

DEVELOPING CULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH INTERNATIONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCES

Dr. Michael Putman
Dr. Erik Jon Byker



WISE Conference 2017
Winston-Salem, NC

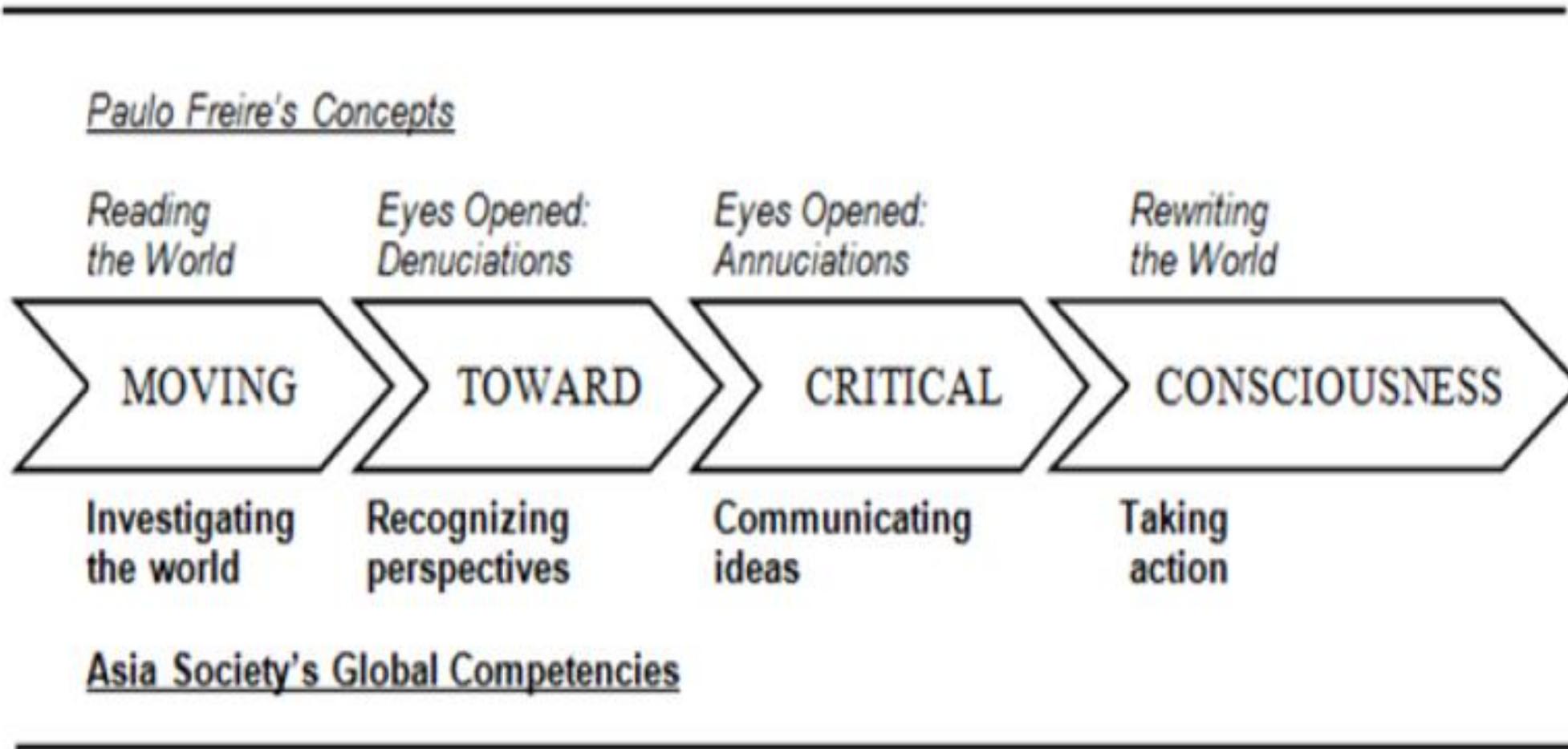
OBJECTIVES

- 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.

| <i>Program Components</i> | <i>Level One: Study Tour</i> | <i>Level Two: Short-Term Study</i> |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Duration</i> | Several days to a few weeks | 3 to 8 weeks, summer programs |
| <i>Entry target-language competence</i> | Elementary to intermediate | Elementary to intermediate |
| <i>Language used in course work</i> | English | English and target-language |
| <i>Academic work context</i> | Home institution faculty | In-house or institute for foreign students |
| <i>Housing</i> | Collective | Collective and/or home stay |
| <i>Provisions for cultural interaction, experiential learning</i> | None | None |
| <i>Guided reflection on cultural experience</i> | None | Orientation program |

RELEVANT LITERATURE

- **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

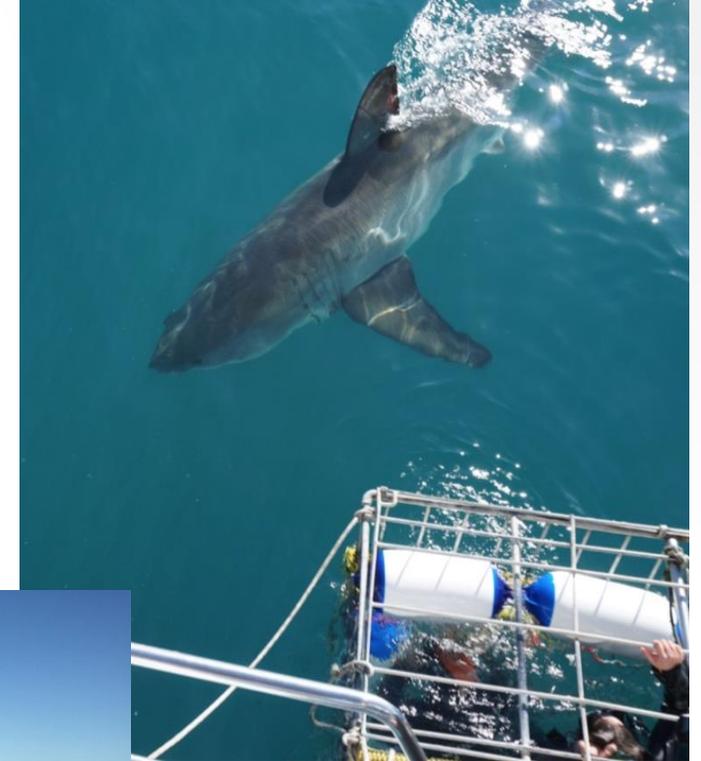


Visit to Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute,
Metropole East Education District (2014); Stellenbosch
District Office (2015-2016)



Education Department

Not So Educational Experiences



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

[Back](#)

- 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

| Perspective | Privilege | Power |
|--|--|--|
| Class sizes | Access <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Wi-Fi● Electricity● Travel | Age |
| Difference in curriculum & instruction | | English language |
| History of apartheid | Language <ul style="list-style-type: none">● English v. Afrikaans | Race/ethnicity |
| Multilingualism | Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Books● Currency exchange● Technology | United States citizenship and passport |
| Religion | | |

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

Contact Information:
Dr. Mike Putman
sputman@uncc.edu

Dr. Erik Byker
ebyker@uncc.edu



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?