SOCIAL JUSTICE AND GLOBAL EDUCATION: INVESTIGATING BEST PRACTICES

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Focuses on...

Educational practices that promote equity and social change throughout the world.

Development of creative learning environments wherein an understanding of, and appreciation for, the privileges and responsibilities of international citizenship is fostered.
Transformative Learning

Meaningful and transformative learning is essential for fundamental change to occur in how learners view and apply themselves in a greater global context (Cohen, et. al, 2001; Mezirow, 2000)

Learning needs to be grounded in moments of disorientation, followed by reflection, and moving into
MEZIROW’S PHASES OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

A disorienting dilemma
A self examination with feelings of guilt or shame
A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions
Recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change

Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
Planning a course of action
 Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plan

Provision trying of new roles
Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
A reintegration into one’s life on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s perspective
MINDFULNESS IN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING

Includes the incorporation of contemplative, experiential, & transformative practices into learning ideologies.

Includes going beyond just teaching students about the critical issues faced around the world, it involves helping students develop a compassion toward these issues and action planning.

(Mahani, 2012)
...a social justice framework is one that “actively address[es] the dynamics of oppression, privilege, and isms, [and recognizes] that society is the product of historically rooted, institutionally sanctioned stratification along socially constructed group lines that include race, class, gender, [sexual] orientation, and ability [among others]. Working for social justice in education means guiding students [and often being guided by students] in critical self-reflection of their socialization into this matrix of unequal relationships and its implications, analysis of the mechanisms of oppression, and the ability to challenge these hierarchies.”

(Cochran-Smith & Power, 2013)
International Education at CMU

Sites are selected based on social justice issues at the location.

- Ireland
- South Africa
- Hong Kong/China
- Singapore/Malaysia
EDL is committed to the incorporation of a social justice frame within the experience.

Select sites and explore issues of power, privilege, & oppression within that context.

Historical context of social justice topics are explored pre-trip & experienced while in country.
Cross Cultural Learning

» Students are administered a survey prior to international travel and the same survey upon return.

» Assessment looks at cross cultural learning and changes.

» Additionally, 10 students have been interviewed as part of an in-depth look at cross cultural learning.
Qualitative THEMES

» Building capacity for perspective transformation through challenging assumptions & worldview

» Growth in intercultural competency

» Greater awareness of social responsibility vs. privilege
This theme emerged as students reflected on their interactions with people within the international sites & how they defined forms of privilege, power, & oppression.
When I saw what poverty looks like in South Africa it rocked my world. I have changed how I feel about my role in addressing poverty…Once I got past my outrage I realized I can do something with this information.
Greater AWARENESS

As an American I became very aware of how I frame the way things should be done. After traveling to Hong Kong and China I realized I was using my privilege to ‘tell’ people how they should do things. Instead I need to look at my social responsibility to understand first and then act.
As part of each international study, a language component is included.

Intercultural competency is effectively communicating with people of other cultures.

This theme emerged as students talked about engaging through language.
GROWTH in International Competency

Gaelic is not widely spoken in Ireland, however when we visited the Irish language center and talked to the professionals who are working so hard to revive the language was amazing. I can learn all I want about other cultures but learning other cultures without focusing on their language would omit a huge part of who they are.
IMPLICATIONS

» Need to create curriculum and opportunities to change consciousness

» Reaffirms need for a social justice frame in international programming

» Global experiences need to be intentionally tied to career readiness

» Assessment and reflection is critical to understand the impact on students
Designing your own experiences

» What is the mission of your program?
» What are the learning goals of your experiences?
» What kind of pre-departure and re-entry programming would you offer as part of your program?
QUESTIONS?

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