EXPERIENCES OF CROSS-CULTURAL, NOVICE TEACHERS

A Record of Study

by

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ABSTRACT

Novice teacher induction is not well studied nor developed for non-native teachers in foreign countries. Consequently, there is a high turnover rate among novice teachers in those countries. This study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences, acculturation, and coping mechanisms of novice teachers in Honduras. The methodology that influenced this study was a blend of a phenomenological and intrinsic case study. This study used responses from semi-structured interviews, artifacts, and natural observations to answer the research questions. Data was analyzed using descriptive and in-vivo coding. After coding the interviews and artifacts, themes were grouped under the qualifying research questions. They struggled with loneliness and missing family, but they also spoke of the beauty of new friendships. Many struggled with being an immigrant and the challenges that accompany this. Based on data analysis, one of the areas that teachers utilized most was seeking support from other teachers. The proposed solution is to develop an induction program that supports professional struggles and cultural adaptation of novice teachers in Honduras. A mentor program that pairs a returning teacher with a new teacher may provide immediate support that can be utilized professionally and personally. Novice teachers often spoke of community in both personal and professional settings. As we provide this needed support, our teachers will become more successful in the classroom and navigating life in a host country.

DEDICATION

As I complete this last requirement for my Ed. D, I cannot thank my husband, Shannon, enough for supporting, encouraging, and being my biggest cheerleader. Through every step, he was there, helping in any way he could. My children, Tyler, Emma, and Bella, were always in my corner and never failed to cheer me on and never complained of missing Mom time. The administration, faculty, and staff of Abundant Life Christian School were there to also support me in my quest to further my education and to be the guinea pig for various programs and ideas.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LEADERSHIP CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE ACTIONS

Situated in Honduras, Villa Verde Bilingual School has seven campuses nationwide. This ROS focused on four that are on the western side of Honduras. As a bilingual school, having native English speakers teach is vital; therefore, international teachers are often hired. These teachers tend to be young graduates, with this being their first teaching job. Intentional support geared to their specific needs must be provided to ensure teachers are successful both in and outside the classroom.

The Context

National or International Context

Honduras' struggle for a national education system did not begin until 1960. Since then, they have faced both political and natural disasters but have continued to look for improvements in educating their children. Prior to 1960, only the upper class could afford to send their kids to private schools, as there were only informal schools (Hilari et al., 2015). However, the public education system was then severely impacted by Hurricane Mitch in 1998, when one out of every four classrooms was damaged (Smith, 2013). Again in 2020, back-to-back hurricanes Eta and Iota destroyed 10,000 of the 25,000 schools in Honduras (M. Wolfe, personal communication, February 17, 2022). Many of these schools were not repaired until 2022 due to a lack of funding. From March 2020 to April 2022, schools were still prohibited from being in person per national government regulations. These milestones dramatically affected the educational system, setting the country back with each national disaster.

The Honduran educational system is divided into four stages: Pre-Primary (preschool), Primary (1-6th grade), Middle (7-9 grade), and Secondary (10-12 grade) (Gavin, 2017). While primary school is subsidized, many children are still unable to attend for a variety of reasons, including that families cannot afford supplies or uniforms (Glavin, 2017), with a second reason being a shortage of secondary education in rural areas (Global Partnership for Education, 2022; US Aid, 2022). Among those in rural areas, only 37 percent of children over the age of 16 are enrolled in school (USAID, 2021). Only an estimated 34 percent complete primary school within the lower socioeconomic classes; of those, only 64.5 percent enroll in secondary education (Glavin, 2017). According to Glavin (2017), many children are not able to finish school in order to provide support for their families.

Although Honduras spends more than the average Central American country on education, it has not resulted in higher educational success (Pavon, 2008). Fewer than half of the students who finished primary education met the minimum proficiency level in mathematics (38 percent). 29% of students completing the second grade could not read a single word. However, this did improve in the upper primary, with 75 percent of students who finished primary meeting the minimum proficiency in reading (Gove & Cvelich, 2011). Interestingly, the Honduran government did not utilize standardized tests to demonstrate student learning. Therefore, the only data on education level came from non-profit organizations, adding to the elusive educational factors. The facets that affected student learning were astoundingly ubiquitous; however, lack of accessibility and cost of supplies were among the most significant barriers.

In addition to the previous factors discussed, much research indicated that at least some of the responsibility lay in teacher training and standards. Glavin (2017) agreed, stating, "Teachers are not typically trained in the latest technologies and current teaching methods" (para. 5). As well, teachers often did not have access to up-to-date teaching materials, nor could they purchase them personally as the teacher wages are low (Glavin, 2017; Global Partnership for Education, 2022). Until 2012, when the teacher standards changed, teachers only had to finish 9th grade and attend a teacher technical school until 12th grade (B. Orellana, personal communication, February 20, 2022). This law changed in 2012, requiring that teachers have a bachelor's degree; however, this has taken time for teachers to get additional training. In addition to other factors, this caused a scarcity of trained teachers, with the student ratio sitting at 1:33 in 2008 (more recent studies could not be found) (Glavin, 2017; Global Partnership for Education, 2022). While the country raised the educational standards for teachers and made progress in other educational standards, the system is still behind other countries.

In addition to understanding the educational system, the socio-institutional system and relative safety must also be considered, as this affects the teacher's experience. Honduras has become safer but is still considered a developing country with a high crime rate (Association for a More Just Society, 2021). According to US Aid (2021), 1 in 5 Hondurans were a victim of crime every year. In addition, natural and political disasters have resulted in over 48% of the population currently living in poverty, with higher extreme poverty rates among those in rural areas (Association for a More Just Society, 2021). In agrarian societies, low productivity, lack of education, deforestation, deteriorated natural ecosystems, and natural disasters put future food sources at risk leading to a decrease in calorie consumption, longer work hours, and children

being removed from school (Hernandez et al., 2016; Economic Commission for Latin America, and the Caribbean, 2021). The delicate infrastructure in Honduras was also severely handicapped by Hurricanes Eta and Iota, with the estimated damage reaching 2.13 billion dollars (Economic Commission for Latin America, and the Caribbean, 2021; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2021). Novice teachers who come here to teach are not only adapting to an educational system much different from their own but a culture that has been severely impacted by both political and natural disasters causing the infrastructure to be weak, poverty to be widespread and basic utilities to be unreliable. All of this severely impacted teachers' experiences while living in Honduras.

Situational Context

The school where I work has seven campuses spread across Honduras, with approximately eight and a half hours of driving distance between our two furthest campuses. Our total student population is 2,270. It is a private, bilingual school that combines the required Honduran curriculum and a curriculum from the United States. Approximately half the classes are taught in English and half in Spanish. While our school does not collect data, anecdotal data suggested that well over 90% of the student population attends university after graduating from our high school. It is unclear how this compares to other schools in our region, as regional data is not collected. One of the main differences between our school and the public school system is the socioeconomic status of the student population. While the country is in poverty, our school caters to the middle/upper class, with about 7.4% of our students on full need-based scholarships. Some of our campuses have a higher percentage of scholarship students. Student curriculum,

uniforms, transportation, and tuition are covered by the scholarship, costing about $2,600 U.S.D. Public school teachers recommend students, and parents can also directly apply at our school. Students are given an aptitude test and provided specific documentation during the application process, such as financial documents and a home visit. There is no minimum amount that a family must make to qualify for a scholarship; however, if they can pay for tuition, they would not be awarded a scholarship (J. Compaan, personal communication, October 7, 2022). They are required, however, to have some buy-in in the education process by working on fundraising projects and purchasing school supplies.

Teachers at Villa Verde Bilingual School are a combination of Honduran nationals and foreign teachers. At the time of this study, we had teachers from seven countries though many were not traditionally trained as educators. They are typically young graduates and contracted for one year. For many, this is their first time working as a professional and living overseas. As my research was specific to foreign teachers' experiences, the demographics focused on these teachers. Data was collected using school documents from past years, including emails and student rosters. Until last year, I worked only in G.L.; therefore, this data was primarily collected from the foreign staff on this campus. We recruit on college campuses in the United States and online, with about 40% of our teachers having an educational background. 89% of our foreign staff are first-year teachers when employed by us. We also have volunteers from the United Kingdom each year that teach non-core subjects such as spelling and penmanship. These volunteers are graduates of high school, taking a gap year. Of these teachers, over half left our schools after the first year resulting in a high attrition rate. Below is the attrition rate for each campus from 2012-2020, followed by the average attrition rate school-wide (Figure 1). As

shown, some of our campuses have a much higher attrition rate than others. T.F., C.O., and C.C. are campuses that are in major cities. These campuses have a different demographic than our campuses located in the West. Students in these three eastern campuses tend to be wealthier, with greater educational and extracurricular opportunities. While the cities allow for greater student advancement, the crime rate also increases. For example, in C.O. "cocaine moves through Valle along the highways that connect the department to El Salvador and Nicaragua" (Insight Crime, 2022). While this is then transported to Lempira and Copan, where our western campuses are located, the main entry was C.O. Tegucigalpa, the country's capital, which accounted for 22.3% of the homicides in the country in 2019. The country, as a whole, ranked fifth in the world in terms of overall crime rate, with a rating of 74.54 (World Population Review, 2022). According to Country Reports (2022), foreigners were typically the target of opportunistic crimes due to their perceived wealth. While our school has not kept records of this as far as our teachers are concerned, school documents suggest that at least one crime against our teachers has been committed yearly for the last 12 years, typically occurring in the larger cities. As the school has not had exit interviews, there is no data to show whether these crimes have affected teacher turnover; however, it is assumed this is a variable.

In addition to a high crime rate, our campuses in the East also have a different teacher demographic than those in the West. Our four campuses in Western Honduras have an average of nine foreign teachers, whereas the areas with higher attrition have only one or two foreign staff. While no study has looked at the reason for this, one could infer that support from peers and administration could play a role since the campuses with the highest turnover also had the smallest percentage of foreign teachers. As well in G.L. and Y.I., an administrative position

exists to support foreign staff because approximately half of the teachers at these two schools are foreign. However, the administrators in these positions also have other jobs- one being a director and my position as an Academic Director and counselor. The other campuses do not have someone who specifically helps the foreign staff. Apart from this, the only other solution that has been tried in order to rectify the high attrition rate is to give a bonus to returning teachers.

- G.L. 53%

- L.U. 69%

- Y.I. 58%

- S.R. 83%

- T.F. 57%

- C.O. 100%

- C.C. 100%

Figure 1

School-wide Attrition Rate
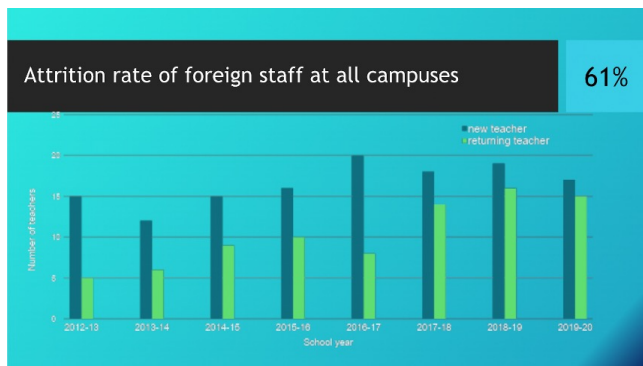
Note. Graph indicates attrition rate of foreign staff.

The Problem

Statement of the Problem

Viva Verde Bilingual School in Honduras recruits teachers from universities in the United States and on international recruiting websites resulting in young, novice teachers from multiple countries. Many of our teachers do not have an educational background making it a struggle to maintain discipline and teach using the lesson cycle. Along with the professional challenges, they also face learning a new culture, being surrounded by a foreign language, and being away from family. These issues combined to present young teachers with a vast array of struggles over the course of a year. Because of this, I believe support for new teachers is a critical issue in our school.

Relevant History of the Problem

Villa Verde Bilingual School is unique in that it recruits teachers from outside Honduras using college career fairs and international teaching websites. Because of this, hired teachers are typically young and in their first year of teaching. In addition to the traditional support given to novice teachers, cross-cultural workers also need additional support. Without this, VVBS will continue to have a high attrition rate which affects student learning and costs the school financially.

Significance of the Problem

Teachers living overseas face a mirage of challenges. They struggle with the "normal" things that all novice teachers face, such as classroom management, pedagogy, and many other

things (Goodwin, 2012; Sowell, 2017). In addition, the majority of our teachers did not study

education as only a bachelor's degree is required. This makes it more challenging for them to

create lesson plans or individualize instruction. Along with the professional challenges, they also

face personal challenges of meeting their adult responsibilities for the first time and being away

from family and friends. Many feel alone and lack emotional support. They must learn to balance

their home culture and the host culture in which they live, all while being surrounded by a

foreign language. These cultures may not align, which causes interpersonal and intrapersonal

conflicts. This affects relationships with students, coworkers, parents, and the community. These

issues cause teachers to struggle with an array of problems over a year. If these experiences are

largely negative or cultural understanding is not reached, then they are unlikely to return in the

following years. This poses a problem to the school and the students as high attrition is

financially draining on school districts (Darling-Hammond, 2020), and education is negatively

affected by a high turnover rate (Mercado & Trumbull, 2018). Because of this, I believe support

for new teachers is a critical issue in our school. At the campus where I am located, we went

from a 37% retention rate to an 86% retention rate after implementing support for novice

teachers.

Teachers' experiences, both personal and professional, while living abroad affect their

effectiveness in the classroom and the likelihood that they will return. Despite the need for

support, there is little research on teachers living in a foreign country, whether these were novice

teachers or experienced ones. There is a plethora of research on novice teachers, which applies to

any teacher regardless of where they teach. There is also sufficient research on people living in a

foreign country. However, this research was largely focused on people who have moved to a new

country long-term with their families as opposed to several years straight out of college. This researcher found minimal research on the combination of novice teachers that were also living in a host country. Therefore, this study addressed the gaps in research so that support can be given to teachers who are living abroad.

Research Questions

This study aimed to investigate the experiences of cross-cultural workers living in Honduras and how teachers' perceived induction support at Villa Verde Bilingual School affected the attrition rate of foreign teachers. To gain a better understanding of novice teachers' experience abroad, the following research question/s were answered:

1. What professional and personal experiences have novice teachers had that impacted their worldview during their early years living abroad?

2. What were the major challenges new teachers faced in their first years of living in Honduras, both professionally and personally?

3. How did they handle the challenges that they identified?

Personal Context

Researcher's Roles and Personal Histories

I arrived on the Villa Verde Bilingual School campus for my first teaching position in Honduras, not positive that I even had a position as I had not signed a contract, had very little contact with my director, and only moved into the country a couple of weeks beforehand. I had

previously visited VVBS and another bi-lingual school when planning our move. After leaving the first interview, my translator advised me to take the position at VVBS as the reputation for quality education was better. However, they did not mention what this would look like. Imagine my surprise when I walked into orientation to a room full of other foreign staff whom I had no idea even existed. It calmed my nerves to see a translator provided and that I would understand the orientation. In addition, the guy leading was a native English speaker and, as I soon found out, the direct boss of all foreign staff. These feelings of relief lasted only a few minutes; until I was given a list of things my children needed to have for school, a uniform that needed to be purchased for them and me, and asked to make a list of what I needed in my classroom in Spanish. My anxiety did not stop there. I was overwhelmed figuring out where to pay bills (at the pharmacy), buy fruit and vegetables (at the bus station), turn in paperwork to open a bank account (it must be apostilled first), and the list went on. When school started a few weeks later, I looked at the faces of the 32 kindergartners in my class who spoke not a word of English, and I realized I had no idea how to begin teaching anything when we did not even speak the same language. It was through this experience that I realized our foreign staff needed support both inside and outside the classroom. To date, we have had teachers from seven countries and several areas of the United States. Teachers' cultural adjustments must be considered when looking at an induction program.

After taking several years off to raise my children, I began teaching in Honduras eleven years ago. I started as a kindergarten teacher and then went down a grade to preschool. Class sizes in Honduras can have as many as 38 students in a class. Our school has about 450 students in preschool through twelfth grade on the G.L. campus, where I started. Teachers typically teach

a diverse range of subjects and grades, and I was no exception. While teaching preschool in the morning, I also taught various high school subjects such as American Government, Bible, and Family Living.

As our school recruits in universities and online, most teachers were young and fresh out of college. This put me in the unique position of being the oldest teacher on campus at age 30. My experience here increased, as well as the age gap between me and each new set of teachers, so it was natural for teachers and administrators to look to me for guidance. As well in 2016, I finished my master's in educational psychology at Texas A&M. In addition to teaching full-time, I began counseling students and slowly introduced a college guidance program to the school. This was a new idea for our school, so at first, they were willing to allow me to counsel but not willing to adjust my schedule. This slowly changed as they saw the importance of mental health and guidance counseling. After seven years of teaching, counseling, and unofficially mentoring, my administration asked if I would be willing to take on a new position as English Curriculum Director. This position was essentially what I was already doing but allowed me to commit more time to help our new teachers as I would be stepping out of the preschool classroom. I continued to teach several high school classes and counseled.

In 2020, like many schools worldwide, we shut down and began the virtual learning process. Unlike many schools, though, Honduras remained shut down until August of 2022, almost two and half years after the pandemic started. For a developing country, virtual learning was complex for various reasons ranging from inconsistent WIFI to the inaccessibility of computers. Our schools were suddenly thrust into the world of technology when the week before,

we did not even have WIFI available in our classrooms. We scrambled to find a platform and

spent the weekend training our teachers to use their computers effectively, log in to Zoom, and

create documents for the students to work from. We also hosted tutoring sessions for parents in

the evenings so they could provide support to their students. Many of our students shared their

smartphones or tablets with siblings, switching off who could be in class via Zoom. While this

posed many challenges, it also had some benefits. One was that it drew our eight campuses

together for the first time. Before this, large-scale decisions were made by our superintendents on

our main campus in T.F., but many of our schools were run independently of one another

because of the distance between campuses. For the first time, teachers were able to collaborate

via technology. This also opened the door for academic support to be given to struggling teachers

and foreign staff to connect with others going through cultural adjustments. My administration

asked if I would consider moving to a new position as Director of English Curriculum,

supporting our ELA teachers at all 8 seven campuses. This was an interesting position for many

reasons. One was that it was a new position for our school and was largely undefined. This

allowed me to develop the position based on my experience of how to support teachers best.

Also, larger-scale improvements could be made to our schools. While I still supervised the G.L.

campus as Director of the English Curriculum, my focus shifted to providing academic support

to teachers so that our students were successful in the English language. This was a challenging

role as each of our campuses had a vastly different student population ranging from rural to

urban and lower to upper socioeconomic status. The teacher population was also a mix of

Hondurans with years of experience and our novice, foreign staff. Finding the balance between

how to provide support for each unique campus and each teacher was challenging. It also

required me to improve in conflict resolution, diplomacy, and gaining teacher cooperation. Even with all its challenges, this allowed me to enhance educational quality at multiple levels.

Journey to the Problem

As I stepped into the role of mentor and then supervisor, I became an observer of novice teachers. I watched their classes and had them watch mine. I spent hours working with teachers on classroom management and the art and science of teaching. I also spent conference time helping teachers solidify their teaching methods and pedagogy. Through these experiences, I learned what support novice teachers needed most and the best way to help them with these.

Outside of school, I became a second mom of sorts, showing teachers where to shop, where to pay bills, how to clean their fruit and veggies, and taking them to the doctor as they needed a translator. I even signed medical forms for our younger teachers since they were considered minors until 21 here. When problems arose with crime, I went to the police station with them, helped file paperwork, and guided them through processing their experiences. This unique part of my job gave me a front-row seat to the emotional challenges teachers have as they face changes in culture.

Between the professional and personal challenges of living and teaching in a host country, I began to see patterns in how teachers reacted to the classroom and the culture. This allowed me to anticipate the needed support throughout the acclimation process. After working with novice teachers for the last 11 years, I have gained valuable insight into the parts of their experiences that they loved and that challenged them. This type of support was unique to the G.L. campus. As I looked at the retention rate of each of our respective campuses, I realized

there was a vast difference between each. I have spoken to many teachers over the years from other campuses and heard how lost they felt because professional and emotional support was unavailable at every campus. I often wondered if the retention rate would increase if an induction program were established as a school system, not just a campus. With my new position, I can be an agent of change in this area. The knowledge I have gained from my personal and professional experience of living and teaching in a host country guided my research and literature review.

Significant Stakeholders

The past and present teachers at Villa Verde Bilingual School (VVBS), who bravely faced their first years of teaching in a host country, are the most significant stakeholders.

Their personal and professional experiences contributed to this study and, in turn, provided support for future teachers at VVBS school. These experiences shared through living life together contributed to the creation of qualitative interview questions and the overall understanding of the problem. In addition, the eight teachers who shared their valuable experiences in-depth via interviews are also significant stakeholders.

Other stakeholders included students, current teachers, and administrators. Current teachers were asked to contribute to the data collection process as the experiences were still fresh in their minds. Administrators at both district and campus levels then gained a deeper understanding of the problem and made needed changes to help support foreign, novice teachers. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, students at VVBS were stakeholders, as the benefits of stronger teachers and less turnover directly affected their education.

Important Terms

Culture: "the values, beliefs, and practices shared by the members of a group" (Mercado & Trumbull, 2018, p.45).

Cross-cultural worker: those working and living in a country or environment that is not their country of birth.

Foreign staff: teachers and assistants that are not Honduran by birth

Host country: A country other than a teacher's country of birth

Immigrant teachers: "The term immigrant is used to depict the overseas-born status of the teachers" (Peeler & Jane, 2005, p. 325). This does not reflect a person's legal status but means they are living in a country that is not their passport country.

Induction program: "intentional support provided to novice teachers to learn pedagogical skills and develop professional practices" (Kwok et al., 2021, p. 168).

Novice teacher: This novice period is generally defined as the first through the third year of teaching (Klavina et al., 2018); however, one is only considered an expert well after the 5th year of teaching (Schempp et al., 1998).

Closing Thoughts on Chapter One

Living overseas requires a distinctive support system that many have not considered. Without this, teachers are left feeling lost and frustrated with the culture in which they are living.

This may affect whether a teacher decides to stay at VVBS or return to their home country, often resulting in high attrition rates for foreign staff. A high turnover rate affects the teacher's efficacy, affecting students academically. As well it has long-term effects on the school financially and inefficiency.

In this study, I examined the experiences of novice teachers at VVBS through interviews, artifacts, and observations. Eight current teachers were interviewed. From this, an induction program was designed to meet the needs of future cross-cultural workers. In Chapter 2, I examined the issues with novice teachers and typical support. As well an overview of concerns for cross-cultural workers was given.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

As novice teachers left their home country, there were both feelings of excitement and apprehension. Natural growth happened as they became professionals for the first time and left home. With this growth came the need to learn about the host country in a professional and socio-emotional setting. Our school's induction program consisted of a two-day orientation the day after new teachers arrived in the country. All our foreign staff met for this and then traveled to their respective campuses, some as far as eight hours away. However, with the emotions of leaving their home country and the excitement and newness of their host country, teachers rarely remembered what was said to them in orientation, leaving them feeling lost and confused about expectations. We needed more. In addition, foreign teachers face unique challenges aside from the emotions and struggles that novice teachers generally face. A comprehensive induction program must encompass the "normal" challenges and those unique to living overseas. However, there was no clear understanding of what an induction program should entail for novice teachers serving overseas, specifically in Honduras and Central America.

Throughout this chapter, I highlighted the challenges that novice teachers worldwide face and the educational cost of high attrition rates. Next, I discussed novice teachers' negative and positive experiences living in a host country. In addition, the cultural aspects of teaching and its effects were addressed. This was followed by an exploration of an induction program, including mentoring, and how this can be used to support novice teachers. As an induction program must be tailored to fit the needs of teachers living abroad, this was considered throughout the text.

Relevant Historical Background

Honduras possesses many natural resources while simultaneously being a developing country with a high crime rate. In 2010 and 2011, it was nicknamed the "Murder Capital of the World" (Romo & Thompson, 2013). In 2012 President Juan Orlando Hernandez took office, and the crime rate dropped significantly. However, in 2020 the pandemic and two back-to-back hurricanes substantially affected the economy. This was followed by Ex-President Juan Orlando Hernandez's extradition to the United States in early 2022, which affected the economy and the crime rate. "In 2020, the relative poverty rate in Honduras reached 70% (6.51 million inhabitants), while the extreme poverty rate (lives less than $1.90 a day) is 53.4% (4.9 million inhabitants)" (Adelante, 2021). Three of our four Western campuses are in rural Honduras, where poverty is felt more intensely. In addition to an unstable infrastructure and insecurity, this significantly affects the education system.

Theoretical or Conceptual Framework

In the last several years, there has been an increase in the value placed on the importance of cultural values and the behaviors that follow these values. As such, there are many approaches to studying cultures and the acculturation process. Hofstede created a framework for cultural values in the 1980s by studying over fifty countries (McFeeters, 2021). Hofstede divided cultures into two categories: Individualistic and Collectivist, with corresponding values. For example, in a collectivist culture, teachers emphasized working in groups, whereas, in an individualistic culture, individual work was encouraged (Greenfield et al., 2000). While this framework has

been criticized for being too simplistic, it is still widely used because of its clarity (Kirkman et al., 2006).

A second framework considered was Gelfand's tight and loose cultures. Gelfand et al. (2011) defined tight nations as having " strong norms and a low tolerance of deviant behavior" and loose nations as having "weak norms and a high tolerance of deviant behavior (p. 1100). Gelfand et al. (2011) asserted that this affected institutions and everyday life. For example, in a tight nation, the acceptable responses were more limited, whereas, in a loose culture, the behavioral expectations had a wider range.

Lastly, as one considers how someone acclimates to a new culture, Oberg's' model that Adler later built on provides valuable insight. Although the phrase can bring negative connotations, Oberg originally defined culture shock as a series of emotional reactions "precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (Oberg, 1954 as cited in López & Portero, 2013). This was followed by the required adjustment to adapt to the new culture. The degree to which one is affected by culture shock depends on several factors, including a person's intercultural experience, knowledge of the host country, language differences, personality, and how integrated they are into the new culture (Lopez & Portero, 2013). However, it is essential to note that culture shock was a process that became stronger or weaker depending on how the individual learned to acclimate (Pederson, 1995). Oberg's model described the acculturation process as a U shape, beginning with the honeymoon stage when the newcomer is excited about the cultural differences. This was followed by rejection or regression as the person adapted to physical adjustment, linguistic

challenges, and loneliness. The third stage was adjustment, where the person slowly began to develop routines and a community from which to draw support. The fourth and final stage was mastery, where the person becomes an adoptive cultural native (Lopez & Portero, 2013). Adler coined the term biculturality (Pederson, 1995). Many scholars have built upon Oberg's model and typically use the term ''acculturation,'' as it encompasses both the positive and negative aspects of cultural adaptation (Berry, 2005).

Most Significant Research and Practice Studies

Novice Teachers World-Wide: Cost of Early Attrition

Teaching might be the only profession where a novice is expected to have the same roles and responsibilities as an experienced teacher. Yet novice teachers lack the skill development that an experienced teacher has regardless of how qualified their preservice program was (Berliner, 1988; Moir & Glass, 2001; Sowell, 2017; Van den Borre et al., 2021). This novice period is generally defined as the first through the third year of teaching (Klavina et al., 2018); however, one is only considered an expert well after the 5th year of teaching (Schempp et al., 1998). At the same time, attrition rates are at their highest during the first five years of a teacher's career, meaning schools are losing teachers before they can become experts in the field (Van den Borre et al., 2021). As teachers gained experience, they became better able to manage the responsibilities required of a teacher (Papay et al., 2017). However, to gain this needed experience, they must stay in the classroom (Sowell, 2017). This was not only a problem for the novice teacher but posed challenges for students and school districts worldwide in countries such as the United States, where "45% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years,"

with similar reports from the United Kingdom, Chile, Belgium (Van den Borre et al., 2021, p. 2). Novice teachers need support, regardless of which country they are from, to be successful in the class and to lower attrition rates.

Concerns about teacher attrition are not new and yet have not been solved. As early as the 1990s, teachers leaving the field surpassed those entering (Darling-Hammond, 2003). A multitude of studies since that time have tried to identify influential factors in teacher's decisions to leave the profession, uncovering factors such as leadership style, school culture, induction and mentoring programs, and salary and working conditions (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Van den Borre et al., 2021). Research by Kyriacou and Kunc's (2007) confirmed this, finding four factors influenced teacher retention: supportive school leadership, workload, student behavior, and a balance between work and life. Darling-Hammond (2002) also found that teachers who felt underprepared in student assessment, lesson planning, instructional methods, and classroom management were less likely to desire a career in teaching. Novice teachers may feel overwhelmed with the responsibilities required to be experts in pedagogy, classroom management, and content matter (Van den Borre et al., 2021). Or perhaps, as Hagger et al. (2011) found, it is "novices' own unrealistic expectations of teaching and students, and others' unrealistic expectations of the novice" (p. 387). Unlike other professions, teachers did not slowly take on more responsibility but were fully responsible for their students while transitioning. As Sabar (2004) explained, teachers must "undergo their own adjustment while at the same time functioning as socialization agents for their pupils. Their role as socialization agents does not wait for them to adjust- it begins from day one" (Sabar, 2004, p. 141). Often teachers felt overworked and underappreciated, leading to the perception of teaching as a semi-profession

22

(Wiggan et al., 2020). All these factors combine to create a systemic problem that influences teacher attrition.

In addition to struggling in their new profession, lack of social and professional support added to teachers' loneliness and professional alienation. In general, novice teachers desired colleague support but did not feel they received it (Blomberg & Knight, 2015). Like strangers new to a social circle, novice teachers attempted to gain acceptance into a group they wanted to belong to. But as strangers, they did not understand the social rules, nor did they want to be seen as unfit. They, therefore, chose to close up and avoid social interaction at school (Sabar, 2004). Ironically, the school culture encouraged this by imposing unspoken rules that "promote privacy and autonomy within the teaching profession" (Rogers & Babinski, 1999, p. 38). Ultimately, this lack of social support further exasperated novice teachers' challenges, adding to the factors that affect teacher retention (Walsdorf & Lynn, 2002; Zaharis, 2019). However, this was problematic as novice teachers required social and professional support from colleagues.

High attrition rates are even more of a problem in urban schools. Urban schools are defined as schools with "a racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse student body, high rates of poverty, low levels of achievement, dense district bureaucracies, and weak infrastructure" (Marco-Bujosa et al., 2020, p. 47). Two-thirds of novice teachers who taught in urban areas left the profession within five years (Papay et al., 2017). This posed a problem as some of the reasons teachers left the profession were poor working conditions, such as low salaries, large class sizes, a heavy teaching load, or unavailability of materials (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). Considering these were similar issues that urban schools deal with, it makes sense that teacher

turnover would be higher. Foote (2005) found that urban schools were more likely to be overcrowded, have fewer resources, and teachers felt unprepared to meet the needs of the diverse population. Despite this feeling, Ronfeldt and McQueen (2017) found that schools with high proportions of English Language Learners had more extensive induction support. However, if teachers still felt unprepared, these induction programs may not have been effective. In addition, Wiggan et al. (2020) found there were "large numbers of uncertified teachers who are teaching the most underserved children where urban, rural, and students of color fare worse with fewer resources and less prepared and experienced teachers" (p. 52). Induction programs for teachers in urban schools may be more extensive than those for their rural counterparts, but possibly their methods need to change, as well as the hiring process.

Early attrition from teaching comes at a high cost to schools and students. According to Darling-Hammond (2002), early attrition created "a drain on school's financial and human resources" because schools constantly were required to pour money into recruiting and professional development for new teachers (p.8). Early attrition also reduced the quality of education and decreased innovation (Mercado & Trumbull, 2018; Van den Borre et al., 2021). In addition, novice teachers struggled with a multitude of things, including classroom management (Goodwin, 2012; Sowell, 2017), the ability to prioritize while multitasking (Berliner, 1988) and were overall less effective than their experienced colleagues (Papay et al., 2017). These factors combined affected student performance and schools, making attrition a priority for administrators.

The perceptions of novice teachers also posed a challenge for schools and students as it was quite different and more detached than expert teachers, affecting student interaction. Novice teachers quickly blamed difficulties in student learning on the student's background and poor attitudes about education on parental support (Schempp et al., 1998). Only a small percentage of novice teachers also believed that building a relationship with parents was part of the teaching job (Hagger et al., 2011). Competent teachers were also more likely to admit knowledge inadequacies than novice teachers (Schempp et al., 1998). Considering that novice teachers needed to learn and grow in their teaching methods, being closed to help was problematic. Novice teachers' perceptions of disruptive behaviors in the classroom were often different than experienced teachers, as novices tended to follow the rules and procedures but lacked the experience to know how to apply these rules in the classroom context (Berliner, 1988). As Wolff (2020) explained:

> Elements of a teacher's practice-based performance include the following: assessing events, deciding whether action needs to be taken in response to these events, pursuing particular action, and continual metacognitive monitoring. In essence, effectively managing classrooms relies on constant event awareness: repeated event monitoring, recognition of who and what needs attention, and knowledge about how to act and react (p. 132).

Novice teachers lacked the needed perception of what should be a priority. This surfaced as a novice teacher's biggest challenge: classroom management (Goodwin, 2012). Lastly, experienced teachers based their lessons on student needs instead of novice teachers who

primarily based their lessons on their own subject knowledge (Schempp et al., 1998). These perceptions may seem small when observed individually, but when combined, novice teachers were not as effective in the classroom.

Novice Teachers Living in a Host Country

In addition to being novice teachers, those who lived in a host country were doing so in a completely new culture. Unfortunately, little research focused on the experiences of novice teachers teaching in a host country, although 250,000 English teachers work abroad in more than 40,000 schools each year (Bentley, 2021). These teachers brought their unique backgrounds and cultural understandings to their host country and classrooms (Peeler & Jane, 2005). While all beginning teachers must define themselves as professionals, cross-cultural teachers were doing so while negotiating different perspectives on culture, the roles of teachers, parents, and students, and teaching methodology (Peeler & Jane, 2005). Cross-cultural teachers have often left the profession due to cultural differences, which affects their interactions with coworkers, students, and parents (Mercado & Trumbull, 2018). As novice teachers in a foreign country pose unique challenges, administrators must consider this when planning induction programs.

Novice teachers who worked in a host country faced many challenges that few can understand. These struggles must be viewed with an understanding of the context of living abroad and can be compared to the difficulties that immigrants face (Mercado & Trumbull, 2018; Sabar, 2004). Novice teachers went through four stages as they moved from novice to experienced professionals: fantasy, survival, mastery, and impact (Ryan, 1986). There was a strong parallel between this and the four stages of adjustment that immigrants experienced:

26

fascination, crisis, and hostility towards the host culture, adjustment, and genuine biculturalism (Sabar, 2004). When combining these two adjustment periods and the intense emotions accompanying them, novice teachers in a foreign country needed a well-defined induction program.

In addition, there was an underemphasis on culture's role in the teaching process; however, the content, assessments, and the method used to teach it highly depended on culture. Culture, in this paper, is defined as the "values, beliefs, and practices shared by the members of a group" (Mercado & Trumbull, 2018, p. 45). Teaching is inherently cultural, and "societal beliefs, goals, and values play a role not only in classroom behaviors but in the personal characteristics" teachers value (Klassen et al.,2018, p. 73). Culture also affected student engagement, parental involvement, and school organization (Sarason, 1996). To develop an understanding of how culture affected one's views on teaching and education as well as the cross-cultural experience, Mercado et al. (2018) suggested using Hofstede's (2001) cultural framework of individualism and collectivism (Figure 2, based on Hofstede, 2001) to view teachers teaching in a host country. When teachers came from countries with a high level of individualism to a country with a high level of collectivism, then they were faced with a conflict in the fundamental differences in how they vs. the society they were living in view the importance of individuals and the collective group (Mercado & Trumbull, 2008; Myers, & DeWall, 2015; Oyserman & Lee, 2008). "For instance, should greater emphasis be placed on the success of individuals or the success of the group (family, classroom, community)? Should people be more responsible for themselves (self-reliant) or for each other (cooperative)?" (Mercado & Trumbull, 2008, p. 45). While these seemed trivial questions, the differing views represented deep cultural values mirrored in school

27

systems, personal relationships, and society (Mercado & Trumbull, 2008). These collectivistic

and individualistic values conflicted with the goals of educational development. For example, in

an individualistic society, students who worked independently and excelled in individual

achievement were considered good students. In contrast, collectivist culture focused less on

personal characteristics (Greenfield et al., 2000). These cultural values were reflected in

students' behavior, teacher expectations, and parental views of teacher responsibility. This

affected how teachers reacted to the school environment, and the disconnect between cultures

could have significantly affected how teachers felt about their overall teaching experience.

Figure 2
Framework for Individualism and Collectivism

Individualism	Collectivism
Success of the individual	Success of the group
Self-reliance	Cooperation with others
Self-esteem	Modesty
Self-expression/egalitarianism (role flexibility)	Respect for authority (hierarchical relations among roles, role definition)
Task-orientation (attention to the task)	Social orientation (attention to the people involved)
Cognitive skills development	Social skills development

Note. From *Mentoring beginning immigrant teachers: How culture may impact the message* (p. 45), by G. Mercado & E. Trumbull, 2018, *International Journal of Psychology*. Copyright year 2018 by International Union of Psychological Science.

The contrasting values described above affected many aspects of a classroom as the classroom exemplifies the culture surrounding it. Mercado & Trumbull (2018) identified four cross-cultural conflicts due to these cultural differences, including: "teacher and student responsibility, parent responsibility and ways of regarding authority" (p. 47). These three cultural differences combined to form a fourth area of conflict: problems in classroom management. For example, when collaborating in a country with collectivist values, parents were expected to engage in the educational process by teaching their children to respect authority but not by focusing on academics, which caused teachers to feel the parents were unsupportive (Greenfield et al., 2000; Mercado & Trumbull, 2018). Most Central American countries were collectivists, and the Spanish language reflected this view on education. Greenfield et al. (2000) described it by saying, "Latino immigrant parents from Mexico and Central America use the Spanish word educación, which differs in meaning from its English cognate "education." Discussions of educación indicated that, for many Latino immigrants, being "educated" means behaving properly and respectfully, in addition to succeeding academically in school. Indeed, most Latino parents do not separate academic and moral goals for their children" (Greenfield et al., 2000, p. 95). The difference in perspectives on respecting authority was another area of conflict. Teachers from the United States and other individualistic cultures encouraged students to talk and discuss in class, whereas, in collectivist cultures, students were less likely to speak up. This caused the teacher to feel the student was not engaged in the lesson; however, the student was responding respectfully (Greenfield et al., 2000). Also, if teachers did not understand the culture in which they lived, this affected their communication with parents and ultimately harmed their relationship with their students (Greenfield et al., 2000). This cultural conflict may also have

affected what a teacher felt was important in evaluating a child, which may not have aligned with their host country's culture. In essence, novice teachers living in a host country faced a cultural conflict twice: once between school and home; and a second time between their home country and host country (Sabar, 2004). They could not ignore the differences in these cultures but had to adopt the school's culture soon after they arrived in the country. Simultaneously they were trying to impact their students while mastering teaching and learning a new culture.

Each person who lived in a host country had a somewhat unique experience, with both positives and negatives and yet there was a growth that happened, regardless of which country a person is in. According to Ospina (2020), this growth was comprehensive: encompassing sociocultural, emotional, and cognitive domains. Furthermore, teachers who have experience living overseas were better able to self-reflect regarding their personal teaching approach, leading them to be more culturally sensitive within the classroom later in their career (Ospina, 2020). Similar results in teachers who taught abroad found that the experience shaped their instruction and student interaction years afterward (Doppen & Diki, 2017). They also "reported increased confidence in how to differentiate across learning abilities, levels of language proficiency, and culture" (Doppen & Diki, 2017, p. 82). Teaching in a host country had a long-term impact on teachers.

As well as being strangers in the country, novice teachers were also new to the school culture. As previously discussed, within the school culture, values influence behavioral expectations, communication, and the "roles of parents, teachers, administrators, and students in the learning process" (Mercado & Trumbull, 2008, p.45). Many of the challenges that novice

teachers encountered stemmed "mainly from their need to adjust to the organizational norms of the school, and to the actors surrounding the school, including local authorities, parents, and the community at large" (Sabar, 2004, p.146). Often, the differences in school cultures were exacerbated by experienced teachers' lack of time and willingness to teach novice teachers the assumed knowledge and innate nature of a school (Peeler & Jane, 2005). Experienced teachers may have assumed that novice teachers had a prior understanding of how things were done, leading to tensions between the experienced and the novice (Peeler & Jane, 2005). These values found in schools were not universal and reflected the larger culture in which the school was founded (Klassen et al., 2018). While this was true of any novice teacher, those teaching in a foreign country faced the more significant challenge of understanding a school culture vastly different from the one they were accustomed to.

Novice Teachers and Their Host Country

While there were many positives that one gained from the experience of living overseas, the problems associated with living abroad were also bountiful. One of the predictive factors in adjustment level was a feeling of isolation (Hwang et al., 2011). While speaking about the support of international students, Hwang and Wang (2011) found that social support and a supportive campus environment significantly impacted student adjustment. One can infer that the same applies to novice teachers living abroad for the first time. Firmin (2007) found that teachers "viewed their social support as an important dynamic influencing their overall experience" (p. 145). This included peers, coworkers, and family, even if they were proximally distant. Teacher communities were also crucial for the professional development of teachers living abroad

(Romero & Vasilopoulos, 2020). "This supports the literature, in which acculturative stressors have been found to be the most important factor in diminishing functional adjustment" (Hwang et al., 2011, p. 334). However, while specific attributes of novice teachers, such as empathy, organization, and resilience, were universal, regardless of culture, there was a differential emphasis placed on teachers' relationships within the community that was highly dependent on cultural values (Klassen et al., 2018). Teachers must find this balance of social interaction that reflects not only their culture but the culture they are currently living in. These social interactions were at the height of factors that influenced them.

Teacher attitude has also been critical in successful teaching abroad experiences. It was found that how teachers perceived the profession affected the longevity of their teaching career (Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007; Van den Borre et al., 2021). In an older study, Hernand and Bailey (1991) pointed out that teachers who were open to experiences and left preconceived ideas behind were more likely to succeed. It could only be assumed that this is true of teachers living in a host country. Their resilience was highly based on their principal expectations of both teaching and their host country. Those who went into teaching abroad with little to no expectations were better able to adapt to a new culture (Hernand, 1991). In a study with international students, Hwang and Wang (2001) found similar results saying, "International students must be active participants in their own adjustment processes" (p. 333). It is difficult to assess the degree of attitude played into cultural adaptation, yet its importance cannot be ignored.

The challenges teachers faced while living abroad were not merely professional. As Peterson et al. (2011) highlighted, living overseas was inherently stressful. Challenges included

"language barriers; differences in diet, living habits, and weather; conflicts in cultural perspectives of interpersonal boundaries; conflicts regarding teaching methods and models; problems with the administration patterns of Chinese schools; and feelings of loneliness and isolation, homesickness, and culture shock" (Yi et al., 2020, p. 2). While Yi et al. (2020) specifically studied teachers' experiences in China, it could be assumed that these same emotions would be present regardless of the location. In addition, Ferguson (2011) found that foreign teachers might feel apprehensive as they struggle with no longer having a home (2011). They may also find the scarcity of supportive relationships and the perceived lack of privacy and boundaries problematic (Yi et al., 2020). In addition, an identity crisis of sorts may occur (Peterson et al., 2011). These stressors caused diverse emotional and cognitive responses in foreign teachers, including exhaustion and confusion (Melby et al., 2008), sleeping problems, and physical problems such as headaches and indigestion (Law, 2021).

With all the challenges that living overseas can bring, many people still have adapted and thrived, indicating that coping strategies are used. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined coping as "those changing cognitive and behavioral efforts developed for managing the specific external and/or internal demands judged as exceeding or surpassing the individual's own resources" (p. 141). However, there was little research specific to the coping strategies used by teachers living overseas but a bountiful amount of research regarding other professionals living overseas. These strategies were grouped into four categories by Yi et al. (2020), which included building social relationships with local people, gradually aligning with the host culture, accepting their reality, and staying in contact with the home culture. These healthy coping strategies included lifestyle

33

activities such as exercise and building social relationships (Young et al., 2018). Coping strategies were imperative for cross-cultural teachers as they faced the stressors of living abroad.

An additional stressor for teachers who lived abroad, especially those who taught in developing countries, was the threat or incident of crime. However, research was non-existent on how traumatic or critical experiences affected teachers living in a host country. Nor were any studies found specific to crime against foreigners in general. This was unfortunate, however, because a lack of awareness did not make trauma any less real for those experiencing it abroad. Trauma is defined as "a shocking, scary, or dangerous experience that can affect someone emotionally and physically. Experiences like natural disasters (such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods), acts of violence (such as assault, abuse, terrorist attacks, and mass shootings), as well as car crashes and other accidents can all be traumatic" (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2020). Teachers who live in developing countries were bound to experience this to some degree. The Human Rights Watch (2020) found the "murder rate [in Honduras] remains among the highest in the world." Youth ages 15–24 years, the age of many teachers teaching in Honduras, "had the highest rates of fatal and non-fatal injuries due to violence." (Yacoub et al., 2006, p. 428). Even the United States Embassy sent emails to United States citizens living in Honduras, warning of crime, violence, and protest. So why was no one talking about this? To compound this problem, cultural affiliations strongly affected how people interpreted and responded to traumatic experiences and how they sought help (Berger, 2015). Trauma affects teachers living overseas and must be considered when addressing stressors. This makes it unfortunate that this phenomenon has not been researched more.

Induction Programs

In a time when teacher attrition was a concern worldwide, administrators needed to understand the factors that influenced teacher retention. One of these factors was teacher induction. For the purposes of this ROS, teacher induction was defined as "intentional support provided to novice teachers to learn pedagogical skills and develop professional practices" (Kwok et al., 2021, p. 168). Three mechanisms were found that affected teachers' retention rates, one of which was pre-service motives and preparation (Van den Borre et al., 2021). It was widely agreed that teachers with adequate teacher preparation were more successful and stayed longer in the profession (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Sowell, 2017; Van den Borre et al., 2021); however, schools themselves had little voice in the preparation their teachers received and needed to be ready to support novice teachers regardless of prior training. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that teacher induction programs positively affected novice teachers by increasing teacher retention, improving classroom practices, and increasing student achievement. The stronger the induction program through participation and coaching, the more likely a teacher was to succeed in the classroom and increase retention (Bastian & Marks, 2017). However, a high-quality induction program must be intentional and comprehensive (Zaharis, 2019). In addition to hiring qualified teachers, Figure 3 demonstrates school leaders' role in keeping teachers through induction programs. Taking the time to put these programs in place was critical for teacher retention.

Figure 3

Mechanisms That Affect Teacher Retention
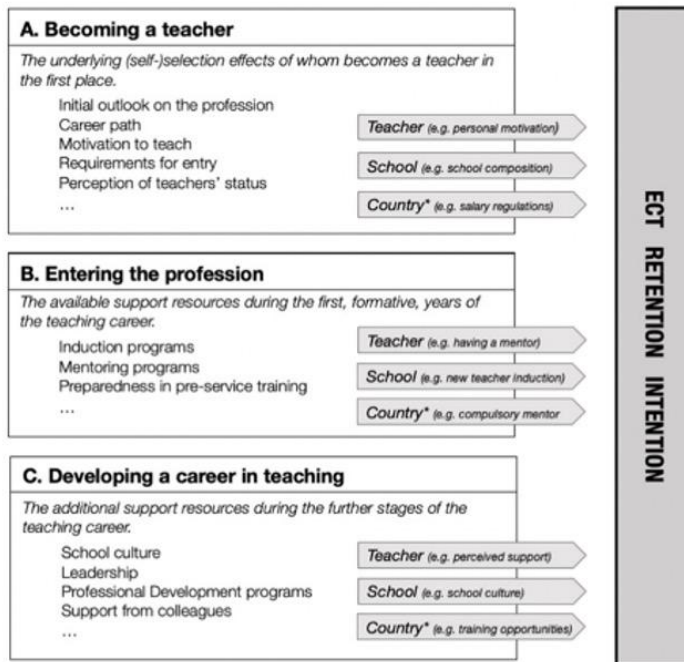
The effect of such induction programs has garnered mixed results. For example, The New Teacher Center Induction Model was found to have no effect on teacher retention within the school district or the teaching profession in a study by Glazerman et al. (2008) and reviewed by What Works Clearinghouse (2015). Perhaps this was due to the comparison group also participating in an induction program with no reference to the strengths of the comparison program (Kang & Berliner, 2012). Other studies have found opposing results, suggesting that induction programs reduce teacher turnover (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017). Though the studies have shown mixed results, there is still a common acceptance that induction programs are effective.

As induction programs are believed to be effective, many studies have researched what a comprehensive program must include. However, there is no clear guidance on the specific support needed (Kwok et al., 2021; Van den Borre et al., 2021). This may be partly due to novice teachers' need for a different form of in-service and support than more experienced teachers (Schempp et al., 1998; Sowell, 2017). Comprehensive programs included various supports ranging from mentoring to extra resources (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017). But how does one know what an induction program should consist of? Moir and Glass (2001) found that a quality induction program began with a strong vision for teachers and included teacher learning, mentoring, and high standards. Reitman and Karge (2019) included teacher learning and mentoring and added additional support from administrators and other staff. It was also found that supportive communication from school leadership, mentor programs, seminars, and collaborative planning time predicted lower migration and attrition (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017). The following was found by Wong (2004) to be essential components of a comprehensive induction program (p. 48):

- Begin with an initial 4 or 5 days of induction before school starts

- Offer a continuum of professional development through systematic training over a period of 2 or 3 years

- Provide study groups in which new teachers can network and build support, commitment, and leadership in a learning community

- Incorporate a strong sense of administrative support

- Integrate a mentoring component into the induction process

- Present a structure for effective modeling teaching during in-services and mentoring

• Provide opportunities for inductees to visit demonstration classrooms

It cannot be overstated that an induction program was not a crash course but a continuum that led to improved pedagogy (Zaharis, 2019). Through a combination of support, novice teachers became effective and successful teachers.

Induction Programs for Cross-Cultural Teachers

The need for an induction program was especially true for novice teachers living in a host country. Induction programs should explicitly educate teachers in the sociocultural knowledge needed to succeed in a foreign classroom where teaching strategies and philosophies may differ vastly from their own (Peeler & Jane, 2005). International teachers may also have needed to learn if the problems they were facing were due to a lack of experience or a cultural difference. These difficulties must be addressed within the induction program by examining intercultural issues (Klavina et al., 2018). It was recommended that mentoring and induction programs should be culturally responsive to help with feelings of isolation and needed support (Hayes et al., 2019). Although this recommendation concerned teachers of color working in rural schools, it can be applied to anyone teaching outside their home culture. Novice teachers needed support that addressed culture, feelings of isolation, and the other challenges they would face.

While traditional induction programs do not include cultural training, it is imperative that international schools do so. Cross-cultural training is needed to include specific knowledge about the host country and provide social skills and behaviors required to successfully navigate the acculturation process (Lawson & Shephard, 2019). According to Waxin and Panaccio (2005), cultural awareness training aimed to speed up the cultural adaptation process and helped

participants learn to interact with the host culture more effectively. They found in a study of different types of cross-cultural training methods that experimental training was the most effective. This included observing behaviors of the new culture so that participants could make cultural distinctions. It could also include role-playing to help teachers learn the accepted behaviors (Osland & Bird, 2000). Experimental training may also be utilized within the work context allowing new people to learn from those with experience (Waxin & Panaccio, 2005). Training matched the emotional stages of adaptation, including pre-departure and post-arrival, and was not a one-time teaching (Lawson & Shephard, 2019; Waxin & Panaccio, 2005). It was suggested that training include the stages of acculturation and that teachers had people that were cultural informants (Lopez & Portero, 2013). Although no set training tool was found, the above components were essential to incorporate into an international induction program.

Mentor Specific

One component of an induction program that has garnered much attention was mentoring. Many studies showed that a mentor program provided the needed professional support and encouragement that novice teachers required (Sowell, 2017; Van den Borre et al., 2021). This was not only the case in the United States, but Van de Borre et al. (2021) found in a worldwide study that mentor programs had a significant effect on supporting novice teachers in addition to preparedness in preservice training. As well, Smith (2011) found, "Effective mentoring increases teacher retention, develops teaching expertise and confidence, reduces isolation and fosters beginning teacher' retention and development" (p. 316). It should be noted that mentoring was not the solution to helping novice teachers but was part of the solution within

a comprehensive induction program (Wong, 2004). As researchers and administrators looked for ways to support novice teachers, mentoring should have been included as part of the induction program.

Effective induction programs used mentors to help successfully integrate novice teachers into the school climate, which benefited the institution, teacher, mentor, and students. However, effective mentor programs did not happen by accident; instead, careful planning took place (Sowell, 2017). First, mentors must be carefully selected and trained to provide ongoing support (Moir & Glass, 2001). Many mentor programs did not prepare the mentors, however. In a qualitative study by Sowell (2017), all mentor participants voiced the need for ongoing training in strategies to support novice teachers. Zaharis (2019) confirmed this, stating that mentors should have initial training as well as continual professional development. Without this training, mentors may lack the skills needed to support novice teachers. Many mentor programs utilized mentors who were also teaching full-time, which limited their availability to novice teachers (Smith, 2011). It is, therefore, important that mentors be released from some or all their teaching duties, as in the case of the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program in California (Reitman & Karge, 2019). Without these factors, mentors may not be effective or have the time to invest in novice teachers.

When considering mentoring in an induction program, several components must be included. Mentors needed common planning times with novice teachers where relationships were built and pedagogical knowledge was passed on (Reitman & Karge, 2019; Zaharis, 2019). Also, novice teachers found it valuable for mentors to observe them in their classrooms in addition to

inviting the novice to observe the mentor (Zaharis, 2019). This process provided a demonstration of how a classroom was effectively run. Another critical component was helping novice teachers understand the school curriculum and grade-level expectations. This required that mentors spend adequate time with the novice teacher, helping them to analyze student work and collaborate on lesson designs (Moir & Glass, 2001). The underlying requirement for any of these things was ample time spent in the relationship to meet the needs of the novice teacher.

As one looks at effective mentoring, it was beneficial to approach this with a broader worldview than just the United States. Van de Borre et al. (2021) pointed out that much of the current research on teacher attrition came from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, which may mean there are gaps in the research because this problem was more extensive than those countries. However, in Finland and Singapore, retention rates were significantly higher than in other countries worldwide (Van den Borre et al., 2021). Therefore, one must consider what these countries were doing to support novice teachers. It should be noted that the cultures and differences in the educational systems of such countries made comparisons hard, but with insight, it was possible (Pennanen et al., 2015). For example, Finland placed great emphasis on mentoring, but unlike other countries, they did this in groups of 4-8 teachers, with meetings once monthly for professional development. The teachers worked together for this time to be effective, comfortable, and social. The motive behind mentoring novice teachers in Finland was to strengthen teachers' professional competence and provide emotional support instead of decreasing teacher retention, which may have played into its effectiveness (Pennanen et al., 2015). While one cannot disregard the cultural differences between countries, it may be

beneficial to examine more closely the method and purpose of mentoring that Finland has adopted.

Mentoring Abroad

Like many immigrants and cross-cultural workers, teachers integrated into a new school without a social network. Social networks provided immigrants with social and practical support (Sabar, 2004). Similarly, novice teachers needed support systems to be successful. One-way schools provided this support was by providing a mentor (Sabar, 2004). Unlike pre-preparation courses and professional development, mentoring laid foundational work specific to the student population and the school (O'Hara et al., 2020). They also helped clarify potential cultural barriers, helping novice teachers adjust to their host country (Mercado & Trumbull, 2018). This was done by asking intentional questions and sharing information on the typical U.S. perspective of cultural topics (Mercado & Trumbull, 2018). Through open communication about culture and by providing concrete support, mentors helped novice teachers adjust to their classrooms and host countries.

Mentor programs needed to be approached differently, though, with cross-cultural teachers. Mentors helped bridge the gap between "past understandings and unfamiliar practices" (Peeler & Jane, 2005, p. 327). Given the significant role that culture played in the classroom as well as in adapting to life in another country, novice teachers needed "explicit support with cultural and social adjustment, as well as with grasping the pedagogical implication of different cultural values" (Mercado & Trumbull, 2018, p. 46). However, cultural differences were often understated and may have therefore been overlooked or misunderstood in the average mentor

relationship (Greenfield et al., 2000). This may have caused discourse in the mentor and beginning teachers' views on teaching and needed to be addressed. Differences in respect for authority may have also caused conflict in the mentor relationship (Greenfield et al., 2000). For example, in collectivist cultures, people were taught to trust an authority figure's decisions with unquestioning respect, whereas, in an individualistic culture, people were encouraged to ask questions of those in authority (Mercado & Trumbull, 2018; Myers & DeWall, 2015). This posed a problem as the mentor relationship was based on support with open communication where one can safely ask questions (Mercado & Trumbull, 2018). Therefore, a mentor who worked with novice teachers from other countries needed to be trained in different cultures and be able to identify when conflict was cultural, albeit subtle.

Informal mentor relationships may have played a greater role in the novice, cross-cultural teacher's professional and personal life. As mentioned, loneliness was a challenge that needed to be addressed with all teachers but specifically with those living in the host country. Utilizing mentors informally fulfilled the novice teacher's need to form effective relationships through shared experiences (Peeler & Jane, 2005). An informal mentor program may be set up by formally assigning a mentor but allowing the mentor and novice teacher to structure the mentoring process to meet the needs of the novice teacher (Peeler & Jane, 2005). In both cases, the relationship was stressed, along with building trust. Sowell (2017) found that "building trust in a mentoring relationship for both instructional support and in retaining teachers" was essential to the mentor relationship (p. 128). This relationship was of utmost importance when looking to support novice teachers.

Review of Relevant Methods

As the topic of cultural adjustment was complex and multifaceted, several methods of data were considered. However, a deeper understanding was the goal of this study; therefore, a qualitative study was more appropriate with a focus on semi-structured interviews. One of the significant benefits of interviews was that data that was not observable could be collected, such as feelings and attitudes (Hüseyin, 2009). As this study looked at cultural adaptation, being able to consider thoughts and feelings was essential. Opdenakker (2006) also argued that one of the benefits of interviews was that the researcher could draw information from body language and tone of voice instead of just words. The nature of a semi-structured interview was also more interactive; therefore, much was gained from the open dialogue.

Another important aspect of the data collection method was the use of photo elicitation. When first developing this method, Collier (1957) said the use of photos had a "compelling effect upon the informant, its ability to prod latent memory, to stimulate and release emotional statements about the informant's life" (Collier, 1957, as cited in Harper, 2002, p. 14). Photo elicitation can not only evoke sharing of factual information but also the feelings and memories that were attached to the photo (Harper, 2002). As a constructivist qualitative research project, exploring avenues that encouraged participants to share experiences was important and eliciting photographs aided in this.

Closing Thoughts on Chapter Two

As educators looked to lower attrition rates and better support novice teachers living abroad, there were several things they needed to keep in mind. First, without the needed support,

novice teachers left before becoming experts in the field, which affected students, teachers, and the school as an organization (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Mercado & Trumbull, 2018; Van den Borre et al., 2021). Secondly, induction programs, including mentors, were pivotal in the novice teachers' first years of school (Sowell, 2017; Van den Borre et al., 2021). Careful consideration should be made when pairing mentors, and mentors should be trained in the cultural factors that may cause friction (Greenfield et al., 2000; Mercado & Trumbull, 2018). Lastly, the cross-cultural teacher needed additional intentional support as their challenges were often more intense and different than your average novice teacher. Those living in a host country must balance the vast array of elements that culture affects in classrooms, including interpersonal interactions, student behavior, and educational goals (Klassen et al., 2018; Mercado & Trumbull, 2018; Sarason, 1996). They needed assistance in cultural adaptations, and induction programs should have included a plan for teacher trauma when it occurs. Without these vital supports, novice teachers living in a host country continued to be ineffective, leaving the profession before becoming expert teachers.

There was a vast amount of research about immigrants, novice teachers, and how culture affected teaching but a minimal amount when we looked at these experiences combined. However, this combination was the experience of a novice teacher living abroad. I addressed this gap in research by drawing parallels between each of these individual issues and the combined factors that cross-cultural teachers may face. In addition, even less was known about the emotional and traumatic experiences and the effect this has on teachers. This was an area in which more research was needed. Lastly, it was known that induction programs were vital to novice teachers' success and in lowering the attrition rate, but more research needed to be done

regarding what this should look like for novice teachers living abroad. Through my research, I addressed these issues, making recommendations for induction programs for teachers living overseas.

SOLUTION AND METHODS

The Problem Revisited

As English Curriculum Supervisor at our school, one of my responsibilities is to help our foreign staff adjust to living in a new country. This included helping them adjust to the school environment and adapt to social norms in the classroom. It also involves showing them where to shop for groceries, pay bills, and get medicine. As such, I have spent a great deal of time listening to teachers struggle with cultural differences. I have often told my students that different isn't bad, different isn't good; different is just different. Recognizing and appreciating differences in ourselves and our culture is key to success in living abroad.

When I reflected on my years as a teacher living in a host country and working with new teachers each year, I wondered if there were commonalities in the experiences of people living abroad and how this experience changed people. I moved to Honduras twelve years ago, and while I was initially in culture shock, I now often overlook differences that newer people struggle with. I also came here as an older, married female, which gave me a different experience than the younger, single teachers I serve. I have noticed that some people took the cultural differences in stride, viewing this as part of the experience, while others struggled to enjoy the country they live in. Therefore, I wanted to take a closer look at the day-to-day experiences of novice teachers living here. By looking at their experiences, I could better help future teachers.

As I watched teachers assimilate successfully to varying degrees, I have often wondered what aids and hinders this process. As such, this was one of the areas I focused on when designing this study. Firman (2007) found that teachers leaned heavily on their social support,

such as peers and family. This affected their experiences. Teacher communities overseas were utilized as personal support but also as professional development (Romero & Vasilopoulos, 2020). But these were all outside influences that every teacher had access to, yet some chose not to engage. Also, why did one teacher successfully acclimate while another gave up and returned home? Were there specific coping strategies that made some people more successful as cross-cultural workers? Which of the many social interactions helped or hindered the process?

To answer these questions, this study examined the experiences in cultural adjustments and personal coping strategies that affected the assimilation of eight novice teachers who had lived in Honduras for over one year. The research questions are as follows:

1. What professional and personal experiences have novice teachers had that impacted their worldview during their early years living abroad?

2. What were the major challenges new teachers faced in their first years of living in Honduras, both professionally and personally?

3. How did they handle the challenges that they identified?

Outline of the Proposed Solution

The proposed solution was to develop an induction program that provided support for professional struggles and cultural adaptation of novice teachers in Honduras. This program was designed so that teachers would receive cultural training in smaller sessions before arriving, then a long-term staff member at each campus would be trained in how to help the novice teachers best as they begin in their respective schools. This was proposed to our superintendent and

assistant superintendent but primarily informed me, as I helped design our orientation and cultural teaching.

Justification of the Proposed Solution

A program designed to meet the needs of novice teachers living overseas will improve their experience, increasing the odds that they will stay sequential years. Three of our seven campuses had a person who unofficially helped teachers learn the school culture, the country's culture, and the life skills they needed while living away from home. None of our campuses had an induction program encompassing the professional and personal aspects of living abroad. In addition, four of our campuses did not have a long-term foreign staff member and, therefore, were not familiar with the needs of foreign novice teachers. These campuses, with fewer supports, had a higher turnover rate. This would continue until support was given to our foreign staff.

Study Context and Participants

G.L., Honduras, is the "state" capital, called a municipality, located at the base of Celaque National Park in Lempira. There are approximately 63,000 people living in G.L. and surrounding areas, with the majority working in agriculture. Lempira is the poorest state in Honduras and has a large indigenous Lenca Indian population. L.U. is a rural village in Lempira, about three hours from G.L. It has a population of approximately 16,000 people. Little information could be found on this rural village. Of our campuses, this school had the highest number of students on scholarship and operated at the bare minimum with no textbooks and few

academic resources. Y.I. is located in the municipality of Intibucá and is a small town of only

20,000 residents. Although rural, the school had more resources than the other three campuses

due to donors who intentionally helped this campus. S.R., our newest campus, only goes through

seventh grade. Each year, one grade was added. While it was in a rural area, most students

traveled from the city. The demographics at this school were vastly different from the other three

schools as it was in a more developed city.

Table 1
School Demographics

Campus	Student Population	Foreign Teacher Population	Novice Teachers	Female to Male ratio	Average Age of Full-time Teachers	Number of teachers who qualify as participants
G.L.	450	18	11	10:8	24	5
L.U.	216	5	3	4:1	23	1
S.R.	264	2	2	2:0	24	1
Y.I.	485	12	10	9:3	22	7

Note. Demographics of each VVBS campus.

As the study intended to understand how living in Honduras had changed people and the

meaning they drew from interactions, novice teachers–new to both the profession and the

country–gave a unique perspective. Their interactions were still fresh in their minds, where

veterans had forgotten some pivotal experiences that changed them through the normalcy of life.

As such, teachers who were still living in Honduras and had been here more than one semester

but taught less than three years ago were chosen. The original intent was to have participants

who had been in Honduras for over a year so that they had more experiences to draw from and were further in the acculturation process. However, few participants met the qualifiers of over one year and under three years while still living in Honduras. I felt the variable of living in Honduras at the time of the interview was essential to the sharing process. Reassessing the participant qualifiers allowed for adequate participants that could have discussions on interactions that were somewhat current in their minds. Yet enough time had passed to reflect on how these interactions accompanied the acclimation process. These teachers had ample opportunity to have new experiences with social interactions outside the school as well as professional interactions daily. They had an up-close and personal view of social experiences daily that those in another profession may not experience. Using the parameters listed above, there were five full-time teachers that qualified for this research study on the G.L. campus, seven on the Y.I. campus, one on the S.R. campus, and one on the L.U. campus. Two of the G.L. campus teachers that met the original qualifications were removed from the potential participant's list because one has lived out of his home country for over three years. Although it was not in Honduras, he may not remember pivotal acculturation experiences. The second teacher will likely leave after the first semester and will not be in-country for interviews. This left G.L. with three teachers that qualified as research participants.

Proposed Research Paradigm

According to Hiller (2016), ontology refers to "the study of what exists, what is in reality, what is real" (p.99). Experiences such as living abroad were processed through a subjective lens and could not be understood objectively. Each teacher has had similar experiences yet has

51

internalized meaning in a unique way. The author believed that this reality could only have meaning when thoughts and feelings about it were acknowledged, which could then produce understanding.

The methodology that influenced this study was a mix of a phenomenological and intrinsic case study. An intrinsic case study is defined as focusing on the case rather than an issue (Bhattacharya, 2017). This study focused on the experiences of eight novice teachers and how their culture interacted with their host country, which aligned with an intrinsic case study. To a lesser extent, this study also utilized phenomenology in that meaning was drawn from participants' interactions based on their home culture (Bhattacharya, 2017).

I conducted a basic qualitative study. This interpretivist, phenomenological case study was conducted using interviews to deepen my understanding of teachers' experiences while living here and the characteristics that allowed them to succeed. The basis of phenomenology was that as we process our past experiences, we form new meanings and understandings of these experiences (Bhattacharya, 2017). At the base of this lies the intentionality to connect with people to develop an understanding of the phenomenon they have experienced. As I was also living in Honduras, this interconnectedness came naturally with a shared phenomenon of living in a host country. However, it was not enough just to have lived those experiences; I sought to understand how this changed people and what meanings were drawn from their interactions. I also explored what character traits affected their assimilation process. As much of a teacher's experiences began with their culture and were then interpreted through this lens, there was some overlap between the theoretical framework of phenomenology and interpretivism. According to

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), "the key tenet of the interpretivism paradigm is that reality is socially constructed" (p. 33). All knowledge was relative and could be understood from each individual's point of view, which means that people formed their thoughts and knowledge based on what they experienced. Interpretivism allowed for a cultural and historical interpretation of interaction (Bhattacharya, 2017). Interpretivism allowed participants to view social interactions and construct truth through their culture and individual beliefs. Views of culture were considered through both Hofstede's (2001) Cultural Framework and Gelfand's (2011) work on tight and loose cultures, while the acculturation process was viewed through Oberg's Cultural Shock theory (Oberg, 1954, as cited in López & Portero, 2013).

As previously discussed, Hofstede (2001) divided cultures into two general categories: individualism and collectivism. As teachers constructed truths of their new home, they did so based on their prior knowledge and beliefs. The United States had the highest level of individualism of any country that Hofstede (2001) studied, whereas Latin America was more collectivist. As teachers moved to Latin America, where our school was located, the extreme difference in values often caused conflict. For example, a prior student of mine came to my counseling office very upset because the person who gave her a ride to school each day would no longer do so. When asked what prompted this change, she explained that her friend asked her to cheat on a test in the class of a North American teacher. The North American teachers had little patience for cheating at our school and assigned a zero if a student is caught. However, in the Honduran culture, the friend had enough money to have transportation to the school, and the upset child had the intelligence to pass the test. Together the "group" could succeed, which outweighed one person's success. The teacher was furious and could not understand the student's

point of view. I would argue that neither was "wrong," but both were "correct" in honoring the values of their culture.

In addition to Hofstede's Cultural Framework, Gelfand's (2011) work on tight and loose cultures was used to explain the cultural misunderstandings that occurred with our novice teachers. According to Gelfand (2011), culture affects all aspects of our lives. He believed social norms gave us our identity and helped us construct society. Without this, society was unpredictable. When moving from a loose culture to a tight culture, cross-cultural workers could have been confused about the social expectations around them. For example, the United States was primarily a loose culture (although this can depend on the state) with more openness to new ideas and weaker norms (Gelfand, 2011). Honduras, however, had a tighter culture, with more regulated behavior and higher expectations of uniformity. As such, one of the areas that cross-cultural, novice teachers struggled with is the rigidness of behavioral norms such as uniforms for teachers. As well, teachers were discouraged from showing emotion, and many were sent home for the day if they cried or got upset. As Gelfand (2011) pointed out, neither is right nor wrong but instead has important strengths and liabilities.

A third framework that was considered to understand cross-cultural workers' experiences was Oberg's Cultural Shock theory (Oberg, 1954, as cited in López & Portero, 2013). Every year, I saw teachers go through the four stages of acculturation that Oberg discussed: honeymoon, rejection, adjustment, and mastery. They found Honduras and the culture fascinating for the first several months and then began to push back on anything culturally different. In the Honduran culture, it was not acceptable to wear shorts in public, and during this

phase, teachers wore shorts or complained about being unable to. They got angry about the lack

of available food and no longer wanted to try new food. This slowly began to change around

Christmas as they reached the adjustment phase. By the end of the year, most teachers were

comfortable with their new culture, and while they may have missed their home countries' food,

they have also found new food they enjoyed. This framework was vital to this research as the

degree to which a person is affected by culture shock is directly related to a personal

understanding and integration into their host culture.

After consideration of the types of action research and their purposes, the author chose

critical participatory action research as this aligned with the purpose of the study. Critical action

research took a critical approach to look at processes and the needed changes for improvement

(Lo & McDonald, 2021). In comparison, participatory included collaboration to examine a

situation and then pursue change (Kindon et al., 2007). Combined critical participatory action

research focused on changes in three areas, "the way in which practitioners practice, their

understanding of their own practices and conditions under which they practice" (Monkevičienė

& Galkienė, 2021, p. 62). As this study aimed to understand teachers' experiences and then

implement change, it aligned with critical participatory action. While the teachers may not have

been directly involved in the design of the induction program, their voices drove the needed

changes.

Data Collection Methods

Data was collected from participants using a combination of semi-structured interviews,

informal conversations, and observations (Bhattacharya, 2017). Semi-structured interviews took

place over the course of two months. Participants were asked eight open-ended questions about their experiences in Honduras. Follow-up questions were asked throughout the interview but were not reflected as those were more participant-directed. They were interviewed individually via Zoom or in person. Notes were taken as we talked, and transcription was utilized to ensure the accuracy of my notes. After each interview, I typed the notes and checked the transcription. Observations consisted of informal conversations with teachers and with naturalistic observations that occurred in daily life. As well, artifacts were collected that teachers felt comfortable sharing. This included early journal articles as they transitioned to Honduras, giving us an incomparable understanding of their feelings about classroom and social life experiences. Photographs were another artifact that teachers chose to share. These offered an interesting opportunity to see the world through another person's perspective. Some people were willing to share small things they had collected, such as cards that represented memorable experiences. While these were a few options, this was largely left up to the teacher as to what they wanted to share to enhance their story.

Justification of Use of Instruments in Context

This study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the novice teacher's experience when working abroad. With this information, the current induction program was enhanced to incorporate cultural and social adjustment support. Through interviews, a deeper understanding of teachers' struggles when living abroad was gained. The general understanding of these struggles was already present from my work with teachers over the last several years, but to dig deeper, interviews were necessary. Interviews consisted of eight questions; however, a semi-

structured approach was taken so there was the freedom to explore topics as they naturally

occurred. The interview questions were designed to explore these experiences and the following

meanings and changes that occur. Knowing that many teachers struggled with these interactions

and the assimilation process, I also sought to understand why this was the case and whether

certain coping strategies made this process easier for some. The interview items were designed to

explore this phenomenon. As well as interviews, I kept a log of interactions with participants that

added to the research. Informal in nature, this showed additional interactions that contributed to

the assimilation process. Naturalistic observations added to the literature by watching the

acclimation process and expounding in areas teachers did not verbalize. Journal entries and

artifacts allowed me to see how participants saw their world, which was a basis for a

phenomenological study (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Data Analysis Strategy

Data from this study was analyzed using an inductive approach (Bhattacharya, 2017). I

began by reading the notes and transcripts of the interview's multiple times. After familiarizing

myself with the data, the data was coded by highlighting keywords and phrases. Transcripts were

coded at the same time so that recurring phrases would stand out. I then compared these codes

side by side, looking for commonalities. Carter et al. (2014) explained that having more than two

research methods helped to gain a more thorough understanding of the cross-cultural, and novice

teacher phenomenon. Therefore, in addition to interviews, an observation journal and field notes

were kept. This allowed me to watch the participants interact with the world around them.

Elicited journal entries were coded similarly to transcripts, looking for themes in writing. Other

artifacts, such as pictures or artifacts, were also included in the data collection. As Glaw et al. (2007) discuss, one way to analyze artifacts was for the researcher "to observe the emotions that arise in the participants as they discuss the meanings of the photographs. The participant also elicits insights not necessarily clear in the photographs." I documented these observations using field notes that were coded and analyzed in the same manner as the transcripts.

Timeline

An approximate timeline follows as indicated in Table 2. Participants were selected that met the requirements of a novice teacher living here for over one year and under three years, and that reflected the teacher population. An email was sent to these participants using a purposeful sampling method in early December. Interviews were conducted starting a couple days after and finished in January of 2023. Coding happened shortly after the interviews. Artifacts were requested at the time of the interview. Most participants shared those within a week of the interviews. These were coded when all participants had submitted them. A few artifacts were shared after the initial ones, as teachers experienced things that they wanted to share. These were coded and included with the other artifacts.

Table 2
Timeline of Data Collection
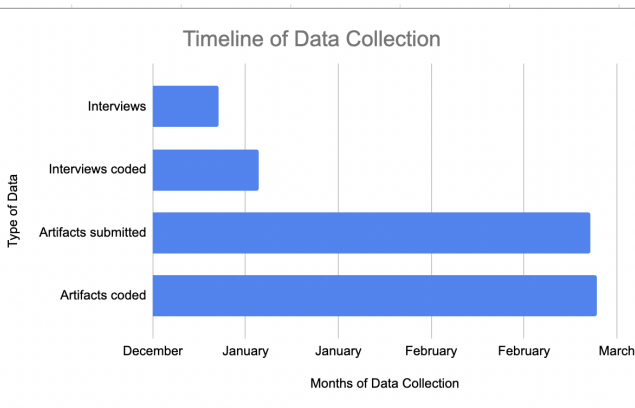
Note. Table indicating dates that data was collected.

Reliability and Validity Concerns or Equivalents

Multiple components were added to ensure trustworthiness, objectivity, and validity in this study. Creswell & Clark (2017) recommend using at least three strategies to increase validity. As such, the three strategies utilized in this study were member checking, triangulating data, and reporting disconfirming evidence. After transcription, participants were given the opportunity to read and affirm whether the interviews reflected their feelings. As discussed, participants were encouraged to submit journal articles, photographs, or other objects that reflect their experiences while transitioning in Honduras. Collecting data from several sources allowed me to see life through their eyes outside of the interviews. This gave me a more intimate view of their feelings and drew out some experiences that they may have forgotten to mention in the interview process, allowing me to have a more complete picture of the acculturation experience. Lastly, I expected that each participant's experiences would be unique and may even have contradicted each other resulting in disconfirming evidence. However, as Creswell & Clark

(2017) pointed out, in real life, opinions and themes may not be cohesive and added to the study's validity.

In addition to validity concerns, possible biases, and subjectivity have been disclosed that may have impacted the gathering and reporting of data. My entry into the school and country was not smooth; therefore, I did not want my experiences to be projected onto participants. According to Burton (2006), the role of reflexivity is to ensure that the author was upfront about their background and the biases that may have occurred. Therefore, it was a balance that must be found as my own experiences helped me to connect with the experiences of the cross-cultural novice teacher but yet could affect my prejudices. Journaling, as well as member checking, helped in decreasing bias.

In qualitative research, care must be taken to build rapport with participants. Prior (2018) described a genre of interviewing that highlights built rapport. He asserted that the researcher strived to establish mutual trust and respect through narrative or in-depth interviews. Furthermore, and of importance in this study, was the sensitivity to power relations that must be considered. Participants have been coworkers of mine for at least one year, and therefore, a relationship has already been built. However, every teacher in this study was also a subordinate, as I am an administrator. Therefore, as Prior (2018) suggested, great care was taken to downplay the administrator/ teacher role and enhance the researcher/ participant role. Factors that may have encouraged this were interviewing in a neutral location instead of a school setting. Also, participants were chosen with whom I already had a relationship outside of the school. We had a small teacher population that supported a community relationship, even between administrators

and teachers. Therefore, I did not anticipate power relations being an issue, but I needed to be sensitive to the possibility. Miles (2014) asserted that one of the ethical pitfalls for a researcher to be cautious of was an unauthentic relationship or one that used coercion to collect data. As coworkers and friends, this increased credibility in the relationship and the views they share.

Closing Thoughts on Chapter Three

Living overseas was an experience that each person processed in a unique way. Through a purposeful sample of cross-cultural novice teachers, my goal was to understand how social interactions have influenced the acclimation process. Additionally, I endeavored to better grasp what characteristics aided or hindered this process. Semi-structured interviews of novice teachers allowed for exploring relevant topics and significantly added to the author's comprehension of the cross-cultural teacher phenomenon. This understanding allowed for a comprehensive induction program to be created and implemented.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introducing the Analysis

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences, the acculturation process, and the coping mechanisms of novice teachers while teaching in Honduras. This study used responses from semi-structured interviews, artifacts, and natural observations to answer the research questions. Data was then analyzed using descriptive and in-vivo coding.

Presentation of Data

There were eight participants in total, living in four towns and originally from seven states in the U.S. All were between 22-25 years old and in their first three years of teaching, with the exception of Amy who taught for four, an additional year online during the pandemic. She was included in this study because she had only lived in Honduras for three years since she taught in the U.S. when online. There were not any other participants from L.U. who qualified. Each participant brought their own perspectives on living in Honduras, much of which was due to their personal backgrounds. Some teachers lived with other foreign staff while some had chosen to live on their own. Each town where our schools were located also had a distinct personality.

Description of Campuses

This study focused on only the campuses in Western Honduras within about four hours of each other, including S.R. (1), L.U. (2), G.L. (3), and Y.I. (4) as depicted in Figure 4 . The campuses on the eastern side are shown as numbers C.O. (7), T.F. (5) and C.C. (6).

Figure 4
Location of Villa Verde Christian School Campuses

Note. Graph made by VVCS staff, 2022. Personal communication, January 2023.

Figure 5
Downtown S.R.

Note. Photo of Santa Rosa taken by Navarro, J. (n.d.). Santa Rosa de copan, Honduras. [Pinterest post]. Pinterest. Retrieved March 15, 2023.

S.R., shown in Figure 5, is the only one of our Western campuses that is located in a large city. It is our newest campus, currently going through seventh grade. There are only two foreign staff at that campus, both of whom have been there for three or more years. Brittany, a Caucasian in her mid-twenties, began her teaching career at our school with three other foreign teachers that were her roommates. She has taught several ages from kindergarten to 2nd grade. She also returned to the US for one year then came back to Honduras this past year to marry her co-worker, Oscar, in 2023.

Figure 6
L.U. From a Nearby Mountain

Note. Photo taken by B. Rodriguez, colleague of Amy, 2022. Personal communication, January 28, 2023.

L.U. is the most rural of our campuses, located 3 hours from the nearest city. It is also one of our smaller campuses. The majority of students are scholarship recipients. There is one foreign couple, two volunteers from the UK, and Amy working at the school. As shown in the interviews, this lack of community was hard. She is also one of our few teachers that did not live with other foreign staff and instead lived in a host home. Amy, a Caucasian, is in her fourth teaching year. Two and half of those were done online, and largely from the U.S. Amy was originally from Massachusetts. She studied Youth and Family Studies and then earned her

Master of Social Work. Before moving here, Amy had visited several countries, although all were first-world countries.

Figure 7
Downtown G.L.

Note. Photo taken by J. Ellingson, colleague of Cody and Sinclair, 2022. Personal communication, January 28, 2023.

G.L., pictured in figure 7, is a mid-size town and is the only campus located near a town. This was not the case originally, but the town has grown, putting the school closer in proximity to G.L. G.L. has about 500 students and the largest foreign teacher population at 19 full and part-time staff.

Cody, one of the few full-time male teachers, is from Chicago. He played college football and studied history with some classes in education. Because he played college football and was from a diverse city, he had exposure to other cultures but had minimal travel experience. He is in his first year of teaching high school and is coaching basketball. Cody is a tall, quiet, African

American man who is an observer by nature and compassionate to both animals and kids. He took his time getting to know the culture and strives to be considerate of it.

Sinclair is the opposite in many ways, with a loud, easy laugh that is full of life. She jumped into the culture and became very involved in the local soccer league. She made several good friends through that, and the teachers often went to her games to cheer her on. She is bi-racial and originally from Colorado, where she studied elementary education with a minor in cultural linguistic diversity. Like Cody, sports allowed her to have exposure to other cultures, but she had not traveled previously.

Violet is in her second year of teaching at our school. She grew up as a Third-Culture Kid, alternating between living in New York and Russia, both of which she blended in as a Caucasian. She also traveled extensively in Europe. She studied elementary education, special education, and TESOL at Roberts Wesleyan University. She is contemplative about life and people. Between that and her life overseas, she has a unique perspective on the world and cultures in general. She takes great care to be an effective teacher and to get to know every student on our campus, especially other third-culture kids. Violet and Sinclair are roommates, along with two other foreign teachers.

Figure 8

Y.I. School Campus

Note. Picture taken by Mary of her school campus, n.d. Personal communication, January 2022.

Y.I. is located about 20 minutes outside of La Esperanza, a decent-sized town. However, Y.I. itself is tiny, and the school is even more remotely located 10 minutes outside the town proper. Their first set of seniors will graduate in the spring of 2023. There are approximately twelve foreigners living and working on that campus.

Mary lives in Y.I. and is originally from Idaho. She had traveled substantially before moving to Honduras; starting in high school, she traveled to multiple countries, from Ghana to the jungles of Panama to Spain. She studied International Studies and minored in Spanish at George Fox University. A soft-spoken young lady with blonde hair, and blue eyes, she stands out in Honduras. She takes her Catholic faith seriously, which is reflected in her life. She enjoys writing and encourages her students to love it too. Mary is in her second year of teaching at VVBS but her first in-person year. She and Sarah are roommates and have one other foreign teacher that lives with them.

Sarah teaches in Y.I. as well and is also in her second year of teaching. Like Mary, Sarah traveled a lot before moving to Honduras and lived here for several months, working at a boy's home. She also had numerous trips to South America and Baghdad. She is Caucasian and looks young for her age, causing many to think she is a student instead of a teacher. Sarah is originally from Frankfort, Kentucky. She studied Elementary Education at Harding University.

Joel, originally from Phoenix, New Mexico, also teaches in Y.I. He has traveled within Central America but not outside it. He studied English with an emphasis on secondary education at Grand Canyon University. Joel has an easy smile that instantly puts people at ease. He lives with one other foreign teacher in an apartment that often lacks basic necessities. He is laid back, and very little seems to affect him negatively, including being one of the few Caucasian men in his town.

After coding the data, four major themes emerged that encompassed the smaller codes: cultural differences, in-country support, acculturation, and resources. In-country support and cultural difference both have four subsections, while acculturation has two.

Cultural Differences

It was no surprise that cultural differences emerged as one of the overarching themes and appeared to be one of the biggest challenges. This idea was further broken down into four subcategories: greeting and hospitality, security, time, and communication.

Greetings and Hospitality. Cultural interactions begin with greetings and relationships with people. It is surprising how much this part of one's culture is embedded with it. Changing it

requires intentionality. For example, it is customary in Honduras to greet each person, even if it was a large group. As well, if you are close to someone, then a hug, and an "air" kiss would be appropriate. Brittany spoke of this as difficult to remember with housemates of Latino culture as well as times she was judged based on her lack of greeting. Speaking of her Honduran husband, she said, "Oscar says the first time he met me, he thought I was kind of stuck up because I didn't say hi." However, she also wanted to habituate this if she moves back to the U.S., and said she now feels rude when she doesn't greet someone.

In addition to greeting someone, there are expectations on how hospitable one should be. Violet spoke of the hospitality in the context of the interdependence and trust that was involved in living here. She highlighted this in a story about missing her flight after Christmas last year:

> "I reached out to everyone I knew, and everyone was all trying to figure it out for me…, and so the Medinas, they came, and got me at the airport late at night. They took me to their house. They gave me a bed. They fed me. Like all, without asking anything, not like complaining, and so just the selflessness that this culture has is incredible. We will just give it to you and not expect anything in return."

Amy showed a similar sentiment when speaking about the community she lived in, which is a lower-income community. "Just the love that they've poured upon me, and care of me, just taking me in like one of their own. It's blown me away… they want to take care of me or send me home with food… It's just so personal and intimate."

In addition to greetings, the personal space that was given was also addressed by five out of the six females but none of the males in the interviews. Their responses to this differed,

depending on their personality, but regardless, it was something they felt they needed to adapt to as they lived here. Sarah mentioned being frustrated by the touchiness of the culture when speaking about traveling on the public bus as well as in her daily life of people hugging and touching her face. Whereas this cultural phenomenon had the opposite effect on Violet, stating that "it's been super nice to be in a physical touch culture." Sinclair too found comfort in the physical affection "Hugging, and like being very touchy, and just being more loving. I feel like here is more. They're more loving, and more heartwarming." This was an area that she planned to retain as she moved back to the US and incorporated this into her classroom. She said, " I think teaching-wise, if a kid needs a hug, give them a hug." Mary had similar thoughts to Sinclair as to the comfort of being able to hug her students and not be frowned upon. Like Amy, she also mentioned the ability to be personal with her students. In both the interview, and in an artifact, Mary shared a time that she had a really bad day and broke down crying in front of her class. Their response was to give her a hug and to share the struggles that they were having as well. She felt this helped them to grow closer as a class and strengthened their relationship as teachers and students.

While neither Joel nor Cody spoke of physical space in their interviews, my observations and conversations with them addressed this. During elementary snack time, young kids came up to hug Joel. While he didn't initiate the hugs, he smiled and hugged them back, indicating that there was a comfort level with this. However, with the older kids, he kept more space and didn't touch any student, even when walking around his classroom. Cody too accepted hugs from the young kids on his campus and loved to hang out in the first-grade classroom during his free time. He, too, kept his space with the older kids, and I have never seen him hug them. I have on

occasion seen older students initiate hugs and he accepts this. Compared to the females who hugged their students, whether they had negative or positive feelings about it, it was interesting to see the difference in the male teachers in observations and their lack of discussion of this important element of the culture.

Security. It is a fairly common practice for women to be catcalled in the streets. The response to this varied but was spoken about by most participants. The more rural the area, the more common it seemed to be. For example, Brittany lived in a larger city and laughed about the catcalling, summing it up as saying she wasn't typically bothered by it and shrugged it off. Sarah said she hadn't gotten used to the comments but also did not engage in them. She did say, though, that she had a very uncomfortable experience with an older guy on a public bus where he was in her personal space and began touching her legs. However, Violet and Amy had stronger reactions to this part of the culture. This was Violet's first comment when asked what challenges she has faced when living here. She began by explaining the "daily thing of just being catcalled, and how that can make me angry but also make me feel unsafe sometimes." When asked how she coped with this, she responded, "It's just part of the culture. It's not necessarily something that I can change so I cannot be wasting my own emotional energy trying to correct it….So just walk past don't, don't acknowledge it." Amy had an even stronger reaction as she has had several traumatic experiences with men while here. She also felt that her administration would not or had not stepped in to help when things escalated because they could not see things from a young, white lady's perspective. She explained this by saying they "don't know what it's like to be a single North American girl here, and it's hard for me to try to have that conversation with him… He's not a girl who's ever been single here in a man's culture." Violet had similar thoughts

71

stating, "I would think that maybe someone from the Honduran culture might not see it as a problem… they would just accept it as life. Or just think like I'm making a bigger deal than what it is." She did, however, feel that if she sat down and explained what was happening to her administration, then they would be willing to help. However, in Amy 's view, this was not the case. After our interview, she followed up with a series of texts but one, in particular, stood out to me as it was obvious, she has felt alone and oftentimes scared. She said,

> "Our conversation meant the world to me. You're the first person in 4 years, as an adult with authority, who has understood me. You have made me feel seen. You have brought a sense of safety, understanding, and comfort that I didn't realize I was looking for. Thank you for being in my corner."

Through this interview and sequential texts, Amy shared that she had been sexually assaulted but had not known who to go to, nor did she trust that anything would be done. Part of this thought process came from an experience the year before when a young man had tried to break into the teachers' house repeatedly, and little was done. She left shortly after the interviews to get the professional help and support she needed from the traumatic experiences she had here.

While Cody, as a male, had not had the same experiences as his female coworkers, he expressed uncomfortableness when walking around as well. He attributed this to being one of the few black men in town. "I would say, not only being someone that is new here, but also being one of the very few people here that looked the way that I look. That was a little scary initially." While people came to know him and he no longer felt nervous when walking around, people gave him the nickname of "Rasta," meaning that he was from Roatan, where most Honduran

black people live. This initial fear still cropped up throughout the year though when political policies changed. For example, there was a recent "Estado de Excepción" that was put into place where Cody lived. This meant that there would be additional police presence after 6:30 in the evening, every person on the street must carry two forms of ID as well as cars could be searched at the police's discretion. When I followed up with the teachers to make sure they understood the changes and to see if they had any concerns, Cody's reply was, "Are you more concerned because I don't look like everyone else?" My actual concern had little to do with him standing out and more to do with the fact that he was scared to carry his passport… and I know this as I had been stopped by the police with him and gotten in trouble for not carrying it. Sinclair mentioned as well that she got anxious when walking by herself but didn't attribute this to men specifically, stating that she did not get the same attention in the street as her Caucasian co-workers.

Time. Fluidity in time was a theme that emerged from almost every participant in answers to the interview questions as well as in stories they told. This included punctuality as well as things changing at the last minute or not being done when promised. When asked what had stood out to him the most, this was the area that Cody highlighted,

> "In that time is not as urgent here. Like people are not as like focused on it, and it's not like so much of a big deal...So like, if someone says, like if my landlord says that he'll come by tomorrow, he'll just come back. Like he'll just knock on my door at some random time. Not tomorrow."

He expounded on this professionally as well, saying that he felt it was disrespectful at first and had to come to realize it was normal. Amy felt this was positive in the workplace, though, saying that "sometimes it's nice knowing that if I don't turn it in tomorrow if I got too busy, there's grace in that." She then felt she could show this same grace to her students if they did not get something turned in. Violet too, felt this was an area she had struggled with and grown in. She said she had been a planner her entire life "And then I'm just kind of been switching to like spontaneity or like that everything will work out, which has helped me professionally, and has helped me like just life here because things don't happen according to plan." Sinclair, who is bi-racial, equated this with "colored people" time explaining that the flexibility in time was similar to how she grew up, "I've always been like, I want to be on time, but if it doesn't happen…" My observations of her backed this up. She was much more relaxed about time than that of her fellow North Americans, but not so much that it was unprofessional. Although Brittany had the most experience with the Latino culture, this cultural difference was still a struggle for her. "I struggle sometimes with this one, like, having an expectation of, oh, they said this was going to happen, and then when it falls through, that's hard for me."

Throughout the interviews, participants were encouraged to tell stories that highlighted their experiences here. Most gave examples of times they traveled either within the country or in Central America. The fluidity of time and flexibility was highlighted in their stories as well. For example, Violet told of a time when she was called to immigration to apply for her Honduran visa. She did not find out until the night before that she would be making the trip, and several teachers from other campuses showed up at her house to stay the night, unannounced, because they, too, had to make the trip. While she said this ten-hour round trip was stressful because it

seemed last minute, the school had taken care of a lot of details that just weren't communicated. "But then we woke up in the next morning, and like it's all taken care of. They have a driver, and they have someone taking us. We got there safely. They brought us Darwin. He was a translator. They had like figured out a lot of the little details. They gave us money, like a stipend, and so like a lot of those things were figured out." Mary had a similar story of when she was called to immigration, and the frustration of it being last minute and then having to figure out the bus schedule when their car broke down. In addition, they also had to do this while protests were happening throughout the city.

Along with these things came a slower pace of life and less of the hurriedness that is often spoken about in the U.S. Joel described it by saying, "And so things that have been hard for me have just been through a little bit slower pace, and a little bit more rolling with the punches instead of this is what you have to do, this is what we expect." Mary, too, explained this on a professional level as a challenge. "I would say culture wise in I can see this in like this school environment as well as adapting to time. Like something that is going to be done super last minute, and like having to be okay with that, and adapting to last-minute decisions, and last-minute plans." While frustrating for some, this was an area that many of the participants hoped to hold on to when they returned to the U.S. Amy expressed this by saying this was an area she wanted to keep when moving away. "Definitely Grace in the flexibility… in the flexibility of like time, like if we need to keep working on this will keep working." Sarah recognized that this may not be the case, though, "And I feel like it's gonna be so easy to fall back into trap because of who you're surrounded by, but I hope to continue to have that when I do go back."

Communication. A difference in communication style was also something that many participants highlighted as a challenge. Unlike the other cultural differences, communication style was not an area anyone wanted to grow from or retain. The culture here values indirectness and considers directness to be rude. This includes when someone could not do something. The typical response would be to say yes but then not to follow through as opposed to saying no verbally. Violet found this hard to adjust to, saying, "I feel like a lot of Hondurans, like saying things without fulfilling them. So that's tough for me because I've always been like you say it you do it." Cody felt there was a conflict in communication, stating, "And then communication is kind of different as far as people being so indirect, or also like, very direct sometimes."

In addition to communication style, there were many who were frustrated by the lack of communication in expectations. Amy spoke about how cultural expectations are not clearly communicated and gave examples of times that she or her coworkers had been talked to for making cultural errors. "Navigating those, and what's expected, and what's not, and not knowing the expectations, and then someone tell you later. Sometimes I just feel like left out in the dark, cause I don't know everything … even after 4 years of being here, and it's like I shouldn't be left in the dark." Amy was not the only one who felt this way. One example that came to my mind personally, even as she was saying this was a time when teachers were playing Nertz on vacation and posted a picture of it on social media. They were asked to take it down after parents complained, as cards are viewed as a negative pastime here.

This was reflected professionally as well. At some of the campuses, teachers felt they were not communicated with in a timely manner or about things they felt they needed to know.

For example, Sarah explained that she felt stressed at times. "And I think that can also coincide with stress in teaching, and not knowing how to deal with discipline because we're not communicated all the time about what are the procedures." In a text several weeks before this interview, Joel had expressed frustration with the miscommunication at his campus. He followed up during the interview saying,

> "that was a prime example of one of those days was too… just it's lack of communication in a number of different ways. So it's like, okay, so I was not told that I was going to lose this class period…. I had lost like, I think two or three different class periods just without anybody telling me… and it was just a matter of miscommunication, and not knowing, and other than that, there were a number of there's just a number of inconsistency issues. In that one person will say, to do this thing, and another person will be like, there's no there's no way."

Cody also expressed frustration with the lack of communication at school. He told of a time that he had to go to the immigration office in the capital, five hours away, and left lesson plans for the teacher who would be covering his classes. Those plans were not given to the teachers and therefore the students just hung out in class that day. Not having effective communication affected all his classes that day. Violet echoed this, saying the problem was not in the language itself but that communication at school was a challenge "And so like, we don't get told things until last minute, or we're forgotten to be told things, and because of that a lot of like, indirectness of the culture. It's just kind of funny how things can get lost in the shuffle, and people left out of the conversation. Intentionally or unintentionally."

Violet made a comment that somewhat summed up everyone's challenges, "like if you're looking to be comfortable, then moving or going to a different culture is not very wise because you will be uncomfortable."

Support

The emotional struggles and sequential support that teachers felt while living in town was the second major theme that evolved. This was further broken down into four subcategories: loneliness, belonging, professional support, and spirituality.

Loneliness. Each participant spoke of the loneliness of living abroad but in unique ways. Amy, who was more secluded, spoke of not having anyone who understood her. She said past years had not necessarily been like that, though. In this particular year, apart from Amy, the only foreigners in her town were two young volunteers from the U.K. and a married couple. While she simultaneously spoke of her Honduran friendships in a positive light, saying, "But they just, they tell you that they love you, and it's so special, and I feel so honored that they give me that love," she also spoke of the loneliness of teachers leaving each year. "I was like the only one left with my students, and like …now I'm the only one walking the streets or like being present and struggling just like everyone left... it's just me." Sarah spoke of loneliness in both her interview and in her journal articles, along with a variety of emotions that have accompanied this. She wrote that there is a tiredness that comes with trying to build a new community (Figure 9). As well she reflected that this had caused tension within herself, "And I don't know if that just coincides with just a build-up of things, and community can be hard, and relationships can be hard, and so I think I've had this short fuse of anger that I've not had before." She had tried to be

intentional in building friendships with other teachers as well as with ladies in the community

through a basketball league. She shared that this was challenging, though, and felt she was often

looked down on by the women on her team. On the flip side, she wrote how thankful she was for

"sweet conversations with roomies before bed." In both her journals and in the interview,

Sinclair too spoke of her roommates and me as being important when she had questions about

things. She attributed this as part of why she had been successful in the acculturation process.

> "I think not being afraid to ask questions, and ask for help when I don't know what I'm
>
> supposed to be doing or where to go, and so it's really nice that I don't feel bad or like a
>
> burden to ask for help here. In the past been like okay, I can do it on my own.
>
> Like I don't need to ask for help. But here, I kind of need to ask because I don't know the
>
> language very well. I don't know the norms very well yet. So being able to depend on
>
> somebody to like give me the correct answer, and help me push me in the correct
>
> direction."

While she was generally positive about her friend group here and the support she

received from them, she also mentioned in her journals and in our casual conversations that she

missed her family (Figure 10).

Figure 9
Sarah's Journal Article
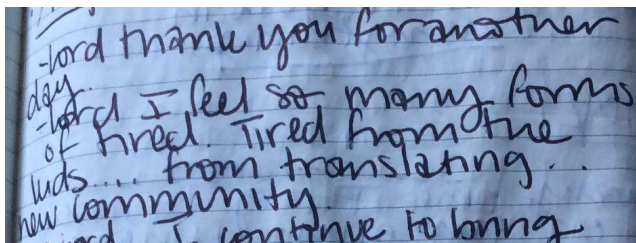
Note. Journal article shared by Sarah, n.d. Personal communication, December 12, 2022.

Figure 10

Sinclair's Journal Article
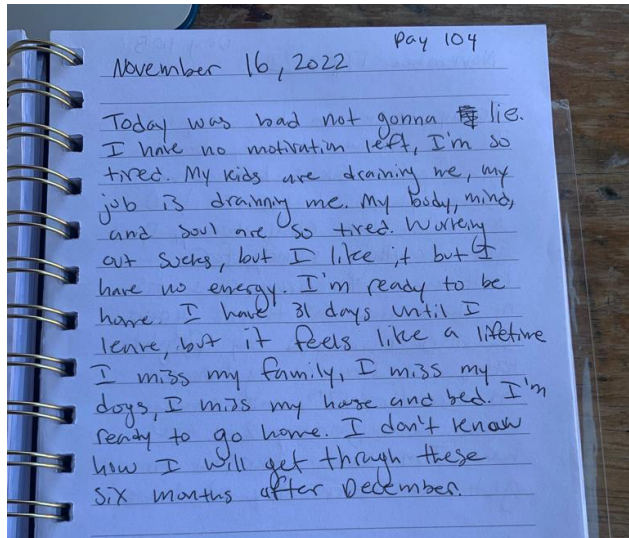

Note. Journal article written by Sinclair November 16, 2022. Personal communication, January 18, 2022.

Cody shared in some of his journal articles that he was initially closed to building community, writing that he should "trust no one" (Figure 11). My observations of him, though, suggested that he later dropped this or at least lowered his wall some to include several of his co-workers. He hung out at the other teachers' houses and had gone on trips with the group several times. He confided to me about personal things on several occasions, and I believe he had done the same with others. Although, as Brittany pointed out, one can feel lonely even while hanging out with other people. She spoke of her and her three foreign co-workers, saying, "and then not having a lot of people that I felt super close to, you know, just a little bit, a little lonely sometimes… But just like even together, sometimes we felt lonely" After three years here, she said she no longer felt that way. Mary said that in the two years she had been here, there was a different feel to the community each year. The first year, during Covid, she said, "I felt very alone, like socially, like it was just the two of us living in Yama. The other teachers were living

out in Obispo, by the school." She expounded on this year, though, saying they did a lot together, and now it was almost overwhelming. She also recognized that she had to be intentional about building friendships outside the teacher circle to engage in the Honduran culture. Joel spoke of this, too saying that he had to make the effort to build relationships with Hondurans and to practice his Spanish.

Figure 11
Cody's Journal Article
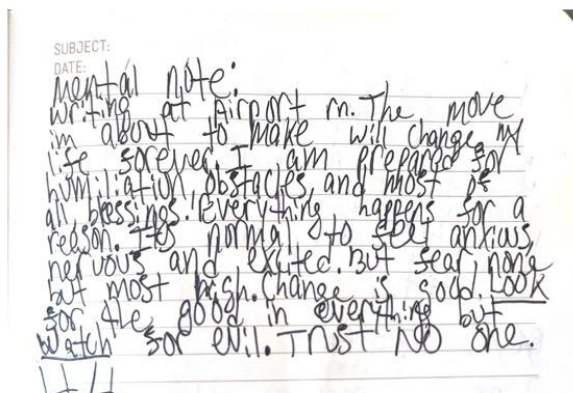
Note. Journal article written by Cody August 5, 2022. Personal communication, December 8, 2023.

Violet had a slightly different view of how loneliness affected her, and in turn, enlarged her peer group to include those younger than her. As a fellow missionary kid, she became friends with my high school daughter. "I can also, like, give to others, so I think of like your daughter how I feel like I'm able to like help her realize she's not alone, and that's been very nice." Others spoke more about the choices of friends, realizing that without being able to speak Spanish, their social circle was much smaller. Joel explained it by saying, "You're just, your group of friends is a little bit smaller, and you just have to be okay with that initially." While this seemed to have a different reaction from Sarah, "I've really been reflecting on life. Like when you spend your time around people, you become more like them… And it's hard because you have to be around them,

and there's no way out of it." She followed this by saying some of her friendship circles included very negative people, and this had affected her.

Through the process of feeling lonely and learning to build relationships, several participants spoke of the lessons they had learned. "I feel more like I can depend on people, and it's not that I have to be very independent and that everybody here is going through something, and we are able to talk about it and come together," Sinclair said. Sarah compared her two years' experiences saying that through this, she had learned, "it's okay to find community… you're gonna have to go out, and find them yourself, and then you'll build that community as well and so I think really the first year struggle with community, and this year God has answered the prayer we have a lot more communities here in Yama."

Belonging. One of the areas that naturally affected participants was their difference in race and ethnic group compared to the Hondurans. Violet, a fairly light-skinned young lady, said, "I think it is challenging for me to stick out as much as I do. Because at least in Russia and in the States, I can blend them because my skin isn't different. But the fact that I like actually stick out; people can see from blocks away that I don't belong. That's been very difficult for me."

Cody expressed on several occasions that this was uncomfortable. He is a tall, black, ex-college football player and therefore stood out in skin color and stature. "I had to, like, accept the fact that I'm an immigrant. It was a weird feeling. … But just like going places, and people being able to tell that you're like, not from here, and you're like, not one of them, and not speaking their native language, and looking different. It was just really, like really shocking for me, initially, and I was like, always, like, offended by people laughing at the way I sound." This aligned with

a conversation Cody, and I had several weeks after the interview. He was walking down the street in G.L. and a guard at the bank called out, "Gringo Papi" which literally translates to "White Dad," neither of which described Cody, but by then, he was used to standing out as a foreigner and being categorized as such. He turned to the guard, who showed him a debit card that had been left at the bank and wanted to know if he knew the person: an older, white lady. He did as she taught at our school. The guard asked Cody to let her know where her debit card was. To those of us who heard this story, it resonated as all of us understood the feeling of not fitting in as a Honduran and simultaneously being put into a category of foreigners where we were expected to be acquaintances; to belong to a group that you did not ask to be in. In few places would it be assumed that a twenty-two-year-old black guy would know and be friends with an eighty-year-old white lady simply because they live in the same town. He did say that this experience gave him greater empathy, though. "And I've obviously met other immigrants in the States, and I guess I just developed more empathy for them… I think we, especially in America, we look at the Latinos that don't speak English differently because we like to assume that they are, like, illegal immigrants or something like that. So, I think it definitely gives me more empathy in that perspective because I don't speak the native language fluently here. So, I know that people look at me differently as well." Sarah, too, spoke of how looking different had affected her friendships. She felt the ladies on her basketball team talked to her like a young child and pinched her cheeks. She is in her mid-twenties but assumed differentiating ages in a different ethnic group could be challenging, so they thought she was young. Sinclair, a bi-racial young lady, said she physically looks similar to Hondurans, so she did not get as much attention in the streets unless she was with the other North Americans, and then people's perspectives and

83

responses to her changed. She also mentioned that the feeling of belonging went beyond just physical, saying, "And like I always don't, I don't feel like I'm being left out or like being figured out something on my own. That people are always there in my corner."

Professional Support and Growth. Each teacher spoke of the professional and personal growth they experienced since living in Honduras. Violet remembered a conversation that she and I had last year. She was upset and I went to the house where she was staying and tried to find something she was proud of. Apparently, this had the opposite effect at this time. "First, during the first week of teaching online, I'm in Michelle's house crying my eyes out. When you asked me, because I remember you specifically said, 'Are you proud of yourself?' and I went, there's nothing about me that I'm proud of. I was like, I have failed at every single thing I've learned. I hate everything. I'm not, I'm never gonna do this." However, when I observed Violet this year, she had confidence about her that wasn't previously there. She also expressed this in the interview that this year she felt she could give back to others. In addition, during a conversation she and I had after the interview, she excitedly told me that she was proud of herself and the way she was able to differentiate the educational needs of her students during a recent test. Sinclair had similar areas of growth professionally, saying, "I know I had an idea in my head when I came here of how I wanted to teach, which definitely got, like, thrown out to them kind of remaster it, and rebuild it to what would be the best for the kids." Cody also talked about the growth he had seen in just a few months he had been teaching. " I think I'm still growing. Every time I think like okay, I got it now. I get to like a month later, and I'm like, oh, I'm way better at this than I was a month ago." We discussed in a recent conversation that this should always be the case. He observed me teaching a psychology class for a post-graduate class he was taking,

84

and I invited him to give me feedback afterward. He was initially uncomfortable with this, which led to a great conversation about how we, as teachers, should always be learning.

Brittany, too, spoke about how much she had grown professionally since her first year of teaching. "I learned a lot about being a teacher but at the same time, like I was just doing whatever I could, I wasn't like there weren't very many people telling me how to improve, and stuff." She referred back to a conversation she and I had years ago about classroom management. This wasn't a lot of time as I was teaching full-time at another campus. For me, the fact that this short conversation was impactful indicated that she was fairly desperate for support. She also spent a year teaching in the U.S. before returning to Honduras and compared the two experiences. "I feel like I learned how to make do with not very much, you know. When I went to the States, I subbed for a teacher on maternity leave. So, I walked into a full classroom, and that classroom overwhelmed me like crazy..."

Several of the teachers spoke of learning to have boundaries between their personal and professional lives. Mary said it this way:

"Like with your students, you have to set boundaries in the classroom, and I've always been like very much a people person or people-pleasing person, and just go with the flow, but I realized I have to set boundaries in my classroom, or my students aren't gonna respect me. I have to also have to set boundaries at work, so I don't get burned out, and I don't like over-committing to responsibilities and duties."

In another part of the interview, she spoke of similar feelings saying:

"I would say like professionally, I just feel like so overwhelmed sometimes. And like to the point where I'm like, I feel stuck or trapped. Maybe this because it's like, the amount of workload, the amount of like, other things you're trying to juggle on top of teaching, then like in teaching as well, like you have, you want to make time for the kids. So, then you spend like your free time talking with the kids as well and building those connections and so don't have time to get the work that he needs to get done. So as a professionally I get really overwhelmed and I'm very much a perfectionist … But I realized like I it's challenging to set like realistic expectations for myself and realizing that things can't be perfect all the time."

While Joel used different wording, he echoed Mary's message of needing to find balance by saying, "And then other challenges … with the amount of work, and figuring out your own personal team, like how best to work with the amount of work that you have to be given."

Spirituality. It was not surprising that many of the teachers considered part of their support to come from their spiritual life. However, this section was shorter than expected, considering we are a Christian school. Several people asked if they were allowed to address spirituality before doing so. This led me to believe that while this may be an important part of their life, they were not certain it was acceptable to bring up in a research study.

Joel referred to his growth in trusting God, "[living here] it's been a big challenge, and it's been something that I've definitely been, like it's been a growing moment for me, in terms of my walk with God; just being able to say, all right, well, I'm trusting God." Mary spoke about building her community around her church but also about the peace she gained from going to

86

Mass each night, "I feel like we've got this sacred space for, like, I can detach my workload for an hour and just focus on prayer." She mentioned this community at several points throughout the interview as well, utilizing her church as a way to be involved in the community, practice Spanish, and build friendships outside the North Americans. Amy, too, spoke of her peace coming from God, saying that he is her "my main vehicle of feeling at peace, and like not having fear." Sinclair referred to a weekly Bible study we had at our house for any teachers who wanted to come. "I've just been able to go to Bible study, and get closer, and understand more of God in the Bible. That was not something I did before I came here." Violet said that when she was facing the challenges of living here, she tried to remember "that God made this culture, and it's beautiful, and it's annoying, and it's great. But he loves every person and loves this culture." She also relied on prayer when dealing with the men in the streets and tried to use that as a reminder to pray for them.

Sarah had a slightly different way she described her spiritual life. Similarly to others, she found community in her church congregation. However, she also said this was her biggest challenge, saying, "I'd say the biggest difficulty was my relationship with God actually, as probably one of the hardest years for me in that aspect. Because I felt that I was continuing to pour out, and out, and out, and I never poured in, and like renewed my mind, renewed my soul, and spent time with the Lord." She followed this by saying that she had learned from this and then intentionally spent time with the Lord.

Resources

Unsurprisingly, every participant mentioned the struggle with what many consider necessities: clean, and/ or hot water, clean clothes, and consistent electricity. Surprisingly though, this seemed to be the easiest to adapt to and the area that seemed to affect participants the least. Some even joked about this in texts. For example, Amy's town had been in and out of water and electricity for several weeks. She then sent a text to me that said, "Honduras needs to choose one. I get to have at least one amenity!! 😂😂." In Cody's case, he explained this by saying, "So, like, not having hot water. That's something I've just kind of adapted to and gotten used to." This was not an area that any mentioned as being a factor in returning or in their overall happiness. Most participants did mention infrastructural issues as something they needed to adapt to, saying things such as:

"And sometimes, you know, the electricity will go off every week or things like that, that you just don't expect when you live in the luxuries of the States…And then with here, I think it just reminds me that I need to think ahead, and like print before the day. I have to just be more aware. Because sometimes, I need to print in the morning, but then it's like oh, the printers not working here. Oh, we don't have power."

While most had gone at least some amount of time without hot water and disliked it, none of them seemed to focus on this other than in passing or in areas of growth. Joel said that one of the personal characteristics that helped someone to be successful was the acceptance of this and other living conditions,

"There's gonna be days where the power turns off, there's gonna be days where the water turns off at 3:00, and you're like 'oh my gosh, I can't do this.' There's gonna be days where it rains every single day, and so you can't dry your clothes... You just have to accept that this is not the best-case scenario. But I'm ok with not the best-case scenario."

Others viewed the lack of resources as a positive and expressed frustration with the North American views of needing more things. This was especially prevalent in the interview with Brittany. She explained that the first time she went back to the US after living here for a time was difficult.

"Like before, when I went back to the States, I remember getting like mad at people or not, not mad, like frustrated, and annoyed because I was like: 'Why do you have so much stuff? Like you're wasting so much money on decorating your house? Buying things like that?' I hope I never lose my frustration. Like I don't want to become like that again or to just to be that way in general. Just like finding the good, the good differences you know, in the culture here, and stuff like that."

She attributed part of this view to being married to a Honduran and therefore saw more intimately the lack of resources in people's lives. When asked if she would retain the minimalist views, her response confirmed this, "So by being married to Oscar like that, reminders constantly there. I'm with his family… So, I feel like that will change it for me, and I mean, yeah, it's like seeing his family; like they have way less than what I've ever had, and that that changes your perspective for sure." In many ways, others expressed similar thoughts, albeit less strongly. Sarah said this has helped her to look at things from a different perspective or to try to understand the

problem instead of being frustrated by it, stating, "I think, like our necessities change or like what we actually truly need in life will change when you move somewhere different." Cody explained that the lack of resources had helped him become a better person.

"So, like not having like hot water, and the lights going out. Water going out from time to time. I think that's overall, pretty humbling, and it can be frustrating initially, like the first couple of times when it got here. When I got here. It was pretty frustrating initially, and then, after a few times, I was kind of looking at it from a different perspective, but some people don't even have a roof over their head, and then it also made me realize how spoiled we can be like Wi-Fi, and lights, and hot water, and not things that we actually need every day. So overall grateful for that. Just learning all that since I've been here."

Violet spoke about the lack of resources but had a slightly unique perspective compared to the other participants. She grew up as a missionary kid in Russia, which may contribute to her different views. She told of a conversation with another teacher and how that stuck with her.

"I just have this memory of one of the teachers last year, like looking on the side of the road, and she was like, these, like kids aren't wearing any shoes like how are they happy? And I'm like maybe they're not you know, maybe they're really unhappy in life, and they have a terrible home. But maybe they're just peachy, and like, and like you should be okay with that. Like, can you help maybe make it better? Perhaps. Can you help, and it gets worse. Maybe that would happen? Or could you just let them be? Yeah. So, I think just remembering to like balance, and you can have problems with this place."

90

On a professional level, several spoke of the lack of resources as challenging yet growing them. Mary expressed frustration with the lack of technology yet acknowledged that this pushed her professionally, "And so I think I really had to make my class more engaging. Like I feel like I've been forced to be a bit more creative in person. [I hope I hold onto] the creativity, and like thinking on your toes." Sarah, too, spoke of how not having resources was frustrating. She more specifically felt the curriculum was not sufficient and purchased her own for her class. So, while she was frustrated, she found solutions and said, "I think being here, I've definitely had to adapt, and there's not as many resources, and trying to be as creative as possible with the resources that we do have." While at a different campus, Amy expressed a similar sentiment. "Actually, I guess, professionally, I expected more teacher books at our school. Okay, because we didn't have a single teacher book except for my two grammar books. Everything else, I created my own basic mini curriculum."

Challenges with the lack of infrastructure in the school were also addressed. Teachers do not have a room that is "theirs." Instead, the students stay in a room, and the teachers travel. This poses a problem when teachers have conference time, as they then need a place to work. On the campus where Mary worked, teachers utilize the cafeteria or the library, which also houses art and music supplies. She said this makes it difficult to concentrate at times. This was also noticed when I visited her campus. Teachers were sprawled everywhere, trying to find a place to work. One left the cafeteria because he could not concentrate and was going to look for a quieter area. Cody did not speak of this during the course of the research but has, in the past, often utilized my office when possible, as our campus is similar to Mary's in infrastructure. He especially loves it when I am off campus, and I leave him the keys to my office where he can work undisturbed.

Acculturation

Next to cultural differences, flexibility or adaptability was one of the more prominent themes spoken of by every participant to some degree. This theme was found throughout the interviews and was discussed to some degree in other themes. However, as it was so prominent, it would be remiss not to mention it in isolation as well. Along with flexibility, many spoke of being open-minded or a combination of both being important in the acculturation process. They also used words like rigid or resistance.

Flexibility and Adaptability. When asked what advice she would give to someone coming to live here, Amy spoke of both flexibility and a willingness to let go of control. While she first spoke of this in broad terms, she followed up by talking about experiences, "I guess when it comes to adapting, trying includes things that you haven't tried before: hiking up mountains, going up waterfalls… I feel like if you resist it too much, you won't be successful. You don't get to have those experiences. Then, you'll let fear hold you back." Amy also spoke of how being open-minded was important for success. "They're just things that people do differently, and you can't come in, and be like, 'Oh, why do they do it this way, and why don't they do it like that'."

Mary explained that flexibility is not just about experiences but is also reflected in one's attitude:

… and then I feel like personally, again, with adaptability, just like adapting to the culture. Like not comparing your former life to the life you're living now because then

you're kind of just constantly upset. Because it's never going to be the same. So just embrace it, adapting to the culture rather than comparing what your situation is right now versus what you had before… Complaining about every single thing every single day is gonna make you have a really negative mindset, and therefore it's gonna get so much harder for you to want to stay here.

Some combined flexibility and being open-minded, seeming to see these as one and the same. For example, Brittany said,

"I think just like to have an open mind and be flexible, and you know, ask for help if you need it… Flexibility number one will help you a lot …, and just even like yeah, I guess kind of have the flexibility, but I was gonna say like an open mind. You can't be like 'it has to be this way, and I'm not going to change my mind.' Then it's going to be difficult because not a lot of things will be exactly what you expect."

While Sarah used different wording, she had similar sentiments to the other teachers. "I think for sure, be flexible. For sure, someone who is adaptable, like we've mentioned, that kind of just has a positive outlook, and like I was saying earlier, just being able to take a posture of learning, and just honestly like a student again, because we're always continuing to learn." She also talked about having to adapt to not being in control and also adapt to a lack of resources and a slower pace of life. When specifically speaking about adapting to the lack of water or electricity, she said, "We're expecting all of these things, and we want to be the people in control

of it." Sinclair agreed with Sarah on being students of the culture and said this is also true when making cultural mistakes.

> "I think to be open-minded, and not to like, be biased. Come ready to learn. I think sometimes we come in, and we don't understand the culture… and so just being like, open-minded to like, criticism, and, coming into somewhere new, I guess, and being ready to adapt towards that… just also be open to the new ideas that you're coming into"

She also felt this was the case when building relationships.

> "If you're coming, I feel like if you're making the journey here, and you're taking the opportunity to come here, you should do it wholeheartedly, and I guess kind of be like, ready to do your job, and meet new people. If you're half-hearted in your work or coming into meeting people. I feel like that will make your experience less positive"

Joel, too, felt that part of being successful is being willing to be a student of the culture.

> "So one of the things is a lot of humility. If you come in here with a bunch of pride. Straight up, you're not going to be able to operate as well. I think that if you come in here with more humility than pride, I think that your eyes are gonna be open to what people are trying to tell you, and you're not going to be too prideful to be like, Oh, I know all this. I'm an American. I know what I'm doing, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. If you come in, and you're like, I'm ready. I'm here to learn, and I'm trying to figure out how best to understand the Honduran culture."

Cody agreed with others on negative thinking in both the interview, and in conversations we had. He said what made someone unsuccessful was "close-mindedness, and like, if you are the person that finds the bad, and everything or complains about everything, then you will not like it here."

Mary had similar advice:

> I would again say the willingness to adapt as well as the willingness to be here. Like, it's almost like you can automatically tell who's going to be staying longer, and who's not going to be staying longer because of just, like, just a willingness to go with the flow or is like it has to be my way or the highway or rigidness… and so, yeah, being able to go outside your comfort zone, and not being comfortable is huge, and I think even a curiosity of the culture so even if they're not familiar with it, they like or feel rigid to it. At least a curiosity to learn about it, I think, is huge. Yeah, because it just like, opens you up to being a bit more adaptable."

Violet's advice, like Sarah's, used a different word choice but also spoke of adapting. Perhaps though, due to her background, she saw culture as the individuals who made it up, and her advice reflected this. She also spoke of being combative or resistant. While this is not traditionally an antonym of adaptation, it could be when speaking about accepting cultures.

> "There's as many good things as there are bad things about a place… Yeah. So I think just remembering to like balance …. You can have things that you love about this place. There are things you can change. There are things you can't change, and just find what those are, and to find peace in that I think is really important to adapting to any culture. I think if you love people and have a penchant to be able to spend time with people and ask

good questions that would help you a lot. Because what makes culture is people, and so that if you're able to have good conversations with people that are not destructive, but like edifying, that helps you with whatever problems you have, or the culture or like things are confused about or things that you love about it. Yeah, that, and then selflessness. Things that are hurtful are definitely things like impatience… Just like general combativeness. I think if you're combative towards people, then you will be combative toward culture, and vice versa. I think resistance is yeah is difficult, and it will make it a lot harder for you to adapt, and I think yeah, like if you're looking to be comfortable, then moving like or going to a different culture is not very wise because you're you will be uncomfortable. You're gonna be scared. You're gonna be overly excited. You're gonna be confused or frustrated."

Professional Adaptability. This theme of adaptability carried over to their conversations about school as well. Amy spoke about how hard it was to adapt to new work culture and the expectations that accompany this. For example, in the Honduran culture, taking time to eat and to have coffee was important. She mentioned that it had been a struggle for some people to understand why she would work through her lunch break. Nevertheless, she also said that being flexible allowed her to learn how to work with students that were struggling. She phrased it as there was "grace in the flexibility." Sarah agreed that she has adapted and grown professionally. Without the resources she was trained with, she has "had to learn, and adapt" her teaching style. Mary summarized this by saying,

"I would say adaptability has stood out both personally, and professionally. I feel like that's one word that could summarize anything well. Like you just have to be adaptable like yes, like, professionally, like today. If the printer ran out of ink and no one could print anything out, and we can't get prints ourselves. We had to get it from Tegucigalpa [the capital that is 3.5 hours away], and so you just have to be adaptable if you ask them for plans or the power going out if you have a lesson plan on a PowerPoint, and you can't give them anymore, so you just have to write everything on board. That's very much adaptable as well."

Results of Research

After coding the interviews, and artifacts, themes were then grouped under the qualifying research question. Many of the same experiences that impacted teachers also challenged them; however, these results were discussed in each section as they pertained to the research questions.

Research Question One

The first research question considered was, "What professional and personal experiences have novice teachers had that impacted their worldview during their early years living abroad?" Overall, participants viewed their experiences in Honduras as positive and one that impacted them both professionally and personally for many years. Many even took negative interactions and learned from them. For some, this was their first major experience outside the U.S., although all had some exposure to different cultures, be it from playing sports at the college level or from travel. There was not a substantial difference in mindset or in impactfulness between those who had traveled internationally and those for whom this was their first time. The only exception to

this would be the length and reflexibility at which they were able to speak about their experiences here. Half of the participants had traveled substantially or had lived overseas before moving here. Their interviews were much longer, and they were able to verbalize their experiences and feelings about these experiences on a deeper level than the other half of the participants. However, the type of experiences that they had here, their challenges, and even their coping mechanisms were very similar.

One type of experience that many spoke about or shared pictures of was traveling in and around Central America. While most used travel to give examples of cultural differences, it was clear that these experiences were meaningful to them. They laughed as they spoke about trying to maneuver the public bus system. Fifteen-passenger buses routinely had 25 or more passengers, without air-conditioning and without clear communication on where the bus was stopping. Therefore, just the logistics of this could be equally uncomfortable and humorous. In casual conversations with the participants, most found joy in traveling even though the conditions were tough. They enjoyed seeing the country but also felt more independent when they were able to navigate this system successfully. For example, a group of teachers that included many of the study participants went to El Salvador on vacation together. They laughingly told me afterward that they all got on a bus without even asking where the bus was going and ensuring it was the correct bus. One person, who was visiting Honduras, did ask. Even after confirming it was the correct bus, the bus driver got a little lost and then wanted to make some detours to other cities. No one seemed upset by this, but more felt it added to the adventure.

Another such experience that affected teachers professionally and personally is the lack of infrastructure. Not having water or electricity on any given day was a challenge, yet for many, this impacted how they view the world. It gave them empathy for those who have less. It helped them to reflect on what is truly important to them, realizing that they can live and teach without these "necessities." On a professional level, this pushed them to be more creative in how they taught and to adapt their plans quickly when needed. This was a skill that was often not seen in novice teachers, but the necessity of it forced these teachers to develop this skill.

Additionally, teachers spoke of how being an immigrant or not belonging gave them empathy as well. There was a bias that was present when anyone looked at an immigrant, and as these teachers have now been on the receiving end of that, they wanted to change their perspectives. Cody spoke of this directly, but others were more subtle in this. For example, Sinclair spoke of her expectations before moving here and then how she changed these. She also talked about how the support of others has been instrumental in her adaptation to another culture. Several of the teachers echoed how the community had helped them. Because of how often this was spoken of, it could be assumed this is also something they will take with them as they approach immigrants in the US, offering the support that they received.

Research Question Two

The second research question spoke about the major professional and personal challenges that new teachers faced in their first years of living in Honduras. There were many of the same challenges discussed by all or most of the participants: cultural differences, lack of resources such as water and electricity but also curriculum and school supplies, not fitting in, and often the

99

feeling of insecurity that this gave, and the need to be flexible. While many faced the same challenges, they expressed these in a variety of ways. I initially struggled with the best way to name the various ways that participants expressed their challenges. I listed all the challenges that teachers were talking about next to the paragraphs in the transcript. I then looked to see if there were commonalities in the vocabulary. This allowed me to use the vocabulary that teachers themselves used in most instances. The exception to this was when discussing not fitting in and insecurity. This was described as uncomfortable, feeling unsafe, scary, frustrating, and a barrage of other words. For this, I looked at the message that was being presented to understand the challenges and experiences.

The cultural difference was a resounding theme mentioned by every participant as a challenge. As culture was truly embedded in much of our interactions, it was no surprise that this was one of the biggest challenges that teachers faced both inside and outside of the classroom. Several spoke of how hard it was to remember to greet people and not to jump right into a conversation. While this frustrated some, it also had become a habit for others. Along with this was the theme of personal space and affection. The Honduran culture was very physically affectionate, with little regard for personal space. Again, some felt this was a challenge, while others embraced it.

The differences between how the cultures' view time, communication, and flexibility were also spoken about by most participants, with varying degrees of how challenging this was to them. While these three things seemed to be completely different themes, they were often spoken of in similar experiences. For example, several participants mentioned trips to the

immigration office which can be intimidating without knowing what to expect. They often call people at the last minute, giving a person less than 24 hours to plan their trip to the capital. For our teachers in the western side of the country, this was a 5–6-hour trip, one way plus arranging to be gone from school, transportation, paperwork, and translators. Half of the participants spoke of the stress of this and how it solidified their views of the communication and spontaneity of the country as a whole.

Many expounded more on the need to be adaptable and flexible while telling stories and when giving advice to future teachers. This showed up as the most prominent challenge for all participants. At times this flexibility was needed because of electrical outages but often, it was also because administrators changed things without communicating. Participants seemed to accept the changes needed for infrastructure more readily than the lack of communication. Cody mentioned in a conversation that his mom is an administrator in Chicago and was going to be amused at some of the stories about changes he has for her. We agreed that it's only amusing if you're not the one affected by it. One example of this was a schedule change that was supposed to happen during the semester. On a Sunday night, a week after the semester ended, a new schedule came out, adding an extra period at the end of the school day. No teachers were assigned to teach this study hall period until an hour before the study hall started. As expected, Cody, along with every foreign teacher, was upset and confused as to what they were expected to do while the Honduran staff just accepted the last-minute change.

Another challenge that many spoke of was the experience of being an outsider and the sequential feeling of insecurity that this gave. All but one participant spoke of this. One of the

guys also spoke of feeling uncomfortable with how much he stood out. The females spoke of the attention from males they received in the streets ranging from feelings of uncomfortableness to feelings of fear for their safety. It seemed that the smaller the town, the more this occurred. Several also spoke of having to be cautious in their friendships with males because of the expectations and underlying implications.

The last challenge that was spoken of was the lack of resources such as water and electricity but more so professional resources. Teachers seemed to struggle with not having adequate curriculum and school supplies. This varied based on the campus but was still a prevalent topic. In theory, the school provides a curriculum for core subjects such as ELA, Math, and Science. In reality, the student books came months after school started and were often missing sufficient books for a class set. For example, this year, Mary and Joel did not receive complete sets of their ELA books until the end of November. In addition, teachers from two of the campuses spoke about the challenges of not having a place to work during conference times. While this may seem like a small thing, it seemed to add to the stress of feeling disorganized and out of place.

Research Question Three

There were many of the same challenges discussed by all or most of the participants; however, their reactions to them varied. This allowed me to answer the third research question of how participants handled the challenges they faced. Participants spoke more of their coping strategies in their journals and in the advice they would give to future teachers as opposed to during the interview process.

Finding community appeared to be the biggest way that people coped with challenges. This came in the form of church, fellow teachers, roommates, and in a very few cases, administrators. Several teachers mentioned that their relationship with God and/or church has helped them deal with challenges. They leaned on him to show them the positives in the culture. They also found community in their churches and bible studies. Several mentioned or I have observed that they have found community in sports. Sarah spoke of this in her interview, whereas Cody and Sinclair, who played in city leagues, have both mentioned this in conversations, and this had become an important part of their daily lives. Sinclair wrote about this in her journal as well as shown in Figure 12. Amy mentioned this as part of her advice, saying, "Learn to be flexible. Because even if you think you're flexible, you're probably not. Get engaged with people, learn Spanish, and get involved in the culture." It has also seemed that several teachers have dealt with challenges by being engaged with their students. I observed Violet and Sinclair do this, and Mary posted on social media about a time she was struggling, and the students comforted her (Figure 13). Most teachers included pictures of them with their students in their artifacts, suggesting that this is an important part of their overall experience and happiness here.

Figure 12
Sinclair's Second Journal Article
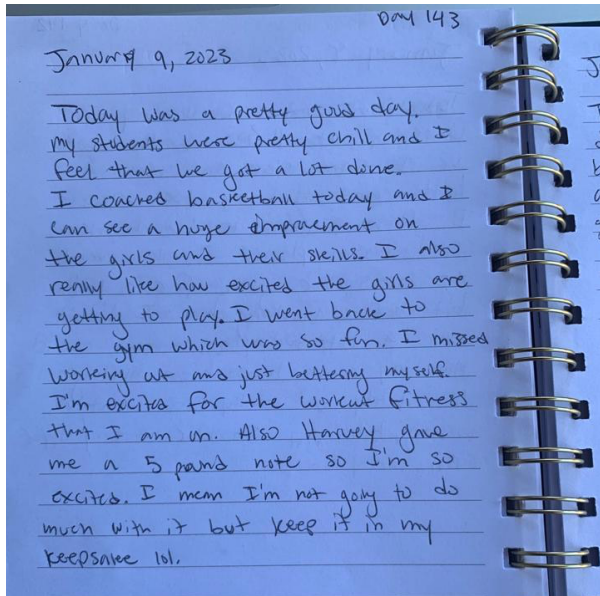
Note. Journal article written by Sinclair January 9, 2023. Personal communication, January 18, 2022.

Figure 13
Mary's Social Media Post

Note. Story shared by Mary on social media, January 12, 2023.

One of the major ways that teachers coped with challenges was by adjusting their mindsets. Some spoke about this in their interviews about how they intentionally look at the other perspectives when they are frustrated, while some did this when they were journaling, saying things like, "look for the good in everything." Violet posted about this on social media, as

well, looking at the positives even after having a panic attack, as shown in Figure 14. In addition, almost every participant journaled, leading me to believe that this is a heavily utilized coping skill. Some mentioned it explicitly during the interviews, while others sent me excerpts of things they had journaled.

Figure 14
Violet's Social Media Post

Note. Story shared by Violet on social media, March 14, 2023.

One of the major ways that I saw coping skills addressed was when participants were asked what advice they would give to future teachers. Teachers mentioned coping strategies such as looking at the positives in culture and specific situations. Half of them also mentioned that it was helpful to find people that they could comfortably ask questions and have conversations about their challenges. Almost every teacher also spoke about not being prideful but instead being open-minded about cultural differences. This seemed to be an important topic for each

person though it was worded slightly differently depending on who was speaking. They used phrases such as being flexible, showing themselves, and others grace, being open-minded, and a willingness to be uncomfortable.

Remaining Questions

As one of the purposes of this study was to not only understand the experiences of novice teachers but to use this information to build a stronger foundation for future teachers, there were several questions that still remained. Teachers spoke of several coping strategies that have helped them to succeed living abroad. Many of these, though, centered around a mindset such as positive thinking and being flexible and humble. One of the remaining questions, therefore, was whether this was a skill or strategy that we could utilize when building an induction program. Are there other strategies that teachers utilize that can be taught?

A second question related to the safety of female teachers. As many expressed concern or frustration at the attention warranted by males in town, how can this be addressed as we looked to bring in more teachers? One of the foundations of mental health is safety, and without addressing this, it is unlikely that we will keep teachers for the long term.

Lastly, when asked what factors they considered when deciding to return after their first year, a theme did not emerge. This makes it more difficult to address why we have such a large turnover rate if the reasons are vast and largely personal. A remaining question, therefore, is whether the retention rate factors are beyond our control.

Interaction Between the Research and the Context

How Did the Context Impact the Results

The context of the study was a private Christian school in Western Honduras, where I have taught for the past twelve years. As such, I have seen many novice teachers come through our school and seen the struggles they have had. As well, I was 15-20 years older than most teachers, which had placed me in the position of "mom" in many of their eyes. They utilized our relationship to vent about cultural and professional things and also to cry when struggling personally. This gave me a good foundation on which to build this study. However, this could also be a disadvantage in that I was viewing the study and the data analysis through these lenses. While I took every opportunity to be vigilant of my biases, this is never completely possible.

In addition to previous experiences with novice teachers, I was the academic director for ELA and History at all our campuses and the direct supervisor of the G.L. teachers. This means I was the academic director for Mary, Joel, Amy, and Cody. In addition, I was the campus supervisor for Violet, Sinclair, and Cody. In the past, I have also been asked to help and observe novice teachers at other campuses, which is how I came to know Brittany. She has also stayed at our house when traveling to G.L. Having such a small community and overlapping relationships had both advantages and disadvantages. As the majority of my time is spent in G.L., I had a solid relationship built with the teachers at that campus as well as frequent interactions and observations. This allowed me to collect more data for this campus. Comparatively, my interactions at the S.R. and Y.I. campuses were infrequent at best, and the L.U. campus, where my conversations were completely virtual. I had to rely heavily on their willingness to share,

limiting my informal observations and conversations substantially. As well partway through this study, the teacher in L.U. resigned, returning to the U.S. to address the trauma that she had experienced. This meant that I was unable to observe her at all; however, I still felt that I had sufficient interactions to include her data in the study. My position at the school could also have been a disadvantage as some people find it harder to be vulnerable with their supervisors. This was especially true of our two newer teachers, who had only known me for about five months at the start of the study. This was not necessarily the case at Y.I., where I have known two of the teachers for a year and a half and the S.R. and L.U. teachers for three years. Perhaps because of this separation, they could be very open about their frustrations with their administration and the various challenges that have arisen on campus. For example, when asked for an example of a challenging experience, Cody apologized before telling me that I was indirectly involved in the incident. While I did sense some hesitation in a few of his answers, he did not seem to withhold information but was more concerned with my reaction. Comparatively, Mary, whom I am still her academic director but not located on her campus, frequently used phone calls to cry on my shoulder figuratively. She did not hesitate to give examples of frustrations professionally.

How did the Research Impact the Context

There were several concerns about presenting this study to participants and to stakeholders. The foreign teacher community was small in Western Honduras, and participants would quickly know who said what even while every step has been taken to ensure anonymity. This was a concern as many of the thoughts and experiences shared were highly personal. I believed the information could be used to create support for future teachers, but some of the

specifics needed to be guarded. This support is reflected in my recommendations, and I believe this would impact the context in the future.

While this research has not been presented formally, there have been several informal discussions with stakeholders. As shared previously, Amy had not thought there was anyone in a position of power that had her back. After this study, she returned to the U.S. to heal from her experiences. We will not be replacing her position with a North American female at this time as we are not certain we can ensure their safety. Discussions about placement for this campus in the future will still need to be addressed.

Several participants asked about the data that was collected. They wanted to know if their answers and experiences were like those of other participants. This was discussed informally as participants asked about it. Most found comfort in the fact that they were not alone in their experiences or their feelings. I believe that providing an abbreviated version of the data in this ROS would help them in feeling a sense of belonging while still protecting their anonymity.

Summary

Overall, there were few differences between the participants regarding their challenges, both professionally and personally; however, the degree to which they emphasized struggles did differ. Most struggled with things such as cultural views of time, communication, and degree of flexibility. They also all mentioned belonging and finding community, whether this was due to the color of their skin, difference in culture, or language. Their advice and coping strategies are also largely aligned with a heavy emphasis on getting involved in the community and being adaptable or open-minded.

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings From Chapter Four

Villa Verde Bilingual School, located in Honduras, Central America, often employs young, novice teachers and, as a result, has a high attrition rate. Providing these teachers with essential support helps them be successful personally and professionally. Having a positive school culture increases the likelihood of a teacher returning, which then increases student learning. This also contributes to overall morale and personal growth. In order to better understand what support is needed, this qualitative study drew on the experiences of eight participants from four campuses in Western Honduras. All were novice teachers and had been in Honduras for less than three years. Participants were fairly aligned in both the challenges that they faced and in the coping strategies that they utilized.

Participants spoke of the struggle and the beauty of cultural differences between their home cultures and their host country. This included the importance placed on relationships, views on time, and personal security. They largely appreciated how hospitable Honduras was and how relationships were stressed. However, they also struggled with remembering to greet someone correctly, ensuring that the relationship was put before the task at hand. They also were challenged by the fluidity of time and the lack of communication about things they felt were important. Lastly, the majority spoke about the lack of security they felt at times and how this affected them. These cultural challenges were reflected in stories they shared about their schools, personal lives, and the government.

Teachers were also largely aligned with other participants in the challenges they faced with needing and finding emotional and professional support. There was a strong theme of loneliness and grieving of family and friends in the U.S. Many highlighted how they struggled with being immigrants and the implications that this had. This was often followed by comments about their growth in their in-country relationships and their mindsets about other immigrants. Building community and finding support were mentioned by all participants, indicating this was an essential factor. A few participants included their spiritual life or their church community in their conversations about in-country support. It was unclear whether this was not mentioned more because it's such a personal thing or whether it genuinely isn't an important part of the support utilized. The feelings of loneliness and the sequential building of new relationships were highlighted throughout the interviews, although how new relationships were formed differed to some degree. One area that was consistent with all participants was forming a community with fellow foreign teachers.

Participants also spoke of the challenges of the infrastructure and lack of resources available in Honduras. The instability of water, electricity, and WIFI was mentioned by all the participants, but more seemed to be viewed as part of the adventure of living overseas as opposed to a challenge. However, learning to adapt to this instability was mentioned as a challenge both professionally and personally. It was highlighted more with professional challenges, though. Teachers typically followed this discussion with comments about how they have grown professionally and learned to be creative through the lack of resources.

Lastly, all participants spoke multiple times about the need to be flexible and adaptable when living overseas. They differed in the word they used to describe this, using flexibility, adaptability, uncomfortableness, and open-mindedness. However, the message was clear with all of them: in order for acculturation to happen, one must be willing to adapt to the culture one is living in. Mary summarized this by saying, "So just like embrace, adapt to the culture rather than comparing what your situation is right now versus what you had before." Flexibility seemed to be discussed at length in more than just the discussion about acculturation, though. Honduras is fluid with time, and this is very different from the North American culture, where time is more rigid. This caused an internal struggle with most participants, with them verbalizing that they had to grow and, to some degree, learn to appreciate this. As Cody vented during a conversation, the school calendar or school activities may change suddenly. Amy spoke at length about this as she realized that this could be a positive as well. When asked how she had changed since being here, she stated,

> "Flexibility? For sure…Not always in a negative way…But sometimes it's nice knowing that if I don't turn it in tomorrow if I got too busy, there's grace in that. Yes, that is a nightmare. And it's not the end of the world or like at home and like some of the supervisors that I worked under during grad school. Like to them it was the end of the world."

Through their conversations, participants highlighted coping strategies they utilized. A large part of this was being open-minded and coming to appreciate the cultural differences between their home and host countries. They also utilized changing their mindsets about the

112

culture and situations in order to cope with their learning situations. Some did this through journaling, while others talked to roommates and other foreigners. Building a community was also a largely employed coping strategy. These strategies seemed to be universal with all participants.

Discussion of Results in Relation to the Extant Literature

Much of the data from this study aligned with current research on cultural differences and the acculturation process, including Gelfand's loose and tight cultures, Hofstede's individualistic and collectivistic cultures, and Oberg's cultural shock theory. In addition, the participants of this study aligned with previous studies in regard to teachers' discussion of their challenges and desires for community and support.

One of the areas that teachers spoke about was the differences in cultures relating to greetings and hospitality. There was an expected way to start a conversation in Honduras, and participants struggled to remember this norm on a daily basis, often feeling like they were considered rude. This is related to Gelfand's loose and tight cultures to the extent that one can deviate from the expected greeting (Gelfand, 2011). For example, in a tight culture, the behavioral expectations of properly greeting were required to build rapport, whereas, in a loose culture like the U.S., any greeting was typically accepted. Hospitality, too, aligned with this. Violet, as well as others, spoke about how the Honduran culture was hospitable and took care of one another. Gelfand addressed that in tighter cultures, this was often the case as the need for this

was greater. Tighter cultures tended to exist where instability was present, and therefore the need for community help was higher (Gelfand, 2011).

Hofstede's characteristics of individualistic and collectivistic cultures were also present. Participants repeatedly spoke about the need for flexibility and the fluidity of time. Plans changed even within a posted school calendar which was hard for teachers from an individualistic culture (Greenfield et al., 2000). They struggled with and embraced the flexibility of time and deadlines, seeing it as frustrating at times and relieving at others. Hospitality was also addressed when using Hofstede's theory of cultures. Mercado & Trumbull (2018) pointed out that those in a collectivist society were typically more socially oriented and more aware of the needs of the group as a whole. When Violet spoke of being taken care of after her flight, this reflected the desire for the group to succeed, as the family that picked her up was one of her students. Throughout the interviews, the differences in cultures were highlighted yet were viewed as largely positive.

Oberg's model described the acculturation process as a U shape, beginning with the honeymoon stage when the newcomer is excited about all the differences in the culture. As these interviews took place after participants had been in-country for several months, this stage was not reflected. Following the honeymoon stage is the rejection or regression as the person adapted to physical adjustment, linguistic challenges, and loneliness. This was touched on briefly by several of the participants as they spoke about the lack of infrastructure and not feeling like they fit in. The three participants that had only been in-country for six months showed more evidence of this. They spoke a little more about feeling lonely and not belonging. The third stage is

adjustment, where the person slowly began to develop routines and a community from which to draw support. Most of the participants who had been here for more than a year reflected on this stage. All participants felt they had a support system to some degree. They spoke at length about the community that provided support for them, whether this was spiritual, professional, or personal. They were able to see the positives of their host country and had begun to accept the cultural differences. For most, though, there were still frustrations with the culture and some resistance to embracing the culture in its entirety. The fourth and final stage is mastery or where the person would become an adoptive cultural native (Lopez & Portero, 2013). Some of the participants were taking steps toward this stage as they had a solid understanding of the cultural expectations, even as they forgot to follow them at times. Those who had been here for an extended period also mentioned finding places where they felt they belonged, indicating that they had adopted the new culture. Brittany, in particular, showed evidence of this as she no longer had the material values of her home country, nor did she want to return to those values.

In addition to comparing this study to the responsibilities that most novice teachers face, I also looked at whether the reasons for attrition were comparable to previous studies, which found that leadership style, school culture, induction, and mentoring programs, salary, and working conditions were all factors (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Van den Borre et al., 2021). During interviews, teachers did not mention school culture, induction, or mentoring programs as factors that played a role in their decision to stay or leave the school. This may be because our school does not have a mentoring program that is consistent across our campuses. They did, however, allude to leadership styles having an important effect on their experiences. This was also discussed in informal conversations. They also mentioned things like the relationships they have

built with students, getting to choose what subject they teach next year, and the freedom they have to teach how they choose, which all align with working conditions. A few teachers mentioned salary as being a factor as well. Other factors participants mentioned were feeling like the Lord was calling them away, staying for immigration reasons, and the community they have built. While some of this aligned with past studies, this demonstrated that the reasons people chose to stay, or leave were a personal choice that few had in common with other participants.

Implications for Practice

Connect to Context

As our schools grow, more and more international teachers will be hired to teach at our school. Worldwide this number is also growing, reaching 250,000 English teachers working abroad (Bentley, 2021). It is important, therefore, to ensure they have the tools needed to be successful. On a basic level, our teachers need an adequate curriculum with clear guidelines for what is expected of them professionally. One of the ways that we begin to do this is to provide professional development on basic things such as lesson planning, how to have effective small groups, etc. In our upper grades, a curriculum map and resources that supplement the curriculum, such as PowerPoints and activities, have also been provided. This was an area that should continue to grow as, ideally, resources need to be provided for all subjects and grades. Efforts need to be made to purchase the missing curriculum for our teachers and students.

As one of the major struggles is a lack of communication and last-minute changes within the school, this is an area that needs to be addressed. The challenge, though, is that this is going against the host country's culture and may never be changed. One might argue that this should

not be changed as it is a value within the host country. For example, it is common for the Honduran government's education department to announce the day before that they will be on campus and give a list of things they need to see. However, finding ways to minimize the disruptiveness is essential. This is a continual discussion that needs to be had with native administrators on each campus so they can begin to understand the struggles of their international staff. On the campus where I am located, I was able to help administrators understand the struggle this caused with the foreign staff. They, in turn, worked to either explain why there were last-minute changes or not to make the changes at all. I believe that if this conversation progressed to include administrators from other campuses, it would help them to sympathize with their foreign staff.

Since one of the main coping strategies was to build community, this is an area that we, as a school, can be intentional about providing. This can come in various forms and differ depending on the campus. It could be formal such as a mentoring program; however, it could also be informal such as a game night, with the intention of building relationships. Regardless of how this is approached, teachers not only need the community's support, but they need to feel as if they belong to a group of people. As teachers discussed, this belonging lessens their feelings of loneliness and helps them to adjust their mindsets.

Connect to the Field of Study

As with any research, the goal was not just to acquire more knowledge but to put this knowledge into practice. Throughout my studies as a doctoral education student, I focused on how to use the knowledge to benefit our teachers and students. As the focus of our program is

curriculum and instruction, this ROS solution is geared towards a teacher training curriculum. This includes an in-country manual for teachers, a mentor that will help them navigate life overseas, and a monthly group check-in to debrief struggles they have as well as address cultural challenges. Through this, teachers will be better equipped to handle the cultural differences they encounter living and teaching overseas.

While there are very few studies that are conducted here in Honduras, this ROS connected with studies on international education in general. As Peeler and Jane (2005) pointed out, teachers living in a host country brought their cultural backgrounds to their classrooms and to their social interactions. Klassen et al. (2018) concurred that teaching is largely based on one's culture. This was highlighted in many of the participants' interviews as they spoke about misunderstandings that happened during their time here. They also discussed how unique their relationships with students were compared to that of their home countries. Many spoke of frustrations with the host country's school system, venting at times about the differences in acceptable teaching practices. Peeler and Jane (2005) expanded their discussion of culture to include individual school cultures saying that novice teachers may not have the information and knowledge that experienced teachers assume that they do. Sarah spoke of this when describing the Christmas program with her students. She missed practice because she did not know about it and also did not realize the stage being used for the actual production was different from the practice stage. While participants in this study backed up Peeler and Jane's (2005) claims that novice teachers may not know the school's culture, they differed on feeling that experienced teachers lacked the time or willingness to teach novice teachers. Each novice teacher in the ROS spoke of veteran teachers' providing them support, both at home and at school.

Participants spoke of their experience as having a large impact on their teaching and the way they interact with their students. Ospina (2020) found similar results in that teachers who taught abroad were more culturally sensitive even years later. While several of the participants spoke of the empathy they had gained while teaching here, Cody stated it explicitly, saying, "I've obviously met other immigrants in the States, and I guess I just developed more empathy for them." Furthermore, teachers who taught in a host country found that the teaching experience shaped their teaching methods and student interaction long after they had returned to their home country (Doppen & Diki, 2017). Novice teachers in this study had not yet returned to their home country, but many spoke of the professional changes they made while living here, such as being more creative, learning to think of their feet as changes required, and wanting to normalize hugging their students in the future.

Living in a host country has innate stressors. The challenges that participants face include language barriers, differences in living habits, and cultural conflicts. In this regard, my research aligned with that of both Peterson et al. (2011) and Yi et al. (2020), who found similar results. Yi et al. (2020) also included "feelings of loneliness, and isolation, homesickness, and culture shock" as challenges that teachers face living overseas (p. 2). Participants in this ROS spoke of these same challenges in both their interviews and their journals, stating things like, "I miss my family. I miss my dog. I miss my house and bed. I am ready to go home."

In order to deal with these challenges, those living in a host country rely on coping strategies and, in some cases, develop new strategies. This included creating new communities and intentionally adjusting to the host country (Yi et al., 2020; Young et al., 2018). Teachers in

this study agreed with those results as well as also spoke at length about their reliance on other teachers and the importance of those relationships. Both Firmin (2007) and Romero and Vasilopoulos (2020) found similar results, with relationships being pivotal in the overall experience of teaching and in the professional development of teachers living in a host country. In addition, the strategy that teachers spoke most of was continuously changing their mindset. This loosely aligns with prior research that found teachers' perceptions affected the longevity of their teaching career (Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007; Van den Borre et al., 2021). It is not, however, specific to those living overseas. Teachers also spoke of the importance of having an open mind and being willing to try new things. Years ago, Hermand, and Bailey (1991), found this mindset was important for success in teachers living in their home countries, although they did not directly address teachers in a host country. In addition, neither Yi et al. (2020) nor Young et al. (2018) were specific to novice teachers and included other professionals living overseas. Therefore, this ROS added to the scarce research specific to how novice teachers living overseas coped with the challenges they face.

As mentioned previously, research on crime and other traumatic experiences that affected teachers or other foreigners was virtually non-existent. However, as this study showed, it does occur. More research is needed in this area as the number of people living overseas grows.

Lessons Learned

Since moving overseas twelve years ago, I have spent substantial time helping other teachers get acclimated and have since heard many of the challenges they face. However, this

was largely anecdotal data, with no real data backing this up. The study forced me to really look at the themes that emerged and to decide if the data affirmed my current ideas. This also gave me directions on the changes that needed to be made within our school.

Personally, one of the findings that I was most surprised by was how little the lack of resources seemed to affect teachers. While most mentioned that the stability of electricity and water was frustrating, this did not seem to be an area they focused on substantially. Most seemed instead to use this as a reminder to adjust their mindsets to be grateful. However, what did affect them was not understanding cultural expectations. This was an area that I was surprised at because we have intentionally taught about culture in training prior to school starting. This study showed that this was not sufficient and perhaps needs to be an ongoing discussion throughout the acculturation process.

A second area that was highlighted for me was the lack of security and support that our teachers felt. I believed it has been wrongly assumed that they knew their administrators would protect them, but several instances spoken about in this study showed otherwise. This was not only a wrong assumption but a dangerous one. In addition, it was shown that some teachers indeed did not have their administrator's support when it came to protection. This both shocked and infuriated me on their behalf. This is an area that needs to be addressed sooner rather than later to ensure the safety of our current and future teachers.

Lastly, over the course of the interviews, participants spoke repeatedly about the care provided by veteran teachers. When moving to a new country, there is a certain level of uncertainty. Cody put it best when he said, "I think that's a pretty brave move. Just because you

don't know what you're really getting yourself into. And you're just kind of shooting in the dark hoping for the best." Most participants had a veteran teacher that answered their questions about life here, packing, and school information; however, not all participants received the same information or knew how to ask specific questions. This left some questions unanswered as they moved here and added to feelings of uncertainty. Because of this, a teacher manual was created with packing recommendations, frequently asked questions, important contact information, and general life questions. The information included was based on this study and informal conversations with participants and novice teachers outside of the study. Oberg suggested that the more a person was informed about their host country and the more involved they were, the shorter and less extreme their culture shock is (Lopez & Portero, 2013; Waxin and Panaccio, 2005). Following this theory, if teachers are introduced to parts of the culture via a teacher's manual before moving, then the culture shock they experience will be reduced.

Recommendations

There were good conversations with the participants about the struggles and joys associated with living overseas while being a novice teacher. Through this, clear challenges were spoken about that perhaps would not have been brought up otherwise. Using this information, there are several recommendations for how we can provide intentional support to our novice teachers starting before they land in-country.

One of the areas that teachers utilized most was seeking support from other teachers. With this in mind, a mentor program that pairs a returning teacher with a new teacher would be helpful. Mentors for new teachers may provide immediate support that can be utilized

professionally and personally. This may be most beneficial to provide before teachers arrive in the country so that they have an immediate connection to someone as they deal with the emotions of leaving their home country. This would also provide them with someone to ask practical questions, such as what is provided and what they need to pack. With training, the mentor teacher could also help with pedological concerns as well, such as how to write lesson plans.

Participants also mentioned time and time again that they struggle with the differences in culture. Currently, we do a short presentation about the differences in culture in the days after teachers arrive. Clearly, this is insufficient. They need more than information; instead, they need to be able to discuss and process the differences as they experience them. Therefore, one of the recommendations is that a monthly forum takes place where different cultural elements are discussed, allowing time for open dialog. Returning teachers should be included in this so they can offer suggestions on how they deal with challenges. Additionally, this adds to the need for community that participants spoke about.

Lastly, a manual would be beneficial for teachers as they arrive in-country. This should address practical things such as how to pay bills and obtain clean water. It could also provide important phone numbers and places to eat. On a professional side, this should also include the expectations the school has, such as lesson plan formats, school calendars, and vacation policies. While this would not entirely address some of the concerns, such as safety, knowing the logistical information would relieve teachers of this stress.

As personal safety, or lack thereof, was explicitly addressed by the majority of participants, this is an area that must be addressed. It is my recommendation that no female teachers be placed in rural areas at this time. Training on how to deal with unwanted attention should be provided to all participants as well as steps to take if something does happen. Furthermore, administrators on each campus need training and accountability in how to handle traumatic experiences before they occur. While this may not change the attitude of some administrators, I am hopeful that, over time, education would improve their responses. An alternative or perhaps in addition to this, a person at each campus could go through training in how to handle emergencies that might occur with our foreign staff. A specific plan for this should be laid out for each campus, ensuring that our foreign staff will be taken care of.

Closing Thoughts

Novice teachers who were living in a host country had specific needs that must be met if they were to be successful in teaching and living in their host country. They struggled with loneliness and missing family, but they also spoke of the beauty of new friendships. Many struggled with being an immigrant and the challenges that accompany this. However, they acknowledged this gave them greater empathy for others. While each participant spoke of the challenges they faced, none spoke of the experience as overwhelmingly negative but instead seemed to focus on the lessons learned. However, as they addressed their experiences living in Honduras, it was clear that more support is needed for our teachers.

While some amount of struggling is helpful and does grow a person, there are some things we could do as a school to lessen the negative experiences. Some of the things they

mentioned, such as the instability of electricity and water, cannot be changed, and one could look at this as part of the experience. Other struggles, such as last-minute schedule changes, can be addressed but are part of the culture here, so are unlikely to change. The same is true about the fluidity of time. However, following Oberg's theory, educating teachers on these cultural differences helps to make them feel less frustrated and allows teachers to embrace these seemingly difficult parts of the culture. Other things were addressed as well, though, such as not feeling the administration's support when crimes were committed.

While living in a host country, the issue really is not what things must change so that the foreign teachers are comfortable but more what support we can provide as they acculturate. Novice teachers often spoke of community in both personal and professional settings. As we provide this needed support, our teachers will become more successful in the classroom and in navigating life in a host country.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions:

1. Thinking back to your time in Honduras, what has stood out to you?

2. When thinking about your experience here, how have you changed as a person regarding the following:

   a. Friendships

   b. Professionally

3. What expectations did you have as you moved here?

   Probe: Which of these did you discard or replace?

4. What were some of the things you had to adapt to?

   Probe: Which things will you hold on to as you move back?

5. What advice would you give to someone who was moving here?

6. What personal characteristics help someone be successful or unsuccessful in adapting to a new culture?

7. What difficulties did you face living in a host country in the following areas:

   a. Personal

   b. Social/cultural

   c. Professional

8. When faced with those challenges, how did you cope best?

APPENDIX B

TEACHER MANUAL

Sample Contact Page

Contact	Phone number	Email
ALCS Gracias	504 ****-****	***@yahoo.com
Kristi Hopkins (Director of English Curriculum)	504 ****-****	***@gmail.com
Shannon Hopkins (chaplain)	504 ****-****	***@gmail.com

Important School Information

- Who will pick me up from the airport?
  - John Carpenter and Gorge Lara will pick you up. They will meet you in the food court and be wearing a school polo. John is a VERY tall, skinny guy so you can't miss him.
- Where do I turn my lesson plans in and when are they due?
  - Lesson plans will be turned in to your google drive folder every Monday at 8:00. The lesson plan format will be in your folder when it is shared with you.
- Where can I find our class schedules and other info like that?
  - All documents such as class schedules, school calendars, etc. will be put into a shared google drive. This will be updated as information is given.
- Where do I write my grades?
  - The school will provide a grade book or "catrachito" as it is called here. You will record your grades and absences in this book. If we are still hybrid then grades and attendance are done on Canvas.
- Can I weigh my grades however I want?
  - This is country directed and the breakdown is as follows
  - Elementary: 70% homework, 20% test and quizzes, 10% attendance and participation
  - High school: 50% homework, 30% test and quizzes, 10% attendance and participation
- How many tests and quizzes should I have?
  - For core classes, there should be a minimum of 2 tests and 3 quizzes per partial. Tests should have 4 different types of questions on them (T/F, multiple choice, essay, etc.)
- Is there a program that formats tests and quizzes?
  - Yes! Easytestmaker.com is free and does this for you. If we are still hybrid then Canvas does this as well.
- What is considered homework?
  - Any work that is not a test or quiz is considered "homework" as far as the grading weights are concerned, regardless of where the work is done.
- What is considered high school/secondary?
  - 7-12 is considered high school/secondary
- What school supplies are provided?
  - The school does its best to provide basic school supplies such as paper, pens, dry-erase markers, staplers/ staples, scissors, poster board, paper clips, etc. If there is something specific that you would like to know then please ask one of us before coming.
- Is there a school uniform?
  - Yes and it is very important to follow it as it is considered professional.

- ○ Women: navy slacks that go below the ankle bone, a navy skirt that goes below the knee can be used as well, white dress shirts with sleeves (no t-shirt material), a navy vest for daily use, a navy jacket for "formal" events, black socks, black dress shoes. If your shirts are thin then an undershirt may be needed.
  - ○ Men: navy slacks, white long sleeves, dress shirts with a tie, black socks, black dress shoes, black belt. If your shirts are thin then an undershirt may be needed.
- Do we have substitute teachers?
  - ○ No, as a staff we will cover each other's classes if someone is sick.
- Can I make copies at school?
  - ○ Absolutely but please allow 24 hours in advance for the office personnel to get that to you.
- What is recuperation/recup and what is a "reposicion"?
  - ○ Per country law, a student has a right to make up one test that they have failed per partial. This is called a "reposicion." You may do this throughout the partial or wait until the last week of the partial.
  - ○ A recuperation is given if the student has failed a semester (10-12th grade) or the year (1-9th grade). They have 2 chances to pass this class before having to repeat the year.
- What is a scope and sequence?
  - ○ This is sometimes called a syllabus in other countries but basically lays out your subject, and content plan for the year.
- I am sick and need meds or a doctor. What should I do?
  - ○ Please contact one of the school personnel and we will assist you in finding a doctor and provide a translator if you would like. Hospitality is VERY important to Honduras culture and our school would like you to be taken care of.
- If I am sick or need to take a day off, who do I ask?
  - ○ You will ask Mr. Calderon and then inform Ms. Kristi. If you do not speak Spanish then you may ask Ms. Kristi and she will confirm with Mr. Calderon. You will be asked to provide lesson plans that can be easily followed. Just a word of advice, this is easiest if you plan everything the week prior because it is hard to write lesson plans when you are sick. The school does its best to accommodate days off, but they are not guaranteed.
  - ○ Days requested off before or after school vacation days will not be granted.
- When will teachers receive a curriculum?
  - ○ A week after arriving
  - ○ Student books often do not come until about October
- Who do I tell if I am missing curriculum?
  - ○ You will be assigned an academic director that will help you with things like this.
- How do I get to school each day?

- There is a bus that takes teachers to school each day. It cost 1000L and the school pays for half of this.
- Some people buy motorcycles or hitch rides with friends as well.

Facts/Realities of Living in Honduras

- Bugs
  - There are these tiny black bugs that bite you and leave a red, itchy welp for an extended amount of time. Thankfully we have found that applying hydrocortisone multiple times a day can relieve the itch and make it go away faster.
  - Other bugs you may encounter are fairly harmless: cockroaches, geckos (which make noise), locusts (which make more noise), ants, demon fairies (not their real name), and of course, mosquitoes.
- Clothing
  - For women, wearing shorts and revealing tops in public is discouraged.
  - For men, wearing shorts in the villages is discouraged and tank tops in public are discouraged.
- Electricity
  - Sometimes the electricity will randomly go out for hours. This doesn't happen often, but it does happen without notice at times.
  - Your refrigerator and freezer food should still be good if you keep your refrigerator doors closed.
- Food
  - The food here is just different from the food you're used to. The food is awesome, but it takes some getting used to.
  - Inevitably you will experience tummy trouble. Don't be embarrassed to let us know.
- Weather
  - There are two seasons: the wet season and dry season.
  - Wet season is rainy and humid. It will usually rain about once a day in the afternoon during this season.
  - Dry season is blessedly hot. During this time the city conserves water so your house may not have water from time to time..

Working With Your Honduran Coworkers

- "Different is not bad. Different is not good. Different is different."
- You are not here to fix or change their culture. Learn to adapt.
- Honduran culture is much more relational than U.S. culture. Hondurans will regularly put tasks on hold in order to have a conversation.
- Personal space is not so personal here.
- Time is indefinite. Things just take longer to get done here. Shape your mind to be ready for that. Things will eventually get done, just not on your timetable.
- Hondurans are indirect. If they are hurt by you, they will tell someone else to tell you.

- Appearance is important. It is important that you look professional while at school and that your classroom be decorated..
- Drinking here is done only to get drunk. Having one or two in a social setting is not very normal. Please do not drink or buy anything other than wine in Gracias.
- The Honduran business culture is more relational, and they will often go out of their way to help or bend rules to help people they have good relationships with. There are some cases when sending a specific person to get something done will equal faster results.

Commonly Asked Questions

- How do I pay my bills?
  - This varies depending on the type of bill. Some can be paid through a bank transfer while others must be paid in person. Please ask your mentor and they will help you with this.
- How do I open a bank account?
  - This will be done in the first week you are here as a group.
  - You need the following: a letter of recommendation from your current bank, your social security card, and your passport
- How do I get legal immigration status?
  - The school lawyer will help with this.
  - You need the following: a passport, the original birth certificate that has been apostilled, and a marriage license (If applicable) that has been apostilled
- How do you keep up with people in the US?
  - Social media
  - Unlock phone in the US then get a chip in Honduras
  - There is Wi-Fi in most places
- What type of apps do you use to communicate with people in the US?
  - Facebook messenger, Instagram, etc.
  - What's App
- Should I bring my laptop?
  - Yes
- Can I bring my Bible?
  - Yes
- How many suitcases can I take?
  - You can bring as many as you want, but the price increases as the number of bags increases.
  - Check the airline website for specific guidelines.
  - Usually 2 bags cost around $50 each and must weigh under 50 pounds each.
- Does a guitar count as a suitcase?
  - It can be a carry-on depending on size
- How do y'all do church there?

- ○ We host Wednesday night Bible study at the Hopkins
  - ○ Sunday nights we attend a village church and often preach
- How does mail work there?
  - ○ Mail sent to Escuela Vida Abundante Gracias, Lempira, Honduras, Central America
  - ○ Takes 1-2 months and is likely to get lost
- Can you get stuff from Amazon?
  - ○ Possibly but it would be quite difficult
- Are there washing machines in Honduras?
  - ○ Yes but your household may not have one
- Is medicine easy to get there?
  - ○ Most of it, and it's usually cheaper! If you need specific medicine then let us know and we can see if it is sold here.
- Are there certain products I won't be able to purchase there that I should bring extra of?
  - ○ Yes, very likely such as toiletries if you like specific brands
- Do y'all have to pay taxes in the US since you aren't currently living there?
  - ○ Yes, taxes will still need to be addressed
- Where will I live?
  - ○ The school will help find housing. You'll likely have 2-3 houses to look at when you arrive. Most teachers opt to live with other teachers, but you can live on your own.

Packing List
- School Uniform Clothes:
  - ○ 1 Pair of Black, Closed-Toed, dress shoes (Not tennis shoes)
  - ○ Black Socks
  - ○ 2 White Polo Shirts
  - ○ 4 White Button-Down Shirts (These will need to be tucked in) (Short or long sleeve but no knit material)
  - ○ 2-4 Pairs of Navy Blue Dress Pants (Not Jeans or Capris, must reach below your ankle) (Women's pants should not be super tight)
  - ○ For Cold Weather a Navy Blue or Black Sweatshirt or Jacket
  - ○ (For Men) An Assortment of Ties and only long sleeve shirts
  - ○ (For Women) A navy blue skirt (Minimum of knee length) this can be made here
  - ○ (For the Women) there is a school jacket and vest that all the teachers have that you will order when you arrive in Gracias. I think normally it is only between 20 – 30 dollars.
  - ○ 4 white or flesh undershirts

- Cold Weather Clothes: (It can get quite cold)
  - ○ Jacket

- ○ 2 Sweatshirts
- ○ A few pairs of Jeans
- ○ Sweatpants (optional)
- ○ Tennis shoes
- ○ Hiking boots (if you plan on doing any hiking)
- Warm Weather Clothes: (It gets quite warm)
  - ○ An assortment of t-shirts
  - ○ Modest Shorts for use at home only
  - ○ Sandals
  - ○ Swimsuit
  - ○ Sunglasses
  - ○ One or two nice outfits/dresses for special occasions
  - ○ (For Women) Long skirts
- Bedding:
  - ○ Pillow
  - ○ Sheets
  - ○ Comforter
  - ○ Towels
- Medicine: (You can get a lot of this medicine here but if you like bringing your own here are some ideas.)
  - ○ Advil/Tylenol
  - ○ Cold Medicine
  - ○ Imodium
  - ○ Allergy meds
- Misc:
  - ○ Laptop Computer
  - ○ HDMI adapters for your computer
  - ○ Note of good standing from your bank (must be signed)
  - ○ Flashlight
  - ○ Powerbank

Places to Eat in Gracias

Agriturismo Santa Lucia
> Food Type: variety/ pizza
> Location: Villa Verde

Buggy's
> Food Type: fast food
> Location: Dinora's road, it's yellow you can't miss it

Casa de Las Baleadas
> Food Type: baleadas
> Location: boulevard across from Calle 8

Casa Hotel Celaque
> Food Type: variety, expensive food
> Location: Villa Verde

Don Juan
> Food Type: variety, expensive food
> Location: Dinora's road

Don Marquitos
> Food Type: coffee
> Location: by the white church in Barrio Mercedes

El Cacique
> Food Type: Mexican tacos
> Location: by the stadium

El Jarrón
> Food Type: típica
> Location: the park

Kandil
> Food Type: pizza
> Location: left on the road by the Hopkins/down from the park

Molly's
> Food Type: pizza
> Location: near the college, really hard to explain, they deliver :)

Patepluma
> Food Type: asados (grilled meat)
> Location: on the boulevard by the big market

Ruta Lenca
> Food Type: coffee, pastries
> Location: up from the placita

Tejas y Brasas
> Food Type: meat
> Location: on a side street up and left of the Dinora's road