I provide some structural description to the text. I wanted to allow the first-hand data to speak for itself; allowing the data to unfold naturally and in its purest form. Moustakas (1994) described this as a "rhythmical flow" that "inspires comprehensive disclosure of experience" (pp. 122-123).

Individual Textural-Structural Description

The next step in van Kaam's data analysis process required that I "construct for each participant a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121). The textural-structural description then led me to the development of the composite descriptions.

Imaginative Variation

My use of an imaginative variation allowed the "what" of the experiences to be illuminated (Moustakas, 1994). It allowed me the opportunity to "derive structural themes that are obtained through Phenomenological Reduction" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 99). In this part of the analysis I described the essential structures of the phenomenon toward meanings and essences (Moustakas, 1994). The steps involved in constructing the Imaginative Variation include: 1) Varying the possible structural meanings that underlie the textural meanings in a systematic way; 2) Recognizing the underlying themes that afforded the phenomenon to emerge; 3) Reflecting on the universal structures that brought forth thoughts and feelings regarding the phenomenon and 4) Searching for examples that vividly illustrate the structural descriptions of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Then, I undertook an internal validation and confirmation of the data by taking the composite themes and examining them against the transcripts. Another examination of the clustered themes for each participant, against the transcripts, ensured that the participants were satisfied with the experience as described by their personal narratives. The composite themes were again organized and compared against the transcripts to

verify that the experiences described in the transcripts were clearly represented in the composite themes.

Synthesis

The next stage of this phenomenological study required that I develop an overall analysis of the data. Instead of individually representing each participant's narrative from the meaning units and themes and their formulation, I created a composite description; I combined any recurring themes to produce common themes addressing the phenomenon under investigation.

Composite Description

I developed a composite description of the meaning and essences of the experience in order to represent the participants as a whole (Moustakas, 1994). I created a comprehensive account of the participants' experiences, the meaning units of each participant's narrative of living and working abroad developed into composite themes, to represent the group as a whole. The composite descriptions referred to were: Motivation to Live and Teach Abroad; Negotiating Intercultural Experiences; and Identity Issues and Transformation. The composite descriptions are presented in Chapter Four—Composite Description of the Data.

Finally I present the comprehensive representation of the phenomenon studied as a composite description of the experiences of three adult educators who lived and worked abroad. I provide verbatim statements from the participants about their motivation to live and teach abroad, the obstacles they faced, the personal reflections of their time spent in the new milieu, and what personal transformations, if any, took place as a result of their

time living and working in Istanbul, Turkey. These accounts, I believe, accurately reflect the phenomenon being investigated and that our knowledge and understanding of the ideation and the stream of experience of living and working abroad, as the participants experienced would provide a deeper understanding of the phenomena.

Validation Strategies

Some of the validation strategies I employed in this study included: the *epoché* process, Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction, and external/internal validation stages—member checks, internal validation check, and the use of verbatim transcripts. My use of member checks provided external validation and confirmation that I accurately depicted what the participants meant to say. However, after conducting the member checks, no major revisions were required. Also, use of verbatim statements from the participants provided meaningful and thick descriptions of the phenomenon being investigated (Moustakas, 1994). Lastly, through the internal validation and confirmation stage, I made certain that the composite themes matched what the transcripts embodied in order to provide an in-depth, amalgamated depiction of the experiences of three adult educators who lived and worked abroad.

The Role and Background of the Researcher

I have been intentionally working towards developing the skills needed to conduct this study for my doctoral dissertation. First, I lived, studied and worked in Rome, Italy, for a total of two years, first as a study-abroad student, where I studied at John Cabot University from 2004-2005. Then, in 2005, while studying in Rome, I also served as a private teacher of English as a Foreign Language to two Italian children. The experience

of living and working in Rome, Italy, helped me understand the obstacles that come with adjusting to intercultural experiences. No longer did I simply live abroad in a university setting. A university setting provided comfort and security. If you were ill, you could visit the university health facility. If you needed a place to live, you could request university housing—where the university took care of the electricity and the water bill. Living and working abroad proved more challenging than just studying abroad.

An opportunity to live and teach abroad in Istanbul, Turkey arose, and I accepted the offer. I lived in Istanbul, Turkey from 2009- 2012, about three years. However, for the past three years, I have traveled frequently to and from Istanbul for personal and academic reasons. Additionally, it should be noted that I have traveled extensively throughout Italy, Turkey, United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Macedonia.

While in Rome, the experiences I had as a study abroad student helped me develop more as a scholar. This experience piqued my interested in learning more about people and their cultures. On this journey, I met people who taught me more about living life differently from the way I had learned it growing up. Not only did I immerse myself in the Italian culture—learning about Italian history, cuisine, and superstitions, but also their opera, art, and literature. I frequented places the locals would go to—family-owned restaurants, Italian friends' family dinners, private clubs, *inotecas*, and *apertivi*, to name but a few. I learned to read, write, and speak in Italian, even if only at an intermediate level.

In the fall of 2009, while working on my Ph.D., I attended a "Cultivating Culture" conference, hosted by the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), in Istanbul, Turkey. While attending this conference, I met a director of a language school and was invited to teach at a school in Istanbul, Turkey. I accepted the offer and began working at the language school in the spring of 2010, but had to return to the United States to complete a required course for my doctoral program only offered in the summer.

However, during the time that I lived in Istanbul, I had to return to America to complete a required course for my doctoral program. After a few months, I returned to Istanbul and married my fiancé in December of 2010. We remained in Istanbul until April 2013, when my husband finally received his visa and we moved to the United States.

My personal experience as a student and an adult educator who lived and worked abroad contributed to my having some preconceived notions and perspectives. Nevertheless, I have invested time in developing my own understanding of the cyclical transformations that I experienced because of my time spent living and working abroad. These experiences provided me with the opportunity to understand that there is a side to living and working abroad that needed to be considered in the lacuna of the literature, which mainly focused on educators participating in teacher educator preparation programs, or students in study abroad programs. However, working to not let my biases and assumptions interfere with conducting this research has enhanced my ability to highlight with genuineness the story the research data had to tell.

A Brief History of Turkey

The Republic of Turkey, located in the Middle East, in southwestern Asia Minor and southeastern Europe, is known as *Turkiye Cumhuriyeti*, or simply *Turkiye* (Turkey-History Background). In 2014, the population of Turkey was approximately 76 million. Roughly 80 percent of the population is Turkish, and about 20 percent is Kurdish (Turkey- History Background). Approximately 99.8 percent of all Turks are Muslims with the majority of them being Sunni Muslims (Turkey- History Background). The official language in Turkey is Turkish. However, other languages spoken in Turkey are: Kurdish, Arabic, Armenian, and Greek (Turkey- History Background). English is becoming more widespread, and is taught in schools, in preparation for students wishing to enter college (Turkey- History Background).

Mustafa Kemal—Atatürk

Mustafa Kemal, a war hero known as Atatürk, is considered, to many, to be the father of Turkey (Turkey- History Background). Many people of Turkey hold Kemal in high regard because he worked diligently to transform Turkey into a contemporary westernized nation. Not only did he created a new political and legal system (Turkey-History Background), but he ensured that both government and education were secular, and that women had equal rights (Turkey- History Background). Kemal progressively changed Turkey's industry, agriculture, arts, and sciences. These reforms are still the ideological foundation of modern Turkey (Turkey- History Background).

CHAPTER 4

Composite Descriptions of the Data

The composite textural-structural descriptions are described as emergent themes that represent the group as a whole. The results of the data analysis are presented in verbatim form and categorized into three emergent themes: Motivation to Live and Teach Abroad; Negotiating Intercultural Experiences; and Identity Issues and Transformation.

The following profiles, of each participant are built from information collected during face-to-face interviews. I use pseudonyms for each participant, for confidentiality.

The first participant is Mya. At the time of our interview, she was a 28-year-old female from Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology and Women's Studies and held a certificate to teach English as a foreign language. Mya had lived in Istanbul, Turkey for a combined total of about three years. She had not mastered the Turkish language, she had some knowledge of Turkish, but said it was only enough to help her get around, shop, and order at restaurants.

The second participant is Joseph. At the time of our interview, he was a 41- year-old male from Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature and also held a certificate to teach English as a foreign language. Joseph had lived in Istanbul, Turkey for over six years. He spoke some Turkish, but says his wife, who is Turkish, handles all the affairs requiring the use of fluent Turkish and said that they spoke English at home.

The third participant is Jake. At the time of our interview, he was a 37-year-old male from Hawaii, U.S.A. but also grew up in several different states in the United

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States. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in History. He was a certified teacher in

the State of Virginia and also held a certificate to teach English as a foreign language.

Jake had lived in Istanbul for over eight years and spoke Turkish fluently. All

participants, at the time of our interviews were employed teaching English as a foreign

language at schools in Istanbul, Turkey.

The emergent themes: Motivation to Live and Teach Abroad; Negotiating

Intercultural Experiences; and Identity Issues and Transformation were presented through

the use of the participants' verbatim transcripts. The experiences presented here as

intercultural learning processes were suggested by Taylor's (1994) model and emerged

through the use of Paige et al.'s (2006) nine-learning dimensions, which I employed to

develop the interview questions. This process helped me move through the participants'

stages of living and working abroad. The themes suggested some form of transformation

in a few of the participants, but not all. Taylor (2000) noted how "there is still little

understanding of why some disorienting dilemmas lead to a transformation and other do

not" (p. 182). I am encouraged to look again, at the factors that influence the possible

transformation of individuals (Sinnott, 2003).

Intercultural Competence

While I sought to understand the personal transformation that the participants may

have experienced because of their intercultural encounters, analysis of the data fit with

Taylor's (1994) assertion that, "a sojourner travels to another culture to live for an

extended period of time he or she often experiences a transformation" (p. 155). Taylor

(1994) did not state whether the experiences had to be positive or negative, and both are

highlighted in the findings presented here. Furthermore, Taylor (1994) went on to say that "the transformation usually occurs out of a necessity for survival, out of a need to relieve stress and anxiety often experienced as the stranger struggles to meet basic needs" (p. 155). What my analysis of the data revealed were occasions where some of the participants' initial transformation began out of the need to relieve stress and anxiety. One, in particular, removed himself from the anxiety by "putting up a shield."

Moreover, Taylor (1994) commented that "this transformation requires the sojourner who is successful at working through and learning from these kinds of cultural experiences has the potential to become interculturally competent within the host culture, developing 'a more inclusive, discriminating and integrative perspective' (Mezirow, 1991, p. 167)" (p. 155). In this study, I did not set out to measure intercultural competence; however, it became apparent that the participants and their experiences could be examined and understood by reflecting on Taylor's (1994) aforementioned statements.

Consideration of Taylor's (1994) learning model shed light on the series of components that reflected the processes and strategies of understanding the participants' intercultural experiences. There are "six components made of up of experiences, events, and strategies that each participant passes through or employs in learning to live successfully in the host culture" (p. 160). The six components are: "setting the stage, cultural disequilibrium, reflective orientation, behavioral learning strategies, and evolving intercultural identity" (Taylor, 1994, p. 160).

After careful review of the data, I thought it best to look at the participants' meaningful experiences and try to compare what their stories had to tell against the Taylor's (1994) learning model. While my intention was to try to understand the participants' personal transformation, the phenomenological research process required that I look at the composite descriptions as a whole. What my analysis revealed, given the data generated from the participants, were the characteristics that are indicative of intercultural competence such as: empathy, respect, overseas experience, listening skills, tolerance for ambiguity, etc. Taylor (1994) proposed that these attributes were indicative of a successful sojourner, and a successful sojourner "are those who are successful at working and living in cultures other than their own" (p. 154).

To put in to perspective the experiences of the three adult educators who lived and worked abroad, it was of the essence to find a tool that would best highlight, develop, and depict what their stories had to tell. The transformational effect that their experiences might have led to personally was only the place to start and that was achieved. However, Taylor (1994) recommended the use of his model to better understand the learning process that takes place because it was "essential to developing more effective education programs and identifying factors that would aid the sojourner during his or her intercultural experience" (p. 154), and that should be the ultimate goal of research in adult education. Much of the literature simply identified characteristics of participants who experienced transformational learning or not; however, little if any research has looked at intercultural competence from a learning perspective (Taylor, 1994). While my intention was to try to understand the participants' personal transformation, the

phenomenological research process required that I look at the composite descriptions as a whole. What my analysis revealed, given the data generated from the participants, were the characteristics that are indicative of intercultural competence such as: empathy, respect, overseas experience, listening skills, tolerance for ambiguity, etc. Taylor (1994) proposed that these attributes were indicative of a successful sojourner, and a successful sojourner "are those who are successful at working and living in cultures other than their own" (p. 154).

Setting the Stage

Taylor (1994) pointed out that the first step, setting the stage, is where each individual comes to the intercultural experience with "former critical event in his or her life, personal goals, varying amounts of intercultural training, and previous intercultural experiences that influence the learning process" (p. 160). What the data highlighted, in verbatim form, are critical life events, personal goals, and previous intercultural experiences that influenced, or motivated the participants' decisions to live and teach abroad.

For example, the data unveiled Mya's motivation to find her biological mother and her time spent studying abroad in Turkey before she decided to live and teach abroad in Istanbul. Additionally, the data revealed Joseph's personal goal of "marrying up" as he often referred to it in personal conversations, as the motivation to leave Ohio, get married, and move to Geneva, which then led him to live and work in Istanbul. Lastly, Jake described his experience of enduring a very painful divorce. After this, he decided he needed to move far away. He decided to take an overseas assignment with the United

State Army, and moved to Germany. After his military time in Germany was completed, he was unsatisfied with teaching in the American school system, so and decided to leave again, only this time, he chose to live and work in Istanbul, Turkey.

Motivation to Live and Teach Abroad

In this section, the participants discussed what prompted them to live and teach abroad. Through the analysis of the data the themes of relationships and wanderlust emerged. Personal accounts the participants shared about looking for love, love lost, and love found centered on major personal relationship changes or issues. Additionally, participants described their wanderlust spirit through the desire to travel and their fascination with historical and architectural aesthetics and the unknown.

Relationships

Looking for love.

Two of the three participants, Mya and Joseph shared their stories of adoption. However, it is Mya's story of being adopted that highlights one of the reasons why she decided to move to Turkey. During her interview, Mya's story unfolded when she discussed being born to an unwed Turkish woman. She said:

My biological parents are Turkish as far as I know. I never knew them, but my mother's name, first and last, is Turkish. She might be of some ethnic minority in the south, but, pretty sure…well, she grew up and lived in Turkey her whole life. For all intents and purposes, she's Turkish, but she could have been Kurdish or another, ethnic minority. I'm not sure.

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At the time, she said her biological mother was unable to keep her because of cultural and family pressure. She became pregnant while unmarried and was disowned by her family. She had to go live with her sister the whole time she was pregnant with me. For this reason, her mother went to live with a sister in another town until it was time for her to deliver.

After I was born, she really wanted me to be adopted by an American family because she didn't want me growing up in this country that oppressed women.

Her parents, who were from the USA, were working in a southwestern town in Turkey and learned about Mya's mother's need to give up the baby for adoption and made arrangements to adopt Mya.

My father was in the military and he got assigned to come to Turkey for his job. My mother volunteered at an orphanage and she always wanted to adopt from the orphanage, but she said they got put on an adoption waiting list and two weeks later they got a call for me.

After being adopted, her parents moved Mya back to the USA together with their other biological children. After moving around to other cities in the U.S. her parents finally settled in Cincinnati, Ohio, this is where Mya would call her hometown.

When I asked Mya what prompted her to live and teach abroad, she said that initially, she had studied abroad in Turkey during her undergraduate studies and that she longed to return. She recounted how:

I studied abroad in 2007, at Boğaziçi University for one semester. That was the start of wanting to move back to Istanbul. I always knew I wanted to come to

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Turkey and see what it was like to live here and see if I could find anything about myself that felt Turkish. I really wanted to find my biological mom, not because I really wanted to meet her, but I just really wanted to see her; even if I could get a photograph of her. I just really want to see what she looks like because some of my self-esteem issues come from how I look. I want to know if I look like her. And I really wanted to learn the language and learn more about the culture here.

One of Mya's motivations was to come and find the roots of her Turkish ancestry because in her interview she described feeling a lack of closeness to her family back home.

I don't really have too much of a close relationship with anybody in my family. It's hard-…I really don't feel close to anyone in my family honestly.

When asked if this made her move abroad easier she said:

Yes. Definitely makes it easier. I've always kind of felt like the black sheep of my family, um, not only physically, but also mentally. My thoughts, like the- my perspective on life and, uh… is much different from my family's. My, my experience-driven pursuit of knowledge is much different than my parents and the rest of my family. my older brother has been married a few times. That's all he wants with his life, is to get married and have a family. My sister got married really young and has children. So they're very much, like, I don't know, kind of pursuing that American Dream in that way and it's not what I want for my life at all.

Since part of Mya's motivation to live and teach abroad revolved around her need to find more about herself and her identity, Mya was asked if she was able to realize this. She said she had given up looking for her biological mother. She asserted:

I gave up looking for her because I don't want to cause any problems for her. I don't want to find her anymore. I mean, what if she's married and never told her husband about me? I can't put that pressure on her. I don't blame my mom for any of this. That's a real mind-fuck, because now, I am in the situation I am in because of the fucked-up ways of Turkey. So I hate it when people, especially men, tell me that I need to find my mom. I tell them that if it weren't for their fucked-up society, I might still be with my mom, if she didn't have to deal with the pressures put upon her.

The situation that Mya alluded to when she says, "I am in the situation I am in," relates to Mya's search for love. In her interviews she discusses how she left America in search, not only for her biological mother, but perhaps a stable relationship with a man who might understand her, a man who might relate to her. She said that while in Turkey, she purposely seeks to date Turkish men. She said:

If I wanted to date…Americans, I would be in America or you know, I'd be looking…

When I asked what her what dating was like in America for her, she said:

Very unsatisfying. American men don't really want to commit to you or say they like you. They wanna play games or lead you on. It's a mind-fuck really, for lack of a better term. It's… (sigh) I don't know.

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She also said that the aesthetic that men in America want is different from what Turkish men want.

People or men in the States don't really, as a whole, appreciate thick women. They don't. It's not the aesthetic that they really want or like.

However, in Turkey, she said:

In Turkey, maybe it is what my roommate said. Maybe it is that I'm foreign and I'm interesting and maybe it has nothing to do with the way I look, but I don't really feel that way. Like, I feel like the guys that do approach me and do want to sleep with me are attracted to the way that I look. I really do feel like that because it's different. The way they touch you, the way that they react to your body is different here than it is in the States I feel like.

Mya also talked about being promiscuous in Turkey. When asked if she had had been more promiscuous in the past than she is now, she said:

I've gotten more selective. But, um…I haven't really been in a lot of boyfriend-girlfriend relationships in my life. Just dating and hooking up.

I asked Mya if the "hooking up" was by choice, she said:

Mmmm, I used to think it was. I still think it was, in the past, but now it's something different. I find myself wanting a boyfriend more now.

I asked Mya if some of the issues she has with her self-esteem go along with her willingness to follow through with sexual activity with some of these guys and she said she didn't think so. She said:

I don't think so. I think it comes more from, like, in the States not getting a lot of attention and then here, I'm getting a lot of it so, my view was get while the gettin's good, because I didn't know when I would get attention again or if I would have to wait.

I asked Mya how this attention made her feel, she said:

It makes me feel more confident, I guess. It boosts my self-esteem, in a shallow way. But that's a part of my outward appearance, you know, that is part of my identity, that, is a lot of times looked over in the States. Like, people like, "Oh, you're nice and you're intelligent and you're cool." But it's never like, 'Oh, you're beautiful or you're sexy." Here, it's like I *can* be that.

Feeling disconnected from her family and the need to find her biological mother, led her to Turkey. While in Turkey, she realized another personal need was being met, the need for attention from the opposite sex. Both situations addressed Mya's desire to find love.

Love found.

In this section, I share part of Joseph's story and his reflections about a city he felt left him wanting more in regards to work and life. He shared how he felt that meeting his wife opened up new opportunities for him; ultimately, taking him to live and teach abroad. Joseph said:

I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. My mother and father, adopted me as an infant. . I have one sister. She is also adopted from a different family. I have never located and I have never actively tried to locate my biological parents.

Joseph gave a description of the city he was raised in, he said:

Cincinnati, Ohio is a river town. So most river towns in the States, have some economic value, for trade and such. It's the home of a major company, which is a very large, international company, which I will reference later in how I met my wife. Growing up there, it seems, very normal. It's a medium-sized city, never any traffic issues, you could always find a job. It's a conservative city, a very friendly city. Growing up there, I have to say that of course I made friends. I went to all Catholic schools. People lived in neighborhoods. They tended to play with and stay in the neighborhoods that they grew up in. Nothing moves too fast in Cincinnati. I'll use a cliché quote: Mark Twain once said that, "When the end of the world comes, I'm going to move to Cincinnati, Ohio because everything happens there about five years later."

I asked what types of jobs he held while living in his hometown, he said:

While I was in school, I worked, various part time jobs, ranging from gas station attendant, jockey if you will, to a janitor, janitorial work.

Joseph shared how he met his wife, when he said:

I had met my wife in 2003. We had met by chance, actually. She had just arrived in America, in Cincinnati specifically, about a week earlier, transferring from Belgium, working for the major company, which I mentioned earlier. We had met by chance. She was driving, I was working at a dealership at that time, selling cars. She pulled into the lot. She was lost. She was turning around, that was her intention, but she was also in the market for a company car. I happened to speak

to her. We had a chat. One thing led to another, we became friends. We started

dating. Three years later, in Cincinnati, Ohio, we were married in a courthouse in

2006. A few months after we were married, her job assignment changed, which

ultimately took us in 2006 to Geneva, Switzerland.

However, at this point Joseph recalled how he ended up abroad by recounting a

conversation he had with his wife. He said:

My wife and I had been dating a few years, and she had told me that her

assignment had changed and that required her to go to Switzerland. We evaluated

our dating situation. And basically, she put it to me as, "Paul, we've spent great

time together but, you know, I have to go, and I want to make it clear to you that

I'd like to spend the rest of my life with you. I'd like to be with you." So, that was

the real first time that I remember being in a situation to make a decision about

taking a ride, going on an adventure, leaving my mediocre job, my mediocre

living in Cincinnati, Ohio. I had a glimpse of a future, eking out different jobs,

going from here to there, living hand-to-mouth. And ultimately, that was what I

would consider one of those crossroads in life. And I made a decision, because

I've always had a bit of an adventurous spirit, and I was never afraid to take a

risk. So I decided then and there, I'm going to go ahead and leave Cincinnati,

Ohio, say goodbye to my friends, say goodbye to my family, stay with her, take a

chance, move to Europe.

Love lost.

In this section, I highlight the third participant, Jake's reflections about his past and how he felt that his divorce served as a motivation for him to live and teach abroad. He began his story by sharing a bit of background information about himself and his family:

I was born in Hawaii, but I grew up in several different states in the United States. I moved around a lot growing up. I come from a divorced family. I lived in Hawaii until I was about four years old, then my mother and father moved to Virginia. Shortly after that, they got divorced. My mother remarried a JAG (Judge Advocate General's Corp) officer who was actually her boss at the time. And then his family was from Pennsylvania, so we moved up to Pennsylvania for six years. He was a very disciplined man and we didn't get along very well. So I stayed in Pennsylvania from second grade until ninth grade and then, we started fighting a lot, so I moved in with my father back in Virginia Beach. And that's where I finished my high school and subsequently did university as well.

Jake discussed how he met his wife, who he is now divorced from. This is how he described it:

I was in the army, Fort Brag, North Carolina. I had met the girl in Virginia Beach. She was six years older than me. She was a waitress at the restaurant I worked at and where I was a cook, the line chef. And, we dated and then I decided to join the Army. And she said she'd stick with me while I went to basic training and my AIT (advanced individual training), and you know, my airborne school. And then

she did. She wrote me a letter every day. It was nice. But then, once we got

together, we got married. We moved to North Carolina. After a while, just

because being gone so long, for six months rotations or whatever, time just took

its course. And she was much older. I was too young. I was nineteen, she was

twenty-five at the time. So, ya know, we just didn't work out, so we got divorced.

Jake elaborated on how he felt the divorce was detrimental to him. He also

reflected on how this break-up served as the motivating factor to move abroad:

It was for the best. But you know, when you're young and in love, you don't

realize that. You think it's the end of the world. I even I even called the army's

central command and said, "Hey, look. I gotta get out of this city because my ex-

wife is living here still." It was a small place. I mean, not really, but it was small

enough that you could run into each other. And, being devastated, I was like,

"Dude, what do I have to do to get out of here?" And they said, "Extend for four

more years." I said, "All right, but I wanna do it overseas. I don't want to be

stateside."

After making the request to go overseas, Jake was given the choice to move to

Germany or Turkey. Jake's initial choice was to move to Germany. He remembers and

shares his initial thoughts about living in Turkey:

I had the choice to go to Turkey, to an airbase in Adana or in Germany and I

quickly said, "Nah, Nah, Nah. I don't want to go to a Muslim country." (Laughs)

"Fuck that shit. Send me to Germany."

And, so he went to Germany. In fact, maybe seven or eight months after his

divorce, Jake went off to live and work in Germany. After serving his time in the Army,

Jake returned to America, and after completing his Bachelor's degree, he decided to

move to Istanbul, Turkey to teach:

> I did five years active duty and then I did the reserves for three and, you know, I
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> got the G.I. bill (Government Issue bill). So that GI bill paid for all of my
>
> university. I wanted to travel more. I did some research online, found out if I get
>
> a teaching certificate, I could teach anywhere in the world. I decided where I
>
> wanted to go and Istanbul, Turkey seemed like a logical choice. I wanted to go
>
> somewhere where I could earn good money and travel easily between Asia and
>
> Europe and obviously Istanbul, being a city on two continents… close to East,
>
> close to West.

Jake's divorce was a catalyst for a pivotal moment in his life, as well as, the

beginning of his time spent living and working abroad. Devastated by his lost love, Jake

took an assignment in Germany. When Jake returned to the United States, he realized

that he wanted to spend more time abroad. Since his time in the military had been

completed, he decided to go abroad and teach. This time though, he chose Istanbul,

Turkey as a place to live and work.

Wanderlust

In this section, I developed the theme of Wanderlust, through analysis of personal

accounts provided by the participants. During the interviews, some of the participants

described their passion for traveling and their desire to learn about history and the

unknown. The participants both highlighted their wanderlust spirit and how their passion

for aesthetics influenced their outlook on Istanbul and their time living and working

abroad.

The desire to travel.

Mya related how:

I got this wanderlust that I really couldn't stop. It became more like I have to see

everything with my own eyes. I have to experience everything myself. I have a

wanderlust that I can't stop right now.

Mya further explained how:

When I was younger I remember seeing a book about prehistory and

Hammurabi's code. And there was the wall of… the Ishtar Gates of Babylon in

this social studies book that we had when I was in fourth grade, and it said, "This

wall is something like 3,000 years old." And my brain couldn't wrap around this

idea of something being 3,000 years old. And when I came to Istanbul, I saw that

wall. And it was in the Istanbul Archeology Museum and that was also a really

special thing for me, reading about something and then seeing it for real. And

when I was in Turkey, I just got really addicted to that.

Joseph told of how:

I remember vividly so many conversations in…in…in the school cafeteria at the

university, listening to Nora talk about Istanbul. "Paul, you have to go see this

city. It's wonderful, it's beautiful." Of course, I said, "Sure, sure. It sounds great."

At that time, I had never left the United States. I hadn't been to more than a few

states in my country. But, she said, "You have to see Istanbul. You *have* to see Istanbul." Now, this would have been probably '94, 1994 or 1995. So, it was more than ten years I had heard—The seeds had already been planted in my mind about this place called Istanbul.

In terms of wanderlust, Jake told of how:

Well, I was stationed in Germany. I was with the army for eight years. So being in Germany, I got to travel all of Europe and I had a wanderlust. So after teaching high school history for a little while I was disillusioned with it, so I wanted to travel more.

Jake described himself as having a wanderlust spirit and asserted that he believed that the best way to learn is by traveling and learning through immersion. He said:

Experiential learning is the best way to learn. You know, there are several types of people. One person that can learn from being told. One person that can learn from reading a book. And the third person has to urinate on that electric fence to see what the hell happens.

Jake told of how:

I'm always one of these people; I'm always looking for something else to do, whether it be housesitting a villa in Majorca, you know, whatever I can think of to get me on a location.

Wanderlust for Jake is related to learning, the way he learns. He said this:

The way I learn is through traveling, you know, and immersing myself with the local culture, the natives, learning the language, learning the customs, learning the traditions, making mistakes.

According to the participants, when they spoke of "wanderlust," they were speaking about an intense desire to travel—to expose themselves to places they had heard about or read about. Places that piqued their interest and being able to travel to these places provided the participants the opportunity to learn more about other places and to feed their wanderlust spirit. The aesthetics that the participants spoke of stirred feelings that kept them motivated to work through the struggles of living and working abroad as highlighted in the following section.

Historical and architectural aesthetics and the unknown.

Mya described Istanbul when she said:

This city is gorgeous. I'm so drawn to Istanbul. It's like a living, breathing thing. And it's just a really interesting place. Everywhere is so aesthetic, so beautiful. And, the aesthetic is what drew me back, and the culture, the food, the history, the archeology, the continuity of archeology and history in this region.

She continued:

When I flew in from the states to study abroad, I remember flying over the city and just seeing all of these minarets sticking up in the landscape and having an aerial view of the city is a really magical thing. It's huge; it sprawls all over the place. And so, I very much remember that first fly-over, and how it looked. And then when we landed and I got in a cab, we were driving from Ataturk Airport to

Etiler on the European side and the landscape was just amazing for me. I was smiling the whole cab ride there, like, to the campus. Really excited about what I was seeing, how different everything was; starkly different from everything I'd ever seen before in my life. And, that was that aesthetic again that drew me in and that has kept me coming back ever since.

She further explained what the aesthetic and the archeological meant for her:

I was taking some archeology courses and we were doing the same thing. And actually, a paper that I had written on two UNESCO sites in Turkey, Safronbolu and Hattusha, I went to those places on one of my excursions and it was amazing to see what I had actually written about in real life.

Joseph described how aesthetics of Turkey, in particular, Istanbul, influenced him. Here he described how Istanbul stirred feelings that were alluring while in Istanbul:

I'm hard on Turkey, but I have to say that there's not a time that when I'm driving across the bridge (the Bosphorus Bridge), from the Asian side to the European side, that I don't look both ways, up and down the Bosphorus, left and right, and say, "Wow. I live in a really, really beautiful city." And, it's a mysterious place.

And, again, I am reminded of how Jake described the how the historical and aesthetics of Turkey, when he said:

The way I learn is through traveling, you know, and immersing myself with the local culture, the natives, learning the language, learning the customs, learning the traditions, making mistakes.

For the participants, living in a city filled with so much history and with what they have described as a city with beautiful aesthetics, aroused feelings of pleasure and opportunity. The pleasure of living in a city that offered them the chance to learn more about places unknown—places they had only read about in books or that others had described to them. Furthermore, it provided them with the opportunity to engage in learning more about the unknown.

Taylor (1994) stated that the learning process of becoming interculturally competent did not start when the participants arrived in the host country, it began before that. In fact, Jake provided a good example of the prior knowledge that affected his initial time in Istanbul, and reflected on the time that he had spent in Germany. He talked about the differences he initially noticed when he said:

> You go through phases. You know, the first phase being you're a little bit scared. When I came here, having lived in Germany and traveled in Europe, you know, the majority of those people speak English. Or, some English. But here, I was surprised at how very few people actually knew English. And then the sounds, the noises, the sights, the chaos of the city was much different. It was interesting, scary.

Reflecting back on a previous intercultural experience, Jake faced the fact that because he did not speak Turkish, and the majority of the Turkish did not speak English was something that scared him. However, Jake worked through this issue (discussed below).

Mya's search for love and interest in history, Joseph's love found and feelings of opportunity, and Jake's need to get away to thwart off feelings of devastation, as well as all three participant's wanderlust spirit presented in this section pointed to the prior experiences, personal goals, and critical events that were the key stressors that initially encouraged the learning readiness of Mya, Joseph and Jake.

Cultural Disequilibrium

The second component of Taylor's (1994) model addresses the cultural disequilibrium that the sojourners experience during their adjustment period time in the host country. Taylor (1994) described this stage as the "component in the learning process" that is "the catalyst for change and its emotional nature is the driving force that pushes the participants to become interculturally competent in the host culture" (p. 161).

Negotiating Intercultural Encounters

The emergent theme of Negotiating Intercultural Encounters highlights some of the individual textural and structural meaning units found in the data, they are: Initial Intercultural Expectations and Experiences in Turkey; and Intercultural Experiences in the Classroom-Gender Issues; Critical Thinking; Taboo Topics; Diversity Issues; and Religion.

Initial Intercultural Expectations and Experiences in Turkey

In this section, I discuss the participants' initial perceptions and feelings about living and working in Istanbul. They describe some of the challenges they faced and how they dealt with some of the issues they encountered. Mya said:

When I need things, like, going to a doctor or I need to go to a government office or refilling my phone. If I need to take care of any sort of bureaucratic drama, then it's extremely difficult and I become extremely resistant. Not only that, but I feel like a child, I feel extremely infantilized when I'm here because I can't do anything by myself. I need somebody who can speak Turkish with me and I need a friend that can help me navigate those issues.

She further noted how:

I really rely on my Turkish friends to help me with all of that stuff, anybody who speaks Turkish. I have my best girlfriend that I mentioned, she helps me a lot. And then, I have a Turkish guy friend who has helped me move a million times and he has been so great. Basically, you have to rely on other people to help you.

Mya commented that:

Turkey's got a huge problem with misogyny, especially if you look at the rates of women who are murdered by their husbands every year and nothing is done about it, nothing. The numbers are absurd. There's no provision to make it better. Men are not held accountable for these crimes against women. And if women retaliate against men for the crimes they have committed against them, then the women are punished.

From bureaucratic issues to misogynistic concerns, Mya had to negotiate these intercultural encounters, and some proved to be difficult without the assistance of a member of the host country.

Participant Joseph recalled how he felt when he first arrived in Istanbul and heard the call to prayer. He said:

The call to prayer which occurs in a Muslim countries five times a day. At first, I remember just hearing this loud call to prayer, and the sounds, it wasn't in my language. It was in Arabic. I really opened my eyes at that moment and I thought, "Wow, I am a long way from home."

Joseph adds more about his initial perceptions of being in a country different from his when he described what he was hearing, what he was seeing, and how he thought he should react to the situations he was encountering. He said:

Anyone's who's traveled or has lived abroad would probably agree that the first thing, the first hurdle, is the language. You know, how people act, how people treat each other, those things all come after because when you first see it, you have to have it in your mind and your mind accepts that this must be normal. When you see two men walking down the street with their arms locked, in each other's arms, you know, in our country, we would look at that as a bit odd. But here, you're forced to accept that what you see must be normal. And the language, in all fairness, it's not as pretty, not as harmonic as if you say, landed in Paris and were forced to live in Paris maybe and you had to listen to French people speak. Turkish is a bit different, and it's sometimes, perhaps, dare I say maybe a bit scary. The people on the streets, muttering, talking quick in a language I didn't understand, cars flying past, honking horns, people on the streets selling, yelling.

Sometimes I didn't know if people were having a conversation or if they were about to fight.

The Turkish language, the way things are done in Turkey, the sounds of the city and all of its factors played a part on how Joseph was perceiving his new surroundings. There were many aspects of the new host country that Joseph had to negotiate when he first arrived in Istanbul. In fact, Joseph shared his thoughts about what he experienced and said:

In all fairness, I'm very hard on Turkish people. I'm very hard on Turkish behavior. I'm very hard on Turkish thinking. I'm very hard on the way things get done here because I really believe things could be done better and with more kindness, more thought for others, and more courtesy.

Of his first intercultural experience in Istanbul, Jake said:

One of the big mistakes I made was during Ramadan. I see all the Ramadan tents where they gave free food. I asked my roommates, "What's going on?" And he said, "You know, free food for the public for Ramadan. You do nice things for people." And I said, "You gotta be Islam, you gotta be Muslim or you got to show a Muslim ID?" And he was like, "No, no, man. Anybody can go in there. They don't ask you." So I go shopping prior to going into the Ramadan tent and, I'm probably going to go to hell for saying this while the *ezan* (call to prayer) is playing, but I go in there, I get my food and I sit down at the table. And, since I'd gone shopping before, I reached into my bag and pulled out a nice, tall *Efes* beer. Cracked it open and it was like the music stopped. The record scratch and four

thousand eyes were upon me. I didn't know you don't drink during Ramadan. Let

alone, being Islamic, alcohol's forbidden.

Jake further explained what he questioned initially, and how learning the Turkish

language helped him. He said:

You question everything. What's this? What's that? How does that work? And,

because I like learning languages, I really tried to pick up Turkish and practice it

with Turkish people when I could. And, when I was learning the language, they

appreciated it, that you were trying to speak their language.

Jake described how he felt about Turkish vendors and what he perceived them to

be thinking in particular situations he encountered when he first arrived in Istanbul. He

recounted:

I'd get in a lot of arguments with Turkish people and vendors, especially how

they conduct business and how they treat their customers. But sometimes, I think

the anger boils over and they look at me like, "You fucking Yankee. Go home."

And I'm looking at them like, "You fucking Jihadist. I should blow your ass."

You know what I mean? "I'll fucking mow you down like the rest of those rag-

heads." You know? So I mean, yeah, it's different. It's different over here.

Jake brought to light a very profound feeling he faced when he first arrived in

Istanbul. He said:

I remember one day sitting on my bed just crying, like, "What the fuck am I doing

here? Why did I come here? This is the stupidest thing ever." You know, because

you don't know so many people. And my purpose of coming here was not to meet

expats, you know? I distanced myself from them. But, those tides have turned and I mostly hang out with Joseph.

Jake's unsettled feelings diminished after time, but the importance of this quote foreshadows how Jake's intercultural experiences unfolded, and will be discussed further in my study.

In summary, all three participants discussed the various issues they had to negotiate when first arriving in Turkey—language barrier, bureaucratic matters, their own personal feelings about how things were said and done amongst people of the host country, and for some feelings of despondence. The aforementioned situations describe, in part, the participants' living experiences in Turkey. In the next section, I will highlight issues dealing with working in Turkey.

Intercultural Experiences in the Classroom

During the interviews, I asked participants about their initial perceptions and feelings about living and working in Istanbul. In the previous section, the data described their initial experiences and expectations of *living* in Istanbul. However, in this section, experiences of *working* in Istanbul bring to light some of the intercultural issues the teachers faced or encountered while in the classroom. These issues are discussed under the topic headings of: gender issues, critical thinking, taboo topics and diversity issues and religion.

In the following sections, I will highlight portions of the interviews where the participants discussed situations they faced in the classroom that dealt with: gender issues—where Mya shared how upset she became when she had a very intense encounter

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with one of her male students, a misogynistic dispute. And, how students wanted to learn more about Western values and her feministic stance.

This section also elucidates how Mya and Jake felt regarding situations involving critical thinking skills in the classroom. Concerns regarding analytical thinking skills in Turkish students are shared.

Additionally, the participants shared how particular taboo topics such as: the Turkish government, homosexuality, and other historical persons or events are not to be discussed in the classroom, and some of the participants share how they handled certain situations when those topics did come up in class. Lastly, diversity issues concerning commonalities and religious practices, are highlighted as some of the problems the participants faced while teaching English in Turkey.

Gender issues. Mya shared her experience regarding gender issues when she said:

My theory and philosophy in teaching is to equip people to express themselves in a foreign language, in a common foreign language. So…and in doing so, you let out a lot of things that maybe you don't want to hear. I had a incidence with one of my adult students talking about…uh…we got on the subject of rape for some reason and one of my students said, "In Turkey, we don't rape Turkish women. We want for the foreigners to come and [we] rape them." It made me so upset that I literally threw my papers on the ground and I walked out of the class crying. I refused to finish the class and I refused to go to that class again. I couldn't handle the blatant misogyny and these issues hit too close to home. Almost every single

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woman that I've known that's lived in Istanbul, foreign women, has experienced some kind of sexual assault or harassment here. So hearing these things flat out was just disgusting for me and I know that he wasn't saying that he himself was a rapist, but it's speaking to the cultural ideology of what it's like to be a western woman and me, straddling that borderline… It's just really difficult, you know, to navigate that line. So the misogyny definitely affected my teaching.

Mya's frustrations with misogynistic matters in her own personal life were now playing out in her classroom. This was now a topic that she knew, as a woman with feminist values, she had to face and negotiate while living and working in Turkey.

She goes on to explain how students picked up on her feminist values and the effects it had in the classroom. She said:

I think my students picked up on it more, because obviously a woman traveling alone, living alone, I have tattoos and piercings, I'm a lot more liberal than women here generally. So, they picked up on it. Sometimes my students would even ask me if I was a feminist and I would flat out tell them yes. I wouldn't go into it unless they wanted to ask me about it. I let them take that. It affected teaching in a way where the women really…most of them, especially if they were in university and they were younger and they were trying to navigate their own oppression within their families or their relationships or whatever. They sought me out. They wanted to learn more about what it was like in the west or, you know, they would ask me questions about, "what does feminism mean? What makes feminism/a feminist?" Things like this. Because it's kind of a bad word

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here, a dirty word, feminism. Well, it is everywhere, but here in Turkey especially.

Critical thinking. Earlier I stated that some of the participants questioned how things were done in Turkey. Joseph in particular made mention of being hard on Turkish thinking. In this section, Mya and Jake shared some of the challenges they faced in the classroom regarding critical thinking. Mya said:

When I was teaching students, it was about half and half, and some of them don't know how to be open. They are never taught to think critically. They are never taught to ask why. Like I said, this idea of a liberal arts education, where you're always taught to think critically and question and wonder why things are the way they are. Maybe they're this way for a reason for, for a different reason. They are not challenged to think that way. And a lot of teachers get really frustrated with that, but you have to accept that that is the reality of growing up here. So, like I said, some of my younger female students, it's so much easier for them to be open because they've already experienced the oppression. They already know what it's like. They've lived it their whole fucking lives. Sorry.

Mya's frustrations in the classroom—with students thinking differently than what she was used to, proved to be difficult for her to understand, initially. She expected students to think more critically about issues being discussed in class, but negotiated the difference as a matter that needed to be accepted as a reality of growing up in Turkey.

Similarly, Jake discussed how frustrating it was for him to negotiate situations with students and their use of analytical skills in the classroom. He said:

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I think the biggest obstacle for Turkish students, and this probably comes from

culture, is that their education system is very memory based. In other words, they

don't think very analytically, and I think that's the most frustrating thing for me.

Because something I would think is logical…they can't figure it out. It's

frustrating at times. And I've seen it. In fact, I could tell you it is cultural. In our

culture, we're raised to think more analytically. We're raised to ask questions,

"Why is it like this?" "How does this work?" Where it's true they memorize facts

for tests, so they can get to the next level. So, I think for me personally, analytical

thinking has been the most frustrating aspect.

Mya and Jake became frustrated with some of their students' line of thinking, or

lack of questioning because it was different from what how they thought, or how they

might question particular topics. They compared Turkish students to students in the

United States. They negotiated their claim of Turkish students lacking critical thinking

skills by suggesting it was the reality of being raised in Turkey or simply a cultural issue.

Another hindrance the participants said they faced in the classroom dealt with

matters their particular school administrators said could not be discussed while in the

classroom or with the students, in general.

Taboo topics. The taboo topics included, but were not limited to the Turkish

government, homosexuality, and particular historical events or people. However,

sometimes, the participants said the topics would come up and below the

participants shared how they addressed the topics if they came up in class. For

example, Joseph, shared his experience with taboo topics when he said:

The topics that most schools generally have across the board to not talk about are: politics, religion and racism, or in this country, we could refer to it as nationalism. But, I reset the rules, "O.K. guys. No politics, no religion." Because it's a simple a matter of, "keeping it light." But, it's so difficult to keep it relevant and topical here because it is everything, it seems, that is going on around here. It's the elephant in the room. It's the events that we need to be talking about, that I can't freely talk about here because you have to be careful about insulting Islam, insulting Turkishness, and students feeling you're attacking them and threating them by questioning religion.

Mya shared her experience with this issue when she said:

When I first started teaching at English Hour Language School (pseudonym), they told us flat out, "Don't talk about the government, don't talk about homosexuality, don't talk about [Kemal] Ataturk, don't criticize Turkey, and don't talk about the genocide." Things like this. "Don't talk about Kurdish relations." You know? All these different things they didn't want us to talk about. In my class, I never brought up these subjects, but if my students wished to express themselves, I would let them, because they're adults. It plays into my philosophy, if they want to express themselves in these ways. I will allow it because I think it's important, especially if you're learning a language, and you're learning to communicate. Because, when you do step out of your country and you do step out of your cultural bubble, you need to be able to navigate these conversations and have them [these types of conversations] as politely as you can.

So if anything, I would try to assist students to have them politely and respectfully.

Mya did not seek out the taboo topics purposely. She was not interested in generating conflicting or challenging situations in her classroom, but she did not steer away from them either. If the students suggested the topic be discussed, she negotiated the uneasy topics by incorporating them into her English lesson.

Jake shared how he broached the taboo topics. He said:

There are a lot of subjects that are taboo, but I like to broach them. And I think I can broach them more so because I'm a foreigner. Whereas, if a Turkish person broached those subjects—I do it with a lot of humor and sensitivity. I never take jabs at anything, even if I totally disagree with someone's opinion, you know. Because I find among anybody learning a language, the more passionate you are about a subject, the better you can speak about it.

Jake, shared an occasion where he riled up a student, using a taboo topic. He thought that this approach might help the student speak English. He said:

I remember one time I had a student at a language school and he was a big Ataturk fan. Just to rile him up, he didn't talk much, I just said, "You know, Ataturk was a dictator. Let's face it. It was a single party. He ran the party, he was the president of the country and you know, he was a dictator." This guy got so angry at me. He started yelling at me. I said, "Hold on, tell me your reasons why." And then for five minutes he spoke fluent English. And this is probably an intermediate level class. After class, I pulled him aside, and I was like, "Look

dude. I don't really give a shit about Ataturk. He's fucking dead, man. He has no effect on my life, no bearing. I just wanted to get you angry, so you would speak. You realize you just spoke for five minutes fluently?" And he was like, "Oh, really? I did it. That's amazing. You know, I can speak."

The sensitive nature of the topics was negotiated differently by each participant. While Jake negotiated taboo topics in the classroom by riling up students to get them to speak English, Mya's approach was to leave it up to the students to initiate taboo topic conversations in the classroom. While she did not elicit the discussions, she like Jake believed there was a usefulness in those dialogues to their English lessons. Joseph, however, decided to keep conversations, "light" in his classroom—he believed that taboo topics needed to be left at bay.

After some time working in Turkish schools, Joseph realized that there were very few, if any commonalities between him and his students.

Diversity issues. Joseph shared his thoughts on what it feels like to walk into a classroom, when you share nothing in common with your students. He said:

We don't speak a common language, we don't have the same music, we don't have the same pop culture. I have nothing to compare the experience of walking into a class and know that my job is to teach them a language. I had nothing really in common with these people, except basic human functions, you know, that we do: eat, sleep, hang out, spend time with our friends. Beyond that, what normal people do, we had nothing in common. You know, most of those students

probably had never really met any Americans unless they spent time in any really touristic areas.

Joseph felt that he and his students shared nothing in common except basic human functions. Other than that, issues of diversity were assumed by Joseph to be, I am different from them and they are different from me. There was no mention of any negotiation or approach in handling diversity issues with his students.

Jake on the other hand, explained that by learning the Turkish language he was able to develop a rapport with his students through this commonality. He said:

I think, too, knowing the culture as well as I do, speaking the language as well as I do, helps me in the classroom. Students respect that. Well, I don't think they see me like them. Because, like I said, I can broach topics, like Islam, the Koran, gay marriages and, things that are normally taboo in this culture. I can broach those because they understand I'm not Turkish. Whereas if a Turkish teacher does that, it's shameful.

Religion. In this section, participants describe their intercultural experiences related to the topic of religion. The topic was not one sought out, but it did unfold during the interviews when we discussed some of the issues they faced while living and working in Istanbul. Mya recounted the following:

You know, in America, I felt really Turkish, I felt really different, but I've come to define it more under the umbrella of having a brown identity, more about color rather than ethnic biology, I guess. I mean I still say that I have a hyphenated identity, but it's more like an umbrella hyphenated identity. I would categorize

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myself more as brown, brown American, than anything else. Because while I'm

in Turkey, I don't feel Turkish at all. What it means to have a family that is

religious, things like this, or Muslim. My family was kind of Christian, but not

really. I mean, it's not really an important part of our lives, so growing up without

those things that make you quintessentially Turkish, it's hard for me to identify

myself as Turkish now. And living here has definitely contributed to that.

Mya began to discuss in more detail how she identified herself and what factors

she used to help her develop her identity. Religion was one of those factors. In Turkey,

she reflected on her own family in the U.S.A. and how they were not very "religious."

And she associated being religious, with being "quintessentially Turkish." Although in

America she felt Turkish, the time spent in Turkey helped her realize that she is not. She

defines herself as having a brown identity—an umbrella hyphenated identity.

Joseph discussed religion and how he perceived it. He said:

Well, I was raised Catholic. I'm pretty familiar with the bible and everything but,

I have never read the Koran. I am not very familiar with Islam as a religion, but

what I think about religions is that I believe they all share some common themes,

some common denominator, which is something like, "Don't kill. Don't steal. Do

right. Make good decisions. Don't hurt people. Get the message. Be a moral

person. Live well." So as far as I'm concerned, the message in Islam, in

Catholicism, whatever is, "Be a good person. Be moral, and learn right from

wrong." I have never found a need to believe in a god or to believe in any kind of

organized religion to…to do anything or solve anything in my life.

Although raised Catholic, Joseph's view on religions is that all religions share a common theme of doing right. And while Islam is a prevalent matter in Turkey, Joseph did not mention religion as a factor warranting negotiation while in Turkey.

Jake however, had more to share as far as his thoughts on religion and its effects on society. He said:

I know people say, "O.K., well, we're not religious in America." But that's bullshit. You know what I mean? "In God We Trust" on our money. Put your hand on the bible, to very much the way we were founded as a place for pilgrims to come to, the Puritans, you know, and practice their religion freely.

He continued:

I think religion is opium for the masses. It is the bane of our existence. It's the biggest problem in our world. And, I think in the next ten, twenty years, we'll see more nationalism throughout the world; more violence, more wars, upgraded destruction. Aside from the current events that are going on right now, you know, like, in Syria with ISIS and the rebels there, the Kurdish problem here. Israel, Palestine, Gaza, Qatar…All these, you know, Iran—different perspectives on Islam, all the sectarian violence. I mean…analysis of Koranic freedoms, Biblical readings, Torah Readings. All of this time keeping up with the news, just seeing how the world is, the quality of people coming out in the world now. I've come to that conclusion. Religion is really one of the…the saddest effects on society. Let me rephrase it. Not religion itself, the way people use religion. Depending on how you use it. And then I think religion has been used for all the wrong

purposes. You see more Syrian refugees, you see how Turkish people don't like it, so yes, it's impacted my perception of how Turkish people perceive others, even others who are supposed to be their brothers from Islam. They're Muslim brothers, you know. And how they look on Iranians, 'cuz my girlfriend's Iranian, which is from a Shiite country. Yeah, it changed my perspective. 'Cuz you know, when I first came here, I thought, "Man, all the Muslims are together," and you know, they're not.

The time spent in Turkey, and the current events taking place in Turkey—the ongoing civil war between the Turkish and the Kurdish, their neighboring country's problems—war-torn Syria, amongst other affairs mentioned, and how the Turkish have handled said affairs, have influenced Jake's view on the people of Turkey. His initial thought was that the Turkish stood together, because they were Muslim. However, after seeing first-hand how they actually treated one another in times of despair, changed his perspective on the people of his host country.

Taylor (1994) confirmed in his study that the cultural disequilibrium can be experienced while trying to conduct routine tasks, and those "everyday situations" that "can illicit intense short-term emotions of fear, humor, embarrassment, or frustration" (p. 163). This became very evident with the experiences described by the participants in this section. Mya struggled with purchasing minutes for her cellular phone, to moving, to issues in the classroom with misogyny. Joseph and Jake questioned how the Turkish behaved, conducted business and treated one another. And, at one point, Jake sat on his bed and cried, questioning his reason for being in Turkey. The intense emotions that the

participants faced drove them to negotiate their feelings in regards to their intercultural

encounters and "bring a balance back into his or her life" (p. 163).

Taylor (1994) further noted how cultural disequilibrium is intensified by factors

that include differences in "marital status, gender and race; muted by previous

experiences of marginality, higher degrees of host language competency and experience

in the host country" (p. 163). The participants' shared many examples of the

disequilibrium that Taylor described as "part of the learning process of intercultural

competency" (p. 164) through their initial intercultural expectations and experiences in

Turkey. Some of the examples the participants shared dealt with concerns they faced in

the classroom. For example, Mya dealt with gender issues, such as feminism and

misogyny. Mya and Jake discussed problems with some Turkish students' lack of critical

thinking skills—not questioning why or how things are done. The participants also

shared how the schools where they worked at asked them not to discuss certain taboo

topics in their classrooms, such as: the Turkish government, homosexuality, religion, and

historical events and figures, to name a few. Other issues of diversity came up in my

interviews with Joseph and Jake, where they discussed concerns regarding

commonalities. For Joseph, he realized he and his students shared nothing common,

merely basic human functions. Whereas, Jake, after learning the Turkish language,

realized that he found more in common with his students and earned the respect of the

people from his host country because he was learning the language. More explicitly

religious backgrounds in the people of Turkey and how it was integrated into family

lives, prompted Mya to establish an identity of herself. While Jake, in particular, described how religious ideologies impacted his perception of a group of people.

Taylor (1994) contended that the disequilibrium sojourners experienced in their intercultural exchanges had much to do with the backgrounds of the participants. Since all three participants admitted to a Christian faith background the implications that religious backgrounds and ideologies posed, definitely influenced the dissonance Mya and Jake experienced. For Mya, while in Turkey, she determined that although she believed herself to be Turkish while in the U.S.A., after time spent in Turkey, she realized how important a role religion played in Turkish families, and given that her own family was not very religious, she contended that she could not identify herself as Turkish, but rather as having a brown identity—an umbrella, hyphenated identity. Meanwhile, Jake's experiences with religious matters while in Turkey changed his perspective of the how Muslim's treated one another in times of anguish. He thought all Muslims stood together, but after witnessing first-hand how current events played out, his mind changed, and it affected his perception of religion and how it is used in society. In the next section, an understanding of how the participants utilized different cognitive orientations to make a connection between what they experienced and their way of contending with the matter at hand is presented.

Cognitive Orientations

Fit with Taylor's (1994) heuristic of the reflective and nonreflective cognitive orientations, here I show how the participants experiences elucidate how during their

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intercultural experiences illustrate Taylor's two types of actions as participants learned and reflected upon their experiences.

Nonreflective Orientation

For Taylor (1994), nonreflective orientation does not require any questioning of prior values and assumptions. In fact, "participants make little conscious connection between their cultural disequilibrium, their choice of behavioral learning strategies, and the actual change taking place in evolving an intercultural identity" (p. 164). Such a process/state can be seen in some of Joseph's responses to the intercultural experiences he had faced while living and working abroad. In regards to not learning the language, Joseph admitted that he preferred not being able to understand what was going on around him. He said he believed that:

Maybe I actually prefer now and since I've lived here, that I can go out to places, I can, just kinda relax and not absorb and take in all of the conversations that I'm hearing. I don't have to have an opinion. I don't have to be caught up. I don't have to think or form any opinion about other people. It's just like white noise around me, when I hear conversations.

Joseph described how the language barrier interfered with his interaction between him and the people of his host country. He said:

I am guilty of keeping up a very protective wall between getting close with Turkish folks. Number one is first about language. But, if they could speak my language, I'll give them the time. I'll get to learn about them a bit. But I have to be honest, I prefer my company first and then the company of the friends that I

have made here. Most of them are non-Turks, but the few Turkish friends that I

have are friends of those friends.

The barriers that Joseph put up based on both language and others' relationships

support Taylor's (1994) contention. Joseph admitted that putting up a barrier afforded

him the opportunity to not even have to think about what was going on around him. He

preferred not to hang around Turks, unless they were friends of another expatriate friend.

He preferred being in his own company. Reflecting on his initial perceptions of the new

cultural milieu he said that he had nothing in common with the people of Turkey and

what can be described as his nonreflective cognitive orientation indicates that he had very

little, if any, intention on building an "intercultural identity" (p. 164).

Reflective Orientation

Taylor (1994) described the reflective orientation as one that compels in the

participant "deep critical thought in becoming interculturally competent" (p. 164). In this

cognitive orientation, the participant faces the cultural disequilibrium head-on. The

participant makes a concerted effort to deal with the "stressful emotions, the events

surrounding cultural disequilibrium, the identification of learning strategies, and the act

of change toward competency itself in an effort to rectify the imbalance in their life" (pp.

164-165).

In Mya's case, she tried her best to immerse herself and embrace her intercultural

experiences in Istanbul, Turkey. After careful thought and reflection, Mya admitted that

it might be impossible to fully immerse herself in the host country because of long-held

cultural prejudices. She said:

I'm definitely open to the culture. I don't think I will ever be fully immersed. I

don't think that it will be possible for me to be fully adapted. There's too many

cultural prejudices that I have from living in the west for my whole life. This

time around, I've tried really hard to be more easy-going about the way things

work here and I've tried to navigate it with more patience, but it's really difficult.

In a concerted effort, Mya admitted that she tried her best to find a balance

between her intercultural experiences and her personal perspective on what she

experienced while living and working in Istanbul. This seems to confirm Taylor's (1994)

assertion that reflective learning assists in "the identification of learning strategies,"

(p.164) as Mya struggled to change "toward competency itself" she developed a deeper

understanding of herself in order to "rectify the imbalance in their life" (pp. 164-165).

Behavioral Learning Strategies

Taylor (1994) discussed the behavioral learning strategies that participants,

"reflective or not" might employ in their development of intercultural competency (p.

165). The three subcategories of the behavioral learning strategies are: observer,

participant, and friend (p. 166). As observers the sojourners engage in watching,

listening to people of the host country. When participating in the host culture the

sojouners are actively seeking out ways to engage with the host culture by, "shopping at

the local market, working with host members, wearing the local dress, eating local foods,

and socializing with members of the host culture" (p. 166). Taylor (1994) believed that

the most significant impact on participants and their development of intercultural

competency stemmed from the relationships that the sojourners made while living in the

host country, "these friends were crucial to their development in the host culture" (p. 166).

Considering Mya's reflections, an understanding about the impact that the three aforementioned subcategories had on her development of intercultural competence should be explored. Mya's observations led her to a more inclusive view of the Turkish culture in which she attempted to immerse herself. In personal conversations and in photos that she shared on social media, she highlighted how she participated in the host culture by shopping at the *Sali Pazar*, where weekly she purchased local gardeners' fruits and vegetables, honey, Vintage National Geographic magazines that only cost 50 *kurus*, and other items she used at home. She also shared in local customs by dressing and using scarves of the moment. For example, during our interviews, Mya, as a gift, gave me a local Anatolian scarf that was being used to promote awareness of the women from that region and the hardships they endured. Through the friendships that Mya made with some of the local Turkish girls and her Turkish roommate, Mya described how she tried to make sense of her intercultural experiences in order to help her work through some of the identity issues she was dealing with. Through observation and in conversation with others, Mya said she learned a valuable lesson that would later influence her questions of identity. Mya discussed an uneasy conversation she had with her Turkish ex-roommate:

Recently I was talking to one of my ex-roommates about men, Turkish men, and Turkish women, about how they care too much about their bodies and the way they look, and I really don't care because I'm getting attention. I'm overweight, but I don't feel ugly in Turkey. Here, I'm getting so much male attention. Some

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of it, maybe I don't want, but it still makes me affirm that the way I look is not the

problem. It's not. You know? I'm not going to feel bad about the way I look here.

But my roommate was telling me, "Yeah, you're right Turkish women do care a

lot about the way that they look," and she said, "But, it's Turkish men. They want

skinny women and they have really high standards for Turkish women." She

said, "You're a foreigner. You have a free pass. It doesn't really matter what you

look like because you're interesting and you're something different that they

overlook this." It's like, "So what you're telling me is that the Turkish man will

never fully like, love or appreciate me because of the way I look? They just want

this status symbol of having a foreigner for a girl?" And, I do see some truths to

that, but I was extremely offended. Like, that can't be true across the board and

they're always going to find exceptions. And she tried to say, "Yes, you'll find

exceptions, but they're extremely few and far between." Sometimes you think

that, people are open-mined like you and then they say stuff like that and you're

like, "Wow. How could you say that?" Like, "How could you say that about me,

especially somebody straddling this identity?" And that makes me reaffirm my

American identity.

Evolving Intercultural Identity

The final component in the behavioral learning strategies process, "reflects the

actual changes that took place among the participants in the process of becoming

interculturally competent" (Taylor, 1994, p. 167). Here we consider "evolving

intercultural identity," which Taylor referred to as "an ongoing process where the

participants' cultural identity is no longer linked to one culture" (p. 167). Taylor asserted

that through this process the sojourners would be able to "identify and understand the

perspectives of the host culture" (p. 167). The development of intercultural competency

consists of "changing values, greater self-confidence, and a change in perspective" (p.

167). Taylor added that the changes the sojourners revealed exposed the new outlook the

participants held of themselves and their world-view by navigating in the host culture.

Additionally, the changes, or identification and understanding of the perspectives

of the host culture, are causal of the five steps the participants underwent: setting the

stage, cultural disequilibrium, reflective and nonreflective orientation, and the

participants' behavioral learning strategies (Taylor, 1994). The examination of the

sojourners' development of intercultural competency through the aforementioned

changes became apparent after careful consideration of the third composite theme:

Identity Issues and Transformation.

Identity Issues and Transformation

The third composite theme, Identity Issues and Transformation, which emerged

from the data analysis reveals the identity issues faced by the participants while living

and working abroad and the transformational effect the participants described as a result

of their intercultural experience.

Change in Values

Jake described his change in perspective—his worldview, Mya shared how her

self-confidence increased, and Joseph expressed his change in terms of values. He stated:

I developed…a shield. I feel that my armor or that the armor that all of us carry, that we have around us to protect us. I feel like it's gotten stronger. I feel, maybe perhaps at times, over confident in the decisions that I make about where I go or what I do because I feel like, "Hey, I've been here a while. I know." But, then I realize, that I need to still stop and think about what I'm doing, because I'm not living in my country. I could easily make choices and I wind up in a place and in a situation that is far beyond my ability to negotiate or get my way out of that situation.

He continued:

It's funny…on Facebook before I travel, sometimes I'll check-in at the *Cikis* Lounge, which means the Departure Lounge, at the airport, and I'll, sometimes check-in there and I'll write, "I'm at my favorite place in Istanbul." (Laughs).

Joseph illustrated an armor that he suggested we all carry with us. However, he described his shield as being stronger than before. In fact, he described his increased sense of knowledge regarding his surroundings, but claimed that he still treaded lightly regarding decisions that he had to make so as to not end up in circumstances that he might not be able to get himself out of. This expressed the change in his standards, the toughness that he developed in order to maneuver through situations in Turkey, as Taylor (1994) said regarding changes that the sojourners might reveal that expose changing values and new outlooks.

Increase in Self-Confidence

Mya described being aware of her "hyphenated identity," living on the "cultural borderland," trying to explain to others that she was not a foreigner. She was trying to find a way to negotiate this issue of identity by highlighting the fact that she was of Turkish descent. However, what Mya learned, she said was that others were not so quick to accept her as a Turkish person, and often alluded to her being a "foreigner." Only after several interactions with other Turkish people, did Mya accept and admit to being an American. Mya said:

> I was trying to explain to people when they asked where I was from. I was trying to give them complicated answers because I felt like I needed to define myself in that way and preface the reason I was here and to assert myself as not a tourist. And since then, it's got extremely tiring, mentally and, socially, to navigate your own identity with complete strangers when they're not even worth it. At the end of the conversation, they end up making me feel insecure about who I am and where I come from and doubt me and then want to offer their own advice on whatever they think I should be doing with my life or my own identity. It got really uncomfortable for me. So now, I choose very carefully who I choose to share that information with and I don't give it as readily as I did when I was here before.

She continued:

The expectations I had with the way things were supposed to work, you know, how things were supposed to be done and my own prejudices of how things are

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done in America really affected negotiating that identity here because I couldn't. It was hard to adapt. I tried, but it was really difficult. And I still don't think I'm adapted, and that's fine, but also I met a lot people who were teaching here as well who had hyphenated identities. They were living on those cultural borderlands, as well. So, that also really helped me with being okay with my hyphenated identity—meeting more people that were like me.

Further, Mya stated:

I know that it's not easy to live abroad and everybody thinks that when you go and teach some place that you're on vacation 24/7 and you're not. You're working in another place. You're living in a difficult situation and without the support system, without being able to do anything by yourself. And some people realize it, but a lot of people want to romanticize it. And even I do myself, sometimes, romanticize the idea of living abroad. It's not easy and not everybody can do it.

She added:

There's not one truth and that's another thing I've learned. But I also see it as I talk to more people around the world, and see it for everybody. Truth is very subjective. There is no whole truth at all. And the things that you would consider to be objective truths are really just morals given to your culture. I mean there is no objective truth. It's all subjective. It has to do with your own perspective and your own experiences and what has shaped your life to make it true.

Mya profoundly stated that her hyphenated identity was discovered after her time

spent living and working in Turkey. The revelation she made regarding her identity

contends with Taylor's (1994) assertion that sojourners develop an "evolving cultural

identity," (p. 167) where the sojourner's cultural identity is no longer linked to one

culture (p. 167) rather, the sojourner, as in Mya's case, is able to "identify and understand

the perspectives of the host culture" (p.167). Additionally, the "it" that Mya refers to

when she said, "It's all subjective, It has to do with you own perspective and your own

experiences and what has shaped your life to make it true" refers to truths—subjective

truths, and objective truths, which she declared are all purely subjective.

Change in Perspective- World-View

The change in world-view that Taylor directed our attention to when describing

the evolving intercultural identity was also described by Jake when he said:

I think they're [Turkish people] not as open minded and friendly as they think.

They're more close-minded, back-stabbing, two-faced. Not as hospitable as they

think either. And you know, a lot of it is fake. It's a façade. I've been able to

make that distinction. Not only how hospitable America is compared to here. I

think I've had a lot of good experiences here, but because I've immersed myself

in the culture so much and I've been here so long, I think I've gotten what I can

get out of it. I think my biggest advice to somebody coming here is, "Don't stay

too long."

He continued:

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I think ironically, because I'd always had that wanderlust and I'd wanted to leave

America, I'd think, if anything, what this whole experience has done…it has

given me a greater appreciation for my own country. America's the greatest thing

since sliced bread. Now, I know, not being naïve, when I go back there and try

and get back into the system, finding a job, renting an apartment, blah, blah, blah,

it'll be, you know, it won't be as great.

While Jake's world-view changed, as described by Taylor (1994) as being part of

the evolving intercultural identity, Jake admitted he developed a deeper appreciation for

his home country. He also developed an adverse understanding of the people of his host

country, as a result of immersing himself in the Turkish culture for so long.

Summary of the Composite Descriptions

The application of Taylor's (1994) six learning stages of intercultural competency

proved invaluable in analyzing the development and perspective changes of the research

participants. The fact that Taylor's (1994) model drew from Mezirow's transformative

learning theory, "partially explained" (p.154) the transformative learning process.

However, rather than focus on whether or not transformative learning took place,

Taylor's (1994) model allowed for a deeper understanding of the learning that took place

and the stages of learning required in the development of intercultural competency—

learning that took place in an intercultural setting and more importantly, before the

intercultural experience began. For example, Mya described the epiphany that she had as

a result of several intercultural experiences and conversations held with other Turkish

people: "In America, I felt really Turkish, I felt really different, but I've come to define it

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more under the umbrella of having a brown identity." "My identity has changed a lot. I've gotten a deeper understanding about myself and where I come from. It was at the culmination of my teaching experience here the first time, realizing that I was much more American than Turkish."

For Joseph, his personal transformation developed into reluctance. Rather than seeking out ways to learn more about the host country and its people, he found nothing in common between himself and "anyone Turkish." Although he did suggest he would give any Turkish person a chance, if they spoke English, but other than that, he said the only things he and the Turkish people had in common were basic human functions. He described himself as "putting up a shield." He described it as his "armor." After six years of living and working in Istanbul, he says that his armor has only "gotten stronger." He admits that while he's hard on the people of Turkey, he says the biggest challenge and reason for his "armor" is due to the language barrier. However, he admits that he is not a fan of the Turkish language, although it is a "learnable language."

Jake said that he has a new-found appreciation for America because of his intercultural experience and, therefore, identifies himself even more strongly after his sojourn, as American: "I'm American. You know, I was born and raised there and I served in the American Army. So, you know, of course I got a love and respect for my country. And, after living abroad, I see all the opportunities, I see all the freedoms, the liberties we have there, in America that other countries don't, you know?"

In conclusion, reflecting on the intercultural experiences of the research participants served as a starting point for the participants to "engage in a process of self-

examination about their own cultural identity" (Guy, 1999, p. 15) in order to better understand their own "cultural beliefs, assumptions, values, attitudes, and behaviors" (p. 15) Three emergent themes: Motivation to Live and Teach Abroad; Negotiating Intercultural Experiences; and Identity Issues and Transformation. In the first emergent theme of Motivation to Live and Teach Abroad, through the analysis of the data emerged the themes of relationships and wanderlust. Through personal accounts the participants shared their reflections about looking for love, love lost, and love found. Additionally, participants described their wanderlust spirit through the desire to travel and their interest with history, aesthetics, and the unknown.

The second emergent theme of Negotiating Intercultural Encounters highlighted some of the individual textural and structural meaning units found in the data, such as: Initial Intercultural Expectations and Experiences in Turkey; and Intercultural Experiences in the Classroom addressing the following subtopics—Gender Issues; Critical Thinking; Taboo Topics; Diversity Issues; and Religion.

The third composite theme, Identity Issues and Transformation, revealed the identity issues faced by the participants while living and working abroad and the transformational effect described by the participants as a result of their intercultural experience. Joseph, expressed his change in values, Mya shared how her self-confidence increased and Jake described his change in perspective—his worldview. The intercultural experiences the participants reflected upon resulted in, for Joseph—a shielded identity, for Mya—a validated identity and for Jake—a stronger sense of identity.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Implications, and Outcomes

Summary

My analysis of the data brought to light the research participants' motivation to live and teach abroad, how they negotiated the intercultural experience, and issues of theirs having to do with identity and transformation. Initially, the purpose of this study was to understand the possible transformative learning that might occur from living and working abroad. The understandings I derived from the participants' experiences showed how their encounters challenged and rewarded them. The analysis revealed both positive and negative emotions they said that they experienced.

I expected that the results of the data analysis would provide me with an opportunity to develop a discussion about transformative learning theory and its core components, comparing transformative learning theory against the data in this study. However, my initial attempts at using Mezirow's theories, did not resonate and proved futile. I was reluctant to force a fit and force analytical purchase, instead, through the phenomenological research project. As the goal of this study was to highlight with genuineness the experiences of three adult educators who lived and worked in Istanbul, Turkey, my analysis—using phenomenology—did in the end reveal three composite descriptions that depict the meaning and essences of the experiences of the research participants as a whole (Moustakas, 1994).

Again, the composite themes, Motivation to Live and Teach Abroad, Negotiating Intercultural Experiences, and Identity Issues and Transformation were presented through

the use of the participants' words and illuminated using Taylor's (1994) intercultural

competency learning model. In the early part of the discussion, setting the stage, I

presented what the participants had to say about their motivation and what had an impact

on them personally; what prompted them to live and teach abroad. The motivating

factors described by the participants were: relationships and wanderlust. Mya described

her search for love. Love of herself, love for her biological mom, and love from a

significant other. I presented Joseph's story of love found, a deeper appreciation and love

for himself, the love of a new life, and the love he found in his wife and family. And,

under this composite theme, I related the story about the love that Jake lost, while living

in the United States. The stressors brought on by Jake's divorce also served as the

motivating factor for him to leave home and move to an unfamiliar country.

Additionally, each participant described themselves as being or having a

wanderlust spirit. Each underscored their love of travel and framed it as a need. They

illustrated their fascination with historical and architectural aesthetics. They described

how certain aspects of the new milieu, the unknown became an alluring factor that fed

their wanderlust spirit.

The second composite theme I described as cultural disequilibrium: the

participants' reflections from the beginning of their time spent in the new setting. The

participants expressed some of their intercultural experiences by reflecting on their initial

intercultural expectations and experiences. Some of the issues they said they had to

contend with included language barriers, interpersonal relationships, learning to accept

the norms of the new cultural setting, and coming to terms with the fears of being far

from home. Joseph described the language as "scary, and how by not learning the language, he did not have to formulate an opinion on what was being said, he described what he was hearing as "white noise." Mya faced issues with interpersonal relationships, not only by choosing date men from her host country, but with stereotypes placed on foreigners in Turkey. Jake, although initially he felt despondent and unsure about why he went to Turkey, he immersed himself in the culture, learned the language and formulated an opinion of the Turkish people that was different from what he originally held.

The next step in the discussion of the cultural disequilibrium, the core part of the participants' time spent in Istanbul, reflected some of the intercultural experiences that the participants said they negotiated while living and working in Istanbul and the negotiated process that the participants had to manage. My analysis brought to light some of the obstacles the participants encountered in the classroom. In this section, the participants described gender issues, taboo topics of discussion in the classroom, and their frustrations with some of the students' lack of critical thinking skills that they felt impeded their pedagogy.

The participants pointed out how they confronted these barriers and brought up another topic of individual consideration: intercultural experiences and religion. Mya and Jake touched on the fact that religion influenced some of the opinions they formulated while living and working in Istanbul. All three participants admitted being raised in the Christian faith and say since they were foreign, stereotypes about religion had to be negotiated. Joseph held on to his belief that all religions basic ideology is to be a good person, and do good deeds. He did not share instances that needed to be

negotiated. However, Mya thought she identified as Turkish, but when she realized the important role religion played in some Turkish families, comparing it to her own family back in the U.S.A., she came to the conclusion she could not identify as Turkish. Jake, on the other hand, understood religion to be an "opium for the masses." After witnessing first-hand how religion was being used in Turkey and neighboring countries, he concluded that the way religion was being used for all the wrong purposes. He said it influenced his perception of how Turkish people perceive others, and how Muslims are not as united as he thought.

In my discussion of the cognitive orientations of nonreflective orientation and reflective orientation I provided examples of the experiences faced by some of the participants. What I found in my analysis of the data showed how some behaviors, such as Josephs "shield", and Mya's reflections had a direct effect on their intercultural encounters, or lack thereof. For example, Joseph said, he put up a shield, and armor he called it, because he did not speak the language, he did not find any commonalities between himself and the people of his host country. And, even if at one point he gained some confidence in maneuvering through his surroundings, he still guarded himself, so as to not end up in circumstances he would not be able to get himself out of. For Mya, immersed herself in the culture by trying to do things that way they are done in Turkey. Although there many have been obstacles to overcome, she navigated through those channels by getting help from her Turkish friends, and by trying to learn the language. Although she faced issues of misogyny in the classroom and stereotypes in her personal

life, she negotiated those by summing it up to that is just the ways things are done in Turkey, or that is just the way people think in Turkey.

Through my application of Taylor's (1994) learning model, I illustrated the behavioral learning strategies that the research participants described as helping them in their intercultural encounters. Mya's intercultural encounters moved through all three learning strategies, an observer, a participant, and a friend. I showed how the application of this model helped explain the development of Mya's intercultural competence.

My discussion of the evolving intercultural identity, the last stage, showed the subthemes I presented were those of Identity Issues and Transformation. For this stage, I represented the participants' evolving intercultural identities, and the changes they said they manifested in values, increase in self-confidence and changes in their perspectives. Their discussion brought to light how for example Mya, navigated through issues of her own identity. At first, she tried to claim her Turkish identity, living between the borderlands; however, after careful thought and examination of her experiences she accepted her "brownness." After her time living and working in Istanbul, Turkey, and with all certainty she said that she identified with being American.

In his reflections, Joseph stated that as a result of his experiences in Turkey, he kept a shield up, a guard up while in Turkey. Joseph stated that he preferred his own company, and rarely if ever, associated with people from the host country. Interestingly, Joseph laughed when he told me that his favorite place in Istanbul was the departure lounge at Ataturk airport.

When I asked Jake about his possible personal transformation, or new-found perspective as a result of his intercultural experience, he said the biggest new-found perspective lies in his impression of Turkish people. He reflected on how different his impression of Turkish people is compared to the one he held eight years ago when he first arrived in Istanbul. He described Turkish people as being close-minded, back-stabbing, and two-faced. He cautioned anyone intending to live and teach abroad in Turkey to not stay too long. Finally, Jake revealed that his experience provided him with a more profound appreciation for his own country and said that, "After living abroad, I see all the opportunities. I see all the freedoms, the liberties we have there, in America that other countries don't, you know?" "America's the greatest thing since sliced bread."

For Mya, her development of intercultural competence was evident in her eagerness to immerse herself in the host culture. The language posed some initial obstacles for her, but she tried her best to manage. She made friends with people in the host country and these relationships helped her come to a new understanding of herself. The increase in her self-confidence and her change in perspective, were both apparent. She said, "I'm definitely open to the culture. I don't think I will ever be fully immersed. I don't think that it will be possible for me to be fully adapted. There's too many cultural prejudices that I have from living in the west for my whole life. This time around, I've tried really hard to be more easy-going about the way things work here and I've tried to navigate it with more patience, but it's really difficult."

Considering Joseph's initial views of the people of the host country, likely impeded on his development of intercultural competency. When he said that he walked

into his classroom, stared at his students and realized that they had nothing in common, he shut himself off to any understanding he might have developed regarding the people of the host country. He guarded himself.   He put up a shield and he alluded to the fact that if the Turkish could speak English, he might just give them a chance. The main reason for his putting up a shield is connected to the language barrier, and this too speaks loudly of the impact the language barrier likely had on his self-confidence. Although Joseph is married to a Turkish woman, he never made mention of any issues he faced in relation to his wife. The only mention Joseph made about his wife had to do with the fact that she spoke English and handled any affairs requiring the use of Turkish. Joseph also said that English was spoken at home and so there was really no need to learn Turkish, a proposition he described as "scary." In regards to friendships, Joseph said that his best friend is Jake and few other expatriate teachers, other than that, he prefers to be alone.

After eight years of living and working in Istanbul, Jake developed an understanding of the host country. He can be seen to have worked through the sub-categories of the behavioral learning strategies, but somewhere in the time that he lived and worked in Istanbul. There was a definite shift. Initially, he made friends with the Turkish people, and even learned to speak the language fluently. He talked about dating Turkish women, even some married women. He said most married women had an affair with him, more than likely because their husbands were having affairs with others. Jake shared some scenarios where he handled differences in the classroom disrespectfully. For example when he said, "There are a lot of subjects that are taboo, but I like to broach them." "I remember one time I had a student at a language school and he was a big

Ataturk fan. Just to rile him up, he didn't talk much, I just said, 'You know, Ataturk, was a dictator. Let's face it. It was a single party. He ran the party, he was the president of the country and you know.' This guy got so angry at me. He started yelling at me." But, Jake defended his actions by saying that was his way of helping the students learn the English. Current affairs, such as the treatment of the Syrian refugees by the Turkish people and government, left Jake questioning their espoused values. This also brought to light the issues Jake developed about religion and how it is used. Jake's reflections on his experiences helped him develop a deeper, more inclusive view of the people from the host country and the values they held. Jake's reflections shed light on his changed worldview and those of the host country. He demonstrated a deeper, more appreciative view of his own country and its freedoms. For example, he said: "I think if anything, what this whole experience has done…it has given me a greater appreciation for my own country."

The reflections that the participants shared, as a result of their intercultural encounters also, as they described, fed their wanderlust spirits. Their travels and extensive experience living and working abroad dampened their wanderlust to the point where it no longer interests them the way it did before. Joseph described his own personal transformation process as one that is "cyclical and never-ending." The research participants embraced their identities, whether this was a clarified identity, a guarded identity, or a reconfirmed identity. They were at a comfortable stage and were ready to move on to the next phase of their life.

Mya said she planned to stay in Turkey a couple of more years before moving back to the U.S.A. for graduate school. She hoped to work toward an MBA (Masters of Business Administration). Joseph planned to stay in Turkey since his wife's work was there, but he did plan to travel to the U.S.A. in the summer for his holiday break. As for Jake, he planned to apply for a Fiancé Visa, so that he could bring his fiancé to the U.S.A, get married, buy a home, and start working as an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher.

Implications

Research

In an effort to "expand the boundaries of transformative learning," (O' Sullivan, Morrell, & O'Connor, 2002, p. 11) the following definition proved helpful in making sense of the research participants' experiences:

> Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that drastically alters our way of being in the world. Such shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race, and gender; our body awareness, our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace, and personal joy. (O' Sullivan, Morrell, & O'Connor, 2002, p. 11)

My analysis revealed a shift of consciousness, one that involved a shift in their understanding of themselves, their relationships with others, and issues of gender, body

awareness, and alternative approaches to living. My analysis revealed the individual

perspectival transformations, not to one trigger event, but rather as a culmination of

experiences. We might consider Alhadeff-Jones' (2012) suggestion of, "recursive loops"

(p.183), which are in step with Taylor's (1994) "evolving intercultural identity" (p.172).

Only the recursive loops that Alhadeff-Jones (2012) mentioned, address bifurcation,

where "transformative learning can also be triggered by the repetition of the same

unsatisfactory experience through multiple cycles, building up to a critical mass" (p.

183). In other words, recursive loops call attention to the dynamics of those processes

that generate "linear and nonlinear developmental perspectives" (p. 183). The learner

and his or her environment should be taken into account. So too, should the "mutual

relationships" between "emotions, beliefs, and behavior" (pp. 182-183).

Through this study, we learned that Joseph for example, did not move through all

the steps of Mezirow's model (2000a). In fact, somewhere in the first stage, that of the

disorientating dilemma, Joseph, checked-out. He concluded that there were no

commonalities between himself and the people of Turkey. He put up a shield. He

guarded himself. He did not attempt to learn the Turkish language. Although, he

admitted it was a learnable language. He preferred not understanding what was being

said, to keep from having to formulate an opinion. If we consider this behavior of his as

a recursive loop, then through the relationships among Joseph's emotions, beliefs, and

behavior, we can better understand why Joseph put up an "armor." We can probe why he

avoided learning the Turkish language. And, why he inhibited his development towards

intercultural competency.

Practice

This research has numerous implication for practice. Some of which deal with issues of overseas teachers being placed in classrooms with students, and having very little to no multicultural teacher training or training that helps teachers deal with diversity in the classroom. My analysis of the data revealed, in those moments, that educators require specialized training on how to handle some of the classroom issues faced by the research participants. There is a demonstrated need to develop more thorough programs in Teacher of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) certification programs, to address multicultural issues in the classroom. It was corroborated by Mya, who in her interview stated this regarding her TEFL certification program:

> Researcher: Were you ever trained on how to negotiate issues of diversity in the classroom?
>
> Mya: A little bit during my seminars thing. We talked about culture shock, we talked about, differences, but I can't pin point anything specifically.

When I asked Mya about the language school for which she worked and any formal training they might have provided for diversity or multicultural issues, she had this to say:

> I got my teaching certificate, to teach ESL, through a Seminars program when I was in Ohio. It was an intensive program. It was only about 60 hours. I did some classroom volunteering while I was there too to gain some more experience, in Ohio. And then when I got to English Hour Language School (pseudonym), I got an "orientation", for the class. They made me observe a little bit, but they didn't

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really equip you much for, or prepare you much at all for teaching. They just kind of threw you into a classroom with a shitty book and expected you to be able to teach them. So I had to teach myself grammar, from beginning to end, in order to explain it to my students. We really weren't given much to work with.

Joseph shared a similar experience. Admittedly, Joseph said that he had very little training, if any, as a teacher. In fact, when he applied at local language schools in Istanbul, he laughed at how he embellished his resumè and left off the part of substitute when listing his teaching experience:

Researcher: You said you had some teaching experience in the States? Can you elaborate on that?

Joseph: Sure. I should probably say it was more on the line of substitute teaching. I didn't work formally as a teacher. I was more of an on-call substitute teacher. My job was to cover the lesson plan that the regular teacher had already prepared. And it was about fifty percent doing that and fifty percent taking the abuse that all substitute teachers from the beginning of time have probably taken. I was more of a substitute teacher than a bona fide teacher who went contract to contract with a certain school. But I may have not so much explained that on my resumè. (Laughs)

Next, Joseph described how he began teaching English at the language school:

I was walking down a very busy street in the *Kadıköy* district and I walked in front of what was the only school, the only sign I saw at that time on the street, it was called English Hour Language School (pseudonym) I had my briefcase, I had

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my CV and I was out that day purposefully looking for employment. Looking for a job. I met with a man, who to this day, he and I are still in contact. We interviewed. We agreed on the terms. We agreed on the pay. I gave a demo lesson and I was hired and I started taking classes almost immediately.

Joseph received his teaching certificate online so that he could teach English as a foreign language. In his interviews he mentioned that he faced issues of diversity in the classroom. He described how he approached issues of diversity by demanding respect. He said:

Well, there's somethin' that teachers need to learn really fast if they're going to have any success in teaching, and this is something that wasn't told to me. I just had to experience it myself and now I would tell anyone the same, class and teaching is fifty percent teaching the material and fifty percent management. What I learned quickly is that, and again I'm going to use another reference, I believe it's Nietzsche who said, "When you look into the abyss, the abyss looks into you." So, when I stepped in front of that classroom, I have twenty people staring at me and I'm staring at twenty people.(Laughs) And I have a decision: either the inmates are going to run this asylum or I am going to be friendly, firm, fair, and they're gonna have to respect me, right away. I am going to demand, command and earn, well the 'earn' may take time, but they will respect me from moment one.

Jake was a certified teacher in the State of Virginia, and due to his discontent with teaching in the United States, he chose to move abroad and teach English in

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Istanbul. Jake received a teaching certificate to teach English as a foreign language through an online school. His experience teaching led him to give private lessons for a company that he started while living and working abroad. However, Jake's ill-mannered reference to Ataturk as an example, we can assume that he would benefit from more training in being sensitive to diversity issues and how to address sensitive topics with students in a more reverent and sympathetic manner.

With that being said, I would like to propose that:

- Language schools that hire teachers from English-speaking countries should develop a program, an orientation and formal training to address not only issues of diversity in the classroom, but multicultural issues, as well. Additionally, language schools should work with their human resources department to develop a guide or matrix to follow in order to ensure that they are hiring "highly qualified" teachers.

- Online training programs that offer Teacher of English as a Foreign Language certification programs should consider a curriculum overall and provide more in-depth training on diversity and multicultural issues.

- Teachers who choose to live and teach abroad should participate in a short-term collaborative study abroad program, as part of their teacher-training program. In reviewing the literature, I read about the "Year Abroad" teacher-training program (Alred & Byram, 2013) amongst many others that require potential teachers to take a sojourn and teach in a country different from their own. This might help address the issues that

Taylor (1994) mentioned regarding many of the Americans who have chosen to live and teach abroad, but who have been unsuccessful in their intercultural experience. Whether they plan to live and teach abroad or not, the first-hand experience of working with people different from who they are will assist them in the development of the skills needed today in our more globalizing world.

Suggestions for Future Research

Further research in this are: the motivation to live and teach abroad, especially done in regards to relationships and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. Especially one informed by the literature in the field of sociology.

Another study could be done from the perspective of Mälkki and Green (2014) and their "emotional dimension of liminality" especially as related to issues of resistance (p. 18). More research in this area would be beneficial to adult educators by "creating a language to discuss the intermediate, in-between zone of liminality where one is faced with the challenge to give up one's cherished configuration of self that offers continuity to one's experience and expectations of future" (p. 18).

A future study building upon Lyon's (2001) work where she interviewed 12 women in adult and higher education, who lived and worked abroad for an extended period of time, would be beneficial. Perhaps such a study would focus on identity issues, as suggested by Kohonen (2005) who asserted that: "more empirical research is needed about expatriates' identity changes" (p. 28). Perhaps this could be done as a collaborative research project. This method would allow the participants not only to "ground data" in

their own perspectives, but would "empower them to observe, reflect, and/or keep careful records or diaries" (Patton, 2002, pp. 183-184) of their experiences in the host country as data. By working together with women research participants, we could experience the many opportunities that intercultural experiences could provide.

Figure 1.

Mezirow's Model of Transformative Learning

1. Disorienting dilemma;

2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame;

3. Critical assessment of assumptions and relationships;

4. Recognition of one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared;

5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions;

6. Planning a course of action;

7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan;

8. Provisional trying of new roles;

9. Building competence/confidence in new roles and relationships; and

10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective (Mezirow, 2000a).

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