Colloquium on Internationalizing Teacher Education

Laura L. Stachowski, Ph.D.

Cultural Immersion Projects
Indiana University
Cultural Immersion Projects
Global Gateway for Teachers
Standing the Test of Time: Overseas Student Teaching’s Lasting Impact on Participants’ Perspectives & Practices

- Exploration of ways former participants have integrated aspects of overseas experience, over time, into current perspectives and practice

- Could provide support for inclusion of overseas student teaching by showing these experiences result not only in “outcomes” ... but also facilitate a transformative process that impacts their lives years afterwards

- Our focus was on professional development and personal growth
Our Study & Respondents

- 18-question survey (9 demographical, 5 examining professional development, 2 addressing personal growth, 1 asking for additional comments, 1 giving option to leave name)

- Sent to electronically to 300 former participants, 94 bounced back (invalid addresses)

- 157 individuals responded
  - 135 female, 22 male
  - from 1+ to 20+ years past their overseas experience
  - had been placed in 13 different host nations
  - licensing areas included mix of elementary, secondary, special education, all grades, early childhood
  - 3/4 still in teaching or education-related roles
Major Findings: The Impact is Lasting, Real, & Important

Impact on Professional Development
(153 respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Mean Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Skills</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Speaking Skills</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in my ability to step into the role my position requires</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What other professional knowledge, skills, or dispositions were developed through overseas student teaching?

- Other professional characteristics including flexibility, adaptability, and a stronger sense of community and one’s place in it
- Increased self-confidence
- Ability to better serve pupils and families from other cultures, including differentiating instruction for ELLs
- Enhanced knowledge of education systems and benchmark examinations, both in US and abroad
### Aspects of Teaching Influenced by Overseas Experience (139 respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extra-curricular involvement</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with teaching colleagues</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with pupils</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of pupils behavior</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific classroom activities or resources used</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional approaches/strategies used</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of curriculum content</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Impact on Personal Growth (144 respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Average Rating (1 – 5, low to high)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change of world view</td>
<td>4.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased interest in interactions with people from other cultures and countries</td>
<td>4.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased awareness of international events</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased confidence in my ability to master challenging situations</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased adaptability and tolerance of ambiguity</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased maturity</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better understanding of own cultural identity</td>
<td>4.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cultural Immersion Projects
Indiana University

- Started in the early 1970s
- Response to “more of the same” in teacher education
- Projects have evolved and grown over the years (e.g., new Urban Project; Overseas Project has grown from 6 host nations to 17 and counting)
- National and international recognition
  - 2001 Best Practice Award for Global and International Teacher Education (AACTE)
  - 2005 Excellence in International Education (Goldman Sachs)
  - 2011 International Award for Innovative Practice in Higher Education (University Design Consortium)
American Indian Reservation Project

[Image of a bus parked in a desert landscape with mountains in the background.]

[Map showing the locations of American Indian reservations in Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico.]
Urban Project: Chicago Public Schools
# Overseas Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Kenya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>Norway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Russia</td>
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<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Teachers the World Over
It’s all about gaining new perspectives and looking at our world through others’ lenses …
The Cultural Projects Feature ... 

Academic and cultural **preparation** prior to placement:
- monthly class sessions
- 2-day workshop
- readings and written assignments
- discussions with former participants and members of host culture
- prep phase weeds out students who may be focused more on tourism and less on commitment to host school and community
The Cultural Projects Feature ...

On-site requirements:
- full-time student teaching
- living in the communities where teaching
- cross-cultural and community involvement
- community-based service learning
- structured assignments to process new experiences and learning
The Cultural Projects Feature ...

General features:
- experience bridging theory and practice (culturally relevant instruction)
- credits earned at the master’s level (even if enrolled as an UG)
- professional insights, cross-cultural/international understanding
- new friends, self-fulfillment, increased confidence, sense of personal/professional accomplishment
Our goal: Develop student teachers’ capacity to explore below the surface of the “cultural iceberg”
Introducing: Indiana University’s Global Gateway for Teachers

- Formerly the Foundation for International Education (River Falls, WI; Dr. Ross Korsgaard, Director)
- Serves IU and numerous other US institutions in securing overseas school placements
- Placements made in “host nation” schools
- GGT materials available in Thursday roundtables
More studies, more outcomes ...

“Non-traditional Sources of Student Teacher Learning”

- School personnel
- Non-school community people
- Host family
- Media
- Geography
- Museums/cultural sites
- Host nation authors
- Parents of pupils
“I realized for the first time that the U.S. is not of primary importance to all people. I had always assumed that people clamored to hear of our news, our lives, our opportunities. They do not! Initially, this was difficult for me to accept.”
“We are limiting our future educators, and the children in their classrooms, by continuing to promote student teaching as something that happens only within a given school, with a classroom teacher and university supervisor having the greatest (or only) influence on what the novice gains from the experience. We must expand our thinking about student teaching as an opportunity for immersion into the local community and culture ....”

Mahan & Stachowski
"Understanding the Self through the Other"

- For many student teachers, first time exploration of factors that shape whom and what they are (family, ethnicity, community, nation)

- Studied student teachers’ perceptions of “home” with both positive and negative slants

“My time in England has forced me to evaluate my understanding of myself and where I come from. It is difficult to be critical of a lifestyle of which I am a part, and being here has allowed me to remove myself from that lifestyle and examine it.”
“Influence of Cultural Values on Classroom Practice & Community Involvement”

- Identified values such as traditions, sharing/reciprocity, family, competition, education, community, faith, relaxed approach to time, etc.

- Described applications related to professional, personal, and social actions
“Host Nation Educators’ Feedback for the Improvement of Overseas Student Teaching Experiences”

- STs’ strengths and assets
- STs’ adjustment and adaptation difficulties
- Increased ST competencies as result of teaching overseas
- Benefits accrued by pupils
- Steps STs should take to better prepare for experience
- Responsibilities of US teacher educators sending STs overseas
Practical Suggestions Based on Host Nation Educators’ Comments

- Preparatory component spanning adequate time and content
- Foster student teachers’ cultural awareness and sensitivity
- Close supervision during in-state student teaching
- Maintain open lines of communication between all parties involved
- Ensure student teachers are approaching the overseas experience maturely, professionally, and with an understanding of their commitment to the host school, family, community
The Service Learning Project

- Must adhere to the “3 R’s” – realistic, reflective, reciprocal exchange,
- Must be completed in the placement community, but separate from the host school’s academic or extracurricular program,
- Requires structured write-up,
- Should involve direct interaction with community people, and …
… Should give the student teacher an opportunity to learn more about the community served by his or her school, thus enhancing classroom instruction, cultural learning, and further local involvement.
Outcomes of Service Learning in Overseas Host Communities

- Helps student teachers build community connections and a sense of “belonging”
- Contributes to a broader worldview
- Informs student teachers’ classroom practice
- Fosters greater understanding of, appreciation for the nature of other people’s lives
- Enhances awareness of own strengths, weaknesses
- Provides opportunity to learn things that cannot be learned in a classroom
“I was privileged to work within a community not as some daring do-gooder, but as a member of that community. This allowed me to experience rather than just watch how people in Ireland live, work, and enjoy their lives.”

(Helped an Irish family on their farm)

“This experience, in accordance with my student teaching and social involvement, has really shown me different perspectives of Australia. I have heard and observed the differing and similar viewpoints of the generations of Australia, and through this can see how the progression of ideas that have shaped the country.”

(Volunteered in a nursing home)
“For the past two years, I have taken classes dealing with diversity and felt like I knew it all. Then, when I was actually faced with diversity, I was not prepared and I was uncomfortable.”
(Worked in Scottish group home for special needs adults)

“Each moment was a lesson in becoming myself. I realized the true nature of who I am now and the person I want to be in the future. It takes the experience of being in a country like Kenya, a country so raw and real, to really realize your place in the world; what it means to be American, what it means to be white, and what it means to be a woman in a first world country ...”
(Assisted with micro-lending organization for Kenyan widows)
Multiple considerations go into program development ... Let’s talk about these over the course of this Colloquium

- Administrative/faculty support
- Placements in one direction, or student teacher exchanges?
- Interfacing with state licensure requirements
- Important legalities (insurance, risk management)
- Require in-state student teaching first?
More considerations ....

- Student recruitment, screening, acceptance
- Preparatory phase activities
- Number of weeks on-site
- Structured on-site assignments (topics requiring STs active involvement and interactions with host community members)
- Community-based service learning
- Development of in-country partnerships
- On-going program evaluation
- On-site supervision
And even more considerations ....

- Expense and affordability – for students AND institutions
- Quality control
- Making placements in non-English speaking countries
- What to do about those Department of State travel warnings and advisories
- Student teachers’ employability
- AND ALL OF THE QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS YOU BRING TO THE COLLOQUIUM!
Thank you, and looking forward to the discussions to come!