



# International Summer Research or Residency Award

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## Comparative Study: India and United States Educational Policy Studies

Education in India, particularly in urban areas, is highly stratified. Growing aspirations among parents, coupled with mistrust of public schools and inefficient regulatory systems, have proliferated the landscape of private school options in the past 10 years. While scholarship has tackled the subject of privatization of schools, less critical work looks at the burgeoning stratification of teacher training within this context. My research attempts to begin to fill that gap. With help from the Graduate Student International Summer Research or Residency Award, I was able to spend three months in Mumbai, India collecting data for my dissertation research. Building on my past experiences working with a Mumbai-based teacher education NGO in 2011-2012 and a Scott Kloeck Jenson preliminary dissertation award in 2017, I developed a proposal looking at the ways pre-service elementary teachers understand their experiences in a teacher education program and develop their own teacher lens as a result.

This comparative case study is situated among three distinct teacher preparatory programs in Mumbai reflecting a diverse educational ecosystem; one a government certified D.Ed (diploma of education) program, the next an NGO training low income individuals (mostly women) to teach in public/private partnership schools, and the last is an NGO training mostly wealthy women preservice teachers to teach in elite, international private schools. During these past months I have conducted over 50 interviews with preservice teachers, faculty and administration, conducted observations of coursework, and collected curricular, organizational and policy documents. I have learned so much this summer while still having a way to go. As a result of this opportunity, my inquiry has begun focusing on the qualitatively different ways these programs support preservice teacher's reflective practices, and how messages around reflection link to stratifications of preservice teacher's socioeconomic status, cultural practices and future aspirations. I believe this has serious implications around how future teachers will engage with students, families, schools and themselves and I hope this research will shed some light on this phenomenon. I will return to Mumbai in January for follow ups and further observations, trying to better understand this area of inquiry.



The Graduate Student International Summer Research or Residency Award was crucial for my ability to do this work and progress through the UW program. Conducting international research is incredibly difficult, physically, emotionally and intellectually, and especially when in a country without family or social supports. This award allowed for me to live, travel and work safely as I shuttled through the “most congested city in the world” to three different sites, sometimes all in the same day. I was able to set up important partnerships with schools, preservice teachers and faculty, as well as reestablish relationships I have been building for 8 years. I met with education scholars at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai to understand important context, ask for mentorship and develop scholarly partnerships. Throughout this experience I was constantly reminded that proximity matters to building understanding and relationships. That the act of being in a space with someone, and not on the phone or computer, matter. Whether I go into academia after this program ends, or continue to work in the education field from a different angle, I am grateful that this experience validated the importance of being physically close and listening to stories and experiences of others in order to understand our world more deeply.

