AJOTE
African Journal of Teacher Education

BEYOND EDUCATIONAL VOYEURISM:
AN ANALYSIS OF A UGANDAN-NORTH AMERICAN TEACHER PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

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Abstract
Beyond simply watching teachers in international settings as tourists might, teachers in a Ugandan – North American international teacher partnership program went further, reflecting on the social/political contexts within which they taught. Teachers' surveys and reflections are analyzed for factors addressing the successful negotiation of both teaching and relationship making across the cultural, pedagogical and political divides that separate them. In the midst of the international teacher partnership program, concerns arose regarding teacher-centered pedagogy and student passivity as after effects of Uganda's colonial education system.
Keywords: international education partnerships, Uganda education, postcolonial education.

I acquired new skills and methods that applied in teaching activities. I also developed the ideology of being friendly to students. We had good teaching and brought new knowledge to each other. (Ugandan Math Teacher)

I'm part of the new generation of teachers in New Jersey that have been lucky enough to have modern, up to date courses on the teaching methods that have been proven by research to be the most effective. Listening to the teachers discuss their problems here, however, allowed me to jump off of my high horse for a second and see where they were coming from. (American English Teacher)

Introduction
In the summer of 2007, 16 North American educators joined 18 Ugandan teachers in three secondary schools in the Gulu region of northern Uganda to participate in a new teacher partnership program. They did not know or understand how the experience would affect them or their teaching. What transpired during that summer laid a foundation for an international teacher partnership program, partnering Ugandan secondary teachers with North American partners. In 2012, the six-week program involved approximately 100 educators in eleven Ugandan secondary schools over an area of approximately 8,800 km^2 as well as 12 Ugandan teachers partnering in 12 different high schools across the United States. This paper adds to the scant professional literature regarding international teacher partnerships by examining how such programs can push past "touristy" team-teaching to more nuanced endeavors, respectful of and informed by sociological and political contexts of host countries.

The literature specifically exploring international teacher partnership programs is limited, generally providing descriptive accounts of such programs and typical professional development/adult learning advice for teacher educators considering similar opportunities. Three decades ago, Hayden (1981) lamented that "very little is known about the immediate let alone longer-term and personal impact of an international exchange experience" (p.2). Unfortunately, limited progress has been made in researching the dynamics within, and the effects of, participation in international teacher partnership programs. Researchers continue to describe the phenomenon of teachers teaching transnationally as an under-researched topic (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Johnson, 2008). Because of this, Craddock and Harf (2004) correctly highlight that educators and program developers are left to "rely on anecdotal and intuitive analysis to inform their activities and planning" (p.2). When contemplating international teacher partnership programs involving post-colonial African schools and their teachers, the literature is even scarcer (Mwebi & Brigham, 2009).

Successful teacher partnership programs must succeed along two different sets of parameters simultaneously. First, such programs must negotiate the difficult process of intercultural negotiation and relationship-making (Freberg, 1994). Second, if they are to be more that voyeuristic teacher-as-tourist opportunities, partnership programs must provide quality teacher professional development opportunities that produce changes in teachers' pedagogy or philosophy (Mwebi & Brigham, 2009). While both are necessary, neither is sufficient to produce a valuable, educationally focused experience for teachers involved. While Belfiore, Cooke, Gorbet, Hynes, & Parsons (1982) warn of ignoring other countries' needs and ignoring the experience or knowledge or partner teachers amounts to "colonization," they urge such programs "to look beyond … teaching, … to see the social, cultural and political factors" (p. 31). Within an African context generally and Uganda specifically, teacher partnerships between

Ugandan and North American teachers gain the added dimension of occurring within system of schooling that originated as a mechanism of colonization and oppression (Kelly, 2013; Okoth, 1993). This paper examines factors reported by 60 participants (36 North American/24 Ugandan) that both inhibited and contributed to the traditional teacher partnership program as well as their awakening to artifacts of colonial education within which they taught.

Contextual Background

Since independence in 1962, Uganda's educational reform has followed the trajectory originally identified by (Johnson, 2006) in which former colonies perpetuate the policies of their colonizers – even while trying to transform those policies. The curriculum taught throughout Uganda continues to be controlled by the Ministry of Education and is reminiscent of traditional British curriculum. The implementation of Universal Secondary Education (USE) in 2007 further complicated matters. The Ministry of Education's mishandling of implementation of USE led to extreme overcrowding within many schools throughout Uganda (Kelly, 2013). Further complicating matters, the schools involved in this study are located primarily in the war-torn Gulu region.

Northern Uganda, the area in which the program under study is located, was plagued by almost four decades of war and strife. Most recently, from 1986 through 2007, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel group, led an insurgency against the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF), the military unit of the Ugandan government. Tragically, the LRA adopted the practice of abducting children from school dormitories and remote villages to people its army. Approximately 60,000 children were abducted by the LRA over those years (Republic of Uganda, 2007). Because of this war, the Ugandan government displaced more than 1.8 million people (95% of the population) from their familial villages and farms across northern Uganda into internally-displaced-persons (IDP) camps, supposedly to protect them from the frequent LRA raids. Within IDP camps, as many as 50,000 people were housed in huts crowded together in small area. Because of the great poverty and fear among the people, camp life was often dangerous, chaotic, and violent.

Radoja's (2007) work with Acholi youth clearly demonstrates the extent of the violence in the Gulu region of northern Uganda. Over half of all Acholi male youth have witnessed torture. Three-fourths of abducted children witnessed murder, and sadly, more than a third of non-abducted youth witnessed murder as well. So widespread was the violence in this area that large numbers of Acholi adolescents are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), even among those who never directly experienced violence (Radoja, 2007). The presence of severely traumatized children in classrooms throughout the partnership schools often colored classroom interactions.

Literature Review

Because most teachers, and thus most participants in international teacher partnership programs, have limited international experience beyond occasional recreation trips, many experience a good measure of apprehension or fear of the unknown. As Rapoport (2008) learned from participants in an American-Russian partnership program, participants fear new and unknown teaching contexts. Their apprehension was based upon multiple factors, including "tenacious stereotypes, prejudices, language deficiency, and lack of exposure to a different culture" (p. 229). Thus, teachers, "have difficulties when moving across cultures. Suddenly, with little warning, they find that behaviors and attitudes that proved necessary for obtaining goals in their

own culture are no longer useful" (Cushner and Brislin, 1996, p. 2). Further complicating matters are the complexities of language – even among cultures that nominally have the same dominant language. Inevitably, the lack of cultural understanding between participants results in occasional clashes and misunderstandings in communication that must be negotiated and resolved. Cushner and Brislin (1996) describe the difficulty well, writing:

> Such clashes occur when people from different cultures interact in ways that each believes are proper and appropriate from his or her own perspectives but are different from what is expected by the other. A problem emerges, then, when people confront differences with which they are unfamiliar. Lacking both an outsider's perspective on the elements of their own culture and a vocabulary with which to discuss that culture, they are unable to speak with others about the situation. People typically respond first on an emotional level; they may become quite frustrated, make negative judgments about others, and then end an interaction at this point of frustration. This must be avoided if productive encounters are to result. (p. 7)

To best avoid such clashes, careful selection of participants and cultural training must be provided to participants in international/intercultural teacher partnership programs. In their study of such programs, Purves, Jackson & Shaughnessy (2005) highlight the importance of additional selection processes beyond simple applications. Having a multiple step application process, involving personal questionnaires and interviews can contribute to "participants being more highly motivated than 'usual' and, in turn, possibly more likely to benefit" from the partnership (p. 553). In addition, pre-partnership personal questionnaires can contribute to successful program implementation in two ways. First, program directors can use them to screen applicants for desirable personal attributes, such as cultural tolerance or collaborative nature. Second, from the questionnaires, personal profiles may be constructed of the participants that can be shared with their international partners before they actually meet. Such pre-knowledge of one's partner "enabled teachers to find out more about each other in advance and possibly facilitated the development of professional relationships and later teaching and learning opportunities" (Purves, Jackson & Shaughnessy, p. 553).

Once participants are selected, program directors must divide their attention between supporting teacher professional development and facilitating healthy interpersonal and intercultural experiences between the participants. High quality teacher professional development is challenging to provide under normal circumstances. However, when designing professional development involving teachers from different educational systems and different cultures, the challenges are magnified. From reviewing the available literature, international/intercultural teacher partnership programs should provide for their participants:

1. Time enough for participants to overcome their initial emotional reactions to the experience.
2. A broad enough understanding of their partners' educational systems to suspend any value judgments.
3. A formal structure for partner dialogue that keeps those dialogues lesson-centered.
4. A supportive environment for reflection among participants.

The emotional reaction mentioned above is "typical" of people engaging in intercultural experiences (Cushner and Brislin, 1996). For a program to be successful in both providing professional development and allowing teachers to seriously analyze and reflect on their practice,

programs must provide time enough for participants to push past their initial emotional reactions to engaging in a new culture/classroom. Unfortunately, the minimal time for cultural adjustment recommended by researchers of at least three months lies beyond the availability for fully employed teachers (Garson, 2010; Koester, 1985). The subject of this study was a six-week program of partner teaching.

Because of the very nature of teacher partnership programs, time spent within another culture's school system is limited. Thus participants' knowledge of general representativeness of their individual school is also limited. For this reason, Rowe (1992) warns teachers against making value judgments about education or schooling in their host country/culture. As in the United States, educational quality and teaching practices vary widely across any nation. To draw conclusions based upon personal experience in a single school, or a few schools, is neither logically sound nor fundamentally fair to the host country/culture. To avoid such erroneous conclusions, teacher partnership programs should provide their participants enough background information on the host country's educational system to deepen their understanding of their individual participation relative to the educational system. To address such concerns within this study, a total of eleven schools and 60 teachers were included.

However, comparisons between various models of schooling and teaching are unavoidable and will be made by participants. Thus, it is imperative that programs partnering teachers from vastly different cultures and approaches to schooling take care to address issues before comparisons are made. Within post-colonial African educational systems, western teaching partners need to understand the origins and the political dynamics that lead African nations to perpetuate colonial approaches to education, as well as the ramifications on the students and teachers with whom they will be working (Johnson, 2006; Kelly, 2013). Thus, the intellectual demands upon participants in such a program are increased as the teachers struggle to reflect on pedagogical, curricular, sociological and political differences between the hosts' educational system and that of the guests.

Providing formal spaces and times for teachers to engage in such critical reflection is integral to facilitating professional growth among participants. As Purves, Jackson & Shaughnessy (2005) observe, "partners may have very different concepts of what teaching and learning 'best practice' and 'excellence' actually are" (p. 548). Having formally pre-arranged opportunities to engage in the reflective process allows participants to engage in lesson-centered discussions. Keeping such discussions focused on lessons allows partners to depersonalize comments within a professional setting. Given the emotionally-laden nature of intercultural exchanges, lesson-centeredness of the formal reflective opportunities provides participants a safer context in which to engage in professional dialogue.

The last condition refers to a supportive environment in which all participants can share their individual experiences across different settings. Teacher partnership programs that involve many teachers can benefit from the conversations among participants as they recount the idiosyncratic nature of their individual partnerships and classrooms. Such arrangements can be either formal or informal, focusing on both instruction and the personal highlights and challenges that will inevitably occur. As in any gathering of diverse professionals, "many important conversations (take) place … over a beer at the end of the school day" (Purves, Jackson & Shaughnessy, p. 565).

Because of the limited international exposure of most participants in international/intercultural teacher partnership programs, special attention must be given to supporting participants' cultural transition from their own into that of their hosts' country/region

(Cushner, McClelland & Safford, 2000; Melnick & Zeichner, 1998). While most researchers in this area offer a list of desirable attributes for teachers participating in international partnerships, the tripartite framework of factors devised by Martin (1987) is most elegant in its simplicity. Martin organized the variety of necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions into cognitive, affective and behavior components described below:

> 1. *Cognitive Skills* (Knowledge about the target culture, knowledge concerning cultural differences and the impact of the differences on intercultural communication/interaction.) Also included in this dimension is *Self-Awareness*, particularly about one's beliefs and values, based on understanding one's own cultural norms.
> 2. *Affective or Personal Qualities* (Tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility, empathy, ability to suspend judgment.)
> 3. *Behavioral Competencies* (Ability to solve problems created by cross-cultural differences, ability to form relationships, ability to accomplish tasks in an intercultural context.)   (p. 339)

Participants possessing these characteristics are better equipped to maximize benefit from their experiences. Cushner and Brislin (1996) describe successful international teachers as developing contentment due to good personal adjustment, good interpersonal relationships, task effectiveness, and stress equivalent to changing jobs within the home culture. Cushner and Brislin's first two factors highlight the importance of teachers engaging in cultural endeavors beyond their partners' classrooms and schools, directly interacting with the larger community. Key to any such exchange is the development of a level of comfort among the participants. That comfort must be situated in the larger cultural context, not simply in the somewhat familiar and comfortable confines of "schooling." Expanding the programmatic focus of these programs to include the larger community is important not only for cultural adaptation, but also to directly support, challenge and expand teacher learning. As Putnam & Borko (2000) report, "situating learning experiences for teachers outside of the classroom may be important – indeed essential – for powerful learning" (p. 6).

Documented effects of participation in international/intercultural teacher partnership on the participants are rather scant and anecdotal. Most researchers report a questioning or weakening of stereotypes (Betts & Norquest, 1997; Cushner & Brislin, 1996; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Rapoport, 2008). Specifically, Rapoport (2008) in his analysis of a Russian-American partnership program reports the following:

> 1. International program alumni have become more culturally sensitive and perceptive.
> 2. International program alumni have become more aware and understanding of the indivisibility and interconnectedness of our world and the various economic, political and educational systems that it comprises.
> 3. International program alumni emphasize in their practices multiple perspectives and multiple loyalties.
> 4. Diversity awareness has made program alumni more open to the sound advice and quality practices that they hear or observed during their programs.
> 5. Observations of foreign educational practices have made alumni value their own educational practices more. (p. 234)

Other researchers highlight not the expanded worldview of participants, but increases in sense of efficacy (Cushner and Mahon, 2002; Quezada, 2004). Having navigated the intercultural

negotiations necessary with participation in such programs, it stands to reason that participants would have more confidence and sense of efficacy. Quezada's (2004) study confirms the positive benefits of increased self-efficacy among teachers with international experience when guiding, motivating and praising their students. This study aims to identify emerging changes more closely aligned to the partnership experience through a multifaceted data collection during such a program, rather after the participants completed their partnership.

Methodology
Building off of Rapoport's (2008) study of a Russian-American teacher partnership program, this analysis uses an interpretive case study approach to construct a representation of the Ugandan - North American teacher partnership program and its effects through the eyes of its participants. Data was collected from 36 North American teachers and 24 Ugandan teachers working in eleven northern Ugandan high schools (See Appendix). Pseudonyms are used for all participants. To best document the experience of participants, data collection was triangulated among three data sources. First, open-ended surveys were administered to participants at the beginning and end of their six-week program. Second, teaching partners were asked to complete open-ended questionnaires weekly for five weeks to track their experience over time. Finally, participants' personal, reflective journals/writings about their individual experiences were copied and open-coded for emergent themes (Glaser 2008). To understand the programmatic background, the program founder/director was interviewed and various program publications were collected.

All hand-written material was transcribed into electronic media for easier manipulation and analysis. Responses were analyzed for emergent themes, which formed the basis of an iterative coding process. The author did not approach the data with *a priori* themes, but instead allowed them to be generated by the data. This is especially evident in the pre-post surveys in which the teachers' responses after participating generated entirely new themes, not mentioned at all in the pre-surveys, while some concerns disappeared from pre to post-surveys. Each data source was coded also for gender, country of origin, subject matter and school site. This analysis examines differences that developed over the teacher partnership program (pre vs. post analysis) and between the visiting teachers (North American) and host teachers (Ugandan). Though not originally intended specific attention is given to the participants' responses indicating pedagogical remnants of the colonial system of education.

Program Description
In 2006, the founder of the program, Amy Nichero, found herself alone teaching English and Geography in a Ugandan classroom. Surprisingly, she found herself thrust into the role of an expert immediately, only because she was American. Nichero lamented:

> *the common perception is that the local educators, the educators who for all intents and purposes really are the experts, must relinquish both status and duty when an outside educator wanders in. Through a very real manifestation of colonial(ism), I was challenged to critically wrestle with this dynamic, my own motivations, and my previous teaching experiences. I began a conversation with teachers at the school, … about the possibilities of teaching across cultures and establishing strands of dialogue around the challenges of teaching, the requirements of 21st century learners across continents and cultures, issues of access and resources, the exchange of methods and strategies, and pedagogy.*

From these conversations, Nichero conceived of, and eventually founded, a six-week summer program seeking "to engender cross-cultural collaboration between international and Ugandan educators." From program materials, the objectives of the resultant international teacher partnership program were:

- to facilitate collaboration between international and Ugandan educators.
- to generate critical thought as participants partner to explore the possibilities of student-centered education in unique contexts.
- to enhance present educational models and create long-term learning opportunities that develop capacity for both teachers and students.

To maximize the successful achievement of these objectives, candidates are carefully screened through an application process and matched by subject matter training with a similar teacher. According to Nichero:

Thoughtful selection of participants is integral to the program's momentum. A series of short-answer narratives are focused on teachers' negotiation of their lived experiences, especially as they pertain to travel and cross-cultural engagement, expectations for the organization and the trip itself, and the perceived pedagogical implications of this opportunity. The staff vet the applications with several criteria in mind; we seek a diverse group of educators who have either received a master's degree in education or state certification at the secondary level, and are teaching primarily in core subjects of study like English, various levels of mathematics, the life sciences, the earth sciences, and geography. Most importantly, we are looking for candidates who exhibit a sense of adventure, motivation, flexibility, and openness.

The second phase of the selection process is an interview, the focus of which is engaging applicants as storytellers and problem solvers. Throughout the conversation, potential participants articulate their beliefs about teaching and learning, cultural respect and value systems, and their expectations for collaboration. An exemplary candidate expresses a willingness to both teach and be taught, a desire to explore a variety of relationships through the program, as well as a spirit of inquiry and adaptability.

Once selected, teachers participate in a six-week program that begins with cultural orientation and language lessons for the North American teachers led by Ugandan staff. It is important for them to develop an understanding of the local Acholi/Ugandan history of the region and its people, as well as be able to communicate outside of the school setting. To assist in this process, and to push the visiting teachers beyond voyeuristic tourism, they are assigned to read Freire's (2000) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* prior to departure. During the initial cultural orientation, participants are led in discussions of the oppressor/oppressed dynamic found in any post-colonial situation, and specifically their manifestation in classrooms. Coupled with Friere, participants also read Okot p'Bitek's (1984/1966) *Song of Lawino*, a poetry collection that explores competing visions between tradition and modernity of what it means to be Ugandan/African. Through *Song of Lawino*, the North American teachers simultaneously read one of the most famous and important pieces of Ugandan literature and grapple with large political and sociological issues in which their partner teachers and students find themselves.

Within the first few days of meeting each other, the teaching partners develop a working contract focused on professional engagement in their classroom. The contract then provides a

touchstone regarding professionalism, expectations, and goals. Over the course of the program, most partner teachers became team-teaching friends, successfully negotiating the pedagogical and/or cultural frustrations typically mentioned by previous researchers (Cushner & Brislin, 1996; Johnson, 2008).

To this end, Nichero committed to developing safe opportunities for dialogue to occur. Multiple teaching pairs exist at each school in the program, and these pairs form a teacher roundtable. For six weeks, the roundtable at each school gathered regularly for conversations in which North American and Ugandan teachers equally shared lesson ideas, offered critiques, and collaborated on joint projects for the local educational community. North American and Ugandan teachers also have the opportunity to meet as culturally homogenous groups, away from their partner teachers, to work through emergent issues. Finally, participants share in some events designed solely for social enjoyment in which Ugandan and North American teachers are allowed to simply "hang out" together to build/strengthen interpersonal bonds, such as a formal dinner, a picnic and a Fourth of July barbeque.

Findings

Participants' concerns were collected initially during the pre-experience surveys administered during their training (See Table 1). The strongest concerns noted by Ugandan teachers regarded team teaching with their partners (75.00%), forming professional relationships with their partners (50.00%), as well as their partners' ability to learn the local Acholi culture (50.00%). As the host teachers, the Ugandans' concerns about sharing their classrooms with strangers from a different culture, of whom they know very little, are understandable. Fortunately, their initial concerns were assuaged during the program as they taught and formed relationships with the North American teachers, as demonstrated by the large drop in the percentage of teachers reporting such concerns at the end of the program.

While sharing some concerns about establishing a professional relationship with their partners (41.67%), North American teachers held a much different set of concerns. Being guests in a much different school system, the most common concern they expressed related to the curricular content they would be teaching (47.22%). By the end of the partnership program, having actually taught the curriculum, the North Americans' concern was halved (23.33%). The third most expressed concern addressed unintentionally offending the Ugandans with whom they interacted (36.11%). After six weeks of teaching and building relationships with Ugandan teachers and students, no North American teachers mentioned unintentional offence as a concern.

Table 1.Teachers' Concerns (% of teachers indicating concerns)

Concerns	Ugandan Teachers		North American Teachers	
Partner concerns	Pre (n=12)	Post (n=24)	Pre (n=36)	Post (n=30)
Timeliness	N/A	45.83%	N/A	40.00%
Professional Relationship	50.00%	4.17%	41.67%	26.67%
Communication	N/A	4.17%	22.22%	6.67%
Teaching Concerns				
Time Management	N/A	33.33%	N/A	46.67%
Limited Resources	8.33%	20.83%	2.78%	6.67%
Classroom	N/A	16.67%	N/A	36.67%

Instruction				
Team Teaching	75.00%	8.33%	N/A	16.67%
Content	8.33%	N/A	47.22%	23.33%
Cultural Concerns				
Language	N/A	16.67%	13.89%	26.67%
Food	8.33%	12.50%	5.56%	26.67%
Time Management	N/A	12.50%	N/A	33.33%
International teachers' ability to learn culture	50.00%	N/A	2.78%	N/A
Unintentional Offense	N/A	N/A	36.11%	N/A

However, some concerns developed as teachers participated in the program. The most common concern was timeliness, which was mentioned by 45.83% of Ugandan teachers regarding concerns with their partners and by 46.67% of North American teachers when addressing teaching concerns. Being a politically unstable and agrarian society for so long, punctuality and the meaning of time in northern Uganda caused many difficulties among the teachers. While the visiting teachers were accustomed to punctuality and living their lives according to a rigid bell system, their Ugandan partners had a much more flexible understanding of time. Over the years, the program director has adapted to address similar concerns of both North American and Ugandan teachers, as well as the headmasters of the schools where the partnerships are based. She explains:

> *I find that the non-Ugandan teachers are planners to the core, uniquely trained to approach life as they approach their lessons… There is really no way to plan for what takes place in that short period of six weeks. The notion of adaptability is central to the success of one's experience. While my Ugandan and international colleagues share many similar traits, they exhibit very different levels of flexibility; most non-Ugandan teachers must be trained to adapt.*

As teachers struggled with the development of lesson plans and teaching, instruction became a concern of both Ugandan and North American teachers. Possibly as an artifact of the colonial origins of their system and the devaluing of indigenous peoples' ideas, Ugandan teachers often validated what they taught because of similarities with what the western teachers taught. Typical comments include:

> *Students will have confidence in me after my partner leaves. They will see that what I teach them is what is done elsewhere.* (Odong, Ugandan math teacher)

> *This will develop confidence in my students as a lot is shared in common between me and my team teacher.* (Jennifer, Ugandan English teacher)

These comments of the cultural duality created within indigenous people when subjected to colonial education systems as highlighted by Freire (2000) when he writes, "they live in the duality in which *to be* is *to be like,* and *to be like* is *to be like the oppressor*" (original emphasis, p. 48). In the case of most students studying in rural Uganda, "to be" means to be like an urbanized British citizen, definitely a far cry from their immediate surroundings and culture.

While the North American teachers did not comment on the curricular similarities between their home schools and their host schools, they did often comment on the didactic,

teacher-centered nature of their Ugandan classrooms. Bryan, a North American science teacher, echoing concerns raised by Penny et al. (2008), recounted a day of observing a Ugandan classroom, writing:

> *Most of the classes observed rely on banking knowledge. They dictate and have students write. No real interaction, group work, or ongoing assessment, which is understandable to a great extent when you consider the class had 115 students.*

The Ugandan teachers did not address their didactic instruction directly, but indirectly by referring to the increased level of student participation fostered by their North American partners as a benefit to participation in the program. Their comments included references to "*adding more participatory approaches to students*" and "*giving the learners an opportunity to talk.*" Overall, both groups of teachers became more aware of the political dynamics manifesting in their classrooms. As Bassey (1999) notes many African schools continue colonizing efforts to perpetuate inequalities, the teachers in these schools, however, are often unaware of systemic effects of such schooling.

Table 2. Benefits of Participation (% of teachers indicating benefits)

Benefit	Ugandan Teachers		North American Teachers	
Classroom Benefit	Pre (n=12)	Post (n=24)	Pre (n=36)	Post (n=30)
Improved Teaching	75.00%	91.67%	55.56%	50.00%
Increased Student Motivation	41.67%	54.17%	11.11%	20.00%
Closer to students	N/A	25.00%	N/A	N/A
Gain International Experience	16.67%	4.17%	38.89%	40.00%
Student Discipline	33.33%	4.17%	N/A	6.67%
Friendship	33.33%	20.83%	8.33%	40.00%
Collaboration skills	41.67%	12.50%	11.11%	N/A
Expanded Worldview	16.67%	4.17%	16.67%	40.00%
Develop as person	N/A	N/A	47.22%	16.67%

Both Ugandan and North American participants reported many benefits of such collaboration, both within their classrooms and personally (see Table 2). A majority of both groups of teachers predicted the experience would improve their teaching (75% Ugandan/55.56% N. American). After teaching together for six weeks, over 90% of Ugandan teachers reported improved teaching skills while half of the North American teachers reported the same. Of this, Komakech, Ugandan geography teacher remarks of the benefit of working with his partner, writing "*She has been able to spice up my lessons. I now have a better approach to the 'learner centered' method.*" North American teachers benefitted as well, as indicated by Janet, an ELL teacher from the United States writing, "*It has made me reflect on my practice and how to adapt it with large groups and little resources. As a traveling teacher, this will be beneficial.*"

Beyond improved teaching, Ugandan respondents reported increased student motivation within their classrooms (54.17%) as well as developing a closer relationship with many of their students (25%). Given the colonial origins of the Ugandan educational system, and the teachers'

role as authorities within that system, it is not surprising that close relationships with students were not common in many of the partners' classrooms. North American teachers, such as Canadian science teacher Christina, noted this lack of connection writing "*I don't like not having much time with the students. The interaction with the students was very impersonal which made creating lessons more difficult.*" Matt, an American English teacher, echoed Christina's concerns commenting "*The lack of teacher/student relationship was tough because I felt a little constrained by that. I didn't get to know the kids as well as I'd hoped.*" Many Ugandan teachers remarked how working with their international partners helped them bridge the teacher-student gap by involving their students in the lessons, rather than dictating notes. Abraham, a Uganda science teacher, simply remarked, "*I developed the ideology of being friendly to students.*"

The North Americans, as the visiting teachers, indicated that they benefitted from participation in the program in the areas of international experience, the friendships formed, and an expanded worldview with 40% reporting each as a benefit. Typical comments addressing their international experience and expanded horizons included:

> *My students will benefit greatly from my participation in the program. I teach in an upper middle class district and the students often joke about living in a "bubble." I'm excited to share my experiences with them to open their eyes to a different culture in a different part of the world.* (Judy, N.A. English teacher)

> *I think that the experience of working with teachers and students from a culture so far removed from my own for a somewhat extended period of time will help me approach my classroom this fall with more consideration for the cultural backgrounds of the students in my classroom.* (Patrick, N.A. English teacher)

Judy's and Patrick's comments clearly illustrate the expanded world view predicted throughout the literature on international teaching experiences (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Rapoport, 2008).

Table 3. Cultural Highlights (% of teachers indicating highlights)

Cultural Highlights	Ugandan Teachers	North American Teachers
	(n=24)	(n=30)
Teaching Together	75.00%	70.00%
Friendships	29.17%	56.67%
Cultural Exchange	29.17%	30.00%
Food	20.83%	23.33%
Engage larger community	4.17%	23.33%

Even when prompted to describe their "cultural highlights," the participating teachers, both Ugandan and North American, pointed to teaching together in their shared classrooms (75% Ugandan/70% N. American, see Table 3). The friendships forged throughout the program were the second most cited cultural highlight, with most respondents citing shared experiences outside their schools as the foundations of their friendships. The teachers often referred to eating meals together, sharing stories about families, or simply "hanging out." Bryan, a North American science teacher explains his emerging friendship well, writing:

> *It is nice to be building a relationship with Ogweng. We did not discuss anything related to the classroom, but instead our lives. He shared that his greatest fear is*

being put in prison. I asked why would he even consider going to prison.
Ogweng simply said, "You don't have to do anything wrong to go to prison in
Uganda. The police force is the most corrupt part of the government." I shared
with him my getting multiple speeding tickets, ending with a huge fine and my
wife's extreme displeasure. We both laughed about disappointing our wives and
being in the doghouse. I think it might be the same everywhere.

Teachers from both groups remarked about the surprising similarity between teachers from different parts of the globe. Finding such similarities between teaching partners was a common theme across the program and helped participants to situate their learning both within shared perspectives as teachers and people as well as within the local context of their classrooms (Chapman & Thiel, 1999; Putnam & Borko, 2000).

Discussion

While international teacher exchange programs have existed for decades, most have traditionally focused only on general cultural experiences and the sharing of lessons. At this superficial level, rarely are participants given the opportunity to deconstruct the contexts within which schooling occurs. The program described herein represents an effort to construct an international teaching experience that takes an extra step - purposefully situating the partnerships that are formed within the program within the larger sociological/political context of post-colonial Uganda. The efforts taken in this program to raise sociological/political awareness of the North American teachers to the local context within northern Uganda allowed some participants to interpret their experience in a better informed manner, respectful of the local context.

According to Bassey (1999), teachers in Africa often "do not realize that schools perpetuate inequalities … and limit their learners to passive roles" in the classroom. The early, week-long training of the North American teachers to the local Acholi culture and the examination of p'Bitek's (1984/1966) *Song of Lawino* and Freire's (2000) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, sensitized them to sociological, political and pedagogical factors in which their Ugandan classrooms were immersed. Many of the visiting teachers identified manifestations of the colonial structure and power dynamics within their hosts' classes. Through the use of teacher roundtables at each school and the lesson-centeredness of discussions scaffolded by their initial contracts, North American and Ugandan teachers were able to engage in discussions about the merits of shifting to a more student-centered pedagogy in which students' voices were welcomed.

While some of the Ugandan teachers welcomed and were excited by the inclusion of more participatory pedagogies, others never mentioned such changes. Some North American teachers echoed sentiments similar to those of Belfiore, et al. (1982) who reported three decades ago, "we felt we simply were not teaching when we did what we were expected to do; and our students felt they were not learning when we taught them what we wanted to" (p. 34). Thus, while the program simultaneously took definite steps to respect the efforts and expertise of the Ugandan teachers and challenge some possibly oppressive aspects of post-colonial pedagogy, not all participants or students recognized or embraced a need to change. Their lack of reaction to questions about more student-centered pedagogy is understandable given the system in which they were trained. Over a century ago Dewey (1902/1990) foresaw such resistance, writing, "We get used to the chains we wear, and we miss them when removed. 'Tis an old story that through custom we finally embrace what at first wore a hideous mein" (p. 206). Further complicating matters may be the traumatization among teachers who survived the LRA war. A

more purposeful examination of indigenous and visiting teachers' perceptions of factors relevant to schooling in a post-colonial, post-war setting, as well as the long term effects participating in a program with such a focus will be useful addition to the field.

While the sociological and political ramifications of the former colonial education system in Uganda emerged as an interesting theme through teachers' comments, the vast majority of their attention focused on traditional facets of international teacher exchange programs – those focusing on the instruction and interpersonal relationships. However as Rapoport (2008) reports and supported by the pre-participation surveys, participants had many concerns about the approaching experience. Fortunately, this study demonstrates that such concerns can be assuaged through a carefully constructed program that directly addresses the facilitation of healthy, lesson-centered, teacher partnerships. By the end of their partnership, most of the teachers' initial concerns either disappeared completely or were greatly reduced. The majority of participants instead reported at length about the formation of close friendships with their partners and the importance of sharing of each other's culture.

Conversely, as many concerns diminished, other unforeseen concerns arose. Thus, international teacher partnership programs also need to address emerging issues of concern among their participants. Within this study, timeliness emerged as the biggest concern, but was not indicated at all in the pre-surveys. As with any issue that arises between strangers partnering in international endeavors, the key was to keep dialogue open and focused on the work at hand. In this program, such dialogue and relationship negotiation was greatly enhanced through the initial formation of their partnership contracts that modeled how to address issues in a straightforward, nonjudgmental manner. This is just one example in which the Ugandan teachers and North American teachers bridged the cultural, pedagogical, and curricular divides that separated them.

Conclusion

The Ugandan-North American teacher partnership program studied demonstrated that such programs can go beyond educational voyeurism. When given adequate cultural preparation and sociological awareness, teachers can and do engage in thoughtful reflection of the contexts within which teaching and learning occur. Ultimately however, teachers, being teachers, focus first and foremost on the core tasks of teaching – lesson planning and instruction. It is through their teacher lens that participants' experience is processed and that similarities are discovered across classrooms that are separated by cultures, politics and continents. Thus, while these facets of the partnership experience should garner the most programmatic attention, developing an understanding of the local sociological and political contexts in which partners' teaching and learning will occur can only improve the quality of the experience – both culturally and pedagogically.

Further study focusing specifically on the needs, concerns and reflections of host teachers in such programs would greatly add to the extant literature. Typically, such programs involve North American teachers traveling elsewhere, and the resultant articles are often written from a North American perspective. Gaining a more diverse perspective on the dynamics of teacher partnership programs would benefit the profession.

Appendix - List of Ugandan High Schools

Atanga Secondary School
Awere (Displaced) Secondary School
Gulu High School
Gulu Secondary School
Keyo Secondary School
Koch Goma Secondary School
Pabo Secondary School
Sacred Heart Secondary School
St. Joseph Secondary School - Layibi
St. Mary's Secondary School – Lacor
Sir Samuel Baker Secondary School

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