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## Metamorphic Journey of a Single Story: Becoming a Globally Competent Teacher

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**Metamorphic Journey of a Single Story:  
Becoming a Globally Competent Teacher**

**by  
Shareefah Pereira**

**Dual Language/Bilingual Childhood Special Education**

**Mentor:  
Nina Jaffe**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to dissect my lived experiences and transform them into knowledge that can be shared with other educators. This project explores transformative teaching by investigating my teaching experience in South Eastern Thailand through a critical autoethnographic lens as a way to reflect on transformative teaching in a global context. As a candidate in the Dual Language/Bilingual Childhood Special Education program I will be using theoretical frameworks and coursework to guide my critical, decolonial, and global approach to education.

As the world is becoming increasingly interconnected teachers are tasked with looking at the identity, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and diverse needs of the students they teach. This thesis provides insights into how teachers' bias can affect their development of global competence. As citizens in society and educators teachers must combine local and global experiences through a critical reflective approach to inform their teaching. This dynamic diversity of perspectives introduced in my thesis allows educators to begin to examine issues and events from others' perspectives and thus inform their stance on global education. Delving into the interplay of teachers' identity, culture, and power, I look at how educators can become global citizens. Including the dispositions, knowledge and skills educators will need to develop.

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"The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story."  
- **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**, 2009, TEDTalk

## **I. Introduction: Metamorphosis of a Single Story**

“Does a metamorphosis begin from the outside in? Or from the inside out?”

- **Pam Muñoz Ryan**, 2010, *The Dreamer*

## **I. Introduction: Metamorphosis of a Single Story**

### **A. Introduction**

This masters project is part of my lived experiences, my travels, and my drive to become a globally competent teacher (Tichnor-Wagner, 2019). I look into global education, its implications, how it started, what it means, and the knowledge, skills, and disposition needed for teachers to become globally competent. I will also delve into my trip to Thailand teaching English to 3rd and 4th graders. According to Ellis (et al, 2010): “When researchers do *autoethnography*, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity.” (p.5). However, in addition to telling about experiences, autoethnographers - in alignment with social science methodology - need to analyze and critique these experiences.

The need for globally minded educators is especially important during times where people are fighting for civil and human rights. Teachers need to develop global competence, global citizenship, and critical global awareness along with perspective consciousness, empathy, social justice, interconnectedness and intercultural understanding. “Teachers need to have the skills and understandings to address diversity and have a firm understanding of cultural identities of their students as well as of themselves” (McCardle, 2017). Educators need to be able to work with the academic and social needs of a diverse student body and they need to teach them knowledge skills and dispositions that align with our growing multicultural world. Wagner states, “to support students in developing multiple, intersecting civic and cultural identities and participating as citizens in a global community, teachers must be equipped with specific skills,

knowledes, and attitudes” (2016). Teacher education has seen many changes through what is considered normal in a systematically marginalized educational world. However, along with all these systematic changes teacher development is still ongoing. Professional and personal development require critical reflection on the issues that occur in the world today. Teachers have a responsibility to understand the world in a global context and help our students navigate the world. If we, as educators, don’t understand what is needed of students in a global world how can we instill in our students the concepts that are needed for them to be global citizens? How can teachers fight for social justice while still working in a system built on oppression? How can we teach students to stand up for equality and justice in a biased system? Any answer to these questions requires self reflection with unbiased understanding of everyone's stories. In order to listen to stories that others have to share we have to be willing to listen without any bias or prejudice.

*Check your privilege and challenge your power:*

Recognize and check your privilege. As a Muslim immigrant graduate student, born in Canada with Carriibbean parents, I have my own set of beliefs and values that check my privilege but I also have to challenge my bias as well. I am aware of how fortunate I’ve been. I acknowledge my accomplishments as a privilege not afforded to many. I also challenge the power of my own identity, and my story. As a Muslim immigrant women living in racialized America, I have both my privilege and power checked constantly. But as a naturalized middle class American I have more privileges afforded to me in a global context.

By being conscious of my attitude towards the multicultural and multi-linguistic practices of my students it'll force me to focus on how I and others view each other's linguistic practices. It

has long been the popular opinion that multicultural/multi-linguistic education is not academically rigorous and not worthy of being added to the curriculum. This adds to the deficit perspective that many teachers have with regards to the students who bring with them various unique “funds of knowledge”(Moll, et al, 1992). Families’ beliefs about the nature of knowledge and learning can also have a significant impact on how students go about learning. This perception can either be nurtured or extinguished by teachers. As teachers we have to be so careful of what we say, regardless of the age/grade that we teach. Students are sponges and they absorb all that we say and do consciously and unconsciously. If I don't consciously make an effort to get any biases whipped into a moral and ethical shape the future of my students will be held in the balance. According to Mrs. Jones, “ You must know who you are - what makes you think and behave as you do- before you can begin to delve into any other factor” (Jones, 2009).

For many of us we look for what we want to see and what we want to be true. We use what has been termed confirmation bias: a general tendency to look for information that supports existing beliefs and to ignore or discredit any contradictory evidence. Without deep self reflection and analysis we are left stuck in a place of limbo where we allow either our confirmation biases or ethnocentric bias (a tendency to take one’s own cultural teachings as general standards of what practices are “right” or “best”) to take hold of our teaching. It is easy to remain in a stagnant familiar place. A place where our habits, attitudes, ideologies and philosophies are happy to remain unchanged. However, when working with students it is imperative that we remain conscious of our own biases. Being aware of my biases allows me to see how much of my thinking has also been institutionalized within a eurocentric scope.

This awareness allows me to fight to decolonize my classroom, mindset and way of living. *Decolonizing Education* via language and curriculum can take on many forms. It can start with the use of gendered pronouns that perpetuate a certain stereotype that we consider the “norm” in society. Race/ethnicity also plays a factor in how students are overwhelmingly misdiagnosed. According to Zimmerman (2016), “Black and Latino students’ actions were seen as more aggressive and problematic than misbehavior by white boys”. In the same article, *When is a student ‘gifted’ or ‘disabled’? A new study shows racial bias plays a role in deciding*, he also goes on to say that, “there is evidence that being labeled with a behavioral disorder is associated with future incarceration”. We need to change that narrative for Black and Latino male students. Unfortunately, girls of color almost always are an afterthought and an oversight. This sad and dismal reality leads me to focus my self analytical practices on the concept of intersectionality.

Kimberlé Crenshaw, law professor and social theorist, first coined the term intersectionality in 1989. “Intersectionality is a framework for conceptualizing a person, group of people, or social problem as affected by a number of discriminations and disadvantages. It takes into account people’s overlapping identities and experiences in order to understand the complexity of prejudices they face” (Alemán, 2018). For young students of color, especially girls, intersectionality recognizes that identity markers (e.g. “female” and “black”) do not exist independently of each other, and that each informs the others, often creating a complex convergence of oppression. Intersectionality theorists posit that individuals with multiple oppressed identities may experience multiple types of discrimination which may in turn have a negative impact on their everyday lives. So although it is important to recognize the harm of

oppression based on singular identities, it is also necessary to further investigate how intersectional identities may make people's experiences with discrimination much more complex. (Nadal et, al, 2015). Thus it is imperative for teachers to listen to the stories that their students have while understanding how their own identities align with Intersectionality Theory (Crenshaw, 1989).

Before change can occur teachers need to acknowledge how their identity affords them power and/or privileges. With both power and privilege teachers can fight for social justice while still working in a system built on oppression. Many teachers are being TAUGHT social justice theory but they are not putting it into practice because of a number of reasons. Mainly personal beliefs, political pressures or top down laws from administration. Whatever the reason, as teachers we need to rethink myths and stereotypes while understanding our role in making a change in the world. To develop global competencies we need a reflective and critical approach to education that align with a social justice lens that focuses on global and local politics. Paulo Freire (2001) asserts that the true goal of education is emancipation, which is the liberation of people's injustices whether social or global (Byker, 2016). In Kopish view, "in practice, a social justice approach to GCE offers educational opportunities for learners to investigate global issues of power and privilege from multiple perspectives, and empowers people to take action and interrupt injustices (2017, p. 22).

## **B. Teaching as a metaphoric journey: My story**

*“Language is culture and culture is sweet”*

Butterflies can't see their wings. They can't see how truly beautiful they are, but everyone else can. People are like that as well. And for me personally, I can't truly see all that I have done and grown as a teacher until I reflect. Staying present while on the journey; but keeping my destination in mind is how I envision myself as a teacher. Both myself and my students are on a journey of self reflection, self discovery, of change and exploration. Through this metamorphic journey we are constructing the world to fit the intersectionality of our identities. I always wanted to be finished and to reach the finish line. It took me a while to realize that the journey was a necessary part to see growth and I needed the journey to get to the end. Even though getting to the end is a good feeling living in the moment and enjoying the moment is exceptional. Stopping to smell the roses, feel the breeze or to appreciate where my students are at is a necessary step in the process.

I have chosen this particular metaphor; metamorphic journey of a single story because of the things in life that have contributed to me picking teaching as a profession. My metaphor is about multiple journeys. The symbolic journey that the butterfly takes to change and its metamorphic process. The physical journey that the traveler takes to change perspectives of their story. While embarking on both of these journeys personal reflection is a catalyst for positive change to occur in our lives. Teaching is similar to traveling because at the end of the day, we never know where we will end up. We can plan a “perfect” lesson and have a catastrophe strike at any moment that requires us to make a change. As luggage gets lost in baggage claim, so do children. They can be lost and confused because of the structure of our lesson, they might be

emergent bilinguals, ELL's or they could simply have been absent for a few days. We never know where our travels will take us. We plan for the students to be on grade level, we make all the necessary preparations but then someone is absent, there's a fire drill, a fight or a number of roadblocks that can happen along the way. All of this seems like setbacks but they are all placed in our path to help guide us to our final metamorphic destination.

*Metamorphosis*: According to Webster's dictionary (2018) metamorphosis has two meanings:

“1. (in an insect or amphibian) the process of transformation from an immature form to an adult form in two or more distinct stages. 2. A change in form or nature of a thing or a person into a completely different one, by natural or supernatural means.”

This process of changing one aspect completely changes the outcome of another aspect. I hope to be this change for my students. I hope that my interaction with them can somehow alter their reality and change their destinies. Change their perceptions of themselves, how they view others, how they utilize the tools that they are given to them, how they can advocate for themselves, and how they view who they are in their communities and how they can tap into their inner selves to make a positive change in the world. This change or metamorphosis occurs in a couple of ways and it represents a fresh new start. If nothing changes, then nothing changes. This means as a teacher there will be no change to my thinking, ideas, philosophies and teaching practices unless I am willing to shed old patterns, habits, attitudes, ideologies, and biases as a necessary step for radical changes to occur. A “break down” must occur for reconstruction to begin.

Regularly looking inward critiquing their own assumptions, inferences, and actions, teachers need to know that “his/her personality, temperament, communication style, learning style, and attention span - affect *every* aspect of classroom life” (Jones, 2009). As a teacher it is important to also be reinventing, reflective, and willing to go through the wringer to achieve

something beautiful. The reflective process isn't always easy but it is necessary in the pursuit of greatness. Part of the decolonization process starts within. We have to learn and understand our own trauma and pain hurt, generational curses. Before we can move on and break the generational barriers. Build on each other, uplift each other's stories; share the intersectionality and understand the specific. We are not a single story and we are not a single window. The intersectionality of my story is interwoven in my culture and language.

Eeeyy, waz di scene, hoss? Why you frontin! You kno he look madd whack. Allyuh ha to be bawlin so? Stop wylin'! Gimmie de latest bacchanal! Nah son, you buggin'. Doh making joke? Nah you just thirsty! Yall play too much!

Did you catch any of that? Probably not so I'll provide you with a simple recipe to help make sense of the madness. Step 1: Mix together two people, my parents, from a little island in the Caribbean called, Trinidad and Tobago. Step 2: Preheat the Canadian oven to the desired temperature. Step 3: Mix the dry ingredients with a lot of chocolate and whisk until you can't whisk anymore. Step 4: Add the eggs, one cup of brown sugar, a pinch sassiness, a sprinkle of black girl magic, a dash of spunk and mix until blended well. Step 5: Mix together the dry and wet ingredients. Step 6: Put the batter in a pan. Step 7: Bake for nine months or until ready, then take out the oven and let cool. Step 8: Once completely cool add chocolate frosting on top. Voila.

Between the Caribbean seas, the Canadian Rockies and the concrete jungle of New York is where my culture and language emerges. I am neither one nor the other but an eclectic combination of them all. Growing up I never considered myself bilingual or bicultural in any way. I never associated my parents' dialect, their customs and traditions to have any significant

weight in a global context. Only in MY world did my “fake” Trinidadian and New York accent matter.

At the age of six or seven I remember being mocked at school for telling a classmate that my aunt was at the hospital “making” a baby instead of saying “having” a baby. Before this occasion certain familiar phrases never occurred to me as being different until I tried using them at school where I was ridiculed for how they sounded to non- Trinidadians. At an early age, I learned to adapt my accent depending on who I was speaking with. Growing up in Queens and going to school in Brooklyn I combined the dialects to develop my own unique accent that I was very proud of. As my friends and I rode the subway home our conversations would have most likely sounded a little something like this, “Y u frontin! U kno he looks madd whack. Stop wylin’! Nah son, u buggin’ Nah u just thirsty! Yall play too much!” And the moment I got through the door of my house I would hear my mom and aunts speaking in their Trinidadian accents, “Eeeyy, waz di scene, hoss! Allyuh ha to be bawlin so? Gimmie de latest bacchanal! Doh making joke?” (rough translation: What’s up, friend! Why are the both of you screaming? Tell me the latest gossip that happened! You can’t be serious!)

I learned to switch on and off my accents and was rather content with the way I spoke until I moved to upstate New York to attend college. Again, at that stage of my life I had to add another accent to my growing repertoire. I, personally, was never conscious of the way I sounded until I embarked on my journey to become a fluent Spanish speaker. At this point is where accents became important in a context I never knew existed before. Because I grew up in a diverse bubble of naivety I never comprehended the value that people placed on accents and

languages. For me language at this point transcended the purpose of communication and entered another world where social status reigned.

As an educator, I am aware that I may unknowingly carry the weight of some prejudices on my back but I try to use all of my experiences to affect my teaching in a positive way. My language identity and journey has taught me so much about my biases, beliefs and attitudes towards so many things. Therefore, when I read the statement, “our first task as teachers, then, is to become aware of our students’ personal histories and cultures, so as to understand their feelings, hopes and aspirations. At the same time, as teachers, we need to look closely at ourselves to discover how our own culturally ingrained attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and communication styles play out in our teaching” (Peregoy & Boyle, 2016), I felt a powerful and personal connection to it. My languages and accents form an intricate part of who I am as a teacher and as a person. They are part of what makes my recipe so successful and they help define and place meaning on my holistic identity. As an educator, I hope to help my students have a sense of belonging in my classroom no matter who they are or where they may be from.

In *A Liberation Literacies pedagogical approach*, Jamila Lysicott (2017) affirms:

“No, students are not physically beaten for speaking in the language of their communities, and no, they are not forced to wear physical signs, but the work of silencing, shaming, and severing the linguistic and cultural practices of the home in effort to have students adopt “Standard American English” (SAE), purported to be the “language of power,” is the work of K-12 classrooms. And this colonial logic is reinforced in our homes and communities under the false pretense of arming children with access to a better world.” (pp...).

Students need to know that there are many varieties of named languages and dialects, accents.

None should be made superior over the other. However in the world that we live in we are taught

about the Standard English and the power that it holds. Students have the power, they are the power to evoke change. The journey they have to take to facilitate that change will not be easy but it will be worth the personal and societal metamorphic change that can be a result of them knowing they wield the power. Classrooms need to be linguistically and culturally affirming space. We can't passively say we are accepting of all change needs to be made visible and tangible. Focusing on the linguistic practices of students can help assess their language and reading capabilities. As we shift our thinking away from the idea that Standard English is the "Best" we gravitate toward the concept that all students bring with them specific funds of knowledge. These funds can be utilized in the classroom to build background knowledge and accentuate the knowledge that students already have.

### **C. Making a change**

While checking our privileges and challenging our power we can not leave our true selves behind. Our voices are embedded in the intersectionality of our identities. For those of us who are critically conscious (Friere 2001) we take a globally competent stance to address the needs of the students. Many educators come from a predominantly white middle class background with insufficient experience or training to enable them to have a global perspective. Regardless of your background, being an educator means bridging the gap between our lived experiences, and the global world. None of us gets a free pass when it comes to social justice in and out of the classroom. There is a need for educators to be conscious of the inequalities and injustices that dehumanize people and to actively make a change.

Teachers need to have the skills and understanding on how to deal with the world. “Open-mindedness, empathy and perspective consciousness are the foundations for global competence.” (Tichnor-Wagner, et al, 2019; p. 21). The greatest action to the revolution of change occurs when teachers use their power and privilege for those students who face the harsh reality of systemic injustices. To enrich and enhance, to allow students the space to have a voice, to give them the opportunity to hear their voice and listen to others. They need a teacher who is reflective, who is not afraid of going on a journey to actively seek change. The metamorphosis happens gradually, as we change we see the beauty in our person. However, it is only as we stop, step back do we truly appreciate how far we’ve come on this journey. To deconstruct my own mindset primarily but to deviate from the ideology of the deficit perspective so that students are given the room to grow, to reflect, to change, to spread their wings and soar.

## **II. Global Education: History & background**

“By humanizing the people who were like me, Baldwin’s story also humanized me. The story gave me a permission that I didn’t know I needed, the permission to write about my own landscape, my own map.”

- *Walter Dean Myers, 2014, The New York Times*

## **II. Global Education: History & background**

### **A. What is global competence?**

Global education has to do with developing global competencies and global citizenship. This section talks about the theoretical background and conceptual frameworks for global education and a description of global competencies. According to Tichnor-Wagner, “global competence is a compilation of dispositions, knowledge, and skills necessary to effectively engage as citizens of the world”. Dispositions include valuing multiple perspectives and a commitment to equity worldwide. Knowledge includes an understanding of global conditions and current events, the interconnectedness of the world and an experiential understanding of multiple cultures. Skills include a teacher’s ability to communicate in multiple languages, to create a classroom environment that values diversity and global engagement, and to facilitate intercultural conversations (2016).

As we look at the three main elements for Globally Competent Teaching we seek to instill in our selves an appreciation of and a thirst to learn more about the world around us. Adding these three elements into our teaching creates inclusivity within a global dimension. As globally competent teachers we have to consider multiple perspectives and have a critical worldview. Taking responsibility as global citizens we create classroom communities that equip students with a globalized mindset that allows them to use the knowledge, skills and values to thrive in a diverse world.

“It is teaching that arms students with the knowledge and skill set to not merely survive but thrive in an ever-changing, interconnected world-one that both paves a pathway for students to pursue their passions and dreams and opens windows to opportunities students might not have known existed. It is teaching that addresses the unique background each student brings and the institution barriers students

face on account of the racial, ethnic, cultural, or linguistic group with which they identify. It is teaching that provides students with the foundation to be the change they want to see in their own communities and the wider world” (Tichnor-Wagner, 2019, p.3).

Thus as teachers we need the driving force or the dispositions to help students be that change. To facilitate the development of global citizens teachers need the knowledge and understandings to engage responsibly and effectively in a global environment. Educators must also have the pedagogical skills to teach students critical consciousness and analytical thinking. I agree with Kopish’s statement, in short, globally competent teachers “enable young people to learn about their rights and responsibilities and equip them with skills for democratic participation, at all levels, from local to global” (Ibrahim, 2005, pp. 178-179) Kopish 2017.

Developing global competence is a lifelong journey. The need for educators with this type of mentality is essential, especially in the current political climate. As we thrive to become globally minded citizens we must always remember that our privileges give us the power to have empathy for others and that we should strive to value multiple perspectives. Advancing on our metamorphic journey we can set the stage for deepening our awareness of global issues.

### **B. My Journey with Council of International Educational Exchange**

Who is a global educator? Globally competent educators are global citizenships. They need an openness toward seeking multiple perspectives on different issues. Preparing students for a new global reality teachers need to look at their cultural identity and citizenship. Many teachers leave their programs of study and settle into their lives or in areas that they may have grown up in. Or even teach in schools that are predominantly their race or religion without any intention of learning about other cultures. Their eyes need to be open to others’ beliefs and

educational practices, others' ways of thinking, doing, and being. They need to step outside their comfort zone and into the global community that is sometimes at their doorstep.

For me choosing The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) was worthwhile because of the long-standing background they have in international education. The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) is a non-profit organization promoting international education and exchange. According to its website, the goal of the Teach in Thailand program was to “immerse yourself in Thai culture and travel while also helping to meet a growing need for English teachers to provide educational opportunities to Thai students”. The website also states, “ At CIEE, we create opportunities that help bring people together. We foster the development of understanding and mutual respect between communities and nations by promoting the exchange of ideas and experiences. We help give students, teachers, and young professionals from across the world skills that make them active and responsible global citizens”. I set out on this adventure knowing that it was a paid teach abroad program where I would work as a lead classroom teacher with students in 3rd and 4th grade. I had the comfort of knowing that CIEE would provide pre-departure assistance, orientation upon arrival, and help with getting acclimated to my accommodations and school. Although the program was not free, paying for those assurances eliminated some stress moving to a new country to teach.

Since the late 1940s, CIEE has been dedicated to providing educational experiences that transform lives. “In the years immediately following World War II, a number of organizations and institutions emerged in the U.S. and abroad that were dedicated to promoting peaceful coexistence and respect between nations through student and teacher exchange programs. It soon became clear that these organizations needed expert assistance in coordinating their efforts. To

fulfill that need, CIEE (or the Council on Student Travel, as it was then known) was founded in 1947 and, in its first year of operation, attracted the participation of 32 member organizations. These were primarily U.S. nonprofits and cultural agencies that were engaged in sponsoring groups of students who wanted to travel to Europe for educational purposes. By the mid-1950s, the Council on Student Travel (CST) was facilitating travel by U.S. students to study in Europe and bringing international students to the U.S. At the same time, CST established operations abroad and began sponsoring conferences on student travel for administrators, educators, and teachers. In the 1960s, CST emerged as the locus of strategic and policy discussions on the future direction of intercultural education. In recognition of this strategic shift, in 1967 the Council on Student Travel changed its name to the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE)”.

CIEE offers a number of different comprehensive exchange programs that allow everyone to have opportunities and experiences that allow them to walk away with multiple perspectives. Expand the horizons of students there are study abroad programs where students can go on their own, faculty-led and custom programs, high school abroad, a gap year abroad, high school summer abroad. There are various internships for students going to the USA to attend high school. Along with those other programs the company also has a few work exchange options such as teach abroad, internship USA, work, and travel within the USA.

When I sought out The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) to teach in Thailand for a semester my intention was to embark on a journey that would allow me to put my teaching philosophy into practice. What I gained from the experience was much more than I could have asked for. It was not enough for me to be “taught” about global perspective but for my professional journey and for a true personal metamorphosis to occur I had to have first hand

experience. Striving for that global perspective and international awareness my journey began. I traveled to Thailand in May 2019 and taught in a town called Chanthaburi until October 2019. Teaching internationally, provided me with the self-efficacy needed to challenge me in a new cultural teaching context, bring a global perspective to the classroom, and develop intercultural professional competences. Teaching in Thailand impacted my identity and my classroom practices. I had a deeper engagement with cultural diversity. The experience helped me gain a deeper sense of cultural identity to understand my privileges of diverse cultural identity.

### **III. Teaching experience in Thailand**

“Traveling - it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller.”

*-Ibn Battuta (1304-1369)*

### **III. Teaching experience in Thailand**

#### **A. Background and country profile:**

This section talks about my journey to Thailand. It is a brief information about the country, the education system, and linguistic features of the language. My experience teaching at the school and what I've learned.

##### *Country Profile*

Thailand, officially the Kingdom of Thailand and formerly known as Siam, is a country at the center of the Southeast Asian Indochinese Peninsula composed of 76 provinces. The capital and largest city is Bangkok. Thailand is bordered to the north by Myanmar and Laos, to the east by Laos and Cambodia, to the south by the Gulf of Thailand and Malaysia, and to the west by the Andaman Sea and the southern extremity of Myanmar. It is a unitary state. Although nominally the country is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy. Through the 18th and 19th centuries, Siam faced pressure from France and the United Kingdom, including forced concessions of territory; nevertheless, it remained the only Southeast Asian country to avoid direct Western rule. Following a bloodless revolution in 1932, Siam became a constitutional monarchy and changed its official name to *Thailand*.

Thailand comprises several distinct geographic regions, partly corresponding to the provincial groups. Thailand's climate is influenced by monsoon winds that have a seasonal character. Thailand is divided into three seasons. The first is the rainy or southwest monsoon season (mid-May to mid-October) which prevails over most of the country. This season is characterized by abundant rain with August and September being the wettest period of the year.

Nonetheless, dry spells commonly occur for 1 to 2 weeks from June to early July. Winter or the northeast monsoon starts from mid–October until mid–February. Most of Thailand experiences dry weather during this season with mild temperatures. The exception is the southern parts of Thailand where it receives abundant rainfall, particularly during October to November. Summer or the pre–monsoon season runs from mid–February until mid–May and is characterized by warmer weather.

### *Education System*

Education is provided by a well-organized school system of kindergartens, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools, numerous vocational colleges, and universities. Education is compulsory up to and including age 14, with the government providing free education through to age 17.

Pre-primary/Pre-school (optional) offered from age three to six and is provided for free by the government. It was introduced in 2004 and made free in 2009. Some state run schools offer two years of Kindergarten (anuban) for three and four year olds. And one year of preschool for 5 year olds. Primary/Elementary School (*Prathom 1-6*) compulsory from age six to twelve for all children. Secondary school (Mathayom) it's split into lower (mathayom 1-3) and higher (mathayom 4-6) levels lasting three years each level. Education at public school is free until the 9th grade (Mathayom 3) . The government provides 3 years free for upper secondary students but it is not compulsory to attend. The upper secondary education is divided into general and vocational tracks. There are academic, vocational or comprehensive schools that offer both tracks. Admission to an upper secondary school is through an entrance exam. On the completion of each level, students need to pass the NET (National Educational Test) to graduate. Children

are required to attend six years of elementary school and at least the first three years of high school. Those who graduate from the sixth year of high school are candidates for two tests: O-NET (Ordinary National Educational Test) and A-NET (Advanced National Educational Test).

Public schools are administered by the government. The private sector includes schools run for profit and fee-paying non-profit schools which are often run by charitable organisations — especially by Catholic diocesan and religious orders that operate over 300 large elementary/secondary schools throughout the country. Village and sub-district schools usually provide pre-school kindergarten and elementary classes, while in the district towns, schools will serve their areas with comprehensive schools with all the classes from kindergarten to age 15 and separate secondary schools for ages 13 through 18. The school year is divided into two semesters. The first begins in the beginning of May and ends in October; the second begins in November and ends in March.

### *Language*

The official language of Thailand is Thai, a Tai-Kadai language. The country has sixty-two recognized languages with varying dialects throughout the region. Numerous tribal languages are spoken but English is mandatory as a school subject. Some Thai linguistic elements can also be carried over to other languages that fall under the Tai language family. This language family includes languages spoken in Laos, northern Vietnam and northern Myanmar. According to the authors of, *A Contrastive Study of English and Thai*, “in the field of second language learning, it is widely agreed that if some grammatical points of learners’ first language

or mother tongue is similar to those existing in their target language, a positive transfer can occur. However, if such points are more or less different than those in the second language, a negative transfer will be likely to take place” (Defense Language Inst., 1974).

### *Features of the Thai language compared to English language*

- **Phonology**

Thai is made up of an alphabet containing 44 consonants, 2 diacritics [a sign, such as an accent or cedilla, which when written above or below a letter indicates a difference in pronunciation from the same letter when unmarked or differently marked], and 10 decimal digits. There are 32 vowels which can be written by combinations of 18 vowel symbols and 3 consonants. The consonants are classified into three classes- namely, high, middle and low consonants- which can affect the syllable tone when functioning as initial sound. The language also has five different tones that can be used when pronouncing a word- these five tones are: low, mid, falling, high, rising. Additionally, there are 4 tone marks in the Thai script. A change in tone can alter the meaning of a word. In Thai the meaning of a syllable can vary depending on which of five tones is used to pronounce it. Stress and tone and intonation in English are used differently than Thai. In English the stress functions at the word level and syllable level. Similar in Thai but it is much more complex. Tonal and intonation problems can lead students to not understand some nuanced concepts that are found in English; such as sarcasm, change in character mood etc. Also the phonology of the language can have an adverse effect on the students' spelling. Thai is an alphabetic language but there are some differences between English. English has 26 letters and uses them in various combinations to produce 35 sounds. Thai has 64

letters and uses them in combinations to produce 38 sounds. All letters maintain the same sound throughout the Thai lang.

- **Morphology**

Students need to know how different word forms function in English. The Thai language contains almost none of the morphological patterns which are listed in English. The areas of difficulty will be around the inflectional affixes of English, the derivational forms of English and the morphological variation of some English words. Thai makes no grammatical distinction between first and third person verb forms. The first and third person verb forms are generally understood by their context or by specifying “i” or “he”. Thai also shows no distinction between past and future tense.

A Comparison of English and Thai Morphology		
Morphological Patterns	English	Thai
<b>Inflectional affixes</b>		
1. plural nouns	many	none
2. possessives	many	none
3. present tense, 3rd per. sing.	many	none
4. past tense and past participle	many	none
5. comparative & superlative degrees	many	none
<b>Derivational forms</b>		
6. changing part of speech	many	none
7. changing meaning	many	almost none
8. variation in "strong verbs"	many	none
9. variation in noun gender	many	none
<b>Other kinds of morphological variation</b>		
10. case variation in pronouns	many	none
11. variation in ordinal numbers	many	none
12. variation in determiners	many	none

There are many aspects of English morphology that do not have counterparts in Thai. The chart above shows some of the areas that are comparative. Important to note that Thai does not have verb inflections, whereas English has several verb inflections. Inflectional affixes in English

which have no counterparts in Thai are regular verbs shown in past tense or past participle for example:

Billie reported (1) to us that he has reported (2) for duty.

1. Reported past tense
2. reported past participle

Another aspect is the comparative and superlative inflection of English adverbs and adjectives.

fast faster fastest

pretty prettier prettiest

Some Derivational Changes in English and Thai		
Derivational Change	English Examples	Thai
Vowel Change in "strong verbs"	drive-drove-driven sing -sang -sung	none
Changes in Part of Speech		
adjective to adverb	slow-slowly	the prefix /ydaŋ/ changes adjectives into adverbs
adjective to noun	serene-serenity	none
adjective to verb	white-whiten	none
noun to adverb	human-humanly	none
noun to adjective	pastor-pastoral	none
noun to verb	beauty-beautify	none
verb to adjective	agree-agreeable	none
verb to noun	run-runner	none
Changes in Meaning		
	childish-childlike	none
	institute-institution	none
	continual-continuous	none
Changes in both Meaning and Part of Speech		
noun to adjective	human-humane	none
Changes in Meaning Through Prefixing		
negation	important-unimportant	very rare
Changes in Gender		
masculine to feminine	actor-actress	a few nouns have derivational gender contrasts.

These elements don't have a comparison in Thai morphology; so some mistakes that students can make in these areas can be made when they are making direct language transfer. These skills would need to be specifically taught. Important for teachers to recognize these areas of growth

for students so that they can provide the students with additional support. Thai words do not change based on the concepts of singular vs plural. ‘Also an ‘s’ sound at morphological marks such as -s -es -ies or irregular forms of the verbs are not used to indicate plural nouns in Thai. Only one form of the noun is used in Thai and it is supplemented with numeral classifiers. According to John Anyan’s research, the end of a word is not pronounced in Thai which means that plural nouns are frequently pronounced as singular. This could be the sources of some English grammatical problems of Thai learners of English. Another area that students may show signs of difficulty with can be with auxiliary verbs such as is, am, are, was, were, do , does, did, has, have, had etc. The Thai language doesn't utilize them. Thai also does not have parts of speech- such as articles.

- **Syntax**

In terms of syntax the sentence structure between both languages are distinctly different. Some of the distinctions are related to punctuation rather than any specific grammatical function. Writing in Thai has no spacing between the words in the sentence, no use of capital or lowercase letters. Several Thai words can be used as adjectives and adverbs so students may have trouble related to their usage and placement in English sentences. The following chart was taken from *A Contrastive Study of English and Thai (1974)* and it shows the similarities and differences between some sentence types in English and Thai. The comparisons from the chart are brief without any in depth explanation. It is only meant as a baseline, to guide someone to where they may look if they see a specific area that students need developing.

Sentence Types	English	Thai
3.1. Minor Sentences		
3.1.1. Exclamations	many	many
3.1.2. Aphorisms	few	few
3.1.3. Answers	followed by auxiliaries: <u>Yes, I do.</u>	followed by verbs: <u>Yes, I like.</u>
3.2. Simple Sentences	subject obligatory	subject optional
3.3. Compound Sentences	many conjunctions	few conjunctions
3.4. Complex Sentences		
3.5. Adjectival Constructions	many: <u>She is eager to help.</u>	none
3.6.1. Nominalizations	many: <u>To be sick is annoying.</u>	few
3.6.2. Relative Clauses	restrictive & non-restrictive clauses similar	restrictive & non-restrictive clauses dissimilar

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3.7. Negation	marked by <u>not</u> and the auxiliary <u>do</u>	marked only by <u>/mây/ no</u>
3.8. Questions	marked by the auxiliary <u>do</u> or inversion	marked only by final particles
3.9. Tag Questions	content of question is answered	form of question is answered
3.10. Emphatic	marked by <u>do: I do like rice.</u>	marked by final particles
3.11. Imperative	subject is deleted	subject deletion & final particle
3.12. Passive	1) subject-object inversion 2) use of auxiliary <u>to be</u> 3) verb changed to past participle	1) subject-object inversion 2) use of <u>/dây/ by</u> 3) use of particle marking passive
3.13. Direct and Indirect Objects	<u>SVD to I</u> or <u>SVID</u>	<u>SVD /két/ to I</u> or <u>SVDI</u>
3.14. Stylistic Inversions	several: <u>Here we find fish.</u>	none

## B. School and curriculum

I taught 3rd and 4th-grade students at Saritdidet School in Chanthaburi Thailand which is on the eastern side of Thailand. The school has 3500 students and each class, on average, has 40 students. I taught two 3rd grade classrooms of 29/30 students in each class and two 4th grade

classrooms with 40 students each. The school is a government run public co-ed elementary day school with traditional hours of Monday to Friday from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. In Thai classrooms, there is always a Thai headteacher and a Thai assistant teacher who has a basic command of English. The assistant teacher generally stays with the students throughout the day and will take them to other classes and special activities.

The curriculum the school used was [English Smart Start](#) for both 3rd and 4th grade. I was expected to teach 5 themes for the entire semester with each theme expecting to take a month to cover. I had each class 4 times per week for an hour each class. The strict timeline for lesson activities sometimes proved to be a struggle with various holidays, standardized testing and whole school activities that students participated in. The assistant teachers tried their best to switch class times so that students got the chance to make up the missing period but it didn't always work out exactly as planned. *i-Learn Smart Start* is a SIX-level course for young learners of English. It has been developed by an experienced team of international writers and teachers to be a perfect fit for any classroom. The Grade 4 Themes were; school, animals, shopping trip, home, and travel. The Grade 3 Themes were; numbers, school, body and face, clothes, and home. The books provided were the Smart Start teacher manual, student book, and student workbook. There were also some vocabulary flashcards and scripted Thai lesson plans provided. The Teachers received; class CD, Flashcards, Test pack, Teacher's Book, and Digital Classroom Resources (DCR) software / IWB. The students received; Student's textbooks and Workbook. There were Digital Home Activities (DHA) software / MultiROM available but I don't think the students were allowed to take it home or if they used it.

For each of my classes, I had selected 5- 6 focus students to work with for my Master's project in mind. Each day I would record what lessons and activities I taught to which grade and took a few notes on how the activities went with the students. Each class was very different in terms of the classroom management style of the headteacher/ assistant teachers. I was required to follow along with the disciplinary systems already implemented by the class and school culture. At the beginning, not speaking Thai led to a few misunderstandings with the students with regards to activity instructions. So as time went on I taught my lessons with more visuals and auditory aids, and included step by step instructions. For certain tasks that were more complex I had one student who understood the activity translate what was required of the students. Using that as a foundation I would keep building on my lesson activities so that students knew my routine and what they were expected to do. As I was teaching I noticed that some of the text in the book was culturally irrelevant for the students that I worked with. The curriculum was heavily influenced by The United Kingdom and their perspectives on what all students should learn and should already be able to know. Building rapport with my students came from a sticker reward system that I was not fond of but seemed to work for the 3rd-grade students. The English abilities of the students in each classroom varied from no understanding to a proficient level. However, with this range, I noticed that most of the students were excellent at workbook tasks but had a hard time communicating ideas and understanding simple conversations spoken at a native speaking level. Working closely with the abilities of the students I tried to create groupings for the students to work on various activities. The small groups/ peer work worked well for the 3rd-grade students because each classroom had only 29/30 students with small desks and chairs, their classroom was also moderately bigger than the 4th-grade room. Despite not

being able to always rearrange the small 4th-grade classroom I still wanted all my students to improve their listening and speaking skills. With that in mind, I focused on including YouTube videos, listening activities, games, and a variety of activities that allowed students to speak in groups. Thankfully, the Books provided by the school included audio activities; I was given files that were uploaded to the teacher's computers in each classroom. The students had a graphic that went along with the audio so they were able to listen and watch the book at the same time. This started working great until the speakers in one of the 4th grade classrooms stopped working for about three months. This really impacted how the lessons were taught as well as student engagement. Seeing as how my objectives for my students were listening and speaking skills I focused a lot of time and activities on conversational skills.

### *Prathom 3/ Grade 3*

At the end of the term, I was able to complete all five themes for the 3rd grade class with my inclusions of various videos, games and activities. The students also completed the activities in their workbooks. There were a few lesson activities that I substituted, modified or eliminated for the third grades. The most interesting thematic unit to teach was *body and face*. For this unit the students participated in Simon says, hokey pokey, parts of the body bingo, They learned how to describe someone with phrases such as; What does she/he look like? He has..... And they were taught the comparative adjectives; taller/shorter. Along with learning how to describe human bodies we also talked about and compared animal bodies. Thai students tend to generalize material given to them and stick to sentences given to them verbatim. I started the students off learning and repeating simple sentences but encouraged them to use the language in a practical

way. Many of the games were scaffolded where the students were the ones giving each other instructions. For example students rotated who was Simon, or who called out the parts of the body during bingo. One of the things I appreciated from the book was scripted dialogue. Every so often I had the students read a dialogue to each other to incorporate reading fluency and word recognition. Also at the back of the text book each lesson in the unit included a song. The song related to the sentence structures and vocabulary that the students had learned throughout the lesson. I had the students practice the song at nauseum in hopes that they would utilize some of the sentence structures in their own speech. By utilizing the song, videos and audio my objective was to allow the students to hear different speakers say words that they were familiar with. By practicing their listening skills it will allow them to develop their receptive and expressive language skills.

**Unit 3: Body and Face**

Lesson 1	
<b>Student Objective</b>	Students will be able to name parts of the body and face

Lesson 1 Vocabulary	Lesson 1 Key Phrases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Head</li> <li>● Body</li> <li>● Arm</li> <li>● Hand</li> <li>● Leg</li> <li>● Foot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What's this?</li> <li>● It's my _____.</li> <li>● What's = what is</li> <li>● It's = it is</li> </ul>

Lesson 2	
<b>Student Objective</b>	Students will be able to name parts of the body and face Students will be able to describe people

Lesson 2 Vocabulary	Lesson 2 Key Phrases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hair</li> <li>● Nose</li> <li>● eye/eyes</li> <li>● ear/ears</li> <li>● Mouth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What does she look like?</li> <li>● She had black hair.</li> <li>● What does he look like?</li> <li>● He has.....</li> </ul>

Lesson 3	
<b>Student Objective</b>	Students will be able to name parts of the body and face

Lesson 3 Vocabulary	Lesson 3 Key Phrases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Face</li> <li>● Tongue</li> <li>● Chin</li> <li>● tooth/teeth</li> <li>● cheek/ cheeks</li> <li>● lip/lips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Touch its chin</li> <li>● Touch your</li> <li>● Touch his</li> <li>● Touch her</li> </ul>

Lesson 4	
<b>Student Objective</b>	Students will be able to compare people by size.

Lesson 4 Vocabulary	Lesson 4 Key Phrases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Taller</li> <li>● Shorter</li> <li>● Bigger</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You're taller than me</li> <li>● He's shorter than me</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller</li> <li>• Thinner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She's taller than me</li> </ul>
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	<b>Lesson 5</b>
<b>Student Objective</b>	Review and test practice

Because I had 59 3rd graders it was difficult to learn all their names and provide individualized feedback and instruction. So during this unit I had the students complete an all about me activity hand out. Something that helped me get to know the students a little better. This is one of the activities that also allowed me to informally assess the students' language abilities. After all the students had completed the project they each took a picture with the self portrait that they created of themselves. The self portraits was one of the most intriguing and eye opening activities I did with my students. It gave me an insight into their homelves but also showed me how they viewed themselves as a person.

*Prathom 4/ Grade 4*

Similarly for the fourth grade, having 80 of them was very overwhelming. I quickly learned that I had to structure the class in a way where the students were doing most of the work, talking, explaining and I provided them with feedback. Again; my objective was developing their English listening and speaking skills in a natural context while it being a foreign language for them. I was stuck with how to accomplish my goals for them with so many of them in the class. Another obstacle I faced was the language barrier. I wanted the students to utilize their Thai language skills and practice translanguaging in a way that benefited them. However, that didn't always go over well with the headteacher and assistant teachers who only wanted them focusing

on English during my class period. However, I was able to bypass that by periodically including a mini-lesson that involved the students teaching me some of the key vocabulary words for the lessons. Once the students noticed that I was willing to learn their language they became more engaged in learning. This activity also gave the struggling students a chance to make those cross-linguistic connections.

The same predicament occurred with many students in the fourth grade. It was hard to learn all the students' names and provide that individual attention that each student deserves. I wanted to work with the students, in a meaningful way, that would naturally and organically teach language. Working with the development stages of the fourth graders I intentionally structured lessons and activities in ways for them to include their own thoughts and thinking. My goal was to allow students the opportunity to ask and answer questions that they wanted to know about. I wanted them to be able to utilize their knowledge of English language to have a conversation with a Native speaker that didn't sound scripted and robotic. Most of the students had no problem working in the workbooks and occasionally coming homework from each other. My objective was to give students the freedom to express themselves with the vocabulary and understandings..

I selected six students from each class to work with me individually after lunch. Part one they would complete a questionnaire; Student Interview Questions and part two they would take 5 photographs of their school and explain to me why they selected those images (see Appendix). Unfortunately, the pictures got deleted but I have video of the students explaining to me about each picture. I wanted to work with a few students to help them improve their English speaking abilities. I wanted to foster organic conversation that wasn't rote and scripted from the textbook.

Providing students with the opportunity to use their English language skills in “real time” and in a real context. Going into the activity I knew that the students would not have all of the vocabulary right away but I was hoping to provide an exploratory option for students to see that learning English was meaningful and it could be used outside of the classroom.

Here are responses from the survey: Question 2: What do you hate about school?

Unanimously the students answered homework. Question 9 asked students to use five words to describe themselves. This question gave me great insight into cultural practices of how the students viewed themselves. Some of the answers were; tall, smart. Happy, dance, thin, short, beautiful, funny, honest, generous, and much more. From each of the students and their responses I could see how their self view interacted with their school experience. This activity allowed me to tap into the students' confidence. They were more willing to make mistakes and take chances in class. It was a great informal assessment into what and how I should be teaching, giving students the voice to share with a new “foreign” teacher their school and to know them a little better.

### *C. Reflection of my experience*

Taking that leap of faith and jumping into teaching in Thailand will always be an unforgettable part of my metamorphosis to becoming a globally-minded teacher. The experience in Thailand deepened my understanding of global awareness while the physical and emotional journey taught me how to be resilient. If I had to do the experience again I don't think I would have done anything differently. There are many things that didn't seem to go right but every up and down taught me valuable lessons.

I developed skills and practices that allowed me to experience first-hand culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1994) and culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010; McAllister & Irvine, 2000). I challenged myself to think and teach outside the box to fit the needs of the students. I understood that developmentally all children go through similar experiences and stages. Throughout my time in Thailand, I kept a journal of what I was teaching to which group of students on what days and times. This process helped me modify each lesson according to what school and personal activities were going on. Although the experience was great it left me with a lot of questions about the educational system in Thailand. Mainly why were the class sizes so large and their views on Special Education? The things I struggled within the classroom, directly and indirectly, related to both of those things. I figured that having a smaller class size would allow the teachers to provide students with more individualized instruction. None of the students will fall through the cracks. However, I'm not sure if this policy pertains to the entire country but I know for the school I taught at there was a no-fail rule. None of the teachers, Thai or foreigner, were allowed to fail any of the students for any reason. That made it harder for me to discipline those students who had no motivation or desire to do school work. But this allowed the students who could benefit from US Special Education services to fall through the cracks. I would love to delve deeper and explore comparative education between the US and Thailand with a special focus on Special Education. I am curious to know if it has cultural implications, the progress of the country's educational philosophies and policies, or a mixture of both.

Professionally I grew through my teaching but personally I grew as I was learning to love how to teach. Reflecting on my experience in Thailand the concept of a globally competent teacher never occurred to me. I was simply enjoying my time experience getting paid to teach in

a beautiful country that I got to explore. It was not until I started to put the pieces of my Master's thesis together that I was intrigued to learn more about globally competent teachers. Although I met a lot of teachers from all over the world with varying backgrounds many of them left me wondering the essential questions, How can someone have international teaching experience and still be oblivious to the power and privileges they hold? This question became evident and was the fuel for my exploration into global education after I was asked by a white male teacher; *Do you know what tribe in Africa your family is from?* 'Huh, what?' I was left dumbfounded to say the very least. This question made me rethink the existence of teachers all over the globe. How can our deep-rooted biases and phobias affect the way we value education. I was determined to let that experience influence my metamorphosis on my personal and professional journey.

#### *Teacher interviews:*

While I was in Thailand I was curious to learn about other teachers' journeys. I put together a series of questions/questionnaires to find out more from the people who embarked on the journey to teach in Thailand via the CIEE program and who were teaching in various provinces throughout Thailand (see Appendix). They all had various educational backgrounds, teaching experiences and came from all over the United States. They were diverse in their socio-economic status as well as their ages, ethnicities, and linguistic backgrounds. My questions ranged from the basic information of who the "teachers" were, to their language abilities, their experience in Thailand and a general reflection.

#### ***Does being considered a "foreigner", affect the way you teach in Thailand?***

**WH** "Being a foreigner has become a big part of my personal identity since living in Thailand. I live in a small community where I am the only foreigner. But my school and the community are very accepting of me and accommodating which has made this a very positive experience."

**AW** “Yes. I think you deserve less respect as a young American teacher from students, which did not help my teaching efforts.”

**KN** “Yes it does. Because I know the kids will pass anyway, so I don’t see the point in working hard to create a solid lesson when they won’t listen or care.”

***What do you want ALL teachers to know about teaching in general?***

**AW** “To remember that you are making a difference in the kids' lives, simply by being there and telling your stories and sharing your experiences.”

**TY** “You aren’t going to impact the students as much as you think you might be able to. You’re not going to change their lives. Especially in just 6 months or a year. **ESPECIALLY** if you are a new teacher and don’t really know what you are doing yourself. That stuff is for the movies. Just do your best and try to connect with the students. If you’re lucky (and work hard) maybe you’ll be able to make a positive difference for a few of the students you teach.”

**KN** “Students thrive best when they’re grouped into levels. Having everyone learn in the same class takes away from both the smart students and those struggling. Also, lecturing should never be done in younger classrooms. They are too energetic and don’t have the attention span. They require a lot of hands on activities to get them fully engaged.”

Listening to the stories of other teachers, teaching in Thailand, allowed me to see the global impact education has on all of us. No matter our background or experience, developing a critical reflective practice benefits us all. Global awareness and knowledge seeps into our lives and transforms our thinking. We are all interconnected in one way or another so as educators we are responsible for the power or our biases. We must use our privilege to be globally responsible teachers that shape a better future for the upcoming generations.

#### **IV. Summary Discussion**

##### **“To Be Young, Gifted & Black”**

*Nina Simone* (1933-2003)

To be young, gifted and black,  
Oh what a lovely precious dream  
To be young, gifted and black,

Open your heart to what I mean  
In the whole world you know  
There are billion of boys and girls  
Who are young, gifted and black,  
And that's a fact!

Young, gifted and black  
We must begin to tell our young  
There's a world waiting for you  
Yours is a quest that's just begun  
When you feel really low  
Yeah, there's a great truth you should know  
When you're young, gifted and black  
Your soul's intact

Young, gifted and black  
How I long to know the truth  
There are times when I look back  
And I am haunted by my youth  
Oh but my joy of today  
Is that we can all be proud to say  
To be young, gifted and black  
Is where it's at

#### **IV. Summary Discussion**

##### **A. My learning on this journey**

Throughout this metamorphic journey, I have found that not only did I have multiple stories to tell, but there were also stories that I needed to hear. Listening to the stories of my Thai students, of other teachers and of the global community I learned what skills, knowledge and dispositions I needed to become a global learner and educator. My privilege allowed me to experience teaching internationally, it allowed me the freedom to challenge myself personally and professionally. Teaching and learning in Thailand gave me the power to become a globally competent teacher.

No matter where a teacher teaches there will always be something they need to adjust to; the school community, being with different students, etc. but doing this project taught me that traveling helps turn us into storytellers but it also turns us into listeners. I've learned how important it is to support children's identity so that they can grow. Giving them a voice so that they can share their intersectionalities. I've found that students don't always want to be taught but they want to learn and the best way I teach is by learning. It has been through learning a new language, culture, and customs that I've become a better teacher. By teaching and traveling to Thailand I have now added value to my cultural identity. My story has expanded and shifted. Without this experience, I would have taken for granted the importance of knowing a name that goes along with the story that my students have to share. For me, the greatest joy of being a globally-minded teacher is that I can listen to the metamorphic journey of many students across the globe.

## **B. Recommendations for the field**

For teachers who may have Thai students or other students who are linguistically diverse, in their classroom. These are a few strategies that can be utilized in the classroom regardless of whether the teacher speaks the students' language or not. From my conversations with a Thai native, an ESL teacher, and teacher who taught in Bangkok Thailand for a year; "students coming from a Thai background are normally spoon-fed information, they are told to focus on rote memorization and not the practical application of English grammar rules or pragmatic rules utilized in spoken lang. Everything is written and may not be in the correct context. A lot of times the students are not able to use the knowledge that they are taught to situations outside of the classroom. Keeping her tips in mind I created a list of things that teachers can use or should remember when working with all ESL students, not only Thai students.

1. *Learn key words in the language of your students*
  - a. Making an attempt to learn and know the language of the students goes a long way. Regardless of the language students speak making an effort to understand helps build the students' self-esteem and promotes diverse cultural and linguistic acceptance.
2. *Make the information visual*
  - a. Provide students with as many visuals as possible. However, knowing the type of visuals and how to incorporate them into the lesson(s) is key.
  - b. Label objects in the classroom in multiple languages. It helps the students learn their native language but also helps other students acknowledge and recognize the many other languages in the world.
3. *Include group work where students of similar languages can communicate together.*
4. *Speak to the ESL teacher*
  - a. If you are not the ESL teacher, share the knowledge to get the students the support that they need.

- b. Collaborating with my colleagues and forming professional relationships, working collaboratively with families could also have a lasting impact on the design and management of my classroom.
5. *Honor the silent period*
    - a. Students may not speak right away. But pay attention to some students who may be passive and will not ask for help when they are in the dark about something.
  6. *Use sentence frames to give students practice with academic language.*
  7. *Beware of rote memorization.*
    - a. Thai Students are accustomed to rote memorization. Create interactive opportunities to make English their own.
    - b. Students are never too old for dramatic play. It is through play that students learn
    - c. Be culturally sensitive and come up with strategies, to break the memorization cycle. Something for the student to utilize in the classroom as well as at home.
  8. *Give students of all languages abilities their time to shine*
  9. *Have age-appropriate literature books and multimedia resources in Thai*
    - a. Create a classroom that has a multilingual ecology: create a space with multilingual materials, language resources, dictionaries, picture dictionaries, and bilingual dictionaries.

Along with those recommendations educators have ample opportunities to develop their skills and dispositions that foster a global mindset. Options include global experiences that can be based on international travel and others that are locally inspired. Experiences can include studying abroad, student teaching abroad, or getting paid to teach teaching internationally. There are many programs such as the one I choose that help experienced and novice teachers whet their appetite with international teaching. Many people also choose not to pay and apply directly to international schools in the countries of their choice. Other options include teaching agencies that help candidates get connected with schools. A few agencies that I have come across are: *Search*

*Associates, Teach Away, and Edvectus*. There are many more depending on the region a person may want to teach in.

For those teachers who don't anticipate making a big move to teach and live abroad other options include studying abroad during undergraduate studies or even student teaching abroad. I have also studied Spanish in Spain and Mexico and those opportunities gifted me with a different outlook on life. Experiencing the world during various stages in my life impacted how I value my power and privilege. As a global citizen during all of these stages being reflective and critical of pedagogy empowered the way one explores education. Creating meaningful and productive learning opportunities that explore global relations of power and privilege and encourage engagement with global issues. Not only should educators take it upon themselves to seek out international studying and teaching opportunities but I agree with Kopish who states, "teacher education programs should work to infuse global content into existing courses, create new global courses, and offer more global experiences, such as international study abroad opportunities, immersion experiences, support for learning other languages, and international exchange opportunities" (2017). Educational programs and teachers alike have an obligation to prepare students for a multicultural and global world.

In that regard, international student teaching can also be an option. "Student teaching placements in other cultures provide tremendous opportunities for students to experience life in another context, learn about another person's view of the world from an insider's perspective, examine alternative approaches to teaching, and, thus, became more global in their thoughts and actions" (Cushner, 2011). International field experiences, including overseas student teaching, emerged as an important way to expand the worldview of new teachers and bring a needed

global perspective to their curriculum development and classroom instruction. These opportunities abroad change the way teachers think about themselves, their students, curriculum design, and teaching strategies.

In lieu of international experiences, teachers can start developing global knowledge and skills by working with the local resources at their disposal. In many American schools, today families come with a wealth of knowledge to share. Highlights customs and traditions unique to each family fosters that home-school connections in ways that don't leave students feeling idealized or tokenized. Cultural immersion experiences can start in the classrooms and extend to the local community. These authentic experiences highlight the importance of creating opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue in classroom and community settings as a way to build cross-cultural awareness, relationships, and communication skills (Kopish, 2017).

### **C. Conclusion**

Each story can save a life, adults need to move out of the way and give students a chance to change the world with their stories. Globally competent teachers create a safe space for their students to unlock their stories from deep within by exposing them to different stories; about community, gender, family, economics, language etc.

After a long physical and mental journey, I can truly say that I have only begun my journey. This experience has taught me that there is always so much to learn about myself and about teaching. But being a globally competent teacher means continuous learning, and listening. The world does not have a single story and if you stop and ask, it will show you the true essence of metamorphosis.

## **V. Bibliography**

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

— *Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)*

## V. Bibliography

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## **VI. Appendices**

## **V. Appendices**

### **Appendix A. Student Interview Questions**

#### **Part 1:** All about me

**Instructions:** Answer the following questions in English or Thai.

1. What do you like about school?
2. What do you hate about school?
3. What do you want teachers to know about you?
4. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
5. What are your hobbies?
6. What do you enjoy doing in your free time?
7. Think about your favorite teacher, you've had so far and what are the characteristics *ลักษณะ* of this teacher that you like?
8. What advice would you give another student in Teacher Sheri's class?
9. Write **5 words** to describe yourself.
10. What's one thing that makes you feel happy?
11. Why do you like learning English?
12. How can teachers make classes better and more interesting?

#### **Part 2:** What do you want people to know about your school?

**Instructions:** Each person has to take 5 pictures of different things around the school.

- Why is this photo important to you?
- How does this photo represent Saritdidet school?

## Appendix B. Teacher Interview Questions

### 1. Basic Information

- a. Name:
- b. What do the Thai students call you and why? How did you get your “Thai” name?
- c. Age:
- d. Gender:
- e. Race:
- f. What's your educational background? Do you have a degree in education or a certificate in TESL?
- g. Have you taught before? Where? When? And for how long?

### 2. Teaching in Thailand

- a. Where are you located in Thailand?
- b. What type of school do you teach in?
- c. What grade(s) do you teach?
- d. How did you obtain your current teaching position? Was it through an agency or on your own? How was the application process?
- e. What would you describe as being the best part of teaching in Thailand?
- f. What would you describe as being the worst part of teaching in Thailand?
- g. How would you compare teaching in Thailand to teaching in other places?
- h. What do you want ALL teachers to know about teaching in general?
- i. Do you have any recommendations/ advice for teachers teaching in Thailand or somewhere other than their *home* country?
- j. Do you have to use a curriculum? Or come up with your own lesson plans?

### 3. Language learner

- a. What language do you speak?
- b. How many languages can you speak/ understand?
- c. Are you proficient in any of these languages?
- d. If you are a second language learner how has that prior experience affected how you teach?
- e. How does being a language learner play a role in your teaching or does it?

### 4. Reflecting

- a. How long have you been a teacher?
- b. How long have you been a teacher in Thailand?
- c. What have you learned about yourself as a teacher/ personally after having taught abroad?
- d. How has this experience (teaching in Thailand) changed your perspective on teaching or learning style?
- e. What motivated you to become a teacher in Thailand?
- f. Does being considered a “foreigner”, affect the way you teach in Thailand?