DEVELOPING CULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH INTERNATIONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCES

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OBJECTIVES

• Share results from a study abroad experiences to Stellenbosch, South Africa
• Describe the major benefits and new understandings identified by teaching candidates as a result of the international teaching experience
• Discuss questions pertinent to planning and conducting study abroad experiences
Theoretical Frame: Critical Cosmopolitan Theory

- Critical Cosmopolitan Theory describes the development of global citizenship
- Connects Asia Society’s four global competencies with Paulo Freire’s conscientization
- Study abroad as “reading and re-writing the world”
- 3 P’s curriculum: perspective, privilege, power
Critical Cosmopolitan Theory - Figure

SEVEN FACTORS TO DIFFERENTIATE STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS (ENGLE & ENGLE, 2003)

- Duration
- Language competency
- Required language used in coursework
- Context of coursework, e.g., faculty
- Housing
- Guided/structured cultural interaction
- Orientation (reflection on cultural experience)
## Figure 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Components</th>
<th>Level One: Study Tour</th>
<th>Level Two: Short-Term Study</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>Several days to a few weeks</td>
<td>3 to 8 weeks, summer programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entry target-language competence</strong></td>
<td>Elementary to intermediate</td>
<td>Elementary to intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language used in course work</strong></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English and target-language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic work context</strong></td>
<td>Home institution faculty</td>
<td>In-house or institute for foreign students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td>Collective</td>
<td>Collective and/or home stay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provisions for cultural interaction, experiential learning</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guided reflection on cultural experience</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Orientation program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Goals of international programs include helping candidates:
  • Develop their ability to interact effectively and appropriately in cross-cultural situations (Quezada, 2004)
  • Eliminate (or diminish) their cultural stereotypes (Smith, Moallem, & Sherrill, 1997).
  • Develop global perspectives (Olmedo & Harbon, 2010);
  • Engage in personal and cultural discovery (Willard-Holt, 2001); and

• International teaching experiences for preservice candidates can lead to:
  • Greater appreciation for cultural diversity (Pence & Macgillivray, 2008);
  • Personal and professional growth (Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Willard-Holt, 2001);
  • Improvements in self-efficacy (Stachowski & Sparks, 2007);
  • Improvements in reflection (Kissock & Richardson, 2010)
GUIDING QUESTIONS

• What is the impact of an international teaching experience on participants’ beliefs about teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students?

• How did candidates’ perceptions about teaching in general change as a result of teaching in an international context?
KEY DETAILS

• 22 female students majoring in elementary education, special education, and world languages

• Preparatory activities: assigned readings (with in-country presentations), annotated bibliography of self-selected South African literature; development of lesson plans about America

• Programmatic educational opportunities (following)

• Ongoing and summative activities: preparation of lesson plans, reflections, observation summaries, and summative reflection/artifact
Locale: Stellenbosch
STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
Seminars led by UNC Charlotte faculty member and members of the Faculty of Education from Stellenbosch University
• Clinical experiences in schools in Stellenbosch; daily debrief sessions
Excursions to sites of historical and cultural significance

ROBBEN ISLAND

DISTRICT SIX MUSEUM
Visit to Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute, Metropole East Education District (2014); Stellenbosch District Office (2015-2016)
Not So Educational Experiences

Cape Point
34° 21' 24" South Latitude
18° 30' 31" East Longitude
South Africa.

Great White Shark

Lion in the wild

Group photo
DATA COLLECTED

• My Cultural Awareness Profile
  • 4 dimensions: Exploring the Global Context, Learning about Cultural Differences, Knowing Ourselves as Cultural, and Communicating across Cultural Differences

• Culturally Responsive Teaching Outcome Expectancy Scale (Siwatu, 2007) & Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (Siwatu, 2007)

• Participant reflections

• Anecdotal notes

• Course artifacts, e.g., observation summaries
RESULTS - myCAP

- General finding: cultural is an important influence on behavior and culture should be integrated throughout the curriculum
- Dimension 2 (Learning about Different Cultures)
  - Acknowledged the importance of incorporating culturally relevant materials into the curriculum.
- Dimension 3 (Know Ourselves as Cultural)
  - Recognized their cultural identity influenced perceptions and behavior
  - Recognized the importance of talking about cultural beliefs, values, and traditions (and were more comfortable doing so)
- Dimension 4 (Communicating across Cultures)
  - Greater comfort in speaking to other cultural groups
  - Recognized the cultural identity impacts communication
FINDINGS – OUTCOME EXPECTANCY & CRTSE Scales

• General finding: Strong beliefs about positive outcomes at the outset of the study; high self-efficacy for enacting culturally responsive practices
• Lowest outcome expectancy scores (observed in pre-test only):
  • belief in the probability that acknowledging the ways that the school culture is different from your students’ home culture will minimize the likelihood of discipline problems.
  • belief in the probability that changing the structure of the classroom so that it is compatible with your students’ home culture will increase their motivation.
• Largest gains on CRTSE were relative to acknowledging and incorporating students’ home language into the classroom (e.g. greet or praise students in home language)
EMERGING THEMES: Acknowledgment of bias and perceptions

- All teachers come to the classroom with their own cultural identity that influences their beliefs and actions
- Cultural influences may impact selection of curriculum, resources, and teaching methods
- May cause teacher to make assumptions and draw inferences about someone from the same culture
- When working with individuals from other cultures, recognized the importance of building relationships with students, coming to know their background and personal history
If a teacher understands the student’s home life and characteristics of his or her culture than she can develop a lesson that the student can learn and benefit from. Teachers need to regard the student’s differences as strengths in order to become culturally competent.
EMERGING CONCEPTIONS: CURRICULAR INTEGRATION

• Prior to experience, candidates’ instructional focus was directed toward including resources, e.g., books and classroom décor, celebrating various religious holidays, and having students research various cultures.

• Post-experience:
  • Importance of acknowledging culture in teaching/curriculum
  • Make all cultures visible in lessons (or incorporate information about cultures in lessons)
  • Celebrate differences
  • Hold open discussions around cultural differences
• I think as a teacher it is our job to help our students first understand their own culture. I watched one of the teachers I observed do a mini lesson and ask the students to make a chart about all the different cultures in South Africa. She doesn't ignore culture.

• Culture definitely should not be ignored in the classroom. I think as a teacher it is our job to help our students first understand their own culture ... I will teach my students that we are not all the same.
## Becoming Critically Cosmopolitan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Privilege</th>
<th>Power</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class sizes</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Age</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Wi-Fi</td>
<td>English language</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Electricity</td>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Travel</td>
<td>United States citizenship and passport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difference in curriculum &amp; instruction</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>History of apartheid</td>
<td>● English v. Afrikaans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multilingualism</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>● Books</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Currency exchange</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Technology</td>
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Educators must move beyond their comfort zone to see their world from a different perspective, discover alternative solutions to problems they face and...integrate appropriate ideas into their setting.

-Kissock & Richardson, 2010

Next step: Global Education Minor

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How can we view teacher education as a global experience? What are the long-term benefits of international experiences on teaching and professional development?

- How do teacher educators help candidates understand the interplay between perspective, privilege, and power when it comes to study abroad?

- How does the study abroad context and various experiences develop global competencies through a Critical Cosmopolitan lens?

- What tasks or assignments should be included in a teaching abroad experience?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How can faculty best prepare (or be prepared) to take students on international experiences?

- What attitudes, competencies, and skills are necessary for faculty to successfully lead international experiences?

- What are characteristics of effective international education partnerships between teacher education programs?

- What support systems have proven valuable during teaching abroad experiences?