Positive Discomfort: Structured Student Reflection in International Service-Based Programs: A Social Justice Curriculum

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Abstract
In the fall of 2009, Princeton University launched the Princeton Bridge Year Program—a service-based, international, pre-freshman "bridge" or "gap" year for 20 accepted students sent to four different countries. Princeton chose the international social enterprise ProWorld Service Corps as its partner organization to run the Bridge Year Program in Urubamba, Peru. Princeton University and ProWorld Peru both state a very clear intention in running this program: to transform participants. Their explicit goal is to turn out students who have a global perspective and are compassionate, humble, aware, innovative and inspired.

But how should program-providers, out in the field, actually accomplish such a mission? This paper proposes that the key to success is reflection. It argues that an intentional, cohesive, regularly-scheduled period of group reflection, rooted in experiential education theory, is what sparks the desired shifts in student consciousness.

The bulk of the paper is a user-friendly curriculum that structures the student reflection component of international, service-based programs. Following a description of its theoretical underpinnings, the curriculum is divided into three modules—Culture, Service and Sustainable Development. Each module introduces a series of resources—articles, videos, quotations, documentaries—followed by provocative discussion questions. The curriculum is based on social justice pedagogy and promotes social justice perspectives. It is meant to incite positive discomfort in students, introducing often untouched issues, and pushing students to "un-learn" and "re-learn." Ultimately, the curriculum aims to cultivate tough-minded, yet hopeful participants determined to join the fight for global justice.

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Other positive impacts included ongoing relationships with social justice projects in India and positive, practical contributions to placement agencies during the active phase of the programme. The need for adequate academic preparation, reciprocity, as well as ongoing academic support and facilitation of short-term study abroad programmes is reinforced. View. Show abstract. One author has been placing social work students in international field practica for the past 10 years. This model of developing and maintaining international student exchanges suggests that communication is at the core of successful international work. Pre-program and post-program evaluation surveys along with reflective workshops...
were used to explore students' experiences in Aboriginal community-based curriculum development, a review of current Aboriginal curriculum packages and other resources; curriculum planning and evaluation. An experiential learning approach with aspects of the course applied during the candidates' practice teaching rounds. Design of studio/lab-based application activities, and curriculum planning relevant to a variety of institutional settings are emphasized. FOCI 215/3.0 Arts in Education K to 12. Learning in this course occurs through a combination of structured classes, contact with professors, a self-directed independent study, and an alternative practicum. While an international alternative practicum placement is supported, it is not a requirement. By providing models for critical reflection, it challenges students to articulate their own value commitments in a spirit of constructive debate. Academics and Research. Toggle. Internships. A central component of the program is the internship, which can involve hands-on social justice research or take the form of a community-based experience guided and deepened by participation in the associated classroom course. A number of funding opportunities are available to support unpaid social justice-related internships. The Brenda Meehan Social Justice-in-Action Grant Program grant program provides support for student-organized events that bring together academic and activist perspectives on one or more social justice issues.