

Multiple Dimensions of Teacher Development on an International Practicum

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Betsy Gilliland

University of Hawai'i Mānoa, USA
<egillila@hawaii.edu>

Jay Tanaka

Hokkaido University, Japan
<jaymt@imc.hokudai.ac.jp>

Bethany F. Schwartz

University of Hawai'i Mānoa, USA
<bfschwar@hawaii.edu>

Maria Díez-Ortega

University of Hawai'i Mānoa, USA
<mdiez@hawaii.edu>

Abstract

As TESOL programs evolve to meet the demands of a globalized world, teacher-learners benefit from gaining opportunities to practice teaching outside their home countries. This article reports on four researchers' analyses of the experiences of US graduate student teacher-learners participating in a two-month practicum in Thailand. The practicum was designed around theories of sociocultural and experiential learning, intended to support teacher-learners' interaction and challenge their assumptions about language teaching and learning. Practicum participants each designed and taught a class of Thai undergraduate students while taking a supporting seminar. Here we present findings from analyses of the teacher-learners' peer and supervisor observation experiences, reflective practices, curriculum development, and classroom research. In synthesizing these individual studies, we argue that the international context played a key role in fostering the teacher-learners' development by raising their awareness of beliefs and offering them opportunities to experience classroom realities different from what they had read about in textbooks or experienced in their home countries. We conclude with recommendations for extending this line of research, as well as suggestions for teacher educators wishing to implement similar international practicum programs.

Evolving alongside global trends in language teacher education, TESOL practicums include more diverse students and more online programs (Santos, Olsher, & Abeywickrama, 2015). In a practicum, teacher-learners^[1] (TLs) receive supervisor guidance while gradually assuming responsibility in instructional practice (Crookes, 2003). TLs develop as teachers through reflecting on practice, observing other teachers, and enacting curriculum; during a practicum, most TLs experience personal as well as professional development (Andrew & Razoumova, 2017).

Language teachers benefit from leaving their comfort zones, encountering unfamiliar contexts and students. It is well documented how "...the practicum facilitates scaffolded opportunities for experimentation with teaching practice, socialization into a teaching culture, and emergence of teacher identity" (Santos et al., 2015, p. 94). TLs learn practical aspects of teaching, such as lesson planning and classroom management, increase their self-confidence, and grow personally through developing their identities as teachers (Andrew & Razoumova, 2017). These benefits evolve through supported attention to experience, observation, and reflection on practice (Oprandy, 2015). While teacher education programs worldwide require candidates to do some practice teaching, most practicums take place close to TLs' home campuses. Though convenient for TLs and supervisors, this familiarity means that new teachers may maintain assumptions about their students and their work, not problematizing issues of language teaching and learning. Taking the practicum to another country, therefore, can push teachers out of their comfort zones.

Research on practicums outside TLs' home countries has primarily focused on their changing perspectives, particularly majority culture teachers learning about other cultures. Teacher education programs in Hong Kong and the United States have reported value from sending preservice schoolteachers to other countries to live with host families, explore cultural practices, and observe or teach lessons in local schools. Research on these experiences found that teachers overcame preconceptions about multilingual learners and cultural practices while developing personal and intercultural competence and confidence in working with learners from different cultures (Lee, 2011; Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Tang & Choi, 2004). Furthermore, field experiences in Latin America for US preservice schoolteachers have disrupted TLs' assumptions about students and schooling while shifting their professional identities (Dantas, 2007; Malewski & Phillion, 2009). The above studies, however, focused primarily on cultural learning rather than TLs' development of pedagogical abilities in the context of the practicum.

We still know little about the role of international practicums in TLs' development of skills such as lesson planning or reflective practice that have been seen during domestic practicums (Andrew & Razoumova, 2017; Oprandy, 2015; Santos et al., 2015). In describing the practicum examined in this article, Gilliland (2015) observed that TLs recognized connections between culture and teaching, changing their lesson plans to reflect new understandings of students' preferences. She further noted that the international practicum context fostered a learning community among the TLs, who supported each other academically (sharing lesson ideas and advice) and personally (with emotional support and friendship). No research to date, however, has empirically documented how TLs develop pedagogical skills during an international practicum.

This article collects research by four teacher educators leading a practicum at one university in Thailand. Our individual studies focused on different aspects of teacher-learner development (observation, reflection, pedagogy, and research) with the same TL population and context. In this article, we analyze our data to answer the question: What does an international teaching

practicum contribute to teacher learners' development? We argue that the study abroad teaching practicum provides teacher-learners with multiple, simultaneous opportunities for personal and professional growth that are enhanced by the specific context, distance from familiar settings, and teaching in a supportive peer cohort.

Theoretical Grounding

This practicum was framed by theories of sociocultural theory and experiential learning. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory posits that learning does not happen solely within the mind but rather through the mediation of experience and external tools, most prominently language. During practicums, TLs interact with each other, their students, and their environment; in the process, they talk with their peers and write (for themselves and others) about their experiences. Because TLs learn through verbalizing their current understandings followed by strategic mediation to help them reorganize, refine, and reconceptualize their knowledge (Johnson & Golombek, 2011), this practicum incorporated multiple opportunities for oral and written reflection on practice.

In placing TLs in language classrooms with real students, the teaching practicum draws on arguments for experiential learning by Dewey and Kolb. Dewey (1938) promoted grounding learning in experience over theory: "...all principles by themselves are abstract. They become concrete only in the consequences, which result from their application" (p. 20). Building on Dewey and Vygotsky, Kolb (1984) proposed that experience plays a central role in the learning process, in contrast with cognitive theories of learning, which focus on abstractions. Learning, he contended, happens when experiences cause a learner to revisit previously held understandings and replace or adapt them to what they have noticed through reflection on the experience.

The physical environment—the language classroom, university, and host country, in this teaching practicum—mediates learners' opportunities and what they can do within a space, providing both constraints and affordances (Vygotsky, 1978). Kolb (1984) notes that experiences must push learners beyond the comfortable so they can reflect on the experience and develop or refine their theories of practice. This holds equally true for teacher learners, who may enter the practicum with theories of teaching and learning inappropriate for that setting. Tsui describes TLs' learning process: "...the knowledge that teachers develop is jointly constituted by the teachers' acting and the setting in which they operate, that is, the context that they experience" (2012, p. 25). We therefore designed the practicum to engage TLs in the responsibilities of planning and teaching their own classes while also observing, being observed, and reflecting on the process, taking into account the Thai context.

Program and Participants

These studies were conducted during three iterations (summers 2014, 2016, and 2018) of a two-month teaching practicum at Isaan University (IU, pseudonym), a comprehensive public university in northeastern Thailand. IU staff arranged classes of undergraduate and graduate students from various faculties (departments); most faculties requested an emphasis on academic oral language skills.

Participants were MA and PhD students in Second Language Studies from the University of Hawai'i. The TLs (see Table 1 for demographics) each taught English for Academic Purposes to

classes of 8-25 Thai undergraduates. TLs planned, taught, and assessed their own classes, observed their peers, and were observed by peers and instructors.

Table 1. Teacher-Learner Demographics by Cohort

Year	Number of Participants	Degree Program	Age range (average/median)	Average teaching experience (years)	Number TLs with previous practicum experience	L1	Home Countries
2014	8	7 MA 1 PhD	23-50 (31.1/27.5)	3.4	3	3 English 1 Japanese 3 Korean 1 Thai	1 Japan 3 South Korea 1 Thailand 3 USA
2016	14	12 MA 2 PhD	23-39 (29/25.5)	3.6	6	9 English 2 Japanese 2 Korean 1 Mandarin	1 China 2 Japan 2 South Korea 9 USA
2018	8	1 BA* 7 MA	24-46 (28/26)	0.9	3	3 English 2 Japanese 1 Korean 2 Mandarin 1 Tagalog**	2 China 2 Japan 1 South Korea 3 USA

* The BA student in 2018 was in a joint BA-MA pathway program.

** One TL reported both English and Tagalog as L1.

All TLs enrolled in a 3-credit summer graduate seminar, taught by Betsy. The group met occasionally during the semester prior to departure, with readings and discussion focused on English education in Thailand, Thai culture, and teaching preparation. Once in Thailand, the course met weekly to discuss theories of language teaching, practice pedagogical applications, and reflect on teaching and cultural experiences. Course assignments (including lesson plans, journals, and teaching philosophies) were designed to be practical and support TLs' development as reflective practitioners.

Reflection was a core principle of the teaching practicum. TLs kept teaching journals about daily challenges and successes as well as other thoughts on their experiences. In 2016, Jay facilitated reflection activities wherein small groups of TLs met separately to delve deeper into their teaching and learning. Reflection group assignments were continued in 2018. All TLs received two formal videorecorded observations from supervisors, after which the observer and TL met to review the video and discuss the lesson. TLs also observed two TL peers and were observed by peers.

In 2014 and 2016, some^[2] TLs took a second graduate course from Betsy with a focus on classroom action research (AR). While at IU, TLs learned about principles of action research (Burns, 2010), designed interventions, and collected data from their classrooms. On return to Hawai'i, TLs analyzed their data, reviewed literature, and wrote reports of their studies.

Betsy was the professor who organized the practicum and taught the associated seminar; the other authors were PhD students working as assistant supervisors. Jay and Bethany participated on the

same practicum in Thailand in years prior to becoming supervisors. All four authors have extensive experience in language teaching outside their home countries.

Our research studies were approved by the University of Hawai‘i Institutional Review Board. TLs signed consent forms for each researcher’s project. TLs are referred to by pseudonyms unless they approved using their real names in recognition of work they have made public (as in Betsy’s and Maria’s studies).

Teacher Development

We present our individual studies in order of commonality with other teaching practicum programs. First, Bethany examines TLs’ perspectives on supervisor and peer observation, followed by Jay’s analysis of TLs’ experiences with reflection. Both observation and reflection are common practices on most practicums. Maria then discusses a case study of one TL’s integrating concepts of critical pedagogy into her curriculum. Finally, Betsy presents analysis of TLs’ perspectives on conducting action research during the practicum. We conclude the article discussing how these four studies collectively support arguments for taking the TESOL practicum to another country.

Teacher Development Through Observation (Bethany)

Observation and reflection have long been considered essential for teacher learning. However, the quantity and quality of observation vary greatly from program to program. One problem is that teacher observation is increasingly used in high-stakes teacher evaluation systems, so teachers may feel that observation is punitive rather than formative (de Lima & Silva, 2018). Teachers may feel threatened by being observed (Withall & Wood, 1979) or uncomfortable giving and receiving feedback (Copland, 2010). This practicum offers TLs an opportunity to learn from observation in a supportive environment.

An online survey containing Likert-scale and open-ended questions was administered to six TLs at the beginning and ending of the 2018 practicum. (See [Appendix](#) for the survey items.) Likert-type items included statements of positive attitudes toward observation which the participants rated on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) through 4 (strongly agree). In-person interviews with Bethany were also audio-recorded in the last weeks of the practicum. Likert-scale items were quantitatively analyzed for longitudinal change; the small sample size prevented inferential statistical analysis. Open-ended survey answers and interviews were qualitatively analyzed for themes.

The average rating for most survey items either remained the same from beginning to end of the practicum or moved very little (+/- 0.17). Only one item had three participants who chose negative responses at the beginning of the practicum: “Generally, I feel confident when being observed while teaching.” Inferring from responses during the interviews, it appears that two of the TLs least confident about being observed had previous experience of observation being used in harsh or impersonal assessments. By the end of the practicum, only one TL still chose a negative rating for this item but nevertheless moved from 1 (strongly disagree) to 2 (disagree). During the interview, one TL explained, “I have a new impression about being observed. It’s not about judgments. It can be supportive,” and another observed, “I think this practicum is not as scary because my job is not on the line.”

Three survey items improved moderately across the practicum (+0.33): “Being observed by experienced teachers can be effective for improving my teaching,” “Other student teachers offer feedback that is helpful and relevant after observing me,” and “Experienced teachers offer feedback that is helpful and relevant after observing me.” Overall, attitude changes about being an observee were evident in the survey. Attitudes toward being an observer did not change, but most TLs named benefits to their own teaching from observing. They rarely felt they had been helpful to the teacher they were observing, however.

In the interviews, some TLs explained that they were able to observe peer TLs from their reflection group, depending on schedules. One TL described observing a peer as very casual since the class covered subjects they “knew from discussion group.” Several TLs said they would have liked to have been observed by the teacher educators more often but attributed a lack of confidence for preventing them from requesting additional observations early in the practicum. Most of the TLs wanted to observe more of their fellow TLs but lacked time due to class preparation and difficulty coordinating schedules. This scheduling difficulty has been a chronic problem for the program. Although the teachers agreed that observation was helpful for their professional development, some were not fully confident or comfortable with the process. Taken together, these results suggest that this international practicum challenged some TLs’ previous negative attitudes toward being observed. The supportive practicum community contributed to their development as teachers.

Teacher Development Through Reflection (Jay)

At least one element of second language teacher education (L2TE) permeates contextual differences: reflection. Farrell (2012) suggests that *reflection* and *reflective practice* are now mandatory terms in L2TE program curricula. TLs commonly engage in reflective assignments such as teaching journals and group discussions. Because few sufficiently data-led investigations have examined the content and nature of TL reflections (Mann & Walsh, 2017), this study provides a qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012) of TL reflection data in the context of an international practicum.

Reflection data was collected from four distinct reflection assignments during the 2016 practicum: teaching journals, final reflection papers, group discussions, and observation debriefs. TLs had free choice what to write about in their journals, and the content of their reflections was not graded. The final paper was a statement about TLs’ teaching beliefs and thoughts on their development as teachers during the practicum. TLs also met outside of class in small groups to discuss assigned topics as well as topics of their choosing. During observation debriefs, a TL and a practicum supervisor reviewed video of the TL’s teaching. All reflection assignments provided some structure for reflection, but also allowed for TL freedom and flexibility in topics. In addition to these assignments, interviews at the beginning and end of the practicum collected TL reflections on the practicum experience.

Qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012) was utilized to organize the reflection into segments, determine the topic of reflection segments, and identify sources of information referenced in those reflection segments. Inter-rater agreement between Jay and another researcher was measured to evaluate the dependability (Brown, 2004) of the findings. Tanaka (2019) provides more detail on the data collection and analysis process.

Among this exploratory study's outcomes was a category regarding TLs' referencing of contexts within their reflections. A reflection segment was coded as *references to different teaching/working contexts* if there was evidence of comparison between distinct teaching or working contexts from the TL's previous experience or knowledge. Often, reflection segments in this category revealed how TLs reflected on differences between their "home" teaching culture and the study abroad context of the Thailand practicum. In one such reflection segment from her post-practicum interview, TL Jane, who had some experience teaching at a US university English language institute, recalled her difficulties during the first week of the practicum due to limited knowledge about the Thai students.

I remember being a little bit lost because I had no idea what they knew. And I had no idea what they could do, what they learned before, how much they would be able to speak, how much they would be able to listen.

Jane then commented on how the experience of learning to teach in this completely different context of Thailand gave her a greater understanding of the EFL context. She reasoned that this knowledge would help her become a better teacher in her home ESL context.

I think I really have developed an understanding of what students... I have a better sort of grasp on EFL in general. And I think it's really important for ESL teachers, even if you're going to stay in the US for your whole career, to understand the EFL context, because that's what students have before they show up in your classroom in the US.

Looking at how my students... like what grammar they knew, what grammar they had just never been exposed to... because my ESL students who have been in the US for a little bit, just picked things up and then experiment with new grammar forms, and then hear things and try them, and have that opportunity to do that because English is everywhere. But my students here, if they have never heard it in a class, it's just not in the repertoire at all. So figuring out how to diagnose what they did and didn't know was important. And that's something I want to carry into the future teaching as well.

Such reflections featuring comparisons of distinct teaching contexts were relatively frequent (9.7% of the total 1,734 TL reflection segments) and highlight one concrete and specific way in which study abroad contexts can affect teachers' reflective practice during practicums. Being placed in an unfamiliar teaching context allows TLs to understand their home context more deeply, and can help them to develop a broader, holistic perspective on L2 English education. This pattern of reflection is closely tied to the situation of the study abroad teaching practicum and is helpful for encouraging deeper teacher reflection.

Teacher Development Through Curriculum Design (Maria)

The goal of this case study (analyzed in more detail in Díez-Ortega and Cannizzo, in press) was to describe how Hayley, a TL in the 2018 practicum, implemented and refined a critical and culturally responsive curriculum with her beginner-level Thai EFL learners, and how the reflective nature of the practicum mediated this process and her growth as a teacher. Critical pedagogy is "teaching for social justice, in ways that support the development of active, engaged citizens . . . who will be prepared to seek out solutions to the problems they define and encounter, and take action accordingly" (Crookes, 2013, p. 8). Critical language pedagogy (CLP) is the interaction of critical pedagogy with the teaching and learning of languages and cultures.

Data sources include Hayley's journals, classroom observation videos, and observation debriefs, all part of the reflective component of the practicum, as well as semi-structured interviews throughout the practicum and materials Hayley and her students created. I used qualitative analysis to identify aspects relevant to CLP in her reflections and triangulated them with interviews and class materials, with the purpose of examining Hayley's experiences implementing a CLP curriculum, and to understand how her reflections mediated her professional development.

Even though Hayley was familiar with the theoretical aspects of CLP, this was the first time she had tried applying them. She faced many challenges during the implementation. For instance, she realized that her learners' proficiency level was much lower than she had expected based on her previous teaching experience, so she had to rethink the whole curriculum after the first class meeting. She wanted to implement negotiation of the classroom rules and syllabus, an important aspect of CLP. However, the learners were not proficient enough to discuss this and were not used to deciding course content or classroom rules. Hayley did not speak Thai, either, so she could not use her students' L1 for clarification as she had done in previous teaching. In her journal, she mentioned how she had to refine the process for beginner learners, not just to help them with the language needed to negotiate the syllabus and rules, but also to scaffold them into CLP:

I spent a lot of the day trying to figure out how to scaffold my students while negotiating classroom rules and a language policy. I came up with a heavily scaffolded worksheet to try and help them. For example, I ask: "Should food be allowed in the classroom?" and then they circle "yes," "no," or "I don't know/ I prefer not to say." I want my students to engage in CLP but I definitely think it is important to get them used to the idea of having more choice and voice in the classroom first.

Hayley believed that by being immersed in Thai culture and engaging in systematic reflection, she could "better assess her own understanding of her students, their needs, and her own beliefs. In doing so, she identified problems in her classroom and took action to implement change that eventually lead to successfully scaffolding her learners into CLP" (Díez-Ortega & Cannizzo, in press).

Hayley also taught critical vocabulary; she believed that even though her students were beginners, they already understood the critical concepts (e.g., *protest*) in their L1 (Parba, 2018). Her curriculum addressed critical expressions for classroom discussions (e.g., agreeing, stating opinions). For the final project, Hayley's students created a critical poster based on a topic of their choice addressing a problem in Thailand (e.g., *waste separation*). She also developed materials to scaffold them into brainstorming, creating, displaying, and presenting the project to their classmates and teachers. During this process, she validated and encouraged students' L1.

This case study illustrates how Hayley revisited her knowledge about CLP while applying it in her Thai class. Employing CLP for the first time, she realized what she had learned about it back home was not working in this context, and therefore she had to change her whole curriculum. Even though she faced many challenges along the way, she eventually felt she succeeded and learned new ways of implementing CLP in a different cultural context and for low proficiency learners.

Immersion in the Thai culture, flexibility in curriculum design, and systematic reflections on the practicum helped Hayley revisit CLP principles, develop new techniques, and learn how CLP can be carried out in practice. As Kolb (1984) suggested, Hayley's learning happened after experiencing difficulties implementing CLP in the class and revisiting her preconceived ideas and plans through strategic reflection. These changes were stimulated and mediated by the immersive reflective atmosphere of this international practicum, which helped her better understand her beliefs about CLP and language teaching.

Teacher Development Through Classroom Research (Betsy)

Classroom research has long been promoted as a way for teachers to better understand their students and teaching contexts (Yucel & Bos, 2015) as well as to enhance our field's knowledge of teaching and learning (Crookes, 2003). In the action research (AR) cycle, teacher-researchers try out new approaches to teaching, collect data, reflect on analyses, and revise their teaching in response (Burns, 2010). In a rare study of AR during an international practicum, Gilliland (2018) examined how TLs in the 2014 Thailand practicum cohort selected research questions and developed research studies; findings suggested that the TLs used their research to make sense of and respond to challenges from the unfamiliar context of the Thai university setting.

The analyses presented here connect the TLs' research to their practicum experiences. I ask how TLs perceived the research process in connection with the practicum. Data collected during the 2014 and 2016 iterations include interviews during and after the practicum, TLs' final reflections and research papers, post-practicum conference presentations, and articles and book chapters the TLs have published about their research. Data were analyzed through content analysis and inductive coding, which allowed for recognition of unexpected patterns. Three themes illustrate how AR can mediate teacher development in an international practicum.

TLs in both cohorts noted how AR allowed them to **revisit their own assumptions** about teaching (often derived from prior teaching and coursework) and become better teachers. Alex Kasula, a 2014 TL, described how AR helped him as a novice teacher recognize a critical incident and develop a more nuanced approach to teaching. He realized during the practicum that he had held assumptions about good teaching practices that turned out not to be accurate in the context:

It became clear through my reflection process and through later discussions with members of the practicum cohort that I needed to be critical about the tools I use in the classroom and the potential advantages or limitations to these tools. (2015, p. 233)

Alex's classmate Hyunjung An echoed other TLs' comments about the ways that AR allowed them to make sense of the **impact of culture on their teaching** during the practicum: "...understanding different cultural and social factors are crucial to understanding the students' needs in the different cultures. ...I had to explore how I could address this problem as both a teacher and a researcher in a different culture" (2015, p. 17).

While planning lessons to meet their classroom realities, TLs also said the AR process helped them understand their Thai students' learning preferences. Lucas Edmond, a 2016 TL, wrote in a forthcoming book chapter:

As the summer unfolded, I continued to iteratively design the course and project through reflection and monitoring. ...I kept a journal where I recorded my observations and

interpretations of my classes. Along with the help of colleagues, I systematically evaluated these notes, my students' work, and student comments. As I learned more what the students valued, needed, and wanted, I was able to more skillfully design lessons and build our class project.

TLs in both cohorts valued the AR process for pushing them to **reflect more deeply on their teaching**. Several noted in interviews and final reflection papers that keeping systematic notes as part of the research process allowed them to understand their own teaching and to observe their development of qualities such as flexibility and patience. One 2014 TL said the act of writing down these reflections facilitated her thinking about both teaching and research.

TLs found the AR process further supported their ability to manage the challenges of teaching and living in a new context. In a conference presentation, 2016 TLs Kelly Bolen, Carrie Bach, Kiriko Shimaji, and Mitsuko Suzuki (2017) said AR helped them balance the time they put into lesson planning and feedback with time for academic development and personal health. Kelly highlighted the role of *critical friends* (Burns, 2010), who served as a sounding board to facilitate her research and motivate her growth both as a teacher and researcher. Other TLs in both cohorts noted critical friends and the AR process as changing their views on teaching practices such as games, classroom management, and teacher-student interaction.

Kiriko connected her AR reflection practices to a deeper understanding of teaching. She described her multi-step process, which she credited for fostering her ongoing development as a teacher:

My routine was to write side notes on my lesson plan, and this was my micro-scale reflection. Then I write my reflection journal about students' needs, what I realized, and what changes I should make in syllabus or in students learning outcomes, and this was my macro-scale reflection. When I have these two records, I am ready to take an action on the next day applying some changes that I have made. (Bolen et al., 2017)

In spite of challenges due to time pressures and other factors, the TLs' perspectives show how the AR process can be a mediating factor that provides awareness about cultural issues, their own teaching, and their students' learning that they could not have attained otherwise, given their unfamiliarity with the context prior to arriving at IU. Changho Kwon, a 2014 TL, captured this sentiment: "The cyclical process of teaching and reflecting offered me great insight into the students' perspectives towards group work, and upgraded me as a teacher researcher" (2014, p. 115).

Bringing the Studies Together

These four investigations on observation, reflection, curriculum planning, and teacher research highlight the relevance of the study-abroad practicum context through descriptions of the reflection and learning that occurred during this practicum. As Kolb (1984) suggested, these studies described how TLs' previous assumptions—about themselves, their students, and teaching—were disrupted, which in turn led to realizations and significant changes in their teaching beliefs and practices, even for TLs who had taught in EFL contexts before. Although such learning experiences are characteristic of any intensive teaching practicum, we argue that the teacher development described in these four studies was mediated (Vygotsky, 1978) by the unfamiliar educational and cultural context of this practicum in Thailand. Initially unfamiliar with

the Thai language and culture, TLs lived in a close-knit community with other teachers on a Thai university campus. This practicum context, distinct from their home teaching and learning contexts, provided opportunities for TLs to attend to concepts (Oprandy, 2015) that led to the learning described in the findings of these four studies.

With regards to opportunities for development that are specific to a study-abroad practicum, previous studies have described and highlighted the importance of cultural learning (e.g., Malewski & Phillion, 2009; Tang & Choi, 2004). However, our studies differ in investigating matters specific to TLs' teaching development and reflective practices within the context of the practicum. Jay's and Bethany's studies delve more deeply into established practices common to most teaching practicum courses, observation and reflection. Maria and Betsy examine less frequent features of practicum courses; not all TLs get the opportunity to develop their own curriculum or do research on their teaching. Both challenge TLs beyond the more common practice of enacting lessons within a host teacher's classroom or following a set curriculum. In all four studies, as sociocultural theory suggests (Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Tsui, 2012), the setting worked in conjunction with the TLs' actions and reflections to facilitate their knowledge development.

The four studies together comprise an exploratory investigation into the learning that occurs from the discomfort and unpredictable elements of a study abroad teaching practicum. They describe how TLs made sense of new and different classroom practices. TLs with varying levels of prior teaching experience developed and modified instructional plans created originally from theoretical learning in graduate coursework. They grew in connection with their peers, pushed by the environment, context, and other people in the study abroad program to think more deeply and reflect more broadly than they might otherwise have done.

Conclusion

The four studies reported in this article have briefly analyzed activities often incorporated into teaching practicums worldwide, but rarely examined in the context of study abroad for teacher education. All four topics (observation, reflection, curriculum planning, and teacher research) merit ongoing research in multiple contexts to better understand TLs' learning to teach beyond their development of cultural awareness and their changing identities, topics addressed in previous research on international teaching practicums. Another factor in language teacher education that deserves greater focus is the role of the international practicum for non-native English speaking TLs. In the Thailand practicum, 15 of 30 TLs identified as NNESTs. Many had expressed concerns prior to the program that they might not be seen by their Thai students as legitimate teachers, but several noted in reflections that they instead found themselves serving as role model language learners. With growing interest in NNEST experiences, the field of language teacher education should consider how international teaching practicums address such TLs' concerns.

Planning and conducting an international teaching practicum can also bring challenges beyond those entailed in preparing a similar practicum at home. The practicum is a complex program, not just a single course. Facilitators need to coordinate with the host site as well as develop seminar content and reflection and observation practices. The better the communication between host and practicum facilitator, the more smoothly the course should run. Advanced planning is vital, but so is the ability to problem-solve in the moment. Problems with host site logistics (such as

scheduling classes within the host institution's academic calendar) can lead to limitations on TLs' opportunities to practice teaching. Visa issues may delay TLs' arrival at the host site, and food borne or other illness may prevent TLs from participating in their classes or other activities. Practicum coordinators should endeavor to account for as much as can be foreseen, but should also keep in mind that just as the TLs encounter unexpected cultural and practical challenges, so, too, will they. Gilliland (2015) reviews some of the challenges Betsy faced in organizing the 2014 iteration of the Thailand practicum. Each subsequent offering has proffered new challenges that have helped build our understanding of how to better support TLs' learning. In spite of these challenges, the Thailand practicum has proven popular with students in our department, who credit it with building their confidence in both teaching and conducting research.

^[1] We use *teacher learner (TL)* to refer to the participants on the practicum because many were not preservice teachers; some had been teaching for many years when they participated on the practicum.

^[2] Six TLs in 2014 and four in 2016 took the class, but other TLs also conducted research during the practicum.

About the Authors

Betsy Gilliland, PhD Education, is associate professor of Second Language Studies at University of Hawai'i Mānoa. Her research examines language teacher education, teacher research, and second language writing. Co-editor of the *Journal of Response to Writing*, she publishes regularly in TESOL and education journals.

Jay Tanaka is a specially appointed associate professor at Hokkaido University. He holds a PhD degree in second language studies from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. His research interests include second language pedagogy, reflection in language teacher education, and critical thinking instruction.

Bethany Faye Schwartz is a Ph.D. candidate in the Second Language Studies department at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She is a certified speech-language pathologist and worked in Hawai'i public schools for many years. Her research interests include child Pidgin (Hawai'i Creole), narrative development, and teacher education.

María Díez-Ortega is a Ph.D student in the department of Second Language Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, where she currently teaches undergraduate courses in pedagogy and second language acquisition. Her recent research projects include L2 teacher education, task-based language teaching, computer-assisted language learning, and learner corpus research.

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Appendix

Observation Survey Results

Circle your opinion for the following statements: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree)

AS AN OBSERVER	start	end	change
Observing other student teachers can be effective for improving my teaching.	3.67	3.50	-0.17
Observing experienced teachers can be effective for improving my teaching.	3.50	3.50	0
Watching video of my own teaching can be effective for improving my teaching.	3.33	3.17	-0.16
Observing other teachers in-person is better than watching video or other remote systems.	3.50	3.67	+0.17
I feel confident in offering feedback and advice to other teachers I observe.	3.17	3.17	0
Other teachers find my observation feedback helpful.	3.00 (1 NA)	3.00	0

AS AN OBSERVEE	start	end	change
Being observed by other student teachers can be effective for improving my teaching.	3.67	3.83	+0.16
Being observed by experienced teachers can be effective for improving my teaching.	3.67	4.00	+0.33
Being observed by teacher educators can be effective for improving my teaching.	3.67	3.60 (1 NA)	0
Other student teachers offer feedback that is helpful and relevant after observing me.	3.67	4.00	+0.33
Experienced teachers offer feedback that is helpful and relevant after observing me.	3.67	4.00	+0.33
Teacher educators offer feedback that is helpful and relevant after observing me.	3.67	3.83	+0.16
Generally, I am confident when being observed while teaching.	2.33	3.33	+1.00
Generally, I feel people who observe me have been fair and objective.	3.67	3.67	0
Being observed is an important part of reflective teaching practice.	3.67	3.83	+0.16

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