

Chapter 2

Innovative Study Abroad Models: Embedding International Experiences in Curricular Development

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses how to integrate international experiences into the curricular development process for educators working in teacher preparation programs. The authors explain the various models which may be used when planning a study abroad experience. The writers then examine study abroad timeframes and the advantages of planning trips of varying lengths. Next, tips for designing curricular experiences which enhance learning are described. Finally, the chapter provides an overview of practical considerations for trip organizers on topics including study abroad administration, recruitment, and funding issues. The chapter concludes with a discussion of planning considerations for keeping students at the center of the study abroad experience.

INTRODUCTION

The Importance of Study Abroad in Teacher Preparation Programs

There is an impetus at many institutions of higher education to provide learning experiences for college students that broaden their global understanding, provide language learning opportunities, and strengthen intercultural awareness. The need for these types of programs is particularly evident in the field of teacher education where novice educators are often thrust into classrooms with limited lived experience

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in diverse environments. Programs that prepare teachers must consider the global nature of the world including the interconnectedness and interdependence, which will likely influence the perspectives of teaching candidates (McGaha & Linder, 2014). Study abroad provides exposure to diverse settings and is a catalyst for preparing educators to teach in a global classroom where they must modify curriculum to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Enhancing the curriculum to consider the global-mindedness and intercultural competence of students is a goal for many postsecondary institutions (Deardorff, 2006; Kehl & Morris, 2008). Each section in this chapter begins with a quote from a teacher who has studied abroad or taught in an international setting. To protect these teachers' identities, a pseudonym is used. The quotes are included to introduce each section of the chapter and exemplify the 'intercultural competence' for which many institutions are striving. The chapter will also describe the various models of study abroad, discuss trip lengths and timeframes, explain the curricular development process, and provide practical considerations for trip planning. The writers will specifically focus on *how* the models relate to curriculum development within the field of education.

BACKGROUND

I always had this idea that my students should become learned citizens of the world, and I don't think I understood truly what that meant until I had become one. The internet has opened a door to viewing others through a lens, but until one has physically been other places, one cannot truly see that other world. We all interpret the world around us to formulate reality, and we teachers want our students to understand multiple perspectives from multiple cultures. - Mrs. Jaycee, Middle School Teacher

How can we help university students become citizens of the world? Many university educators believe that the ideal situation is for all university students to have the opportunity to study abroad for a semester or longer. Additionally, many professors would like students to have opportunities for expanding international opportunities within different countries and content area disciplines. The world we live in does not always facilitate these dreams. The reality for many college students is that they would love to travel but may not have the practical means to take a long trip or finance this type of experience. Educators must then make travel choices which balance curricular needs, program obligations, timeframes and financial sense. How do we balance curriculum goals with study abroad design?

Currently, many university faculty and constituents in higher education begin with an international travel destination in mind. For example, a faculty member may dream of visiting Costa Rica and taking university students along for the experience. Next, the study abroad format is considered. For example, the faculty member might suggest that the university students could complete some service learning by teaching English in Costa Rican schools. Another approach is to consider existing partnerships with faculty and university colleagues abroad and then determine how these relationships can transform into a trip abroad. For example, a faculty member has a colleague conducting research in France and begins to develop a worthwhile visit for university students to Normandy. While this type of incidental planning can lead to valuable outcomes, the authors of this chapter suggest that university staff consider a different approach or model for study abroad work. Faculty members could begin with the program and curriculum goals established at the beginning of planning and then align the travel destination with the

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