

Images of International TEA Teachers and their Students

Teaching Excellence
and Achievement Program

Spring 2010



Edited by
Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska



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Kraków 2011

**Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program (TEA)
& International Leaders in Education Program (ILEP)
ALUMNI SMALL GRANTS**

Title: Images of International TEA Teachers and their Students

Revised by: Dr. Lawrence J. McNulty

Special contributions: Hugh Bilton

Collaborator: Waldemar Sędkowski

Technical editing and IT development: Łukasz Kaczyński

Cover design: Piotr Rachwaniec



"This project was made possible by an award from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State, through a program administered by IREX (International Research & Exchanges Board). None of these organizations is responsible for the views expressed herein."

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ISBN 978-83-62275-21-2

Published by FALL

The Power of the TEA Program is in its People

Each of the past 160 TEA Fellows, who came to the University of Nebraska – Lincoln (UNL) for the program, were greeted at the airport by Elvira. She was also an immigrant from Belarus, who last saw her father she was 17 years old. All she knew of him was that he lives for a time in Central Russia. From the moment the Fellows arrived until they departed, Elvira was their guardian angel or “mother hen” as some of the Fellows put it. She drove them to events, helped them shop, took sick Fellows to the doctor, and other personal assistance for six weeks.

In the Fall 2010 TEA Program, Elvira met Alexey, from Orel, Russia, approximately 40 miles from the village where her father once resided. Elvira is a very quiet, but caring person, so she did not want to impose on Alexey, but on the bus to the airport departure, she mentioned her father to him and asked if he could find any information regarding him. Several months later she emailed Alexey, reminding him about their conversation in Lincoln. Alexey responded in less than two weeks with the information that her father had died in that village and the date of his death. Ironically, he had died on Elvira’s birthday the note said... Alexey replied it was also his birthday.

After several days crying, Elvira followed the Russian tradition of saying goodbye to a loved one with an empty chair and a few tablespoons of Swedish herbal potion, because she did not have any other alcohol at home, and had a final toast to him...

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A NOTE TO THE READER

*Dear Representatives
of
The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
of the US Department of State,
International Review and Exchanges Board (IREX),
Host Universities and their great Educators
as well American Embassies in our countries,*

You have made the change in TEA teachers' lives. This collaborative grant and the book itself could never have come into existence without the influence of open-minded and generous people. We are enormously grateful for your collective and positive presence. Thank you for having the faith in us. As ever, it has been an education and a comfort just to have most of the world in one place.

On behalf of thankful TEA Teachers

Anna Kaemińska-Kaczyńska

Dear Contributors to this collaborative Book and all TEA Teachers,

I had the honor to work with dedicated teachers from many countries, which I always wished to visit. Reading our collaborative book I have great memories of you in my mind. In one minute, I find myself in many places all over the world...

At this point, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all of you for being great ambassadors of your homelands! You brought to Washington D.C., to host universities, and to this collaborative grant a piece of your national heritage. Indeed, parts of your school and personal life, teaching skills, lovely traditions, habits, daily matters, and your personal stories formed the foundation where all professors, doctors, high school teachers worked everyday together to bring our countries and students closer to understanding and trust.

In fact, we spent lots of valuable time at host universities. Thanks to host universities' representatives, our six-week program went smoothly and in a collaborative atmosphere. Thanks to Dr. Lawrence Joe McNulty I learned about being a leader in our schools, communities and countries. It was Dr. McNulty who was like our father when our handbag was lost, we got cold, or had any problems. Finally, because of him this collaborative grant is so well-edited and the bonds with the TEA alumni and the university seem to be everlasting.

Dr. Delwyn L.Harnisch and Mrs. Shannon Cooley-Lovett played a vital role in helping me understand American culture and the human side of teaching. Their experiences at the University of Nebraska constitute an important stage in my lesson planning now.

I cannot forget to mention Mr. Tim Bayne, whose work on teaching service learning had a great impact on my students, who have learned about civic responsibility and have gained an understanding of global problems at the local level.

I also offer my great gratitude to Professor Larry L. Dlugosh for his great hospitality and confidence in me and TEA teachers.

Thanks to my collaborators Hugh Bilton (Australia) and Waldemar Sędkowski (Poland), as well as United States guests, Allyson Daly and Denise Ghiloni, I met the deadlines of this challenging project.

As a coordinator of this project, I would also like to thank Dr. Terence Janicki (the USA), Varduhi Grigoryan (Armenia), Md. Mutahar Hussain (Bangladesh), Guillermo Alonso López Ossa (Colombia), Oscar Erick Fuentes Prudencio (El Salvador), Nana Tiatisvili (Georgia), Rita Banerjee (India), Saliou Sarr (Senegal), Efraín Dávila Salazar (Peru), Irena Barilenko (Russia), Oksana Petrova (Russia),

Modou Mbaye (Senegal), Charles Morgan (the USA), my mother, Jolanta Krzemińska, for professional teaching and life support, and especially to my husband Łukasz Kaczyński, who is always willing to participate both virtually and in reality in any projects run by me.

As a credo found on one notice board in American school I strongly believe that *to live a creative life we must lose our fear of being wrong*. If it had not been for the inner drive of the contributors to take part in the TEA Program, we would not have met and had a chance to work together on this book. I hope this book will be a positive contribution to your daily life and thanks to our work, you will never have any fear of being wrong making your life more colorful and creative.

Thank you for making a change in the world and creating a great documenting TEA teachers experiences and their perception of the United States,

*Best regards,
Anna*

A note from the host university Representative

I have been a coordinator for six TEA programs at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. We have been most fortunate to host more than 160 very devoted teachers from 26 countries on four continents. These programs always result in significant changes for the teachers and students in their home countries and incredible cultural learning experiences for the teachers and students at the university and local schools. This book is the first of its kind, because it documents this experience from eyes of multiple TEA Fellows, while in the US and at home. The descriptions you will read herein are moving and from the heart of the writers, demonstrating the tremendous sharing and learning that occurred in these programs and thereafter.

Great thanks to all who contributed and especially to Anna, whose ideas, hard work, and dedication made it all possible.

Dr. Lawrence J. McNulty

Teaching – surely is a ‘Noble Profession’

Teaching has been described for a long time as a ‘noble profession, and to pass on knowledge and skills is surely that. So, what is teaching. Teaching, or to teach – to pass on knowledge and skills, through instruction, training, practice and exercise. The Dictionary meaning makes it sound so simple! But if only it was.

It is, however, the ability to put these into action that every teacher strives for, no matter what you teach. Teaching English, or English as a Foreign Language is no different. At its basics it is simply to get the student/s to be able to:

- Write – with some structure.
- Read – with some comprehension and flair.
- Listen – with some openness and understanding.
- And finally to Speak – with some structure, comprehension, flair and understanding.

Once again it sounds so simple.

But to achieve the above takes dedication, enthusiasm, knowledge and guidance, and it is this knowledge and guidance that programs like TEA and others throughout the world continue to provide.

Education systems, as you will see in this book, vary from country to country, within individual schools in those countries, as do facilities or resources within those individual schools but it is as an individual, as a teacher that the most important development can occur. Teaching does not come without its challenges or without its frustrations, whether your teaching in the USA, Australia or Armenia, Peru or Poland. The constant search for a balance of real teaching time – the teacher student interaction – and the time spent preparing, planning, juggling paperwork and documentation, whether at school or at government level is ever present. The limitations of facilities or resources, of momentary reimbursement or finances for projects and the constant ever changing educational environment all make teaching just not a simple as it sounds.

So, when you are looking for DEDICATION, or ENTHUSIASM, or KNOWLEDGE or GUIDANCE, pick up this BOOK, flip open a page and read.

*You will find all these and more. Enjoy the read.
Hugh Bilton*

INTRODUCTION

Images of International Teachers and Students Book "(...) was made possible by an award from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State, through a program administered by IREX (International Research & Exchanges Board). None of these organizations is responsible for the views expressed herein."

What is the Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program (TEA)?

The Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program (TEA), a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State provides secondary school teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), social studies, math, and science with unique opportunities to develop expertise in their subject areas, enhance their teaching skills, and increase their knowledge about the United States. TEA brings outstanding secondary school teachers from Eurasia, South Asia, East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Near East, Europe, and the Western Hemisphere to the United States to participate in a six-week professional development program which includes coursework, curriculum development, and effective teaching methodologies. This six-week program takes place at a selected U.S. university and includes a three-week internship at a U.S. secondary school teaching in a classroom as partners with the American teacher. The TEA Program also gives U.S. middle school and high school teachers of these fields the opportunity to travel to the participating countries for two weeks to collaborate on joint projects and create linkages and learning partnerships between U.S. and international schools. This program is administered by International Review and Exchanges Board (IREX) and more information can be found at <http://irex.org/programs/tea/index.asp>

In spring 2010 there were four universities participating in the TEA Program and hosting international teachers:

- **University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida**
represented by **Dr. Bárbara C.Cruz**
- **University of Nebraska – Lincoln, Nebraska**
represented by **Dr. Lawrence J.McNulty**
- **Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia**
represented by **Dr. Susan Crim McClendon**
- **California State University, Chico, California**
represented by **Mrs. Diana Parks.**

Who is who in the project:

- Awardee, coordinator of the Project, editor:
Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska (Poland)
- The book was revised by:
Dr. Lawrence J. McNulty, University of Nebraska (USA)
- Project collaborates:
Hugh Bilton (Australia) – editorial assistance, proof reader
Waldemar Sedkowski (Poland) – collaborator
- TEA – Facilitators and contributors:
Dr. Delwyn L. Harnisch, Dr. Terence Janicki, Shannon Cooley-Lovett, Denise Ghiloni, Allyson Daly, Chuck Morgan, Jolanta Krzemińska.
- Authors of the articles:
TEA FELLOWS Spring 2010 who agreed to cooperate and write the articles.

What was the aim of the collaborative project?

To publish this book describing:

- Memories and evaluation from TEA program
- How TEA teachers used gained knowledge once they got home
- What do international teachers/students mean to each country representative?
- To present representations of students works

Target audience: It's designed for current and future TEA teachers and their students.

The authors wanted to put their views across on education and new international experiences to challenge and provide thinking on educational issues that we – both teachers and students-face every day. Besides, we wish that our book would be a help for our embassies on TEA program. (For example, Poland has been in the program for the first time and definitely such a book will give future TEA teachers lots of valuable information).

How would this book inform current and future TEA international teachers?

- Through the website of University of Nebraska, where except for information about the book we added the link to our `book blog` to give people a chance to get acquainted with us <http://teabookproject.blogspot.com>.

- Some hard copies were sent to IREX, to our countries` embassies, hosted universities and they are placed in our school and local libraries. Thus, it is a great source of information on TEA program for those who apply for the program or go for their scholarship.
- In the future, we are planning to run the project together somewhere in Europe (maybe in Poland) to gather all or most authors together and organize an international conference for teachers on TEA program, education and methods of teaching and cultural diversity.
- Each contributing TEA member received a copy of a book.
- PDF version of the book can be accessed at www.book.annakrzeminska.pl

**PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND EXPERIENCES BY THE TEA
FELLOWS**

TEA Program Experience – the Action Plan Realized

Varduhi Grigoryan

"Quantum" college, Yerevan, Armenia.

varduhigr@yahoo.com

Being chosen as a member of the TEA group going to the University of Nebraska in February 2010 turned out to be a focal point in the development of my school and in the future of its students.

I work at Quantum college which is one of the best colleges in Armenia and is famous for having highly educated graduates who enter higher educational institutions without difficulties. For 10 years our school has achieved very good places not only in the Republic Subject Olympiads but also in the international ones showing very good results especially in the subjects such as Physics, Informatics, Mathematics, Chemistry etc.

Before coming to the USA, I was a teacher of English and also was appointed as the coordinator of the school who was trying to develop international projects and to cooperate with other schools in other countries. At the same time, we applied to the International Baccalaureate Organization for permission to implement the Diploma Programme in our school which would mean open doors in front of our students who graduate from the college with very good results but not having internationally acceptable diplomas cannot enter world famous universities the first year. To our application we got the answer that we could get the authorization only if we make the necessary changes which were mainly about the teaching methods and ideology of the international mindedness.

Coming to the US became a very good chance for me to understand what is necessary to do and to understand what they meant saying that we need to make changes. The excellent professionals working with us there in the UNL and also the chance to have the internship at Lincoln East High school helped me to see all the things that I had heard of before. The impressions were great!

The methods used showed how important and efficient the student centered approach is and what good results could be achieved. Staying there for 7 weeks and being at school two of these weeks gave me a chance to understand the needs and to try to make an action plan for my further steps but it was obvious that the experience that I got there was not enough to go and to make huge changes in my own country, it was clear to me that I would need some help, help of people who were very good professionals already. The projects and the ideas that arose while having discussions with our group members were things that I am sure can be realized and can be very beneficial for our countries, but I saw the need of

something more than just working on possible service learning plans, I knew that the teachers of my school were in the need of having a chance to take part in a professional development workshops to improve their teaching methods and their approaches to teaching in general.

So, while in Lincoln, I tried to find people who were very good professionals and were somehow interested in the idea of coming to my country and teaching our teachers. The first discussions with one of our trainers Tim Bayne who was also teaching at the same school where I had my internship and who I saw in the process of teaching, seemed to be quite interested.

Later, after coming back and sharing the experience I got with all of our teachers with the help of the teacher trainings organized at our college the principal and I saw the need of continuing the trainings and the need of taking them to a higher level. So, I contacted Tim Bayne with the request of having him come and hold a teacher training. Fortunately, he not only agreed to come but also persuaded Mike Musil another excellent teacher to join him and to come to Armenia.

As a result of all these, 20 teachers from Quantum college (who also teach at other schools or at the State University of Yerevan) and 30 students took part in the summer school from July 26-August 7, 2010. These two weeks became very important for both the teachers and the students. First, because it was a summer school with an English immersion and at the end of the school the level of the teachers' and students' English had greatly improved, secondly, they all learnt how to write essays, what service learning is and how to write projects, besides they had a course on leadership.

The teachers understood the need of making changes in the way they teach. They were introduced the importance of developing the critical thinking and giving students a chance to become responsible for the things they do.

The summer school became the first step; in fact now we continue what we have started and already seeing the results we want to share our experience with the teachers of other schools and in this way help our country to take a step forward in the education.

The chance to be a part of the TEA Program became an important event not only in my life but also became a reason for the huge changes going on in my school which hopefully will have their impact on the whole country!

Unforgettable TEA Program

Md. Mutahar Hussain

Anjuman Adarsha Govt. High School, Netrokona, Bangladesh
mutaharntk@yahoo.com

As a teacher, I enjoy teaching and the company of the students. But in the third world countries, a teacher has a lot of limitations. In Bangladesh, too often we cannot give our students proper facilities. We have many problems, including poor infrastructure and insufficient classroom facilities. At the same time, we have 80 to 100 students in each classroom. Above all, we are not well trained. But from the very beginning, I have been trying with my heart and soul to help my students. I always thought if I could have training in a developed country, I could know the modern education system of a prosperous country, which would be helpful in order to teach my students. At last I received a great opportunity. I was able to participate in TEA (Teaching Excellence and Achievement) program in the United States of America organized by IREX (International Research and Exchanges Board) under the State Department. This was a very important training program which changed my thinking and view teaching.

In our country there are training programs. Some developed countries are helping to run these training programs, and the government is trying to upgrade the situation. Changes are coming slowly. But these programs are not sufficient. In most cases we use very traditional teaching methods. We cannot use modern technology in our classrooms. When I went to the USA, I visited some schools there. I was astonished seeing the facilities of the schools. The students are given all kinds of facilities, which our students cannot imagine to get. These facilities are essential in the teaching-learning process. The schools there work in a much disciplined way. Teachers are very active there and they are well trained in technology. They have a lot of patience to work with the students in a friendly manner.

In our country we act in our classrooms as lords. The students do not have much freedom in classrooms and in schools. They are not engaged in co-curricular activities and in community service. We cannot give the students technology based teaching. The school environment is not attractive to the students. I always wanted these things to be changed. So I sought valuable things from the program and the things I gained are as follows:

I received help and encouragement from the American Center and the Embassy of the United States, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

I experienced hospitality, good behavior, and encouragement from the IREX officials and the officials of the US State Department. I can remember Christine Mueller, Senior Program Officer and Ashley Snell, Program Officer, Education Division, IREX, who worked hard with others to make the program successful.

In Washington we took part in a photo competition. I was awarded the third prize in the cultural section. It was amazing and encouraging to me.



Photo 1. Before the lessons start



Photo 2. My students

I had the chance to interact with many brilliant international teachers of various countries of the world from whom I learned many new things about teaching. I could learn about the education system of their countries. I also learned about the cultural system of different countries from discussions with each other. I want to mention here the names of two very smart teachers who became very close with me. One of them is Guillermo Lopez Ossa from Columbia. He was my roommate

in the Holiday Inn Downtown Hotel, Lincoln. We discussed the educational, cultural and religious system of Bangladesh and Columbia. The other was Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska from Poland. She is a skilled teacher. We also discussed educational, cultural, and religious system of Bangladesh and Poland. However, all of the TEA fellows became very good friends. When I was in America, my mother died and then Anna and Guillermo stood by me with other international teachers. I also remember here the IREX officials and honorable UNL professors who stood by me and consoled me a lot.

At the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, we had a wonderful experience. Our course co-coordinator was Dr. Lawrence J. McNulty. He was a very active and nice man. He always tried to make the training program successful. We also met there professor Larry L. Dlugosh, Department Chair, Relations; Conflict Management, Dr. Delwyn L. Harnisch and other professors and trainers. All of them are great but simple and well behaved. We learned many methods, techniques and skills of teaching. At UNL, one of the most important things is microteaching. We all the international teachers took part in microteaching and knew many skills of teaching from each other.

The most important thing in the training program was to take part in classroom teaching in North Star High School, Lincoln. There I took part in teaching with Mr. Scott Friezen, who was a very co-operative and helpful man. I learned about the classroom situation of the USA there. The school is very nice and well facilitated. The Principal, Mrs. Nancy Becker and other teachers of the school are dedicated. I also visited some other schools and observed classroom teaching. I saw that every school was well organized with good facilities and skilled people.

Besides training we were given an opportunity to visit museums, a zoo and other important places. We met with Lt. Governor of Nebraska State, the Mayor of Lincoln and the Chancellor of the University of Nebraska. They are very valuable people. We also took part in many dinner parties and many cultural programs, gathering knowledge from everywhere.

Now the question arises how I can use all these experiences, gathered from the TEA program in my school or in my country. I have said that my country is a third-world country. I cannot change my classroom situation overnight. But I am confident in bringing some changes to the classroom and other activities. I know how to make the students active in their classroom activities and in their individual and group works. After training I organized a workshop in my school where our Headmaster and all the other teachers were present. I discussed my experiences. I am also doing the following things:

Now I realize that before classes, I must prepare so that I can teach the students more effectively. Now I understand that for a positive learning situation, making lesson plans and preparation is a must.



Photo 3. Photo competition, Washington DC



Photo 4. With Dr L. Joe McNulty



Photo5. With Chancellor Harvey Perlman

I saw a very important thing in North Star High School, Lincoln. There teachers of each department meet together to discuss their challenges and problems in teaching and try to solve them. I informed our Headmaster and other teachers of this matter in a workshop. Now we are trying to follow this important thing.

Another thing I understood that the school should have good communication with the guardians. To create a good atmosphere in the school, they can play a vital role. Now I communicate with the guardians if necessary and the school is getting good results. The Headmaster of my school helps and encourages me in this work.

The most attractive thing that I learned from the USA is service learning or community service. Through this teaching method the students can become confident in doing social service. They can get pleasure helping the society. I have already introduced service learning in my school. I work with my students and clean the surroundings of school. Some other teachers have also joined with me. I also want to extend service learning outside the school.

Teaching is a noble profession, so we have to perform our duties nobly and sincerely. We have much responsibility to students and society. It is especially quite difficult to perform in a country like ours. But the TEA program has enriched me professionally. Now I am more skilled and confident to help my students. I am hopeful that I will be able to apply my experience and gathered knowledge more effectively and successfully in order to make my students more active so that they can be successful in their real life and in building a prosperous nation.

My TEA Program Memories

Guillermo López Ossa

Deogracias Cardona School, Pereira, Colombia
galoperiscol@gmail.com

Abstract

After a year of spending six spectacular weeks in the USA enjoying the TEA 2010 program from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State administered by IREX, I am here home in Pereira, Colombia with my memories of people, places and learning. Now, I can look back and think about my time there, and also look what is happening and think about what the TEA program can help me to achieve here.

Three crucial aspects of my TEA program experience

Looking back, I think about three specific things: firstly about the people. It was wonderful to meet people from so many different countries and cultures becoming good friends. We were people from America, Europe, Asia, and Africa working all together, learning from and teaching each other. Personally, I will always have in my heart all the teachers who I met at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Also, the people from the USA who inspired us to keep working hard with our students, and hosted us with love, peace and happiness. People like them will always be in my heart, and I will have a feeling of gratitude and love to them.

Secondly, I think of culture. What an experience to share our own culture with the others, and be able to find similarities and differences. But, most importantly, to be able to perceive that the world is open no matter how different our cultures are. I am personally grateful to have shared a room with my friend M. D. Mutahar Hussein from Bangladesh. Being from different cultures, we became good friends and we had fun everyday we shared. Sharing a room with him was the best cultural learning experience I have ever had. Also, I also enjoyed going to the theatre with Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska from Poland and Irina Barilenko from Russia, visiting my couchsurfing friend Dave Burchell and his family from Lincoln, NE, serving at the Ethnic party, listening to Spanish language from Central American TEACHERS Carlos Ortiz Altamirano, Mayerlin Molina Moreno, Karla Zaldana de Cruz and Erik Fuentes Prudencio, cooking empanadas with Sandra Moreno Medina and Biviana Correa Andica from my beautiful Colombia, making a video with Varduhi Grigoryan and Gohar Atoyan from Armenia, working a workshop

with Karine Dilagyan from Armenia and Oxana Petrova from Russia, walking through the snow and ice with Piret Bossack and Margit Timakov (Ice girl) from Estonia and Mamta Kumar and Rita Banerjee from India, eating food made by Nino Sekhniashvili, Sopho Khvedelidze and Nanuli Tatiashvili from Georgia, listening to the beautiful accent of Marina Goltsman from Russia, laughing at the funny stories of Mijgona Sharipove from Tajikistan, as well as enjoy seeing Sharopova Makhsuda, also from Tajikistan, next to her pretty daughter, going red to watch Nebraska girls basketball team defeating Kansas or serving the ladies at Heart Dinner thanks to Dr. Delwyn L. Harnisch's invitation, and last but not least, I am still learning from Dr. Lawrence J. McNulty, Dr. Delwyn L.Harnisch, Dr. Anastasia McNulty, Dr. Mila Saskova-Pierce, Mr. Tim Bayne, Mr. Bojan Lazarevic, Mr. Tareq Daher, and I am still running to the Holiday Inn lobby because Mrs. Elvira Radiona is coming to pick us up. All these unforgettable moments and people are always present in my heart.



Photo 1. Ethnic party



Photo 2. TEACHERS

The third and final thing is communication. From the first to the last minute, English was the language I heard, spoke, read and wrote. Various accents were used by the participants and we all had fun and learned a lot from each other's command of English. New vocabulary, better pronunciation, and grammar of the English language, which were gifts for us as English teachers. Also the learning of web quests, rubrics, service learning, new technologies, lesson planning, leadership, the 2-week internship at the U.S. school plus visits to other schools in Nebraska have increased our perception of education in the USA and other countries, including Colombia.

Summing up

At a personal level, I have changed a lot. Now, I perceive the world around me in a different way than I used to do. It now seems easier to understand, as Colombian, the international context. Before going to the USA, I had many concerns about my participation in the program. However, Sandra, Biviana and I – were happy to represent our country so as people from everywhere could see through us how beautiful Colombia is.

At a professional level, it is great to be a U.S. State Department alumni, and keep contact with IREX and the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, as well as with so many teachers from the USA and participating countries.

At this point, we are, at my school Deogracias Cardona in Pereira, waiting for Ms. Susan Smith, a US teacher from Lawton, Oklahoma to stay with us for two weeks, and continue working together as TEACHERS to make our schools better places for our students.

It is great how the TEA program becomes more meaningful when we come back home. IREX small grants are a great help for us to become agents of change and enhancement in our schools. In my case, I am so grateful with the Small Grant I received from the US Department through IREX .With the invaluable help of Mr. Brian Burbach from Lincoln, NE, we could lead a SERVICE LEARNING workshop for teachers and students from my region in Colombia.

Now, I am looking to apply for a second small grant in order to create a resources center for the teaching - learning of English as a foreign language and service learning to the community of Deogracias Cardona school. The Principal, teachers and students are eager to start working in the resources center. The academic committee has already voted in favor of the project. It means we will have the support of the whole community.

At a social level, it is now great to be invited and participate in conversations with teachers, staff, students, and parents about new ideas, experiences, projects

and contacts that can help us to improve our school communities through solving educational, cultural and social issues.

Finally, I want to congratulate to Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska for this great job. It is an excellent example of how we can last together no matter the distance.

I wish LOVE, PEACE AND HAPPINESS to TEACHERS family around the world and to US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, IREX and UNL people.

God bless you all,
Guillermo

TEA Program Experiences and Changes in my Teaching Style

Oscar Erick Fuentes Prudencio

Centro Cultural Salvadoreño Americano Secondary School

San Miguel, El Salvador

efuentes2983@hotmail.com

Being part of such a wonderful Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program (TEA), has been the best experience ever. This program not only helped me grow as a teacher, but also taught me how to apply new techniques in my teaching style. Sharing and learning with English teachers from all over the world, while attending useful and dynamic classes with teachers who were always giving us plenty of tips to be used in every class of our own, was so great.

At first, I did not know many techniques that I could apply in my classes, but after attending this program, I realized I needed to make many changes in my classes, starting with technology in the classroom, the way of testing my students, and most important how to make the most appropriate lesson plans according to what we are teaching or the micro ability that is being evaluated.

My classes now are totally different due to the fact that I started changing my lesson plans in order to base them more on my students' needs and learning styles. I have realized that the most important point while teaching an English class is to respect students' learning styles and monitor them all the time without interrupting or even correcting them while they are speaking; this way they would improve a lot.

Working with the portfolios was also part of this program; once I returned my home country, I started using them in all my classes and explaining to my students the importance of them. First, I gave them the parameters to be followed while working with them on how to make them. The purpose of this activity was to give students ideas to self evaluate and check which areas are being improved or which ones need to be double checked to work a little bit more on them. Now I am waiting for positive results, being implemented to my daily teaching thanks to my participation in the TEA Program.

A Dream Came True

Nana Tatiashvili

G.Chilashvili Author`s School, Georgia

nanatatiashvili@yahoo.com

Abstract

Years ago it was impossible even to think of going to the USA, as it was forbidden by the Soviet Government. However, today many teachers from all over the world have the opportunity to participate in the TEA program, one of the most important and successful programs for all teachers, thereby increasing their knowledge about the United States. I was one of the TEA winners from Georgia. Georgia is a country of ancient history, as people lived there 1,800,000 years ago, which discovered by the archeological excavations in the town of Dmanisi, where the most ancient human skeletons in Europe were discovered. Georgia is an ancient Christian country with unique architectural and cultural monuments and fortresses, ancient viniculture.

Dreams come true

A dream came true when I achieved my goal and was given the opportunity to gain experience at the University of Nebraska, in Lincoln (UNL).

As an English teacher, I constantly make the effort to increase my professional capacity. I have actively participated in many English teacher trainings, worked with three Peace Corps volunteers, but my participation in the TEA program gave me much more as an English teacher, especially about American education. I have implemented much of this information in my district successfully. This was important because many teachers and students in our school want to know more about the U.S. I had intensive trainings while at UNL focusing on teaching methodologies, lesson planning, a two week internship at North Star High School, and I also visited seven area schools. Through these experiences I was engaged with American teachers and students. Teaching in the local school environment and conducting lessons made a great impression on me. After returning to my home country, I actively used the experience I gained while teaching lessons there. I especially liked Micro teaching which was quite new and exciting for me. During this experience, in fifteen minutes I learned about 10-12 words in Polish, Spanish, Armenian, and Estonian with fun. It was very productive and I implemented it in my 4th grade at home.

A great experience was using a computer in teaching, accessing the Internet, and making e-portfolios. But the experience of friendship was unforgettable as all teachers were very friendly, helpful, and creative. We were the best group working as one team I have ever had.

Summing up

After returning to my country, I shared my experience with my colleagues and district teachers. I made a presentation on America for the district principals and students. In July I conducted a two week school for students, from local schools who were motivated and learned many activities with fun. That summer I can say that they really discovered America. I implemented all materials and experiences which I gained in Lincoln.

This fall Dr. Delwyn L. Harnisch visited my school. The whole school was excited, students arranged the meeting and did their best to show him that they already knew a lot of information about American values, culture, traditions, and life. It was unforgettable and productive meeting for everyone.

My participation in the TEA program helped me greatly as I learned a lot of new and useful experience and knowledge, which I shared with all teachers and students in my district. I also gave them accurate information to the students and teachers about American education. Five of our students were able to become the finalists of the Freedom Support Act Flex program this year, and we have two semi-finalists. One student is a finalist of the Muskie program and is studying at Ohio State University. Two other students are at Harvard and Tampa universities. I hope the education and knowledge gained by these students will help my country successfully achieve its goals.

I encouraged my district teachers to apply for the TEA program, and one of them was a finalist. I want to thank all professors of UNL and the teachers for making our time memorable and unforgettable. I am very grateful to them, as they did their best and gave their knowledge and hearts. They were professionals, highly qualified creative, and conducted the trainings and activities at a very high level.

My TEA Program Experience

Efraín Dávila Salazar

San Jose Obrero School Marianists, Trujillo, Peru
El Cultural centro Peruano Americano, Trujillo, Peru
davilaefracinpe@hotmail.com

Having had the chance to go to the USA through the TEA PROGRAM sponsored by the American government in February 2010 was an enriching experience for me. When I arrived at Washington D.C., I felt so happy and excited. There I had the opportunity to meet all the international teachers. It was awesome to meet people from different countries and learn about their customs. We had some time to go sightseeing and visit the most popular places of this amazing city. Then twenty-two teachers were chosen to attend classes at California State University in Chico and I was one of them. We had classes about methodology, technology, lesson planning and leadership. For instance, attending classes at the university was a good experience as well, because I had the chance to work and interact with people from different countries. It was an opportunity to share and exchange experiences. At the beginning it was not easy to agree with teachers from different countries, but then we reached an agreement and succeeded in completing different assignments and the most important activity was the International Forum, in which we had to talk about our education reality and I was lucky to be chosen to give the speech about Latin America. I really loved this experience because even though we had a very busy schedule, we found time after attending classes at the university in order to prepare the presentation for the Forum. Therefore, I personally liked meeting people from different countries. In addition, the program included a two week program to visit a school. I had the chance to get involved in Oroville High School and spent two weeks to get familiar with the school system and teaching. Visiting the school was a very meaningful experience because I could observe different classes and even had the chance to work with an American teacher. During my stay at Oroville High School, this experience had given me the chance to give speeches about Peru. It was great to tell American students about my country, history, tourism, customs and traditions. American students were shown pictures and a video where they could see how beautiful my country is. It was very interesting and rewarding telling American students about my country and they showed lots of interest and asked me lots of questions, which made my experience more interesting and challenging.

Furthermore, during my internship at the American school, I asked American students to write about themselves to work on Pen Pals with Peruvian students. As

soon as coming back to San Jose Obrero, letters were distributed to students of San Jose Obrero and they were asked to write a reply to the American Friends. My students found this activity very interesting and enjoyed writing the letters. When all the letters were finally written by students, they were ready to be sent to Oroville High School in California. It was even more exciting for my students to get letters from the USA again. It was a great opportunity for my students to exchange information about their cultures and customs. It was an enriching experience for SJO students.

“On beginning his work, Father Chaminade was thinking: ‘For new needs, new solutions are required’”. Hence, it is important to admit that students have different motivations and needs. They belong to a different technological age and they get bored so easily. In fact, students from 1st grade and 3rd grade of high school developed a Power Point presentation about their personal information and about an important city in Peru with the purpose of sending it to a Russian teacher from the TEA Program. Students showed enthusiasm and excitement for this activity. They even showed more enthusiasm, when Russian students’ Power Point Presentations were sent to my e-mail account and then my students saw each presentation. This activity called Electronic Pen Pals has given my students the chance to improve their writing skills and learn about Russian culture and knowledge. In fact, my TEA experience was very important and meaningful for me because it gave me the opportunity to start and develop ties among American, Peruvian and Russian students. Besides, San Jose Obrero school was chosen to host an American teacher for two weeks in June 2011. We are so excited to welcome the American colleague. Finally, I had the chance to share my experience in the USA in different institutions in my city.

My Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program Experience

Rita Banerjee

Carmel High School, Kolkata, India

rbredpanda@gmail.com

Abstract

Teaching Excellence Awards (TEA) is a program of the US State Department through the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. It is conducted and implemented by IREX (International Research and Exchanges Board). Besides contributing to improving the quality of Secondary Education in participating countries, it also aims to develop personal and professional relationships between American and international teachers. It aims to improve academic study and expertise in individual subject areas, and enhance teaching skills through internship at a US school. It increases the knowledge of the United States and provides international teachers a rare glimpse into the American way of life.

Key words: Announcement of results Arrival at Gallaudet University. Orientation workshop. Travel to University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Classes, microteaching and team teaching ensue. Internship at Lincoln East High. Cultural activities and life with TEA fellows. Follow ups with Teacher exchange and Small Grant project.

TEA program experience

My experience with TEA began from the time I was informed of my selection for this coveted program. American efficiency and assiduity came home to me all the way through the preparations for my visit by the American center in Kolkata, India, my air travel and my reaching Washington DC. I felt lucky to have been the first to have reached Washington DC for I had an extra day all to myself. I utilized that to make a self-conducted tour of all the major sites of the renowned capital. Through the next few days of our stay at Gallaudet University, we had a rich and rewarding experience. We attended seminars and workshops and were acquainted with the other TEA fellows from the various other parts of the world. This was a very interesting and intriguing period of my life when I was experiencing events that I knew very few can be a part of. We had sessions on cross-cultural communication and education, adjustment process, culture shock, the foundations of the US educational system, and Service Learning, among others. What I was struck most by and felt excited about at the time was the sessions on service

learning. It is an entirely new concept to me and has enormous possibilities in my country India. Members of the IREX staff like Christine Mueller, Sarah Dye, Kristen Laboe, Amy Ahearn and Lisa Weilminster were notable in their competence, skill and organization. IREX had arranged for the TEA fellows to make a sightseeing of Washington DC as a source of tapping community resources and utilizing field trips for educational purpose. This experience had been an extremely interesting and an important one for me where I came to know America better.

Thereafter, the TEA fellows traveled to their respective universities where the workshops seminars and educational practices began for all of us. Dr. Lawrence J. McNulty headed the TEA program at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. The other faculty members were Professor Larry L. Dlugosh, Dr. Mila Saskova-Pierce, Dr. Delwyn L. Harnisch, Dr. Ron Joekel, Mrs. Shannon Cooley-Lovett, Mr. Tim Bayne and Mr. Michael McDonald. The professional development program included coursework and intensive training in teaching methodology, lesson planning and teaching strategies for the participant's home environment. The six-week program included a two-week internship at a U.S. secondary school. There were visits to different types of local schools and government organizations.

Among the several different teaching practices and theories that we were made acquainted with, I found them interesting, novel, innovative and all with a scientific basis. Lesson plans with measurable goals and objectives seemed useful, practical and effective. Student centered learning, and the different strategies for differentiated instruction in the classroom seemed very good concepts. Active learning, the Socratic method, using the scored discussion method, debate, music, skit, summarization technique, and using the graphic organizer seemed very interesting means of making the students involved in their learning. The emphasis of education to be made real, rich and relevant rang true. I found Service Learning, as a concept apart from community service, an exceedingly important realm of activity. Service Learning is an excellent means of involving the heart and the mind of the learner where he is the made to own his learning, feel useful and contribute to his community. This has an enormous potential in my country, India.

Involving students in grading and assessment, using the formative and the summative assessment technique has again been an invaluable learning skill for me as a teacher. I feel that if these two means of assessment techniques can be put to the best use, it would be a marvelous way of a child's improvement. The Rubric is a tool that a learner may herself/himself use in order to gauge her/his own progress through the learning process. Besides all of these strategies of learning, I also found the sessions on educational leadership, school community, and parental involvement educative. TEA experience has helped in the sharing of good

practices, new ideas and development of new teaching and learning strategies. It has helped us to see America as members of the community rather than as an outsider, inspiring us to find ways in which both our communities can mutually benefit.

School internship in East High School in Lincoln

The two-week school internship will remain as a happy memory for me in my life as a teacher. It provided us an opportunity to get to know how an American school system works. The American teachers that I came in close contact with were forthcoming in their cooperation and assistance. I found the students in my Advance Placement (AP) classes to be challenging and charming. The several different school visits added to our experience of the American school system. Boys' Town I found to be especially inspirational. The concept of team teaching with two or more teachers working harmoniously to fulfill the needs of every student in the classroom was novel to me. During our two weeks of internship we immersed ourselves in the activities of the school, providing us an opportunity of a close look at American classroom teaching and an overall insight into American life and school culture.

The several different visits to the cultural sites, home stays with Lincoln families, dinners with faculty and their families all added to the richness of the experience. The TEA program comprised a wide cross-section of teachers from different parts of the world. We were involved in team teaching, information sharing and skill building conferences, all with the purpose of generating collaboration among teachers from around the world. The time spent together made us deeply immersed in each others' cultures and we easily found common grounds. We hope to build on the collaboration and work toward a global community of support.

Back home I have found multifarious ways of using my TEA experiences. Apart from effectively using the classroom-based activities, I have had the opportunity of sharing my knowledge within the teaching community of my school. I have held a seminar workshop on the new theories and practices of education. Among the hypotheses that have found a fertile ground, are student centered learning, differentiated instruction, critical thinking, graphic organizers, and assessment of learning.

I have effectively used differentiated instructional method with a view to reaching each individual learner in my classroom. Debates, group discussion, the fish bowl method, have made my classes more interesting. My students seem more involved in their learning. Discussion has helped connect them with the world at

large. I now complement formative assessment along with summative as well as involve students to assess each other and themselves. This helps students understand how they learn best and give them strategies to improve their abilities. Using Bloom's Taxonomy in the standards of questions has improved the quality of questioning for examinations. I have been able to test new hypotheses and have been able to analyze what works best for my students. This has led to new variety and innovativeness.

The Indian school system like any other has its own strengths and weaknesses. While we emphasize on discipline, making our students retentive, knowledgeable and hard working, we often miss the application, analysis and synthesis. We produce individuals who are often unable to relate to life situations. Using Active Learning and Critical Thinking in our instructions, questioning and assessment might help fill the gaps in our education system. We ought to make our instruction more task based and use the Internet to improve research skills of our students. Teachers could learn to be more facilitators than instructors. Ours is a country of a very large population and consequently we have sizeable student strength. Understandably, we need to use different ways of instruction in our classrooms to reach out to different types of learners. TEA pedagogy of multiple intelligences and differentiated instruction would be an ideal system to adopt. Cooperative learning and peer teaching will motivate learning. Team teaching by teachers would also provide a social networking of support that will allow students to reach their full cognitive potential.

The US system of inclusiveness where the K-12 system serves all pupils for twelve years and does not 'weed them out' at an early age is in my opinion a great strength. We in India would do well to adopt this to be able to reach out to the greatest number. The variety and diversity of subject choices available, the very best infrastructure and an impressive state of the art technology conducive to the best learning atmosphere. However, I feel that this system could gain by some added discipline.

My school has been selected to host two US teachers for the Teaching Excellence and Achievement program in early 2011. This is in keeping with my school's commitment to promote global learning. The incoming teachers can bring a fresh and a different outlook into the school and assist in the school's international activities. The direct contact with America can bring American resources materials and culture into my school. This will provide a basis for links, networking and joint projects. This is an enormous opportunity for broadening pupils' perspective on the wider world. A teacher's role is ongoing and experience with teacher exchange will expose the teaching staff to different teaching methodologies that can enrich and expand our vision.

India's education system has been still unable to achieve inclusive growth. We are a country of nearly 90 million people with a large young workforce but with most of them lacking in the requisite skills and abilities for productive employment. Successive efforts at universalization of primary education have proved to be partial. We need to produce educated, creative and skilled people. Along with the government efforts, business houses and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), it also behooves upon the individual to contribute in improving the system. Service Learning among the students in spreading literacy can be an exceedingly effective tool to meet the needs of education in India.

Summary

The follow on grant available to TEA alumni is within my view and I hope to implement Service Learning and build a project on literacy. I hope to help my students not just learn new material but also help them connect and become useful members of their community. This will help them be involved, and become well-informed participants in our society and democracy. This is an opportunity to prepare a new generation of global citizens to lead us into the future.

TEA experience has provided me a new perspective on teaching. I have come back reinvigorated and with increased motivation from the change of scene. I feel refreshed and more enthusiastic in my vocation. The different teaching methodology and approaches has enriched my teaching practice and expanded my vision. I have grown both as a person and as a teacher. I have had first hand knowledge of American culture, developed a better sense of cultural understanding, and in the process gained a different perspective into my own culture. TEA has provided me a global perspective on education and a link with America that we shall foster over the years. The benefits of TEA go beyond personal growth and skills obtained by individual participants. This has a positive cultural, academic, economic and political impact on our society. Our world continues to be increasingly interdependent. The challenges we face are often global in scope and require collaborative solution. The well-being of our society therefore rests on our ability to create and maintain positive relations with individual, governments, community groups and academic institutions. TEA has provided the means and the opportunity for international teachers to help future generations understand global dynamics whereby they are able to commune effectively across cultures and become responsible global citizens. This will exert a positive influence in world affairs.

TEA Program and Service Learning Experience

Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska

European College in Kraków, Poland.

ananah0901@gmail.com

Abstract

I am a teacher of English and Geography at the European College (Polish high school) in Kraków (Poland), who strongly believes that international education must go well beyond the provision of information. Participating in the TEA Program enabled me to gain knowledge about teaching methods used worldwide and helped me in a better understand diversity in the world. As it occurred during my stay at the university of Nebraska, self-development, love of teaching and learning, appreciation of culture, and civic responsibility are not only the characteristic features of the core of the European College Programme but also of the TEA Program. My school's philosophy aims at facilitating our students to become part of the modern world and achieve better standards of learning. This is especially important, as we are an International Baccalaureate World School where internationalism is also understood as taking action to change the community on all levels: local, national and international. As a result, this fact became a part of my service learning project, in which I participated in Lincoln.

For Poland and Polish teachers, it was the first chance and honor to participate in the TEA program to represent their country in this program. Just the news of being chosen as a TEA program finalist was a new experience and big challenge for me. I applied for the program in April 2009 and in February 2010 I found myself in the USA. All the candidates and I had to take the TOEFL exam and score well. I was interviewed by experienced educators from the USA and Poland, participated in the pre-departure orientation, and was obliged to do several medical check-ups. My six - week program in the USA included: coursework and intensive training in teaching methodologies, lesson planning, and teaching strategies for the participants' home environment. It also included the use of computers for the Internet, word processing, and as teaching tools; a two-week internship at a U.S. secondary school – East High School in Lincoln; visits to local schools, NGOs, local government offices; trips to U.S. cultural sites; and full academic support.

Key words: TEA Program requirements, Internship in East High school in Lincoln, Service Learning.



Photo 1. Students of the European College in Kraków, Poland



Photo 2. A conference in Washington D.C.

TEA Program experience

The program started in Washington D.C., where along with approximately 100 teachers from 37 countries in the world, I participated in the introductory session for TEA Spring 2010 Cohort, which was devoted to culture, tolerance and TEA program introductory session. Once I found myself among international teachers, I realized that being tolerant might constitute a big challenge for all participants. There were teachers who originated from many exotic and diverse cultures and countries, who from the very beginning seemed to be a great source of world information for me. In such a group, one can check if you are tolerant and open to other nations, cultures and diversity in the world.



Photo 3. Working with students at East High School, Nebraska

I was with 23 other teachers from Armenia, Estonia, Bangladesh, Russia, Tajikistan, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Colombia, India, and Georgia who had been selected to spend our program at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. In fact, everything started to become more exciting when we got there. The representatives of quite different countries suddenly met together in our place and lived almost two months next to each other. Having different cultural or political life experiences, we were put together and started building lasting relationships that promote international understanding and collaboration between U.S. and international teachers and students. There were no boundaries and worries working with the people of different origin. Peoples` willingness and openness were the base of communication between us. For me as a European citizen, it was a great occasion to share my national background and history and to be proud of being Polish. We could present our national heritage so that our fellows could see our countries through our eyes. Indeed, we had a chance to present our lifestyles, beliefs, traditions, teaching experiences just from the first day to the end!. A great community has been formed where a lot of different nations were introduced.

In fact, we spent many hours at the university, participating in various sessions and every time we learned more and more, got new ideas, and got involved in the learning process deeper and deeper. All of university teaching staff made us feel better and more prepared to share our newly gained experiences once we got home. We also worked in groups and pairs even after sessions, in the evenings creating presentations, lesson plans and movies! To check our teaching experience and show cultural aspects in practice, the professors at the university organized many practical sessions for us. For example, each participate had to do a 15-minute micro-teaching session in a mother tongue. I taught some Polish using a Geography content to my international friends in order to present the tools I use while

teaching Geography and English to my students at the European College in Kraków. The university staff as well as the other participants graded us, gave us some feedback, and those short movies were loaded on You Tube platform and now can be found on the websites: www.youtube.com/watch?v=kG_CS2wfSFw (one can write TEA teachers` full name on YOUTUBE to find them).

We gathered together very often to spend our free evenings to share our experiences to talk about teaching, school facilities, ways of overcoming prejudices, daily and family life. We learnt from ourselves. One can only imagine my friend MD from Bangladesh who has approximately 100 students in his class, being seated in threes in a row. As a matter of fact, once they take any exams he spends nights and days to correct and grade students` work. As a result, the only method he could have been using so far was lecturing to them.

Internship at East High School in Lincoln

Another unforgettable time, I spent at East High School in Lincoln, where for two weeks I taught Geography with my partner – teacher Chuck Morgan. It was one of the best experiences I had there. Students at East High School were eager to know me and Poland better. There were some students whose relatives were Polish or who visited Poland. They wore – especially for me because I was the only Pole in Lincoln – T-shirts with Polish maps or words. I gave them lessons about my country, school and geography issues too. Teachers at school and teaching staff at the university were so nice and open to us: ready to share their experience and knowledge with us. They also contributed to improving our teaching in participating countries by preparing us to serve as teacher leaders, equipped to apply and share our experience and skills with our colleagues and students upon returning home.

TEA teachers make a difference

At the end of the program, we visited various schools: state, rural and private ones. We met educational boards of Nebraska State to broaden our minds on the school organization systems. I will always keep in mind the visit in Raymond school. As in other schools, we were observing classes, talking to students and teachers and telling them about our school. In the class I went to there was a girl – Rachel Predmore, thanks to whom I saw my stay in the USA from both sides: visiting and hosting. After our visit she sent me a great reward in the form of a letter presenting how much the visit of international teachers influenced host schools and students too:

“At Raymond Central we had several teachers come from all over the world to teach us about what their schools were like and to see what ours were like. Anna from Poland came into the 7th grade Skills class where the students learn basics life lessons like respect, responsibility and time management and talked about her life style and what Poland was like. Just in that one day I learned so many things about teaching and Poland that I would have never learned. Anna taught us how to say Polish words like hi, bye, how are you, and many more. I really liked when Anna came and talked because I was really focused and was really wanting to hear more when the bell rang to go to the next class. Thank you for coming and I want to tell all of the teachers out there that if It wasn't for you that the world wouldn't be in good condition and my future might not be bright without education.

*Sincerely,
Rachel Predmore”*

Finally, participating in the program taught me some modern teaching methods, which I have begun to use in my school with my students. One of the teaching methods I became familiar with was a service learning method which is youth service throughout and within the community. It teaches civic responsibility and encourages students to lifelong work for the common good of local environment and people.

Description of the service learning project: migration

In this project, students read units from their course book Migration concerning why migration happens and about the economic and cultural effects of migration. Students read the leaflet from Małopolska Provincial Office in Krakow, which included a migration database from the Malopolska Region. I engaged the students in a discussion about the readings to understand the issues and facilitated the students' learning about the immigrant population in their own community. For the service aspect of the project, students volunteered at a local immigrant services organization and wrote a report about the experience. The report was placed in the school library and loaded on the school website.

Thanks to Mr Tim Bayne – a teacher at East High School in Lincoln, who has implemented a service learning in his school, I could see how important is serving for both the community and students. Students suddenly take a responsibility for their actions, enjoy their rights and believe they can make a change to their local world. In fact, my students at European College take an obligatory course called:

Creativity, Action, Service course. It exposes students to the real community in which they live. Thus, the topic and objectives of service learning project I offered to my students fitted in ideally with our mission statement and school philosophy.

Once I got home in March 2010, I started working with a service learning project I wrote entitled Migration: Why do people (we) migrate? Since there are lots of nations at European College in Krakow, Poland, each year they change and `migrate` as it happens in everyday life. Those who have never migrated or met foreigners in their country cannot realize how much migration and immigrants effect their community. By this service learning, students learned about civic responsibility by giving back to their community and gained an understanding of global problems at the local level (in the city of Krakow). They presented their strong role within the community and encouraged the will to act in the service of community. Through their own experiences in service learning, students could learn that being a citizen means helping people who are around us without too much effort. Sometimes, it is enough to open our heart and minds to others and we can make a change in people`s and our lives.

Service learning consisted of the following sections:

– General Goal:

Students gained an understanding of why migration happens and related this knowledge to their own personal experience and to the immigrant population in their own community. They realized that they are an important part of community even though they are not citizens of Poland.

– Service Goals:

By volunteering, students were able to utilize their knowledge of the issue of migration in general and the specifics about themselves and their local migrant community to help address the local challenges.

– Learning Outcomes:

Students could analyze how immigration affects the school, social, economic and political systems in the host country and their country of origin,
Student realized that they are a crucial part of the community,
Students hopefully understood push and pull factors in migration,
Students could articulate the connections between local and global problems.

– Procedure:

Before Class students should read the books/articles suggested by the teacher. They can also use extra ones if they feel like it. After reading they should be able to answer the following questions:

- What is the difference between a “push” and “pull” factor? Give an example of each (you can use your personal experiences),
- List some of the economic and cultural effects of immigration,

- What skills are needed to succeed in Krakow? Where can immigrants go to gain these skills?
- What positive and negative aspects did you notice when you first came to Krakow?
- Classroom discussion and activity:

I spent the first 5-10 minutes in class discussing the homework assignment. Then brought the students to the library and had them research the immigrant population in their own community. Research questions to find out the answer were as follows:

 - Number of immigrants in their own community and, if possible, country of origin.
 - Why are immigrants coming to your community? Are there “push” or “pull” factors or both?
 - What are the different institutions involved in helping the immigrants in your community.
 - How does your community differ from Krakow? Is it more or less diverse?
- Service Activity:

The length of the volunteer period for the service is up to students. In fact the service activity will depend on the needs of the organization, but students from their perspective might know what is most needed while coming to a new country. Some activities for sure that I will organize are (for students` choice):

 - A book drive where each student donates a copy of his or her favorite book,
 - On-going tutoring on the weekend or weeknights with immigrants offices,
 - Tour-guide showing the most important places in Krakow (the first aid center, home office, embassy),
 - Other suggested by students helpful activity.
- Assessment:

Students were asked to write a two-page report or a diary about the volunteer experience. The report should have included a summary of the volunteer activity and reflections sections. In the reflection section, students should have addressed the following questions:

 - What did you enjoy most about your volunteer experience?
 - What did you enjoy least about your volunteer experience?
 - Did you feel this organization meets the needs of the migrant community?

- (e.g. provides needed school facilities, helps to find a job)
- What else needs to be done to address these needs in the community and how can you help?
 - How to encourage other students to give a helping hand to those who might be in need?
 - How much do you understand immigrants` situation? Is it similar to yours somehow?
- Summary:
- Once, I found myself in Kraków, I used service learning method to activate my students to gain the knowledge about immigrants in our city. Students could work individually or in pairs. Most of them put a lot of effort in organizing their service learning. For example, a student Yulia Dorosh from Ukraine was helping her fellow citizen to write a CV and find work in Kraków, Alexandra Bittner and Julia Federska made a movie about an Indian student from the British school in Kraków to present cultural diversity in Kraków and how people coming to Poland deal with daily matters, especially at the beginning when they have a language barrier. Below, I have included two sample students` works to present all stages of service learning I did with my pre-IB students at European College in Kraków.

SAMPLE STUDENTS` WORKS

Service Project

Dąbrówka Żarska

IB1 student, European College in Kraków

GOAL: By volunteering, I will be able to utilize my knowledge of the issue of migration in general and the specifics about myself and my local immigrant community to help address the local challenges.

1. What skills are needed to succeed in Cracow? Where can immigrants go to gain these skills?

In order for an immigrant to be able to succeed in Cracow, I think it is very important that they know at least a few basic words in English. Many tourists from all over the world come and visit Cracow and many are from England and America, so it pays off (literally in some cases) to have a way of communicate with them. Thankfully, anyone can find a language school in Cracow because they're practically on every corner and there's usually one next to another. Just like anywhere else, it's good if a person is confident, social, negotiable, strategic,

productive, imaginative and inventive and a leader. Anyone can get all of these skills if they are ambitious and self motivated.

2. What positive and negative aspects did you notice when you first came to Cracow?

Some positive aspects were the clean streets, it's unique architecture in the main square, the diversity of all of the people, the busy street and constant events that were planned which brought people closer to the city and to their culture as well as other foreign cultures. If you go into the main square you will find shops and restaurants from all over the world neatly placed one next to another with no vicious competition between businesses. The busy streets signaled that the city was alive and running and that something was always going on and being planned. Events such as concerts and free open museums attract people from all over, not just those who live nearby.

There aren't really any negative aspects about Cracow that specifically target the city itself but in general big cities like Cracow. For example, the fact that the river Wisła is so close to the biggest parts of the city that when a flood occurs, all of the transportation services become not available and people are forced to sometimes even evacuate their homes. This disturbs the peace, balance and harmony within the city which causes unnecessary confusion and even damage to the land and the risk of water contamination rises. One other negative aspect of Cracow is how expensive it can be. Prices of houses, apartments, bills, clothes and food can sometimes be several times higher than what you'd find in other big cities in Poland.

My Students' Service Learning

When I started this project, I wasn't exactly sure how I could help someone who had immigrated to this country. My experience ended up being something completely unexpected and the end result was more positive and effective than I could have ever thought it would be.

My immigrant was Krystyna Mickolajczyk, a 74 year old widow who was born in Opole, Poland and immigrated to Toronto, Canada and then several years later to Cracow, Poland. She has a son, Marek, who now lives in London, England and works as a computer programmer. Her husband, Bronisław, died just 4 years ago due to liver and kidney failure. The traumatic event of her husband dying and her son moving away had left Mrs. Mickolajczyk battling depression and a list of other mental-emotional disorders which had left her "immobile", so to speak, meaning that she was not able to function normally and do normal everyday things like chores and grocery shopping. I met Mrs. Mickolajczyk through my aunt and

grandma since they were both good old friends with her. I was nervous upon meeting her since I envisioned her being a grumpy, moody, sad, poor, lonely woman and as if I were psychic, that's exactly what she was like. Not a single, slight smile was visible on her old, tired, wrinkled face. Her home was dark and gloomy with only wisps of sun rays peering through the closed, dusty blinds that hung from the windows. In the first few moments, I had already started doubting myself and couldn't picture making any progress with her nor making any difference in her life, and immediately labeled myself as a failure. After we just briefly introduced ourselves and asked each other a few questions, we spent the rest of the time just sitting in silence, sipping tea and watching the news on TV. Once it was time for me to go back home, I thought to myself that I would never go back there. Just the thought of having to sit through another minute in that awkward and uncomfortable silence ran chills down my spine but I knew that I couldn't give up. I knew that somehow, someday I could bring joy back into this woman's life. She couldn't see it anymore but I had to show her that life was worth living and that she is a strong woman who had overcome some very hard hardships which is not something everyone can do.

I saw her again a week later and I brought along some homemade apple pie and cheesecake. She didn't seem the least bit interested in my offerings but tried a small piece of each anyway. She raised her eyebrows and showing a mixed look of being surprised and lightly delighted. That's when I asked her if she enjoyed baking and/or cooking because in my family all of the women do and they're all quite good at it. The look of pleasure that glowed on her face vanished and she just grumbled and gave me a firm "No..." with a lingering "...not anymore." "Oh?" I said, "Why don't you enjoy them anymore?" I asked. She let out a loud, sad and annoyed sigh and started telling me how that's something that she and her husband used to do together and how he was a much better cook than she was and no matter how hard she tried, she could never cook up anything as delicious as he could. The kitchen just brings back some wonderful memories that remind her of something that once was but will never be again. At that point, tears began streaming down her cheeks like rivers along valleys and through all of the emotions, she tried to say how much she missed him and how no one can bring him back or help her get over his death. She figured that even her own son didn't love her since he left her all alone in her own misery. I sat down by her side and tried to comfort her but she just turned away and asked me kindly to leave her alone and let her deal with the pain by herself. I explained to her how that was not going to happen and that that wasn't an option for her anymore. She couldn't just keep everything bottled up inside forever. I promised her that I would be there for her whenever she needed to talk and that everything was going to be okay. I handed her a tissue, sat and patted her

back, and then later went home. My mind raced with thoughts and ideas of what I could do to make her happy again and help her move on with her life.

Another week had passed since I last visited Mrs. Mickolajczyk. Her house looked just as depressing, messy, gloomy and uncared for with not a single plant in sight as the week before. This time I brought with me a small daffodil plant and a miniature palm tree which I nicely arranged on a windowsill and in a nice sunny corner. Mrs. Mickolajczyk didn't feel well and was worn-out and drowsy so I insisted that she take a nap while I do some chores around the house. I first started by shedding some light onto the place and opened up all of the windows. It was pleasing to feel the warm wind blow all throughout the house. The light revealed how uncared for the home really was. There was a thick build up of dust, dirt and grime everywhere. I decided to get my hands dirty and get to work. I scrubbed every square inch of the place. I vacuumed the carpets, washed the dishes, sorted through piles of mystery junk, swept the floors, set the laundry and even made some late afternoon lunch for the both of us. When Mrs. Mickolajczyk saw what I had done she was absolutely gob smacked. Her eyes grew big and her mouth dropped with shock. She couldn't believe it. Her home hadn't looked so spotless since before her son left. She couldn't stop thanking me and insisted that I stay a bit longer and share a cup of tea with her. I couldn't say no. We sat outside on her balcony since it was a rather warm and sunny day. She had immediately turned cheerful and I could see a young free spirit inside of her just slowly started to peak through her aged exterior. We began chatting about our experiences in Toronto, Canada since we both recently moved to Cracow from there. She lived there for 15 years. I was there for only 6 months but we had similar opinions about the city and life there. She had a comfortable lifestyle and was happy. When her husband died, she had to move back to Poland to plan his funeral and pick out a burial site. Since he came from Cracow she figured it'd be best he be buried here. Having to move to Poland was very difficult for her and she is still trying to adjust. With the expensive bills and low retirement rates, she's been barely getting by and can't afford much. All of this combined resulted in her having to go to therapy for the past 3 years in order to control her depression, anxiety, self-hatred and violent mood swings. She has to take 13 different pills a day for the rest of her life in order to keep her hormones in balance and prevent her from going into those dark, dark places in her mind. With the big move and his mother's emotional and mental breakdown, her son felt helpless and thought that he couldn't do anything so he set out abroad. She has limited contact with him and hasn't seen him in 2 years. He does however send his mother generous amounts of money to help her survive and pay the bills. That's what hurt her the most. The one person that she had left in her life had gone far, far away. That's when it hit me. I had an idea of how I could bring Mrs.

Mickolajczyk and her son, Marek, back together. Or at least, partially back together.

Mrs. Mickolajczyk, like other people of her age, wasn't very dependent upon technology (she barely even watched TV!). Therefore, she didn't own a computer and didn't have access to the internet. So about 3 days later, I brought over to her house my laptop and wireless internet USB. I plugged in and turned everything on and launched my newly installed Skype program. Mrs. Mickolajczyk looked rather horrified once she saw all of the cables and flashing lights and practically fell out of her seat when she saw herself on the video webcam. She was clueless as to what was going on but my plan was just about as close as she and Marek could get at that point. I scheduled a video chat session with Marek using Skype which allowed him and his mother to talk freely for as long as they wanted while being able to see each other. I contacted Marek a few days earlier after noticing his number listed in Mrs. Mickolajczyk's address book that she had left open on the counter. The moment Mrs. Mickolajczyk saw her son dressed up in a fancy, elegant suit sitting at his office desk, tears of joy filled her eyes. She couldn't believe it. Her son was right in front of her as if he was actually in the room. They chatted for 3 hours! Mrs. Mickolajczyk couldn't stop commenting on how her son's appearance had changed and how she is fortunate to have such a successful son. Their goodbyes were bittersweet but I knew that this wasn't going to be the last time that I put my successful plan into action.

Over the following 2 weeks, I visited Mrs. Mickolajczyk every 2-3 days so that she could continue video chatting with Marek. Their conversations grew a bit shorter (only 45 minutes long) since he had to work. During the time that she chatted with him I would do chores around the house, cook and sometimes do a bit of studying. Then one day, Mrs. Mickolajczyk told me that she had some wonderful news. Thanks to their conversations over Skype, Mrs. Mickolajczyk and Marek were able to express their thoughts and feelings "face to face" which enabled them to deal with past problems and plan a bright future. They discussed about finally getting together and going on vacation to Italy. They haven't been on a vacation since Marek finished college! I insisted that I help them plan their trip. They settled on the date and time as well as the hotels they'll be staying at and what tourist attractions they're going to see. They promised themselves that after their trip, they would contact each other more often and that Marek would come visit her in Poland now that her house was all cleaned up and in order.

In the last few days that I spent with Mrs. Mickolajczyk, she prepared a huge dinner, big enough to feed a small army. She told me that it was just a small way of her showing her appreciation for everything that I had done for her. Not only did I help her live a normal life by doing everyday tasks for her but I also managed to

bring her and her son, Marek, closer together and create a stronger bond between them. I never in a million years thought that I'd have the power to do that but I guess that's what my time with Mrs. Mickolajczyk has shown me, that if you just believe in yourself and strive to succeed and make a strong effort to accomplish your goals, then even the impossible can become possible. I will miss her dearly because deep down inside she was a very kind and sweet woman and I just hope that she has a splendid time in Italy.

Questions

1. What did you enjoy most about your experience?

I liked the fact that I was able to help someone who I had never come in contact with and will probably never see again. I enjoyed learning about that person in need and why they are where they are in life. It gave me the feeling that I was an unsung hero to someone. It gave me immense satisfaction to serve someone and help them achieve what they thought was impossible, but at the same time I was happy to get away from constant studying and indulge in something that helped me to relax. I thought it was fun. I really appreciated being able to see their face light up and receiving "thank-yous" daily for even the smallest things and knowing that I'm doing something worthwhile with my time. I was taught that in reality, every little bit of help does make a difference. A good deed goes a long way. Part of the experience has been figuring out that I have the power to help others and the rest of it is seeing that influence making a positive difference in someone's life. I liked the joy of being able to make somebody feel better and to support them whenever needed. I helped this person help themselves. I got to see for myself things what most of the world has been ignoring and I got the chance to reach my hand out to this one person. I hope that others will see that help does not only come from giving money, but that there is a lot more that you can do if you want to. This experience has given me memories that will last me a lifetime and has helped me realize that it is very rewarding to help others and I developed a sense of pride and accomplishment which was my greatest reward.

2. What did you enjoy least about your experience?

I honestly can't think of anything negative about my experience. Perhaps, having to do not only do my own chores but then also someone else's, did get annoying at times especially after a long day at school but I think that that taught me responsibility and it allowed me to prove not only to others but also to myself that I can take care of myself and manage my time wisely and efficiently. At some points I did get a bit stressed, not only because I had to take

care of my needs like studying and doing homework but I also then had to deal with my person's problems which sometimes felt like it was way too much to handle and that I was in way over my head. I also think that the fact that I will never know what would've happened if I was able to take care of my person for a longer period of time is a bit of an issue. Would I manage to change their life again but this time in a different way? The fact of the unknown is eating away at me and this question has stayed in my head to this day.

3. What else needs to be done to address these needs in the community and how can you help?

People in the community could come together to discuss what problems they've noticed and if they or someone they know needs any sort of help. The people could then decide on what problem to tackle first and then join together to raise awareness of this issue by for example, making and handing out flyers that say when and where the group will meet up and what they plan on doing and what their goal is. The more people that find out about these problems will set a greater chance that they'll be motivated enough to do something about them and tackle them head on.

4. How to encourage other students to give a helping hand to those who might be in need?

I would first ask them if there was ever a time that they or someone they knew needed help and what if anything happened. I'd then ask them if that made them think helping others was important and in what ways they can/will help. This would make them realize that if they or someone close to them ever needed help they'd want someone to be there for them and they'd see the importance of reaching out to those in need. I could share my and other people's experiences with volunteering and show them that it's fun, rewarding and the outcomes can be remarkable and life changing.

5. How much do you understand immigrant's situation? Is it similar to yours somehow?

I can perfectly understand what my person has gone through because I've moved on more than one occasion and I know how hard it can be to adjust to one particular place. I too was surprised at how things like the bills for example work. In other parts of the world, you pay each month for the amount that you've used up not the same amount each month whether you go over the limit or are well under it. This can be difficult for some people to manage their expenses and keep up, especially with constant raises. Also just the look and feel of the city is different then what I'm used to and so I feel a bit out of place, like I'm on some distant planet. For the years that I've been away from my closest family, it has resulted in me being a bit distant from my family members and

our relationship is different than from what it should be. But just like Mrs. Mickolajczyk, chats on the phone and getting together has helped in bringing us closer together and we can catch up on all of those years lost being apart.

Topic: Migration: Why do people migrate?

Students: Natalia Dębska and Sandra Struzik, IB students,
European College in Kraków.

Introduction

Before beginning our project, we decided to find out a little more about migration, in order to have some background knowledge. We learnt about the “push” and “pull” factors of migration. ‘Push’ factors are the reasons that drive people out of their country, while ‘pull’ factors are the reasons that draw people to another country (Leuner, 2008).

We also researched about people migrating to the countries in which we had previously lived in. After searching the web we found out that in San Francisco, CA the percentage of immigration is 36% and about 90% of those immigrants are from Mexico (Just the Facts, Immigrants in California).

We then did some further research on immigration in Australia and learnt that at the time of the 2006 Census, Australia’s population was 19.9 million, with one in four people living in Australia born overseas. Some 45 percent of all Australians were born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas. We decided to do some further research on the population of migrants to Victoria, Australia, this time focusing on the Polish minority. From our research we found that in 2006 the population of Polish migrants to Australia was 52,251 (Clyne, 2005).

This research helped us realise just how much migration there is all around the world and helped us gain a better understanding of this issue.

Service Learning Goal

Our aim for this project was to gain an understanding of why immigration happens and relate this knowledge to our own personal experience.

The initialization of our project

In the beginning, we were unsure about how we could get in contact with an immigrant, so we decided to go on the internet and make a search for voluntary service centres in Krakow. During our search we came across many voluntary services from which we then selected the ones we considered most suitable for our project. Caritas Archidiecezji Krakowskiej, Centrum Pomocy Prawnej im. Haliny Niec, SKC (Szkolne Kola Caritas) and PCK (Polski Czerwony Krzyz) were the voluntary service centers which we chose to get in contact with. We noted down the address of each of the service centers and thought it would be best if we personally visited the centers to ask if they provide services for immigrants and if it would be possible to get in contact with one of them. After continuous running from one address to another with no positive results, we realized that it would be better if we first got in contact with the centers by telephone, to find out if they actually provide help for immigrants. After calling all the service centers, we found out that none of them provided the services that we were looking for. The closest centre that offered help for immigrants was in the city of Lodz. At that point, we realized that this was not a walk in a park. Our next attempt at finding an immigrant was to go to the Jagiellonian University and get in contact with the Centre for Polish Language and Culture in the World which we had heard of previously through family members. There, we got in contact with a teacher, who told us of a boy in her Polish language class who was an immigrant from Belarus. We made an appointment to meet with this boy in order to introduce ourselves and our project.

Background Research

Before our appointment the immigrant, we went to speak with the director of The Centre for Polish Language and Culture in the World, to ask a few questions about the courses they provide, the students they have and what they do for immigrants, in order to learn more about this organisation. The director was very keen on helping us with our project and was happy to answer all of our questions.

1. What does the Centre for Polish Language and Culture in the World do?

The centre is part of the Polish Studies Faculty at the Jagiellonian University. The objective is that it teaches Polish to foreigners and conducts research about how to teach Polish to foreigners and various aspects of Polish culture and language in the world.

2. What kind of students do you have?

All students are foreigners, most of them come from Europe and quite a few from America. Most of the students come to Krakow in order to study Polish for one year and then go to a university. These students are either paying for their courses or have a scholarship. The Erasmus is a European program supporting academic mobility for both students and staff. The Polish government also gives scholarships to students from outside of the EU, there are several foundations that give out scholarships such as Kosciuszko Foundation in America. A small portion of these students are “true” immigrants who don't have money and can't get a scholarship.

3. Do many immigrants come to the Centre for Polish Language and Culture in the World?

No, only some of the students are immigrants in the true sense of the word. The majority of students are foreigners who come here for a year and then return to their country of origin. A small amount of students are immigrants who come to Poland with the intent of settling.

4. Are there any courses specifically for immigrants?

No, but I feel we should have such courses because teaching immigrants is entirely different from teaching students who come here with the intent to study or work. It is different because they have different needs. Learning Polish is only one of their needs, more important is feeling a part of the society. It would be good if language courses could facilitate that. Language learning should be combined with work placements and visits to various Polish institutions to help them make contacts, so that they feel part of the society, but current Polish language courses don't do that. The courses don't provide that because they teach Polish as a foreign language. If we wanted to teach immigrants we would have to start teaching Polish as a second language. There was such a program at the Centre for Teaching Polish and Culture for Foreigners at the Wroclaw University. It obtained a European grant to teach a course aimed at immigrants, it was a success, but only lasted six months because of funding problems. It had ninety students who fully finished the course.

5. How can students find you?

On the web, look up the website through the Jagiellonian University. We also produce brochures and leaflets that are distributed around town.

The director was very helpful and we learnt a lot through this interview. After speaking with the director we began to realise that Poland is not ready to receive immigrants. There are not enough institutions helping immigrants. We also learnt on this day that Poland takes in fewest immigrants than any other European

country. In Poland it is less than 1% of immigrants, while other European countries have up to 30% of immigrants.

Volunteer Activity

After the interview with the director, we went to the Center for Polish Language and Culture in the World school where we met with Mrs Legawiec, a teacher at the Center, who introduced us to Artiom, an 18 year old boy from Belarus. We were eager to meet him and were uncertain if he would even be willing to spend his time with us to help us find out more about immigration. We introduced ourselves and firstly asked him if he would prefer to speak in Polish or in English. He said that he would most prefer Russian, but Polish would be better than English. We explained to him our project and what we would like to do. He seemed very eager and open to answering our questions and interested on continuing to help us with the project. We decided it would be best to meet the next day, where we would take him out for coffee and ask him a few questions.

The next day we met at 6 o'clock at the statue of Adam Mieckiewicz and took him to a small cafe in the City Square. He was very open in answering all of our questions, he was friendly and we felt comfortable speaking with him. After spending some time with him and asking him a few questions we were able to find out a lot about his situation, his country of origin and about immigration.

Artiom immigrated to Poland from Belarus in November 2009, when he was seventeen years old. He told us about the current political situation in Belarus and how he and his family are opposed to the current structure of the Belarusian government. He and his family participated in protests against the president and the government. Once he finished school, he was rejected from universities in Belarus because of his difference in political views. He says that many people are in similar situations as he is. Four years ago, his brother immigrated to Poland for the same reason.

We asked Artiom, why he chose to immigrate to Poland out of all countries. He said that he chose Poland because it is close to Belarus and the Polish language is similar to Belarusian. He also said that he wanted to see Krakow. His brother helped him move to Poland and helped him find the school that he now attends and find a place to live. Artiom currently, lives at the Piast Dormitory and attends Polish classes everyday at the Center for Polish Language and Culture in the World. He says that he likes the school very much, everybody there is very pleasant and the teachers very helpful and teach well. His plans for the future are to study sociology in Poland for five years and then, if the government in Belarus changes, he will go back to his country. He currently pays for his own studies, but when he

starts learning at a University, he will be on a scholarship. This scholarship is provided by a program, by the name of K. Kalinowski. This program is especially for immigrants from Belarus that need help. Once Artiom has his scholarship and starts his studies, he would like to travel and visit different countries.

Artiom stays in contact with his family and friends in Belarus through the internet. Within the past seven months of living in Poland, he has only been back to visit Belarus once and that was for New Years. Now, Artiom can no longer go back home, for he will be forced to join the army if he does. He told us that he must wait until November to be able to go back, without being sent to the army. None of his family have visited him in Poland yet, however, Artiom's brother lives in Gdansk and they often visit each other.

Artiom says that he has visited other cities in Poland, but Krakow is his favourite. He told us that it has very similar architecture to his home town of Minsk in Belarus. When we asked Artiom about how he finds the Polish language, he said that it is both hard and easy. He understands everything, but has a hard time speaking it. He knows Russian fluently and says that this helps him in learning Polish, because the languages are similar. Yet still, the language was the hardest thing for him to get used to because the Belarusian language and the Polish language have a very different mentality. He also said that he has no communication problems during short talks, however during long talks he encounters some problems with expressing himself, due to his limited vocabulary. After being asked how he finds the Polish people, he responded saying that the Polish people that he knows are very nice. He said that he has never had an unpleasant encounter with any Polish people.

We learnt that Artiom has many friends in Krakow that are from the Ukraine and Belarus and they often have barbeques, go to clubs and hang out together. Some of his hobbies include basketball, shooting and writing music. During his free time he likes to read books and listen to music. His favourite place in Krakow is Blonie and there he likes to take walks. The only thing that bothers him in Poland are the drunk people that he sometimes encounters at night on the streets and the French guy who lives next to him and always yells at him to turn down his music.

We enjoyed spending time with Artiom, as he is a very happy, fun and open person. We asked him, if there would be anything that we could help him with. He answered very politely that there as not, but later said that we could help him by showing him some popular Polish songs, as he does not know any and likes music very much. We thought this was a very good idea and arranged to meet again in a couple of days, where we could give him a CD with some Polish music and show

him a nice place to have coffee and hang out, when his brother visits him from Gdansk.

For our final meeting, we met Artiom once again, by the statue of Adam Mickiewicz. We showed him a few places around the City Square and gave him a CD with a compilation of Polish music. He thanked us very warmly and we sat down for a cup of coffee and talked. It was already as if we were old friends. We exchanged contact information and said that we will keep in touch.



Photo 5. Sandra, Artiom and Natalia.

Reflection

The aspect of our volunteer experience that we enjoyed the most was being able to meet a new person and feel accomplished by helping them. We least enjoyed searching for immigration volunteer centres as it was a very difficult task and at some stages quite nerve-racking. Through this experience we learnt that Krakow does not provide enough organisations helping immigrants. We were therefore unable to find an organisation that strictly provided help for immigrants, but we feel that the Centre of Polish Language and Culture in the World is on the right track to helping immigrants. Although they do not provide special services for immigrants, through meeting a person who attends the school there, we learnt that they are doing good work in making immigrants feel welcome, meeting their needs and helping learn the Polish language. In order to address the needs of immigrants, it would be good if Polish language classes were combined with work placements and visits to various Polish institutions.

Through the meetings we have had with Artiom, we have learnt about a number of “push” and “pull” factors that played a role in his case. For example, the situation where he was unable to study in his country and the fact that he strongly

was against the Belarussian government were clear factors “pushing” him out of his country. On the other hand, the fact that he wanted to live in Krakow, that the Polish language seemed to him similar to Belarussian and that his brother had already been living in Poland, were all factors which “pulled” him into Poland.

We would strongly encourage other students to participate in volunteer work and help with various immigration issues. It is nothing to be afraid of and it is a great way to build friendships and help others. It gave us a satisfaction and a feeling of accomplishment. We learnt a lot from this experience. We understood Artiom’s situation very well. We could relate to him in a few aspects, but his situation was quite different from ours. We believe that his circumstances were a lot harder than ours, due to the fact that he is alone, where as we moved with our families and have family already in Poland.

This Service learning has been a great experience. It has taught us a lot and we now have some understanding of the issues of migration.

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Speak up on Grants

Jolanta Krzemińska

Zespół Szkół Ponadpodstawowych im. Wincentego Witosa in Samostrzel, Poland
jola5696nta@wp.pl

Hugh Bilton

European College in Kraków, Poland
hugh.tlc@gmail.com

Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska

European College in Kraków, Poland
ananah0901@gmail.com

Abstract

As an awardee of Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program (TEA) & International Leaders in Education Program (ILEP) ALUMNI SMALL GRANTS I along with my colleagues would like to share our experiences of working with students in both rural and urban Poland. Thanks to The Small Grant support from Polish-American Freedom Foundation, European College in Kraków (located in a city) and Zespół Szkół Ponadpodstawowych im. Wincentego Witosa (ZSP) in Samostrzel (located in the countryside), partner schools have run two projects together. My colleagues include Hugh Bilton, an English teacher from Australia at the European College in Kraków and Jolanta Krzemińska, a Geography teacher at ZSP in Samostrzel. Our schools were awarded a grant for the following projects: *The Grass is always greener on the other side of the fence* in 2009 and *The Survivor Challenge Project* in 2010. Both projects were devoted to support activities that promoted the English language within the context of Geography. Their aim was also to enable students from rural Poland to have equal access to educational opportunities. The grant led our schools to stimulate and develop actions within the local communities. The grant allowed students to be treated equally and to start believing in their full potential. The core of our *Survivor Challenge Project* was also to develop students' confidence and love of learning English, especially through a specialist English Hugh Bilton – a native speaker who could only communicate in English with these students.

In this article we would like to highlight how crucial a financial support is from nonprofit organizations in helping students and TEA teachers to organize and fund programs, workshops or camps where the knowledge and experience gained from the TEA programs can be used to enhance and enliven their daily work. We

would like to emphasize how vital a native speaker can be in learning English as a second language.

In *The Survival Challenge Project I* and Jolanta Krzemińska had an honor to work with Hugh Bilton a native English speaker from Australia - whose presence, creativity and engaging activities in teaching – strongly motivated students of ZSP Samostrzel and European College in Kraków to gain a profound insight into the knowledge of English.

Also, hosting U.S. Teachers Denise Ghiloni and Allyson Daly at the European College in Kraków – within TEA and ILEP Programs - constituted a great support in deeper understanding of English speaking country, American culture and language. Just as, U.S. teachers came into the class a target language community was formed. Suddenly, students - who were claimed to be shy and not too talkative - were interested in interacting and cooperating with Mrs. Daly and Mrs. Ghiloni. What is more, thanks to their stay in Kraków, I and my students could appreciate our homeland, national heritage and be proud of being Poles.

Key words: Local Grants, Teaching English through Geography Context, School Partnership, Students` Feedback on *The Survival Challenge Project*

The Survival Challenge Project - ZSP Samostrzel

Zespół Szkół Ponadpodstawowych in Samostrzel is situated in a small rural community on the outskirts of a small town, which in some people`s minds could mean that the students would be deprived of opportunities to expand and develop their thinking. Luckily enough, we had a chance to cooperate with the European College in Kraków, a city based school located some 550 km, to help overcome prejudices that students from a rural village are worse off.

As a geography teacher I have always wanted to be able to educate my students to be responsible citizens in the local community by appreciating their home and neighboring villages, but still have an invaluable contact with and encountering foreign cultures. Thanks to *The Survival Challenge Project I* had a chance to do this. Bringing together well-motivated students who wanted to achieve success in communicating with a native speaker Hugh Bilton and have exposure to someone who has travelled extensively and has had various business dealings throughout the world. Thanks to the Polish-American Freedom Foundation, Hugh Bilton and Anna, the students had a chance to improve their standard of English and understand the importance of being part of the modern world. At Samostrzel school participants of the project took part in various initiatives preparing them for English and Geography Workshop in Szczytna with students of the European

College in Kraków. This included extra English lessons after school and learning English through Geography context on the moodle platform.

Once we found ourselves in Szczytna, students of the European College in Kraków with a really good command of English began working with my students helping them to improve and expand their English at the camp. Partner teachers organized the camp in such a way that nobody was felt left out. Students were working in 5 groups for 5 days. We were having English lessons in practice, outdoor activities commanded in English and tours guided by English-speaking guides or translated by students of the European College. For my students it was also the first time they had a chance to speak with the native speakers.

First of all, lessons given by Hugh Bilton who spoke English to them were a challenge for my students. They were used to asking questions in their mother tongue if they did not understand the English teacher; during classes with Hugh Bilton they had no choice but to speak English. Besides, there were students with different English background so as our camp changed into a small English-speaking community where we communicated in English and where the atmosphere of tolerance, collaboration and respect developed throughout out time of the camp. This project also taught my students appreciation of their homeland and personalities and gave them inner power to be part of the modern world where the knowledge of English is used and matters. A special thank to Anna and her participation in the TEA Program and willingness to share her professional development and teaching enthusiasm with my rural school. We can only continue to benefit from our partnership.

Jolanta Krzemińska – project coordinator at ZSP Samostrzel



Photo 1. Participants of the Survival Challenge Project from Samostrzel and Kraków at the workshop.

Students` project feedback

Students of the European College summarized the Survival Challenge Project camp with ZSP Samostrzel as a life lesson. After the camp they really appreciated what they already gained in their lives so far. They were very grateful to be able to share their knowledge with the students of the partner school in Samostrzel. Their opinions on the camp speak upon themselves:

1. I especially remember `the word bank` game in English. It was really fun. And the play about Polish legends. It was really fun to create them. I will never forget Mr Bilton`s game with a small ball. Once someone gave you the ball you had to say a sentence or word about the passed day. Of course, our tours with English-speaking guides or my friends translation were great! The Uranium Mine was incredible for me. The goldmine was fantastic. It was a great fun especially the underground train. And of course Gory Stołowe after 630 steps everyone was tired but when we could see the view, we realized that it was worth it. The maze was also amazing. The whole workshop was really awesome!

Maria From Norway (1st junior high school)

2. I remember a lot if things but the best memory was the workshop in general but I think I will remember it for the rest of my life !

Dario De Pado from Italy (pre-IB class)

3. That was a very interesting workshop, we could meet students from a partner school and learn something from them. The workshop in Szczytna was really fantastic. (...) Besides, Ela had her birthday and we all were singing Happy birthday to her at a barbeque party. I hope next workshop will be as good as this one.

Michał Knap from Poland (pre-IB class)

4. Everything was well-organized. People were great not only from our school but from the other one too (...) We had lots of work daily in groups, usually after dinner. It was hard-working time, but we did all the exercises. We were working with students from a partner school. In general it was a fun.

Paula Wójcik from Poland (pre-IB)

5. The memories from there are all positive; working in groups and developing new friends, learning some more words Polish and learning how to develop and express myself.

Krzysztof Siwecki from Australia (pre-IB class)

6. I have brought from Geography and English workshop only positive memories and feelings. In Szczytna we could learn and practice our English. We were in interesting places. We could see beautiful views and be really close

to the nature. In our camp we had a swimming pool and nice rooms. During our trips we could improve our geography knowledge. It was a great fun when we played A Polish game Podchody in English. We were working in groups with a school from Samostrzel. It was great time to broaden our minds.

Julia Krzanowska Poland (pre-IB class)

7. I have brought from geography and English Workshop a lot of very good memories. The workshop in Szczytna was a great chance to practice and improve our English and knowledge learnt during geography lessons. We have been in many beautiful places and discovered how pretty Poland is. During the trips we had a chance to check our `vocabulary bank` while translating Polish tour guides in some places where there was no English –speaking guides. We also had a lot of fun and needed to use our imagination while playing games and working in groups with students from Samostrzel. Besides, our class had a great opportunity to integrate too.

Karolina Sioda from Poland (pre-IB class)

8. I really enjoyed the Survival Challenge Project. I was able to see many beautiful landscapes and sites. We came to Szczytna on Tuesday as well as students from Samotsrzel. There was also a talent show evening. Till this trip I didn't know how pretty Sudety are. I also had a possibility to improve my English through working in groups and talking to native speakers of English. It was a great fun to meet students from another part of Poland.

Julia Koziel from Poland (pre-IB class)

9. All things in the workshop were great but there are some which have a special place in my memories. The best was the game in the forest Search and Find game. The participants were great too. Now we can talk to each other and with partner students about the workshop and we have built some bones between us.

Mateusz Lachowicz from Poland (pre-IB class)

10. That was a very nice workshop. We had many tours and English speaking situations. I would like to go to one more workshop like that to a different place next month. I learnt much about canes, mines, glasshouse, mountains.

Mateusz Miskiewicz from Poland (pre-IB class)

11. Great! Now we are really close friends, we had a fun and we know our teachers well. The thing I remember the most is birthday of our friend Ela. All camp was singing HAPPY BIRTHDAY to her. I want to come back there.

Nikola Ziętara from Poland (pre-IB class)

12. We stayed in Szczytna from Tuesday until Saturday. At the hotel we rested, played games and had lessons. From the hotel we could take a bus to tourists attractions, such as a mine or cave. Once we arrived we usually hiked up to the

desired destinations and explored famous sites that had an interesting history and intriguing geographical features. In the caves we learnt about the rock formation and the wildlife that inhabits it. In the mines we also learned about the elements within the rocks and the history and use of the mine. For the next few days we learned about the culture of the region and saw more geographical marvels while hiking up mountains. By the time we had to leave we had gotten much from this trip. We learned to appreciate the country we live within, we learnt about the country's history and to learn about our country's culture. although more importantly, we had bended with our fellows, classmates and teachers.

Thomas Tylek, *he used to live in the USA* (pre-IB class)

13. I liked all trips but the most exciting part were thw workshops in English. A school workshop was cool.

Radosław Łabuz from Poalnd (pre-IB class)

14. It was very interesting. Teachers were nice and helped us. We walked to many places and visited them. The atmosphere was friendly and fun.

Diana Krzak from Poland (pre-IB class)

15. It was great and a lot of fun. I experienced a lot of interesting things and new people. We had a great time and we discovered a lot. Every day in the late afternoon we had interesting workshops with funny games and competitions. So it was a great trip with a lot of fun. I came back tired and happy.

Sergij Bosyk from Ukraine (pre-IB class)

16. All together it was a good experience for our class. We didn` t know each other before, so it was a great opportunity for us to come closer. It was interesting for me to see spontaneous reactions of each person, to see how people behave and check what they do in their free time. In was interesting to see how strict our teachers are. And of course it was really interesting to see and meet people from a partner school – to understand how important language skills are in life. I think that most of us realized how many opportunities our school gives to us. We were really proud of to help partner students to improve their language skills and to motivate them to learn English. The camp was a really great experience.

Paweł Wysata, *he used to live in Germany* (pre-IB class)

17. I have the memory of my first Podchody Game. A friendly atmosphere and caring teachers, especially the deputy head Mrs. Ewa Makowska of the school in Samostrzel.

Iwona Sroka, *she used to live in the USA* (pre-IB class)

18. So, it was a wonderful time, I leant a lot of from my friends. I think I start to be more open to people. I know a lot of new words. I speak more English

now. We learned how to help one another and support students from Samostrzel school in their English. We gained some geography knowledge too. The trips were amazing. Our lessons were very funny. I liked the talent show evening and Podchody were much. I spent a great time there and I want to go there again.

Marta Śmieciak from Poland (pre-IB class)

19. I really enjoyed the workshop. It was something new for me like a summer camp. I could meet and talk with many interesting people. Good thing was to cooperate with partner school in Samostrzel `cause they were really cooperative and sociable. I could learn many interesting and amazing things. I had a really great time and I will be happy to have such a workshop again.

Adrian Baranek (pre-IB class)

20. In my opinion the workshop in Szczytna was great. I have met new people from Samostrzel and it was a great opportunity to know better other people from my class too. I had a chance to visit some new places (...) unfortunately, on Saturday we had to go home. I think it was one of the greatest trips I have ever been to.

Ela Dilling (pre-IB class)

Conclusions

Thanks to professional development teachers can change the school environment and help partner schools in opening the door to equal opportunities.

Native speakers motivate learners of language to acquire the target language in a more effective way.

National and international grants are needed to support regular English teaching activities and to bring up open-minded citizens of the world.

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TEA Program Experience in a Nutshell

Irina Barilenko

Physics-mathematics - School Specialized Scientific Study Center,
Novosibirsk, Russia
parus_iren@list.ru

TEA is a dynamic, forward-looking program, which prides itself on being a centre of excellence in teaching and learning. The program strikes a balance between theory and practice that meets both the demands of educators and the society.

TEA provided a rich diversity of teaching and learning experiences, including lectures supported by high quality notes, slides, video materials, visiting speakers, and computer presentations, as well as problem solving workshops and seminars based on pre-prepared materials. A huge instant repertoire of teaching ideas included both classroom classics that all ESL teachers come to know and love, and new activities, at a range of varieties from micro-teaching to video-making performance was shared. There were also excellent opportunities to polish our language skills.

School Internship helped me take a constructively critical view of my own teaching and of the theories and recommendation of others including partner-teachers and learners; activities to challenge established way of thoughts and action. It offered guidelines for self-directed action, experiment and creative risk-taking.

I could not have wished for better foundation than I gained at the UNL, Nebraska, USA.

There is no doubt that by committing to do TEA program certificate, we have made a vital investment in our future.

The Most Inspiring Moments from TEA Experience

Oksana Petrova

Gymnasium 1, Biysk, Altai Krai, Russia
opetrova20@gmail.com

My name is Oksana Petrova, and I am from Russia. I live in Biysk, Altai Krai. I cannot describe how lucky and how thankful I will always feel about the opportunity of visiting the U.S.A. and meeting so many people connected with education. Never before have I had such a chance to be around so many teachers from all over the world and the opportunity to interact with talented teachers in the country of the American language. For me it was really an unforgettable experience in terms of both huge collaboration opportunities and cultural experience in the unique American cities of Washington D.C. and Lincoln, Nebraska.



Photo 1. My students

The time in the U.S.A. was always full of exciting events. I found so many friendly people ready to meet and communicate with the students at school, university staff or community members. They helped me explore differences, similarities, as well as observe values and beliefs of the American society. That experience has really enriched my own world and my local community! I feel myself to be a global person today, connected to the world beyond my country borders.

Every day of the program was rich in activities. The word intensive was just the right one for all activities we were involved in, both in Washington D.C. and Lincoln at the University of Nebraska. We had many highly professional workshops focused on using new teaching methods, preparing lesson plans, and participating in team teaching. We were able to consult professional staff of the

College of Education and Human Resources on different aspects of teaching English and organizing service learning efficiently. We developed our personal computer skills and cultural awareness. The University coordinator, L. Joe McNulty, Ph.D. and the team members contributed making our professional development program effective and enjoyable.

The experience I had during my first visit to the American school was unique. The very first warm welcome tour around the school with the principal Mr. Mike Wortman will always be in my mind, with an image of the school of great opportunities where all students' and teachers' dreams can come true. I was impressed with the size and the opportunities offered for students in my internship school, Lincoln High.

Before the program, I could only dream of having a chance to teach a group of American students in their own country. Before that, I tried to imagine myself standing in front of the multicultural group trying to do my best at starting a conversation and communicating. The emotions I had could never be described in words; I felt like a university student having his/her first classroom experience. Thanks to my U.S. partner teacher Rodney Droud, after some minutes of observation his reading lesson, and listening to various accents used by American students, I understood that the classroom atmosphere was very similar to that I had in my own country and managed to calm down and even felt the great desire to start the conversation.

Every day in an American school I felt as if I was reading a book that had some exciting plot and I always had the impression that I wanted to read nonstop and learn something different every day. I still feel lucky that I had the chance to read some most interesting pages of that book called *The System of Education in America*. The program gave me the opportunity to observe different school types and communicate with principals, teachers, and students, see the strengths of the system of education, and learn a lot from that. The image of an American school is so vivid for me today. It seems as if I have managed to discover some new images of a modern school in terms of school management and student centered approach.

Unforgettable are the trips to the U.S. cultural sites and pictures taken in the Nebraska State Capital in the Governor's Reception Room, living in the Historic Haymarket area, visiting the University of Nebraska State Museum and Lied Center, getting involved in Nebraska Women's Basketball, even becoming a fan of the team, dinners with faculty and host families, funny pictures with the Indian people taken in front of the Center of the Great Plains Studies, and a real journey to the Missouri River Lewis and Clark Visitors' Center. Visiting Washington D.C. was a special part of the program that is never to be forgotten!

Now looking through the images of the country and pictures of the best moments of the TEA program with my TEA friends, while telling my colleagues and students in Russia about the TEA program, it seems to me that I have left a part of my country image behind and brought some other different and unique experience from other parts of the teaching world back home. Through my workshops I try to contribute positively to the promotion of the idea of mutual understanding between the people of the U.S. and my country. My participation in the professional development program administered by IREX has also resulted in designing new workshops to develop the idea of creating better opportunities for the happy school environment.

TEA Program as a Wonderful Example of Mutual Understanding, Love, Generosity and Sincere Collaboration

Modou Mbaye

CEM Sikilo Ouest/Kolda, Senegal

doumoz@yahoo.ca

What the TEA Program Brought Into My Life

When in April, 2009 I applied for the Teaching Excellence and Achievement (TEA) Program, I mainly had two very noble and ambitious objectives: to explore new teaching methodologies to help me become a better teacher, and also to gain more insights into American culture and way of life. After six weeks of hard work, collaboration and fruitful exchanges with colleagues from the United States and the different nations who participated in this program, I realized that I got more than what I had expected. In fact, I have the feeling of having become another person, a better teacher with lot of new ideas. All this thanks to the wonderful people I met in the States during this TEA program. These amazing teachers, although from different parts of the world, shared one common ambition: to become better teachers to better serve and contribute to build a better future for the students with whom their countries have entrusted them.

From Washington to Nebraska, but mostly at the University of South Florida (USF) in Florida, I discovered the true meaning of generosity which is more than just sharing but giving everything you have without expecting anything in return except the feeling of having contributed to finding 'global solutions' to the different problems each one may have faced in his or her home country. Values such as generosity, mutual understanding, and love are to be perpetuated, so that coming generations can walk peacefully along the path, which has been well paved by the U.S. State Department through IREX and all those who made this program possible. The TEA program has provided me with priceless ideas, which have begun to impact on the different activities in my classes, the different seminars or conferences I have had the chance to participate in since returning home.

What Has Changed in My Life?

Before going to the United States, I worked for years with children in different clubs like the English Club (to develop the students' communication skills) and the Excellence Club (to sensitize the students against the dangers children of their age face, such as sexually transmittable diseases and the danger of early marriages and

early pregnancies). But my stay in Florida particularly working with the Children's Board of Hillsborough County has inspired me further. That is why I am very happy to set up a new club E.H.R. (Education about Human Rights) to help the students know their rights and learn to take actions on issues that might be an obstacle to their personal development, such as gender violence and violence in general.

As for my teaching, I honestly think it has become more communicative because I give more importance to the communication among the students themselves. I have also gained in terms of maturity and capacity of innovation and pay more attention to my students' needs, bearing in mind that they usually have different learning abilities. As a matter of fact, the first thing I did when I came back was to implement several activities I learned from this program to see how they were going to impact my teaching. I started with the three activities that Olena, Maive, Flyura, Yilena, Cecilia and I presented in the closing ceremony in Nebraska: Chain of Our Talents: My Personal Image Gallery, the Faces. My students loved them all and the class participation was a record.

Another opportunity to use my USF acquisition was given to me through a workshop about violence against young schoolgirls. It was as if I have been an expert about children's rights and psychology all my life. I also had the opportunity to present a conference on "Avoiding School Dropout" in my parents' village. It was in the presence of the local school teachers, the students' parents, the local authorities and of course the students. They all appreciated and promised to do anything they can to fight against this phenomenon. It was wonderful!

If all these have proved so successful, it is due to the fruitful exchanges and the wonderful teachers we had at the University of South Florida, the teachers of the Global Schools Project our program manager Doctor Barbara Cruz had wisely invited, and those who kindly shared their experience with us.

For these reasons, I would be forever indebted to my country for the education and schooling it has given me. But I will never forget the United States of America for this lifetime experience. Bravo! IREX for making it possible and last but not least and from the bottom of my heart I say thanks to the college of Education, Dr. Kiran C.Patel Center for Global Solutions and all the teachers and staff of the University of South Florida for making my stay in Florida far more wonderful than I could have imagined.

As long as I am alive I will do everything I can to remain a good ambassador of IREX and the TEA program in my country, sharing everything I have acquired from this program with my colleagues, my students and whoever needs to share their experience with me, no matter wherever he or she may be, provided I can reach him/her. In addition to the valuable knowledge I acquired from this

program, I also have the impression of having traveled all around the world with my only one U.S. visa. In fact my stay with these international teachers has given me a unique opportunity to learn a lot about their countries. And today, I know about countries I could not locate on the map before the beginning of this program. And last, I am proud to have friends all over the world. The proof of this is that I do not go longer than twenty four hours without receiving an email from these wonderful brothers and sisters.



Photo 1. Sharing TEA experience with my colleagues

For all these reasons, I want to say THANKS! Thanks to all the people who helped make this program a success: the University Staff, my mentor Earl Conteh Morgan, the teachers, the students, the bus drivers, the hotel managers and all the Floridians who have been really nice to all of us. But most of all thanks belong to the United States and IREX for this lifetime experience.

Thank you all for making me part of this TEA family.

TEA FOREVER!

Modou

A Family of Teachers from around the World

Saliou Sarr

Valdiodio Ndiaye High School, Kaolack, Senegal, West Africa
zalsar1@yahoo.fr

My experience as a TEA Fellow at University of South Florida was both unique and amazing. It was totally beneficial for me to be among the selected teachers for the 2010 TEA Program sponsored by the US Department of State and run by IREX.

My sojourn in the US started in Washington D.C. for orientation week, which allowed me to enjoy cross cultural experiences as I met many other international teachers from a variety of countries. I had the opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss the most important issues facing the world today. But I got my most tremendous experience at the University of Southern Florida (USF) in Tampa, Florida, where I stayed for 6 weeks. When I arrived in Tampa, I first attended a welcome dinner, which was hosted by the Patel Center for Global Solutions. It was a wonderful evening in which I met many personalities with whom I talked about my country, Senegal, and the US as well as a variety of other topics.

Through the 6 weeks, we combined work and pleasure. We participated in many workshops focusing mainly on Interactive Teaching in a Globalized World, which was our theme. It was a unique opportunity for me to learn new teaching methodologies with 23 other TEA Fellows from Argentina, Bangladesh, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Estonia, India, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Senegal, and the Ukraine. In fact, the most interesting was the use of the new technologies in the teaching process. USF is well equipped with laptops and we were able to have valuable hands-on experiences with these computers.

During the program at USF, I also participated in a two-week internship at Freedom High School. I was able to observe and participate in the classroom and experience the atmosphere of an active teacher-student relationship. I also observed that American students are given more freedom than students in Senegal. This can be justified by the cultural difference that exists between the two countries; however, that situation is positive and promotes the students' learning process.

During the two-week internship, I became more confident about myself. I realized that what I have been doing in my country so far is largely positive. It was a self-evaluation that I made myself after comparing the teaching techniques in Senegal and that of the US.

In fact, I cannot finish my abstract without talking about Dr. Barbara Cruz, the Professor of Secondary Education, who was our Course Instructor. Everything

goes back to her. She has been an outstanding lady, a professor, a mother, a sister and everything for us. She has succeeded into binding us (24 foreign teachers) in one family. Barbara developed strong social and professional relationships within the group.

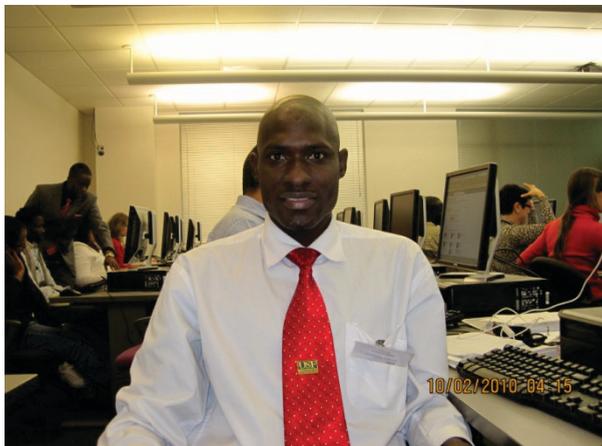


Photo 1. I at the workshop, Chico

I am also grateful to the all staff and professors of USF, the drivers of the Bull runners, the staff of ON50 hotel. I cannot forget the staff of IREX who coordinated the TEA Program. The issue of Globalization has been enhanced by IREX though this very amazing program. The success of IREX can be observed very easily. The atmosphere of the first meeting in Washington D.C. for orientation week was very different to that in Lincoln, Nebraska at the End of Program. In Lincoln, when all TEA fellows met again after six weeks in our respective host universities the atmosphere was warm and very friendly compared to the first meeting. This shows how IREX built up a family of teachers from around the world.

On the whole, my experience as a TEA fellow has actually changed my life. It has changed my way of considering the world. Today I can travel around the world because I know at least one person in many countries. I can travel without fear. I have been internationalized.

Thanks to all; until we meet again
Saliou

**PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS BY TEACHERS WHO WORKED
WITH THE TEA FELLOWS.**

Introduction to Regions – Support Materials for Science TEA teachers

Charles A Morgan

East High School, Lincoln, Nebraska.

cmorgan@lps.org

Introduction

We all have a “sense of place” that connects us to a particular location. In our case the attachment as a Lincolnite or Lincoln East student, or the area of attachment as a Cornhusker or native of Nebraska or the Midwest. An area of the Earth defined by one or more characteristics is a region. A region derives its unified character through the Cultural Landscape, (Carl Sauer, 1889-1975). Cultural Landscape is a combination of cultural features such as language and religion, economic features such as agriculture and industry, and physical features such as climate and vegetation.

Abstract

This article will investigate Critical Thinking Skills in a 9th Grade Introductory Geography Course and illustrate how students can understand physical and human geography in the general context of understanding Regions. In the majority of general education courses, most students do not have the proper geographic background and feel disconnected from this material. Many find it difficult to understand the various concepts applied in recognizing a Region. By using exercises that promote and challenge learning, along with concept association, students can and will apply new information into their lives and make use of this meaningful and memorable material. Using Critical Thinking Skills, formatted worksheets and thought provoking lessons, students will reflect on one session after another finding geographic connections and understanding how to define a Region.

Key words: Critical Thinking, Physical Geography, Human Geography, Problem-Based Learning, Learning Outcome, Bloom’s Taxonomy, Formal, Functional and Perceptual Regions.

Lesson:

UNIT QUESTION

Day One Activity 1

Objective: The whole unit should focus around the Unit question. The question we created was designed to make students look more closely at the themes of Place and Region. The theme of place asks students “what is it like there”? We want students to go beyond the simple description of a place and use geographical terms and ideas to tell us what it is like there. Finally we wanted students to get an understanding of why we place areas in regions, what function it serves and ways to classify regions. Our goal is to provide students with the tools to provide students with the tools to critically analyze the earth’s surface.

To do this we want students to look at the question “How does where you live effect how you live”? Use this question to guide you through out this unit.

In structuring this unit we decided that the best way to organize it was to place things in the order that you might use them. So the unit question introduction will be followed by notes on place.

Unit Question- place this question in a prominent place in your room and keep coming back to it as you teach the unit.

Specific directions:

Ask students to write down an answer in their notebooks and conduct a small discussion. Tell students that this question is important and that they should keep coming back to it in their thinking.

How does where you live effect how you live?

Notes on Place

Day 1 Activity 2

Teachers:

This is a basic copy of the notes that we felt students needed to have in order to complete the assignments we created. We have created a Fact Sheet attached to the back of this unit or you can use the textbook to provided additional information.

DEFINE PLACE

- A few notes on place.
- Place – What is it like there?
- Physical features - things that naturally exist.
- Examples of Physical features are weather, landforms, vegetation, and animals.
- Human/Cultural features – things that people bring.
- Examples of Human or cultural features are dams, highways.
- Livestock, population issues.

Pick A Place Activity

Day 1 Activity 3

Objective:

We would like students to begin thinking about the final project. In the final project we want students to do a little research about an area of the world and then tells us how living there would make their life different. In this activity you are getting them to brainstorm places that they might like to move. One of these might be the topic they research for the final project.

Specific Direction:

- Instruct students to take out a sheet of paper that will need to be handed in at the end of this activity.
- Ask Students to list 3-5 places in the world that they would love to live and why.
- Then ask them to list 3-5 places they would not want to live in the world and why
- Finally tell them that they will be looking closer at these places in the final activity so they want to think about there lists. They can use their book to come up with some ideas if necessary.
- Collect the sheets from the students and save them for the final activity.

Cover Page Activity

Day 2 Activity 1

Cover Page for Places and Regions

Geography

We will develop a cover page for the unit call “Places and Regions”. The cover page goes on the **RIGHT** side of your notebook. To create your cover page you will be creating a pictoword for Place. A pictoword is a symbolic representation of words and phrases that show their meaning.

The cover page **MUST** also include the following:

- Unit Name
- Date
- Class Period
- Your Name

Placard Activity

Day 2 Activity 2

Skill Builder

Human and Physical Characteristics of Place

Objective:

Students will analyze placards of different physical and human characteristics. This lesson can last more than one class so please plan on going into the third day.

Specific directions:

- Divide students into teams of two.
- Have students seat at desks and give them the instructions:
“Your task is to decide if the placard depicts a human or physical characteristic of place. Some placards have both human and physical characteristics, so be prepared for those as well. Once you have determined which it is please place your answer on the answer sheet provided.
- Need to have 15 different placards and an overhead of each.
- Students will rotate to different places to look at a new placard.
- Use guide create by us or create your own for students to record their answers on.
- Create two posters, one titled human and the other physical. Place those at the front of the class.
- After students have traveled to as many different placards, as time allows, bring the class focus back to the front of class.
- Have each student pair look at the placard that they are currently at, and decide if it is human or physical or both. Then have them come to the front of the class, place the overhead on the projector and explain what category place their placard in.
- After their explanation, have them tape the placard to the correct poster in the room.
- Have student go home and make a list of 5 different human and physical characteristics of their neighborhood.

Placard Activity

Day 2 Activity 2

Skill Builder

Human and Physical Characteristics of Place

Continued:

Pictures of Physical and Human Characteristics of a Place. A Key of a Place. A Key of the pictures.

- Human and Physical – Monsoon in Malaysia – A woman seeks shelter from the driving monsoon rains.
- Human - A portion of the Hanshin Expressway lies on its side after collapsing in an earthquake that hit the city on Jan. 17, 1995. 5,000 people were killed and another 35,000 people were injured. The quake caused billions of dollars in damage.

- Human and Physical – Murry River, Australia – Murry river and the Hume Lake
- Human and Physical – South Pole, Antarctica – a British team of scientists approach the research stations at the South Pole.
- Physical – Serengeti Plain, Tanzania – buffalo’s graze on the Plain that is around 9,000 square-miles.
- Human – Great Indian Desert, Pakistan – A herdsman in the Great Indian Desert. He is rewinding his 42-foot-long cotton turban after dipping it into a nearby well to keep him cool.
- Human – Zaire River, Zaire – A passenger boat, lashed with heavily laden barges, ferries passengers on the Zaire River.
- Human – Persian Gulf – An oil tanker makes its way through the Persian Gulf, an arm of the Arabian Sea.
- Human – Dakhla Oasis, Egypt – Date palms and olive trees surround a mud-brick minaret, mosque, and village in the Dakhla Oasis in Egypt’s Western Desert.
- Human - Oil Rig, North Sea – Fired with success, an offshore rig in the North Sea tests the flow of oil and associated natural gas it has just tapped.
- Physical- Tierra del Fuego, Chile- A glacier slowly scrapes away a mountainside in Tierra del Fuego, a group of islands split between Argentina and Chile.
- Physical – Cloud Forest, Costa Rica- Mist bathes a mountaintop jungle in the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve.
- Physical-Mississippi River, United States- Snaking through marshy woodlands in Minnesota, the longest river in the United States begins its 2,348 mile journey to the Gulf of Mexico.
- Physical-Oregon Coast, United States- during summer’s calm, gentle waves roll in against the cliff sides and rocky towers, or sea stacks, of the Oregon coast.
- Physical and Human-Interior Plains, Canada- Breadbasket of North America, the plains encompasses about 1.125 million square miles, from the Arctic tundra to the Rio Grande on the southern border of Texas.
- Human-Mexico city, Mexico- Mexico city houses about 20 million people, and it is expected to be the largest city in the world by population in 2020

NAMES: _____ PERIOD: _____			
PLACARD NUMBER.....HUMAN.....PHYSICAL....JUSTIFICATION			
PLACARD _____			
PLACARD _____			
PLACARD _____			

Scan pictures of a bunch of places

Interactive Slide Presentations

Day 3 Activity 2

Monsoon, Malaysia – Number 66

Teacher note: the objective of the exercise is to get students to use physical and human characteristics to infer information and to analyze a place.

- What specific natural characteristic do you see in the picture?
- What specific human characteristic do you see in the picture?
- What is happening in this picture?
- Who is the figure in the picture?
- Why is the figure located where she is?
- What is the figure thinking?
- What can we learn about the customs or culture of Malaysia?
 - Who works in this society?
 - What type of work do they do?
 - Are they wealthy?
 - Where is her family?
 - How does she feel and why?
 - Would you want to trade places with her?
 - How would you adapt to living in this society, climate?

Background of picture – A woman seeks shelter from the driving monsoon rains. A monsoon is a seasonal change in the directions of the prevailing winds. Monsoon cause wet and dry seasons though out much of the tropics, depending on whether they blow inland from the sea or vice versa. Half the world’s population depends on

yearly rains to provide water for agriculture. However, monsoon rains can cause severe flooding that kills thousands of people and leaves millions homeless.

SCAN PICTURE HERE

Significance of Place

Day 4 Activity 1

Objective:

Students will analyze and discuss the concept of Place along with its meaning and significance.

Developing a sense of Place: Human.

- Open the class with the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Play the C.D.- Red Skelton’s version as you hand out the written copy.
- Discuss how the Pledge affects us as Americans – do others feel the same? Why, why not?

Are there other examples that connect us, i.e. Bruce Springsteen’s “Born in the U.S.A.”? – Lynard Skynyrd’s “Sweet Home Alabama” – Lee Greenwood’s “Proud to be an American” – the “Nebraska Fight Song” etc.

Developing a sense of Place: Physical

- View pictures of bald eagle, Grand Canyon, the Rocky Mountains – what meaning or significance do we arrive at? View pictures of a Kiwi, Mt. Fuji, the Great Wall, and other physical features that hold importance to other cultures.
- Discuss how these images develop a sense of ownership, of belonging vs. other images that may inspire other people.

Introduction Activity for Regions

Day 5 Activity 1

Regions

- Have students stand as soon as they all sit down.
- In your mind three characteristics that you can separate the class by. A list to help get you started:
 - Shirt Type, Color of Shirt, Hair Color, Height, Nail Color, Watches/Jewelry, Eye Color, Earrings, Shoe type, Hair Length, Kind of Folder, Pen or Pencil.
- Do not tell students that the characteristics you are looking for as you begin to move the around the room. into groups. You will need three separate areas to place the three separate groups into.
- After you have moved the students, ask them to decide how you separated them what characteristics.

- Your goal is to have the students look for common characteristics. Just like regions.
- After they have guessed have them sit down and define regions for them. You could have students open their books and define regions and what are the three ways to classify regions.
- Hand out a world map to every student.
- Have them chose three colors and create a map of three different regions. They can use their book, an atlas, or even make up a region. But for each map they must tell us the common characteristics that our region is based on and which way to classify regions they are using. This can be homework if they do not get done.

Notes of Regions

Day 5 Activity 2

A region is a concept that is used to identify and organize areas of earth surface for various purposes. A region has certain characteristics that set it apart from other regions. It can be used to simplify the whole on the basis of the absents, or presents, of specific human or physical characteristic.

Region – How are areas similar or different? Areas of the earth that have similar characteristics can be considered a region. For example we can separate the earth out into regions by looking at political, economic, physical or cultural traits of areas.

Three ways to classify regions:

- Formal Region – ones that have a limited number of characteristics.
- Functional Region – set of interactions and connections between places like links to specific places.
- Perceptual Region – people perceive or see characteristics of the place in the same way. Views always differ so these are not set in stone.

Regions Discussion

Day 5 Activity 3

After defining some of the basics about Regions it is important to have students then begin to understand what purpose regions sere and how we create them. The activity below will help in looking at regions and why we form them. The first part of this lesson is a discussion and the second part is creating region maps using specific characteristics.

Questions for the Discussion:

How and why do people define regions?

Using this question, have students look at a map in their books. Ask them some questions for discussion:

- What characteristics do the United States and Canada have in common?
- How do the two countries differ?
- What are the characteristics that are important in making Canada and the United States a formal region?

Geography Regions Activity: Mapping Regions

Day 6 Activity 1

Using a U.S. map to create a functional, formal, and perceptual region.

After students will be given notes on regions, and on functional, formal, and perceptual regions, we will do the following:

- Hand all students a U.S. map. They can work with a partner for this activity. Have each student complete a map. This will go into their notebooks.
- Students will now create ONE region classified as formal, functional, and perceptual. (Three total regions.) Each region will be shown by a different color on the map. Justify why the regions were chosen. Write down a brief explanation of each on the back of the maps.
- The regions can be ones that are created by the students. We want the students to be creative and develop their own classifications of each.
- Students will have about 15 minutes to complete this.
- Next, we will discuss each of your maps. Tell the class what your regions are, and why you classify them as formal, functional, or perceptual.

SCAN OUTLINE OF THE UNITED STATES

Final Activity

Day 7 Activity 1

Photo Essay: Students working in groups of two will be required to create a photo essay.

Specific directions:

- Break the class into groups of two.
- Assign students a place in the world. You want to make sure that you choose major cities in the world to make the research easier. We have provided a list of possible places at the end of this lesson or you can use your own.
- Students will then need to research the following information:
 - What is it like there? (Pick 3)
 - Climate, Vegetation, Landforms, Bodies of Water, Animals.
 - How are they similar or different? (Pick 3)

- Language, Religion, Political Systems, Economic System, Population Distribution.
- After researching their city the students want to collect pictures that represent the different parts of their research. For each picture they will need to write an essay for each photo describing what they learned in their research.
- The essays should also ask students how these traits affect what regions these places would fall into.
- After creating the pictures and the essays have students assemble their photo essays.
- Have students grade each other and their final project.

List of Cities for Research

- New York City, Los Angeles, Toronto, Mexico City, Havana, Cuba, Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, Buenos Aires, Argentina, London, England, Warsaw, Poland, Madrid, Spain, Berlin, Germany, Moscow, Russia, Cairo, Egypt, Cape Town, South Africa, Jerusalem, Israel, Baghdad, Iraq, New Delhi, India, Kathmandu, Nepal, Shanghai, China, Seoul, South Korea, Osaka, Japan, Taipei, Taiwan, Manila, Philippines, Sydney, Australia.

A list of possible vocabulary terms students will use in this unit.

Vocabulary for the Unit.

- Place, Region, Formal, Functional, Perceptual, Climate, Vegetation, Landforms, Bodies of Water, Language, Religion, Political systems, Economic systems, Population Distribution, Physical Characteristics, Human Characteristics.

Grading Rubrics

Essay Rubric	4 Points	3 Points	2 Points	1 Point
Content and Facts	Facts are accurate for all the information used.	Facts are accurate for almost all of the information used.	Facts are accurate for most of the information used.	Facts were often inaccurate for the information used.
Quality of Information	Information clearly relates to the main topic and has supporting detail and examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic and provided a few supporting detail and examples.	Information relates to the main topic, but does few if any detail or examples are given.	Information has little or nothing to do with the main topic.
Spelling and Grammar	No grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.	Almost no grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.	A few grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.	Many grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.
Organization	Information is very organized with good use of photos.	Information is organized with well constructed paragraphs, with good use of photos.	Information is organized, but paragraphs are not well constructed and use of photos are poor.	Information appears to be disorganized and photos are not used well.
Images	All images are very clear and easy to interpret.	Almost all images are clear and easy to interpret.	Most of the images are clear and easy to interpret.	Few of the images are clear and easy to interpret.
Relevance	The photos are completely relevant to the research topic.	The photos are almost completely relevant to the research topic.	The photos are mostly relevant to the research topic.	The photos are not relevant to theresearch topic.

Teachers Notes On Regions

Geographers define Regions in three basic ways.

The first type is the Formal Region. It is characterized by a common human property, such as the presence of people who share a particular language, religion, nationality, political identity or culture, or by a common physical property, such as the presence of a particular type of climate, landform, or vegetation.

Political entities such as counties, states, countries, and provinces are formal regions because they are defined by a common political identity. Other formal

regions include climate regions (e.g., areas with a Mediterranean Climate), landform regions (e.g., the Ridge and Valley and Piedmont regions of Pennsylvania), and economic regions (e.g., the wheat belt of Kansas, the citrus-growing area of south Texas, and the irrigated farmlands of the Central Valley of California). Formal regions can be defined by measure of population, per capita income, ethnic background, crop production, population density and distribution, or industrial production, or by mapping physical characteristics such as temperature, rainfall, growing season, and average date of first and last frost.

The second type of region is the functional region. It is organized around a node or focal point, with the surrounding areas linked to that node by transportation systems, communication systems, or other economic associations involving such activities as manufacturing and retail trading. A typical functional region is a metropolitan area (MA) as defined by the Bureau of the Census. For example, the New York MA is a functional region that covers parts of several states. Commuting patterns, trade flows, television and radio broadcasts, newspapers; travel for recreation and entertainment links it. Other functional regions include shopping areas centered on malls or supermarkets, areas served by branch banks, and ports and their hinterlands.

The third type of region is the perceptual region. It is a construct that reflects human feelings and attitudes about areas and is therefore defined by people's shared subjective images of those areas. It tends to reflect the elements of people's mental maps, and, although it may help to impose a personal sense of order and structure on the world, it often does so on the basis of stereotypes that may be inappropriate or incorrect. Thus southern California, Dixie, and the upper Midwest are perceptual regions that are thought of as being spatial units, although they do not have precise borders or even commonly accepted regional characteristics and names.

Through understanding the idea of region, students can apply geographic knowledge, skills, and perspectives to solving problems as immediate as making an informed decision about a neighborhood zoning issue, or as long range as predicting the reconfiguration of political and economic alliances owing to resource shortages or changes in the global ecosystem. Most importantly, studying regions enables students to synthesize their understanding of the physical and human properties of Earth's surface at scales that range from local to global.

Teachers Notes On Place

Places are part of Earth's space, large or small, that has been endowed with meaning by humans. They include continents, islands, countries, regions, states,

cities, neighborhoods, villages, rural areas, and uninhabited areas. They usually have names and boundaries. Each place possesses a distinctive set of tangible and intangible characteristics that helps to distinguish it from other places. Places are characterized by their physical and human properties. Their physical characteristics include climate, landforms, soils, hydrology, vegetation, and animal life. Their human characteristics include language, religion, political systems, economic systems, population distribution, and quality of life. Places change over time as both physical and human processes operate to modify Earth's surface. Few places remain unchanged for long and these changes have a wide range of consequences. As knowledge, ideologies, values, resources, and technologies change, people make place-altering decisions about how to use land, how to organize society, and ways in which to relate (such as economically or politically) to nearby and distant places. Out of these processes emerge new places, with existing places being reorganized and expanded, other places declining, and some places disappearing. Places change in size and complexity and in economic, political, and cultural importance as networks of relationships between places are altered through population expansion, the rise and fall of empires, changes in climate and other physical systems, and changes in communication technologies. A place can be dramatically altered by events both near and far.

Knowing how and why places change enables people to understand the need for knowledgeable and collaborative decision making about where to locate schools, factories, and other things and how to make wise use of features of the physical environment such as soil, air, water, and vegetation. Knowing the physical and human characteristics of their own places influences how people think about who they are, because their identity is inextricably bound up with their place in life and the world. Personal identity, community identity, and national identity are rooted in place and attachment to place.

Knowing about other places influences how people understand other peoples, cultures, and regions of the world. Knowledge of places at all scales, local to global, is incorporated into people's mental maps of the world.

Students need an understanding of why places are the way they are, because it can enrich their own sense of identity with a particular place and enable them to comprehend and appreciate both the similarities and differences of places around their own community, state, country, and planet.

Professional Strategies to Improve Achievement

University of Nebraska, Lincoln, USA

Delwyn L. Harnisch, Shannon Cooley-Lovett

harnisch@unl.edu, shannita@cox.net

Abstract

Developing effective lessons and assessments is key to improving the education of students. This paper emphasizes the importance of teachers in enhancing student achievement. In order for students to be most successful, teachers must write clear lesson objectives, focus on student-centered learning, keep students engaged, consider students' learning styles, support lessons with visuals and interactive activities, and monitor and assess student learning, while continuing to self-reflect on their own teaching styles. Doing so will provide the best possible learning environment for students.

Key words: Assessment, Instructional Strategies, Learning, Feedback

Introduction

Educational assessment and evaluation are vital components of the teaching and learning process. Assessment attempts to determine how well students are learning and to provide information about the effectiveness of schooling and the educational system. In order to most effectively use assessment and evaluation, teachers must create or select activities that will help them collect evidence about student learning (assessment), make judgments about student performance (evaluation), and assign a numerical or letter grade that represents a quantitative description (measurement). Alongside other activities, teachers must integrate these three processes of assessment, evaluation and measurement into the teaching and learning process.

Instruction and assessment are closely related, with evaluation embedded in the relationship between the two. Techniques and practical tips of integrating assessment and evaluation into the instructional process to improve the achievement of students are shared in this paper.

Classroom assessment practices influence classroom interactions. They shape students' understandings of what learning is and which things are most important to learn. The most effective teachers are also learners, always seeking ways to support student learning. Teaching well requires planning instruction and creating

assessments that improve student learning. Teachers must identify the content they will teach, determine the performance they expect from their students, and then develop a means of assessing that performance.



Photo 1. TEA teachers



Photo 2. TEA teachers engaged with student-centered activities shared by Delwyn Harnisch and Shannon Cooley-Lovett of UNL

What is taught in the classroom plays a primary role in determining student achievement. Currently, thoughtfully constructed standards guide education reform initiatives by providing consensus about what students should learn and which skills they should acquire. The use of clear standards brings much-needed focus to curriculum development efforts and provides a target for new forms of classroom assessment.

In order to bring about significant improvement in education we must link educational standards to what takes place in classrooms. This requires that teachers do two important things: (1) translate standards into specific classroom experiences that facilitate student learning and (2) ensure that classroom assessments effectively measure that learning. Some states and local districts have developed teaching guides to identify instructional materials and classroom activities that help teachers

to meet this challenge. The University of Nebraska, Lincoln, assessment cohort training program has assisted teachers in developing classroom assessments that address standards accurately. The program has also assisted teachers in identifying instructional weaknesses and diagnosing individual student learning problems (Harnisch, Shope, Hoback, Fryda, & Kelberlau, 2006).

Development

Lesson Planning & Assessment

Lesson planning is another key component in effective teaching. It is the road map that leads students to their goals of being successful in a classroom, and it is a map that can be difficult to design. A teacher must be open to adapting lesson plans in order to meet students' needs. A teacher must also adhere to local and national standards. This means that a teacher must simultaneously listen to their students and discern how best to teach standards in any given lesson.

Writing clear and specific objectives for each lesson keeps teachers on track as they attempt to provide structure and guidance for students to follow, while also aspiring to reach larger goals. Posting lesson objectives in the classroom on a daily or weekly basis provides a clear picture of what is expected from both teacher and student.

When planning a lesson, there are certain questions a teacher should ask him or herself: Am I moving too quickly or slowly through a lesson? Am I allowing for interactive and critical thinking activities? Am I providing ample feedback to students? Do I provide background knowledge before starting a lesson? Am I incorporating various learning style activities, challenging my students, and collaborating with other teachers? Am I incorporating reading, writing, speaking, and listening in my lessons and modeling the behavior and skills I want students to learn? Am I reducing teacher talk time? Asking these questions will help a teacher create and write more effective lessons.

Assessment is an important part of lesson planning that can be incorporated at any point in the lesson. Assessing student knowledge before a lesson begins, helps the teacher develop more effective lessons for the class and individual students. A teacher cannot assume that students have been instructed on a particular topic before they arrive in the classroom. By using quick and simple assessments, teachers can collect data related to student knowledge that will help them create more effective lessons. Assessing student knowledge prior to teaching a lesson can be done in a variety of ways, from having a conversation with the students to having them list what they know about a given subject.

It is also important to assess students' learning during the lesson. Again, this can be done through verbal or written reflection, a quick quiz, or the teacher's ongoing observations. Observing what students are saying and writing gives the teacher an idea of where the lesson should go next. If the students understand the concept being taught, then the teacher can move on. If some students understand the material while others do not, the teacher can pair a student who understands with one who does not. The teacher can also create extension activities for those who understand the concept and remedial activities for those who need additional support.

Monitoring individual student progress is important as well. This is often difficult with large classrooms, and might require providing additional support to a few selected students each week. By taking a few extra minutes to explain a particular component of the lesson, the teacher can support those selected students. The teacher might also share activities that students who need additional help can practice outside of class. Specific strategies may be developed to assist struggling students. Understanding why the student is struggling is the first step to helping the student learn. By using this relational and individual approach, a teacher can make meaningful connections with students, encourage them, and help them become better learners.

Finally, it is necessary to assess students at the end of a lesson. There are many ways to do this, and it is important that a teacher vary the styles and types of assessment used. Teachers should be mindful of their assessments and aware of what it is they are trying to assess. The periodic informal assessments that take place during the lesson should ensure that students are learning the material and guarantee that they will be successful when the final assessment is given at the end of a lesson.

Table of Specification

One tool used to analyze standards for instruction and assessment is a table of specifications, a simple table that describes the various kinds of knowledge and abilities that students must master to meet a particular standard. Many teachers are discovering how this strategy, described years ago in the work of Ralph Tyler and Benjamin Bloom (Bloom, Hastings, & Madaus, 1971), can help them align their classroom instruction and assessment with curriculum standards.

As a planning tool, a table of specifications serves two important functions: (1) it adds precision and clarity to teaching and (2) it clarifies for students the learning goals of a course or unit so that students understand what they are expected to learn. Many teachers use the tables of specifications as teaching guides, sharing

their tables with students in order to reinforce students' understanding and learning progress (Guskey, 1999; Guskey & Bailey, 2009).

A table of specifications also serves as a guide for consistency among standards, the steps needed to help students attain standards, and procedures for checking on students' learning progress. Many teachers stress that they want their students to develop higher-level cognitive skills, such as the ability to apply knowledge to new situations, but often find themselves giving quizzes and unit tests that mainly tap skills that are easiest to assess, particularly knowledge of facts and definition of terms.

Developing a Table of Specifications

Teachers must address two essential questions when developing a table of specifications: (1) What must students learn to be proficient at this standard? and (2) What should students be able to do with what they learn? For example, will students simply be required to know the steps of the scientific method of investigation, or should they be able to apply those steps in a classroom scientific experiment?

Table of Specifications						
Knowledge of:						
Terms	Facts	Rules & Principles	Processes & Procedures	Translation	Application	Analysis & Synthesis
New Vocabulary:	Specific Information:		Patterns	Identify		Compare
Words	Persons	Relations	Sequences	Describe	Use	Contrast
Names	Events	Guidelines	Order of events or operations	Recognize	Illustrate	Explain
Phrases	Data	Organizational cues		Distinguish	Solve	Infer
Symbols	Operations		Steps	Compute	Demonstrate	Combine
						Construct
						Integrate

Figure 1 shows the categories that teachers in a wide variety of subject areas find most useful.

Student-Centered Learning Strategies

What does student-centered learning look like? In a student-centered class the lesson and its supporting, well-planned activities, are focused on student needs. When creating lessons and interactive activities, the teacher establishes rules and guidelines and shares them with the students. Next, the teacher models the expected behavior and skill for the students, and then has students practice the desired behavior and skill.

When attempting an activity for the first time, teachers should start slowly and not expect perfection. Learning new skills takes repeated exposure and practice for both teachers and students. When activities do not go quite as planned, it is easy to quickly criticize what went wrong and never attempt the activity again. But a teacher should not be so easily frustrated. Through these interactive activities the teacher can learn something about his/her teaching and about his/her students. If the teacher is willing to evaluate what went well and what went poorly he/she can make modifications and improvements for future activities.

In a student-centered classroom teachers are sure to give positive feedback on what students do well during activities. This helps to reinforce behaviors and skills the teacher would like to see in his/her students and in future activities. Teachers should not criticize students, but should instead try to figure out what is hindering student success and attempt to create a solution.

Engagement

Another part of student-centered learning is keeping students engaged. Getting students up and moving in a classroom teaches them to be active learners. Many varying activities promote active learning in a class. Having students sing is an excellent way to help them remember the material that is being covered while giving them an activity that keeps them engaged. Books that have songs and chants for students to learn are available for purchase. Teachers may also create their own songs or chants for their specific classroom needs.

There are other ways to keep students engaged in learning as well. During an English lesson a teacher may write conjugated irregular verbs on small sheets of paper, put tape on the backs of them, and then distribute the cards to the class. The teacher will then ask students to place the cards in either a “past” or “present” tense category on a board or wall. This activity gives students a chance to get up and move. Students may do this activity in small groups or as a class. In a small group setting shorter lists can be used and students can work together to complete those lists. The teacher brings the students back together as a class after the activity is finished in order to correct any errors and discuss the topic further. This categorizing activity can be used in other content areas as well.

Graphic organizers are another way to keep students engaged in a lesson while helping them make sense of the content. A teacher may allow students to work with these organizers in groups. Group work allows students to fulfill responsibilities, grow as learners, and build communication skills while learning from each other. Often students come up with ideas together that a teacher would

not. This is a perfect example of a collaborative learning environment where both the teacher and students are learning from each other.

A teacher may also engage students by having them compete with each other in the form of a game. There are many games that can be used, such as the fly swatter game. In this game teacher writes words related to a particular topic on the board. If the students are working on object pronouns, for example, the teacher might list them on the board and then say a subject pronoun like, “she.” The first student to hit the corresponding object pronoun with their respective fly swatter, (in this case the word “her”), is the winner. Students in the class participate by taking turns calling out a subject pronoun. The teacher may pass around an object, like a ball, in order to regulate the calling out of subject pronouns. This helps to avoid having multiple students call out words at the same time. The student who loses the contest with the fly swatter is replaced by another student in the classroom. As with any activity, rules must be established first to maintain a learning environment. For example, prior to the game a teacher might say that students must have their fly swatters at their side and must be equal distance from the board or wall in order to make the game fair.

Other means of supporting a lesson while engaging learners include word walls, visuals, manipulatives, and color coordinating. Word walls: Lists of specific words that can be posted in the classroom. For example, a teacher might post a list of transition words and phrases that students can use while writing essays. Visuals: Photos or objects that can be incorporated during a lesson to help students make a connection to the lesson and assist them in recalling the information later. Manipulatives: Real objects in the classroom that help students learn. For example, a teacher might bring a flower to class when talking about the parts of a flower. Color coordinating: Associating colors with learning. For example, when teaching parts of speech, a teacher colors the nouns blue and verbs red. Drawing shapes around words may also be helpful for teaching syntax. These strategies can be applied in any content area to help students learn.

Group Work

Students learn from not only their teachers, but also their peers. Group activities promote peer learning by giving students a chance to teach and learn from one another. Direct instruction still comes from the teacher, but supplementing a lesson with group activities gives students the chance to gain insight from one another as well, thereby enhancing the lesson. It also helps them to practice and improve their communication skills.

Strategies for Success

Five broad strategies found to be equally powerful for teachers of all content areas at all grade levels include (Leahy, S., Lyon, C., Thompson, M., & Wiliam, D. (2005):

- Clarifying and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success,
- Engineering effective classroom discussion, questions, and learning tasks,
- Providing feedback that moves learners forward,
- Activating students as owners of their own learning,
- Activating students as instructional resources for one another.

The above assessment-for-learning strategies are feasible teaching practices for individual teachers to implement. We encourage teachers to make subtle changes in practice that allow them to see large gains in student learning (McTighe & O'Connor, 2005; O'Connor, 2002; Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis (2004).

The strategy that we believe binds all others together is the use of assessment information to adapt instruction to meet student needs. Teachers who use assessment for learning continually look for ways to improve student achievement by meeting student needs. They share the responsibility for learning with the learners and ensure that students know they are responsible for alerting the teacher when they need help or do not understand. Teachers provide feedback that engages students. They give students time in class to work on improvement and activate students as instructional resources for one another.

Teacher communities that implement these strategies yield substantial improvements in student achievement. Tools for supporting assessment-for-learning include school-based learning communities. Over time, these teacher-learning communities develop a shared language that enables teachers to talk to one another and grow in their understanding of how to improve student learning practices.

Learning Styles

Many teachers are familiar with the theory of multiple intelligences and learning styles, but not all make an effort to actively implement them into their teaching. Teachers should begin by identifying their own learning styles and intelligences and understanding how these directly impact their teaching. Teachers are inclined to teach toward their own strengths, but should challenge themselves to move away from the style they are most comfortable with and attempt to teach from another for short periods of time during a unit lesson. Teachers should also discern the learning styles and intelligences of their students. To understand what

types of learners are in their classroom, teachers may have students complete a learning style survey that will pinpoint their learning styles. When teachers are familiar with who their students are as learners, they can plan lessons that highlight these different styles.

As an example, teacher might select an historic event in their country as the topic of a lesson. Instead of giving the students one specific assignment, the teacher may give them multiple options, such as writing a paper or poem, drawing a picture, singing a song, acting in a skit, building something, taking photos, or making a collage to show their knowledge of that historic event. Allowing students to choose from the list of assignments can provide meaningful experiences that showcase student talents while keeping them engaged in learning.

Multiple Intelligences Theory

Howard Gardner's (1999) work in the field of multiple intelligences theory is an instructive way to think about how people learn. His research in a variety of contexts led him to challenge the prevailing wisdom of intelligence as mainly paper and pencil, abstract abilities, and so on. From his investigations came the idea that intelligence manifests itself in at least eight distinctly different ways, perhaps more. The eight forms of intelligence that have been identified include: (1) intrapersonal, (2) interpersonal, (3) verbal, (4) kinesthetic, (5) musical, (6) logical, (7) naturalist, and (8) visual.

Gardner states that “multiple intelligences is more than a theory of intelligence; it is, for us, a philosophy about education with implications for how kids learn, how teachers should teach, and how school should operate...” (Hoerr, p. 30). The message for the classroom is to encourage and support multiple forms of learning and knowing. This may involve incorporating more artwork, music, construction, projects, teamwork, and reflective thinking activities.

Classrooms are like talent pools waiting to be tapped by teachers. All students need to be challenged to use and develop their intelligences. If we limit our teaching to specific traditional forms of education we may deny the other abilities that our students have. Classroom teachers of the 21st century need to recognize, reward, and emphasize all eight kinds of intelligences so that classrooms become places of opportunity for improved student learning.

Conclusion

John Dewey advocated the idea of the teacher becoming a learner and learners becoming teachers. Teachers need to be learners who continually seek ways in

which they can improve student learning. They need to be flexible and willing to adapt their lessons, plans, assessments, and teaching styles in order to best meet the needs of their students.

Teachers have the responsibility to teach the required school standards as they meet students' needs. They can successfully do this by (1) translating the standards into specific classroom experiences that facilitate student learning and (2) ensuring that classroom assessments effectively measure that learning. Students gain more in a classroom in which a teacher focuses on effective lesson planning, assessment, and evaluation.

There are many ways to develop effective lessons, such as providing background knowledge to students, allowing for interactive and critical thinking activities, providing ample feedback to students, collaborating with other educators, self-reflection on learning styles and lessons, and modeling the behavior and skills teachers want students to learn and use.

We believe that learning should be active. Student-centered lessons keep students engaged. There are a number of activities that promote this, such as games, graphic organizers, and group work. In addition, lessons can be supported with word walls, visuals, manipulatives, color coordinating, and other strategies that promote understanding and engagement.

Assessing student knowledge prior to, during, and after a lesson is the best approach to measure lesson effectiveness and what students have learned. There are many types of assessment, such as a table of specification. Assessment can be administered at any point in the lesson. When developing and implementing assessment teachers need to be mindful of what it is they are trying to assess.

Teachers should also be mindful of the ways that learning styles and multiple intelligences play into their teaching. They should identify their own learning styles and multiple intelligences and then discern the styles and intelligences of their students as well. Based on their findings, teachers can develop lessons that allow students to choose meaningful assignments that will showcase their talents and keep them engaged in learning.

We live in a day of standards, accountability and formal measures of academic success. We have tried to provide some reflective thinking strategies to help teachers and their students move toward a practical sense of what works, what is good and what has meaning. We also strive to answer the question of why these methods and practices are successful. We believe that reflective thinking strategies are helpful in improving the social/moral conditions in which we teach and learn and in giving insight for improving student achievement. Our professional goal is to help teachers bring teaching, learning and assessment together into a new vision for the classroom. We want them to experience a sense of integration with their

students and the students with their teacher and with each other. Our dream is to see teachers experience the realization of raising achievement and improving the learning environment.

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TEA Program Seen Through the Eyes of Host California State University in Chico, USA

Terence Janicki

California State University, Chico, California

tjanicki@ctc.ca.gov

Introduction

CSU, Chico hosted a six (6) week professional development program for 22 secondary level teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) from nine different countries (Argentina, Bulgaria, Egypt, India, Jordan, Peru, Poland, Russia, and Tajikistan). The program was funded by the US Department of State through International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX). The CSU, Chico-based program provided international educators with an opportunity in the United States to enhance their expertise in their teaching discipline and equip them with a deeper understanding of best practices. These best practices covered areas including teaching methodologies, lesson planning, and the use of technology in teaching. This program was designed to further aid them by creating a more nuanced understanding of the United States; developing productive and lasting relationships and mutual understanding between themselves and American teachers and their students. Additionally, it was designed to contribute to the improvement of teaching in the participating countries by preparing participants to serve as teacher leaders, who upon returning home would apply and share their experience and skills with their peers and students.

Each participant developed tangible products to implement upon their return: 1) a portfolio of theme-based functional lesson plans organized in units designed by colleagues; 2) a list of contacts for future networking purposes; and 3) a list of internet teaching resources 4) an action plan describing an activity to be implemented upon return home. Finally, each participant contributed one lesson plan towards their thematic- unit for inclusion in a volume of 3 units including 15 lesson plans. This component was designed to not only to allow participants to benefit from one another's work, but will also encourage continued networking and cooperation between program alumnae.

Action Plan Development

The author of this chapter facilitated a dialogue and brainstorming, offering suggestions as the Fellows worked through the steps necessary for achieving their

goals in the action planning. The action plans were to allow Fellows to transfer lessons learned in the US to their home communities and schools. Through this method there will be an emphasis on results. To stimulate results, Fellows are required to develop “Action Plans” to implement upon their return home. Therefore, Fellows developed individual and/or group Action Plans. My goal was to apply the effective Action Plan tool and to allocate the necessary time and assistance to help Fellows create the steps of a viable plan of action. Certainly as training progresses and Fellows become aware of new possibilities, their strategies changed and the steps needed to accomplish their goals become clearer. It was critical that I was able to work with participants on an ongoing basis to help them draft an effective plan.

The Essential elements of an Action Plan included:

- A six month time-frame unless otherwise indicated,
- At least one goal and a general strategy for achieving the goal,
- Specific steps detailing the Fellow’s strategy and the target date for each step,
- The human and material resources available and those unavailable (but needed) to achieve the goal,
- Possible sources for the needed resources and the steps required to secure them,
- Person responsible for each step if other than the participant,
- What is the indicator of successful completion of the action.

Action Plan Groups and Topics

Below are the group developed topics:

- Group 1:
 - Topic: Using Information Technology to Develop Social Cultural Competence,
 - Goal: To provide skills to high school English teachers in the city to use Information Technology effectively in classrooms to increase socio-cultural competence of their students.
- Group 2:
 - Topic: Using Information Technology as an Educational Tool,
 - Goal: To increase the ability of English school teachers to use Power Point Presentation, Excel, and Microsoft Word applications more effectively.
- Group 3:
 - Topic: Classroom Management,

- Goal: To enrich our English teacher colleagues' range of classroom management techniques/strategies by sharing our understandings gained from the workshops in the TEA program, Feb/March 2010.
- Group 4:
 - Topic: Effective Methodologies to develop THINK, READ, WRITE, LISTEN, SPEAK,
 - Goal: To equip secondary school ELT teachers with a set of learner-centered strategies to help students who struggle learning English.



Photo 1. Working on action plan



Photo 2. At the workshop

Using the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Applicable, Realistic, Time frame) acronym, participants will be led through effective action planning to create workable, implementable plans for use upon return to their home countries. I was able to bring my unique experience as a teacher educator and former action plan

coordinator to consolidate the various seminar topics. My background was well suited for this endeavor. I hold a Bachelors of Science in Physics and Mathematics, a Master of Arts in Science education and a PhD in Educational Psychology. I am currently administrator for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing in the Examinations and Research Unit. Prior to that I served as the Director of Education Services Center at CSU, Chico. Additionally, I managed the Mathematics/Science Leadership Office at the California Department of Education.

Developing a High Quality Professional Development Experience

In addition to develop action plans I assisted Fellows in designing a presentation. The presentations were to include, but were not limited to: a lesson plan, outline of a new program or administrative structure, an outline of a workshop for sharing a skill learned with colleagues at home or a new teaching methodology. This event was designed to bring together all aspects of the professional development for which the participants are responsible. In addition, this component prepares the educators for the multiplier effects of their experiences as they extend to their professional settings at home.

The following elements of High-quality professional development were offered:

- improve and increase teachers’ knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach,
- be sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and teachers’ performance in the classroom,
- be based on, aligned with, and directly related to agreed upon teaching standards,
- be structured on scientifically-based research demonstrated to improve student academic achievement or substantially increase the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers,
- be sponsored by school divisions, colleges, universities, organizations, associations, or other entities experienced in providing professional development activities to teachers and instructors,
- be delivered by individuals who have demonstrated qualifications and credentials in the focus area of the professional development,
- support the success of all learners including children with special needs,
- provide training for teachers in the use of technology so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve

teaching and learning in the curricula and federal core academic subjects in which the teachers teach,

- promote the use of data and assessments to improve instruction; and,
- be reviewed for high quality.

Teaching Practice Standards

These teaching standards were developed in California and were shared with the Fellows. The California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/CSTP-2009.pdf>) are intended to provide a common language and a vision of the scope and complexity of the profession by which all teachers can define and develop their practice. The standards seek to serve and support professional educators in fulfilling their professional roles and responsibilities from pre-service teacher to experienced practitioner. The standards are not set forth as regulations to control the specific actions of teachers, but rather to guide teachers as they develop, refine, and extend their practice. The CSTP have been used for a variety of purposes, including the following:

- to prompt reflection about student learning and teaching practice,
- to formulate professional goals to improve teaching practice in support of student learning; and,
- to guide, monitor, and assess the progress of a teacher’s practice toward professional goals.

The CSTP are organized around six interrelated domains of teaching practice. The following are the six standards:

- Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning,
- Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments for Student Learning,
- Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning,
- Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for All Students,
- Assessing Students for Learning,
- Developing as a Professional Educator.

Next Steps

I am writing this chapter of the book about my experiences working with the TEA Fellows I have asked the Fellows to answer the following three questions:

- As you were working on the action plans and other assignments in Chico that I was facilitating in their development, what you were learning from me or the experience with your colleagues?

- It has now been six months since that experience, what has been the lasting impact, if any, from that experience?
- In what ways might I help you in the future?
Based on their responses I plan to continue assisting my valued colleagues.

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<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/CSTP-2009.pdf>

**AMERICAN TEACHERS' OBSERVATIONS WHO VISITED
POLAND**

Traveling to Poland: Lessons in and out of the Classroom

Denise Ghiloni

Remington Middle School, Franklin, Massachusetts, USA
ghiloni30@yahoo.com

Introduction

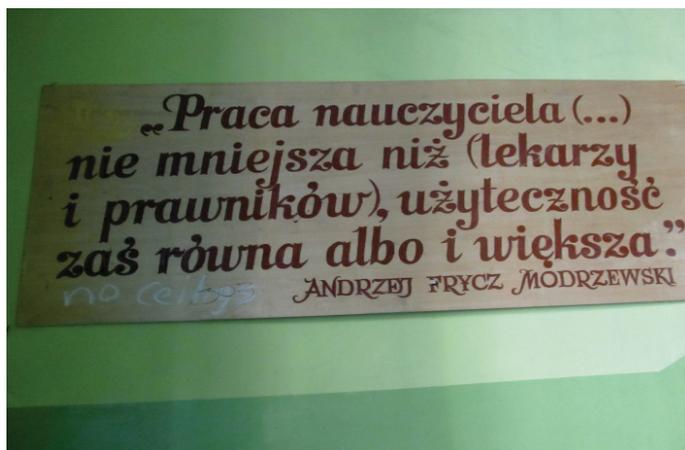


Photo 1. Sign at school

This sign hangs in the staircase at Kolegium Europejskie (the European College), which was my host school for two weeks in February 2011. On my first day there, I asked the student who was giving me a tour to translate, and she paused and reflected on the sign for a minute or two. “Well, it says that teachers are as important as any other profession”, and then added with a smile, “I never really looked at that.” The student’s words and the sign’s meaning were just two of the many lessons I would learn while visiting Krakow, Poland, as part of the Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program (TEA). My stay in Krakow allowed me access to a new country, school, teachers and students, all of which provided me a chance to look at happenings within the field of education and gain new insights about them.

Whenever there is a group of people, it is easy to spot a teacher; they are usually the ones who are asking questions, since probing further for ideas and information is a part of who we are as people. Teaching allows us this opportunity countless times throughout a school day; however, teaching can often be an isolating profession in the sense that trying to find time to meet with a co-worker to share ideas or co-plan a lesson can be daunting, due to the multitude of tasks that we face each day. As a middle school teacher, I am privileged to be part of a team of

teachers who are like a second family to me, but we can go an entire school day without seeing each other. I've found that I work best when interacting and collaborating with other teachers, which was part of my motivation for applying for the TEA program. I saw the program as a unique way to learn more about my profession, as well as learn about education from a global standpoint. Needless to say, my trip to Krakow allowed me to achieve both of these goals- and much more. Being able to collaborate on lessons with my host teacher, Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska, and co-traveler, Allyson Daly, from Goldsboro, North Carolina, work with students at Anna's school, meet her friends and family, and share the experience back at my school, all combined for an unforgettable experience.

My Host Teacher

IREX 's weekend orientation that I attended in November, assuaged many concerns and answered questions that were crammed in my head about the specific tasks, as well as cultural differences that may come up while on the exchange. However, there was still that one question that couldn't be addressed until I arrived in Krakow: What will my host teacher be like? Throughout our planning, emails flew back and forth while we made the arrangements for dates, the workshops Allyson and I would be presenting, the day-to-day agenda, and accommodations. During this stage, I was able to get a sense of Anna's organization and concern for our well-being. However, my understanding of how privileged I was to be able to work with and learn from Anna could not be gleaned from emails. She is the epitome of what a teacher should be: professional, intelligent, organized, and always concerned that her students are gaining knowledge about themselves and the subject being taught.

Anna teaches Geography and English (language) at the European College, which is an International Baccalaureate World School for grades seven to twelve. In addition to the intense curriculum taught, students choose this school because the courses are taught primarily in English. Since Allyson teaches high school English and I teach middle school, the European College provided a perfect set-up for us to learn, and in return, we were able to provide information about two different school districts. Within the European College, Anna organizes several activities, including the Comenius Project, where students from various countries including Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Italy, traveled to each other's country to learn about each other's cultures. We truly benefited from Anna's extensive background in travel and working with international teachers, as she seemed to know instinctively what we needed to access, whether it was culturally or academically. Anna provided several other educational opportunities for us, as we

were able to visit a partner IB school in Krakow, as well as visit three students Gabrysia, Patryk and Tomasz whom she tutors in English at their homes. Anna is committed to each student becoming fluent in English, and Allyson and I welcomed the chance to provide access to native speakers through the use of word play and conversations. These visits provided some of the trip's highlights, as we were welcomed so warmly into each student's home with tea, chocolates, smiles, and even piano playing and a game of chess that we were able to extract a better understanding of their culture.

Anna guided us around Poland, and she and her husband, Lukasz, made sure that we saw the highlights of not only the beautiful city of Krakow, but also the mountain resort of Zakopane in the Tatra Mountains. The time spent inside and outside of the classroom allowed for hours of conversation comparing the cultures and educational systems of the United States and Poland. The topics of conversation were never depleted as we delved into topics such as public schools versus private, qualifications to get into college, grading students (the IB system grades on a one-seven scale), curriculums, parent communications, and student accountability. The similarities we face as educators lead to hours of engaging discussion.

Inside the Classrooms

During my two week tenure at the European College, I had the pleasure of observing and participating in classes for the first gymnasium (seventh grade), the second gymnasium (eighth grade), and the Pre-IB (tenth grade). As part of our introductions, Allyson and I presented our regions, New England and the South, and students were surprised to learn that our schools are located about fifteen hours away from each other by car. We felt it was important to emphasize the size of the United States and the fact that our two schools represented just a tiny part of our country, and not the United States as a whole. Much of the information we shared was geared to showing the diversity of our two regions, including food, dialect, weather, history, and recreation. Three of my students from Remington Middle School had made a video for me to share in Poland, and the students there enjoyed seeing the physical layout of the school, the classrooms, the library, the recycling program, students at lunch, and the various Unified Arts classes, such as Computers, Technology, Art, and Physical Education.

Another aspect they enjoyed was the yearbook, which they do not have in their school. One section of the yearbook showcases the eighth graders' baby pictures, and the Polish students were quite taken by the idea of these. Although they poured over this section and wanted to know why it was included, who the

students were and what they were like, they were adamant in their viewpoint that they would not want theirs displayed this way because they'd be embarrassed. I was extremely excited to learn that two students plan to take on the design and production of a yearbook for this year's graduating class- although it will most likely not include anyone's baby pictures.



Photo 2. The First Gymnasium class with Remington's yearbook



Photo 3. Artifacts shared in class that showcase major world events in Poland

Another class that left a strong impression on me was the second gymnasium, with whom we spent one to two classes each day. From giving us a tour of the school on the first day to a good-bye party on the last, their pride about Poland's culture and history, and their questions about the United States provided all of us an opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding about each other. One day was devoted to the students teaching us about various aspects of Poland from traditions to wildlife to religion. One student, Piotr Chrzanowski, brought in

artifacts from his family, which included ration cards from the Soviet occupation, his grandfather's Solidarity card, and pictures, bullet casings, and money from World War II. Allyson and I were treated to a firsthand account of one family's history through the major events that impacted both Poland and the United States. This group of students had such enthusiasm and curiosity that it was impossible not to learn from them during my visit.

This proved true also on the field trip that we took together to the Wieliczka Salt Mine, located about fifteen kilometers from Krakow. The organization of this excursion provided quite a contrast to the way field trips are run at my school, and probably for most U.S. schools. For me, a field trip takes months of planning between getting permission forms and payments, planning for coverage of any duties, organizing lunches, and procuring a nurse, buses, and chaperones. It was a shock when Anna told us that students could decide to come and if they were, they'd need to bring in money, and make plans for their parents to pick them up when we returned at 6:00 p.m. If they didn't come, they would go to their regularly scheduled class. The independent nature of the trip was refreshing and all went smoothly during the outing.

On the last day of my visit, students shared further ideas of what this visit meant both in letter format and a discussion we had about the similarities and differences in our schools. With the students of 2nd gymnasium class Kaja Gryga, Aleksandra Skwarczyńska, Joanna Bojarska, Paulina Dutkiewicz, Justyna Gąsiorowska, Bartosz Marzec, Krzysztof Kałwak, Grzegorz Dziembaj and Piotr Chrzanowski we also talked about how globalization will impact the future for students and what is most important for students of any culture to learn in school. My favorite answer to this latter question was "creativity" because, as the student said, "What career does not require this?" The students presented us letters reflecting on our visit, and several students' words have resonated with me. One student wrote, "I could feel USA atmosphere in the classroom." Another shared that she "learned a lot of useful things from you. Thanks for all the time you spent with us. We'll be waiting for you next time in Poland!" I only wish that we had had more time to get to know these vibrant young adults, whose infectious enthusiasm left an indelible mark.

Working with the Teachers

Being able to sit in some of the classes and observe highly skilled teachers is a luxury not always available to us on a daily basis at our own schools, but one that I took advantage of during my time in Krakow. While there, I was able to sit in not only Anna's classes, but also in Literature and Psychology courses, and I was given

an opportunity to work with teachers while presenting a workshop on Socratic Seminar with Allyson. The text that we chose to use as for discussion was the Declaration of Independence, which proved to be a bridge to topics such as equality, revolution, government, hypocrisy, and the role of the individual in society. Our participants included teachers whose disciplines included ethics, physics, biology, psychology, geography, and literature, and together we traversed this important historical document, while helping each other access a new method for students to use in the classroom. It was rewarding to spend time with this group of professionals and to hear their enthusiasm of how they might implement the Socratic Method in their subject. All of these interactions provided time to reflect on what methods are common practices in the United States and Poland.

Keeping the Connection Going

Upon my return home, I've been mulling over how to keep this experience alive and active for both me and my students, and Anna and hers. We plan to set up email correspondence between our students, Skype sessions and, of course, I'll be anxious to see how the yearbook undertaking pans out for the seniors. In addition to these interactions though, there are several more ways that I plan to bring Poland and global awareness to my classroom.

First off, I have started to revise the myths and legends unit that I do as part of my curriculum so that it includes more cultures in order to focus on archetypes that connect many different countries. I was inspired in part by the list of favorite stories and fairy tales from childhood compiled by the second gymnasium class. Winnie-the-Pooh, Hans Christian Anderson, and the Brothers Grimm are overwhelming favorites, but the story that I had to bring back to my students is the Legend of the Dragon at Wawel Castle in Krakow. Without fail, students implored us to visit the castle and see the dragon. In fact, the Pre-IB group even acted out the legend in skit format with a rousing battle scene included. This story, complete with pictures of the castle will be shared this spring when we study legends.

Another revision to the curriculum is to expand on the current selection of novels so that more cultures can be studied. By next year, the literary choices will include stories set in Japan, Korea, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and South Africa. The geography teacher on my team and I are planning to teach multi-disciplinary units using these books.

Lastly, I'll be presenting a workshop to the teachers at my school about my TEA experience. During the presentation, time for reflection and discussion on

what is currently done in classrooms for global awareness and what else can be done within the school will be included.

Final Reflection

Being part of the TEA program has enabled me to gain so much: friendships, cultural understanding, growth as a teacher, and understanding the common bonds we face as educators. The November orientation allowed for the first step in the acquisition of these gifts, when I was able to meet some of the international teachers who had completed their six-week training and get to know some of the United States teachers. The presentations shared provided new ideas for lessons on global awareness, and I left Washington with such enthusiasm for the sojourn to Poland that I wasn't sure if my expectations could be met, but I needn't have worried.

In the Participant Workbook given out at the November conference, there is a video that is recommended called "The Danger of a Single Story", in which Chimamanda Adichie cautions people against judging a country based on meeting one person. Allyson and I often sent this same message to the students we met, as we too emphasized that we each represented just one school from a huge country and that there are many differences in U.S. schools. However, while I can definitely understand and appreciate Ms. Adichie's point, it is hard not to let my exchange persuade me into thinking nothing but the best about the Polish people, country, and culture. The warmth and hospitality extended to me by Anna, her husband, friends, and schools made this an unforgettable experience from both a personal and educational perspective.

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<http://deniseghiloni.blogspot.com/>

Finding the Generative Center: Navigating the Future with the Teaching in Excellence Program

Allyson Daly

Eastern Wayne High School, Goldsboro, USA

allysondaly@wcps.org

*We appreciate our culture, but we want to live in American culture too.
Pre-IB student, sixteen years old, Kolegium Europejskie*

*I would like to see us take your fun and hands-on methods and
combine them with our knowledge.
IB Psychology Teacher, Krakow, Poland*

Abstract

There are many right answers to the question, how do we prepare our students for the global marketplace? One excellent way is to partner teachers and students across national borders. Through this exchange my fellow teachers and I saw real leadership in action, listened to students make sense of the influence of one culture on another as they sharpened their cultural savvy, and built trust. High school classes, especially a project that surveyed pedestrians in Krakow on The American Influence on Polish Culture, are featured here as is our workshop on teacher training using the Socratic Method. By taking the best from both systems and using the strengths of students and teachers in both countries, we learn from and benefit our own communities. The rub created when two cultures touch can create energy, that when directed with purpose, can fuel our world toward ethical, just, and peaceful responses to real world problems.

Introduction

If universities are becoming international, and according to BBC News education correspondent Sean Coughlan, they are, then teachers must prepare students for university level inquiry on the international plane. In his article, “Graduates—the New Measure of Power,” Coughlan writes that, “[John] Sexton, [president of New York University,] sets out a different kind of map of the world, in which universities, with bases in several cities, become the hubs for the economies of the future, ‘magnetizing talent’ and providing ideas and energy to drive economic innovation.” If many jobs will emerge from modern needs like clean

energy, clean water, and international resource management, then problem solving will require collaborative efforts that draw from cultural awareness, scientific knowledge, creativity, communication, legal expertise, ethics, and interpersonal skills, among others. If we wish to head off future war and genocide akin to what the world witnessed during the Holocaust or even as recently as the Darfur and Rwanda genocides we need to invest in creating “preemptive trust.” We will never know how many tragedies were averted because good people were in the right places, acting with integrity. The great people who will shape tomorrow are sitting in classrooms all over the world right now; they are in our classrooms right now. We need to empower them.

In an effort to connect two countries, three schools, and multiple classrooms to international learning, Denise Ghiloni, a Massachusetts Language Arts teacher, and I, a high school English teacher from North Carolina are traveling to Krakow, Poland to teach in International Baccalaureate (IB) school after receiving Teaching in Excellence and Achievement (TEA) State Department grants. Our host, Anna Krzeminska-Kaczynska, had already been awarded a grant to come to America, where she studied teaching at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln for six weeks. She had graciously and wisely planned our trip, offering her home to welcome us and meet friends, observe and teach at the Kolegium Europejski, the International Baccalaureate World School 1528 (IB), and a partner school, also an IB school, visit sights in Krakow, and see the mountains at Zakopane. What we experienced became greater than the sum of its parts; we felt the generative power of being in the same place at the same time and working with a common purpose.

Questions Which Prompted This Exchange

Contemporary discussions of American education oscillate between doom and gloom and extreme optimism. The truth is not somewhere in the middle, but actually at both ends of the extreme. Now, however, even those students who achieve have no guarantee that a job, career, or pension, will be the natural outcome of a college degree. Both ends must navigate new spaces as nations globalize. Many questions that educators now ask are: What jobs will exist in the future? What skills must people have in order to succeed in these fields? How do we help students reach their potential? How do we pass on the best parts of each of our cultures? How do we prepare students for their future without leaving behind the hard-won wisdom of the past?

To these questions we graft in those that Anna shared were the particular concern of the IB program and her school. Since the IB program is based on classes being taught in English, both parents and students want to know that the program

prepares students for the English speaking world. In the classroom, students speak to one another and their teachers in English, but they can revert in pre-IB class to Polish if necessary. Would their language skills be good enough to be understood by native English speakers? Could graduates of the program travel abroad, perhaps even to study at the university level in the UK or the US and thrive in that environment? Would students experience culture shock or a smooth transition if they made that choice?

The Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program (TEA) creates environments where teachers can solve these and other challenges together. Through their grants and training, TEA connects communities, schools, classrooms, and students. These connections create spaces that become laboratories where teachers and students have the opportunity to build trust as they answer the questions that matter to them.

Finding the Generative Center

Immediately impressed with Anna's drive, Denise and I are humbled by all that she has taken on as well as all of the responsibilities she has been given. In addition to teaching at school, she tutors individual students in English, implements service-learning projects, runs the Comenius project, writes grants so that students may study for a semester abroad, and is writing and editing a collection of TEA teacher's articles. In short, she is an amazing leader.

Anna's Classes and Methods

Anna's teaching skills match her leadership ones, and I am very excited about what I witnessed in her classroom. Her teaching techniques are innovative and elicit critical thinking at a high level. Anna's IB-1 Geography class (the same age as Juniors in America) conducted original research on disparities in one city. They were to select a square kilometer and determine housing and expense differences within that space. Both students who presented took pictures and offered statistics and stories that illuminated the differences between classes of people and their living conditions. They addressed such issues as unemployment, poverty, budgeting, the effect on a celebrity moving into the area, and neighborhoods that are walled and exclusive. Julia Dorosh, originally from the Ukraine, was incredibly open about the poverty there. I was struck by her comment, "It is thirteen cents (in Euros) to ride the bus to one location from here, and twenty eight to ride to another. People often decide where to go based on how much change they have in their pocket." When she wants to go back home for a visit, she rides the bus to the

nearest village to the Polish/Ukrainian border, walks across the border until she can take the next bus to a train station. She says she likes it because it is beautiful being out in nature by herself.

One program that we were able to help plan, watch grow, and witness the product emerge was called “The American Influence in Polish Culture.” Anna already had set up that we would conduct a street survey, but she waited to finalize the topic until we could be together. At her house we discussed categories for each of six groups—geography and language, stereotypes, sports, clothing and branding, media, and food. The first day she described the criteria to a class of pre-IB students, equivalent in age to tenth graders. She required that they devise at least five questions that they could quantify, coached them on how to approach people on the street, what information was needed about each person surveyed, like age, gender, country of origin, etc., and even gave them suggestions, like perhaps pictures may help draw responders into their questions, etc. Denise, Anna, and I moved through each group probing to get students to see differences between open-ended, close-ended, and leading questions. In working with the group on stereotypes, the students were debating that, “Stereotypes are not true, so why would we ask about them? It’s like asking to be insulted.” Our response, that ignoring stereotypes does not mean they cease to exist, prompted them to ask about stereotypes of Polish people as well. Knowing what they are and understanding where they originate is one of the first steps toward truth. They then predicted that people on the street would say that Americans are overweight, but they thought that overall the American influence on Poland would be neutral. “It’s about business, so it’s neither good nor bad,” one student commented.

The next time we met two days later, students were to have their questions ready. Since days before students were mumbling about the topic, we addressed it head on, saying, “This study is not to find out about just America; it is also to learn about Poland, especially since as Poland has joined the European Union in 2004, it is an interesting time in Polish economic and cultural history. We are learning about ourselves.” We bundled up and walked out of the door. A few blocks from the school we paused at a park that had a bus stop on one end. Students had forty five minutes to give their survey to as many people as possible. One of the new students, Assad, pictured below, who joined the class only a few days before and spoke no Polish, clutched his clipboard and politely asked everyone he met for assistance. He was undaunted. After we gathered back together, most groups had interviewed six or seven subjects, one had only interviewed four, and one group had interviewed thirteen. When we got to the next stop, Market square, groups of four broke into two groups of two to try to get more subjects, and the competition was born.

Conclusions varied. In the sports category, America had little influence. From a teacher's perspective, the process and discussion were as interesting as the presentations themselves. We watched as students tried to make sense of the information they gathered. In the fashion industry, they found that America had a big influence, maybe even the market share, as we noted the first day when students sported such brands as Billabong and Hollister. This group asked questions about why those surveyed thought American products were popular and responders answered that both quality and cost were factors. This prompted a question from another student, "How can we call these American products when everything is made in China?" When the Geography and Language group presented, students were surprised that many people interviewed thought the capital of the US was New York or they didn't know where the Statue of Liberty is, especially when the group reported that an Asian girl knew all of the answers. "Why did the Polish people not know the answer, but the Chinese girl did? Who were you asking?" Everyone in the room knew the answers to those questions and they couldn't believe that people one or two generations older did not. Upon probing the information gathered, students found that most of the people who did not know the answer to these questions were of the 30-40 demographic, those educated under a different system.

The final projects were mixed, and on the last day many students were absent for a planned field trip to play paintball. The school does not have a gym, so students have to accumulate a number of hours of action outside of school. When it was time for the stereotype group to go, a lone young man had to give the presentation by himself, and neither America nor Poland were spared negative stereotypes. I will not say the conclusions here, only that one student speculated that the reason Americans are often seen as ignorant, is because there are so many examples on YouTube showing Americans who cannot find Slovakia on a map, or who struggle with other such geography questions. Both media and food categories showed that Polish people and others on the street were knowledgeable about and big consumers of these products. McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken were favorites, and students said that these are tasty foods, they know the menu ahead of time, and there are always clean bathrooms. At the end of the survey we ate a second breakfast at McDonald's to warm up, and because it was also the only place that had room for all of us. The media group with a great leader Iwona Sroka was really impressive. Their questions included pictures of celebrities and television shows, and were so probing that we could see that Polish people watch American television shows and movies, often preferring them to Polish programs. A favorite show was "Dr. House" with all generations. One student concisely revealed the

mindset of her peers, “We appreciate our own culture, but we want to live in American culture, too.”

Some of the differences I mention here between our systems, schools, or teaching styles are meant to be only that—differences. These are areas which teachers from the US would most likely notice, and there are differences which cause me to reflect on my own teaching practices. They are not meant to present an ethnocentric view of teaching or value one style over another, but rather be informative to those who may follow in our footsteps. Denise in particular marveled that it was so easy to get permission to leave the school. In her school it takes months to plan a field trip, and a nurse must accompany them. I do understand the legal reasons for these procedures, but I also think that, in America, learning opportunities are lost because there are so many hurdles to overcome to take students for enrichment. I was also interested to see teachers read students’ grades out loud, often commenting on their performance. Students are scored on a 1-6 scale (in gymnasium and pre-IB class; and 1-7 scale in IB classes) one being elementary through six excellent. Describing the lowest level as elementary focuses the performance on being too basic. Unlike in most American schools where teachers stay in the same classroom, students and teachers moved classrooms.



Photo 1. Asaad - Students from the pre-IB class perform their street surveys

Listening to and Teaching Students and Faculty

Part of our responsibility as TEAs was to teach both students and teachers. In geography class we taught about our regions and schools; in English language classes we helped students practice their English-speaking skills. A few students wrote to us that having us brought the United States into the classroom, and was a good challenge for them because they did not know where the conversation would

take them, unlike when they discuss a lesson for which they had planned. After meeting with one class, students were abuzz about our visit. They were excited that we did not correct their English, and they told other students so. I had not even considered that such a small thing would mean so much. If we correct how people speak, then are we really listening to what they are saying? If we correct how people speak, how willing will they be to speak to us, to share themselves with us?

In planning for our teacher training, Anna thought that our experience with the Socratic method would be most beneficial to her school. The only time to have the seminar when the staff could all come was after school, on their own time. Anna's school serves about 100 students, so we made packets for fifteen teachers, hoping for a good turnout. As we modeled and explained the Socratic seminar, teachers participated with intelligence and made sure they were clear on procedural issues at the same time. Our selected text was The Declaration of Independence because Anna had asked us to teach about the United States, it is a short text, and it has some challenging diction. Teachers discussed the nature of freedom, and related its ideals to their own country. When we asked if a modern reader would change any of the following words, all, men, created, or equal, one teacher even said, "It is not bad; I wouldn't change anything." It was a seminar where our participants moved between role of student and teacher, at times simultaneously, as they responded to questions and then asked their own so they could duplicate the procedure. Since we had observed classes, we could adapt our presentation for their needs—that is until we met the Physics teacher who has a class of two students. He participated in the seminar so well, but during the reflection on how he would use it in his class, he started laughing, saying "If I try to have an inside and outside circle, I would only be talking to one student." Still, all of our packets were taken, teachers stayed well past the allotted time to ask questions, and we learned that teachers were willing to participate in staff development even though they were staying after school on their own time.

To connect Poland and the Polish school with my students back in North Carolina, I created a blog entitled "The Daly Chronicles." Students emailed and let me know what they were thinking, and encouraged me to write. We were also able to connect my classes with Anna's through Skype. We had a few technical difficulties: one side could hear, the other received messages through print, yet a conversation blossomed. Students introduced themselves and asked cultural questions of one another. The highlight had to be when the Polish students sang "Happy Birthday" to one of my students to celebrate her eighteenth. Sitting next to the students who had been so kind to us, and looking at the faces of the people I missed from home, I felt like I had a foot in two worlds.



Photo 2. Magda, the IB Psychology teacher, asks questions about the Socratic method of Denise and I while the IB coordinator, Joanna looks on

Taking the Best from Both

Looking at the strengths of the IB program at these two Polish schools and the American public school in which I teach, I can see strengths in both systems and ways that both could benefit from future contact. The following characteristics of each system were gathered from comments that students and teachers made as well as our observations while visiting. The Polish IB schools showed a high language proficiency, staff that are required to have a Master's degree to teach, a commitment to core knowledge, a process to guide students to original research through their extended essay, a thriving Cominus project, an international school with students who have traveled extensively, and in Anna, a TEA alumna and Fulbright scholar with experience in grant writing. It is a system where the intellectually curious can explore, although like in our system, not all students take advantage of the opportunities offered. The North Carolina system offers opportunities for staff development at the state and local level, in teacher retreats at the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCATs) and continuing education, especially in technology. Creative and student-centered approaches are a part of the curriculum, as are hands-on methods and project-based approaches. Ethnic and racial diversity and equality are present and valued.

Teachers from Poland thought that developing in the following areas would enhance their students' learning: teacher staff development, implementing creative projects, and using new methods centered on sound pedagogy. In the American system, students at all levels would especially benefit from exposure to other cultures, to see a world beyond their own experiences; I believe they would aim

higher and reach further. They would also benefit through their encounter with another form of rigor. One of the IB teachers said it best, “I would like to see us take your fun and hands-on methods and combine them with our knowledge.”

There are many discoveries because of this experience, hoped for and unexpected, professional and personal. Walking on the consecrated ground of Auschwitz and Birkenau, Nazi concentration camps during WWII, reaffirmed my commitment to human rights, to exposing students to literature that speaks to the dignity of every human being. I learned that the mountains of Zakopane are a healing place, and that Krakow is a treasure of Europe, having been hidden behind the iron curtain, ready to be discovered again. I would highly recommend it as a travel destination; not only is it historically and artistically engaging, it is also safe. We saw many people, including women alone, walking after dark in the many blocks surrounding the main square. When I expressed what my hopes were for this exchange in my IREX application, I wrote that I wished for, “an authentic relationship with a trusted colleague. The teacher connection should be the catalyst to connecting communities.” I found two such amazing relationships, with Denise Ghiloni and Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska. Most of all, I found generous, curious people; my cup overflows.

Limits of this Exchange

Two weeks is not enough time to view a whole system, but even two weeks is challenging to be away from our own classes during the school year. As guests, we were able to plan, execute, and derive conclusions as we created lessons, although we were often invited to observe classes for which we did not participate in the lesson planning. What we saw in those cases were teaching methods, student-teacher interactions, and a slice of the curriculum. We were also fortunate to be guests of two schools, both private schools in one of the larger cities in Poland. We do not see these experiences as an end, but rather as a foundation for future partnership.

Directing the Energy

Students already have energy within. We are creating sister classes in Krakow, Boston, and Goldsboro, North Carolina. We teachers have planned together, taught together, edited this book together, and reflected together. We plan to stay connected through skype, class projects, grant writing programs, and the shared passion to provide real learning experiences for our students. We know how much energy was created when we put American teachers with Polish teachers and

students. Our next goal is even more exciting—to place international students together with purpose. Our students are our target audience, not the target. The target is connectivity and the learning that comes from it. From these experiences which will inform their perspectives, enhance their cultural awareness, hone their communication and interpersonal skills, test their beliefs, and feed their creativity and intellectual curiosity, we look forward to seeing how students go out into the world and create momentum of their own.

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**EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION FOR SELECTED TEA
FELLOWS' COUNTRIES**

The System of Education and School Reality in Armenia

Varduhi Grigoryan

"Quantum" college, Yerevan, Armenia.

varduhigr@yahoo.com

Abstract

Education has always been considered to be one of the most important parts of an Armenians' life, as Armenia is a country which has a 1600-year old history of literacy. From the very beginning, school has been the basis of the nation's political and cultural survival and the incentive for national progress.

Today's educational system was first established during the first republic of Armenia (1918-1920) which later on was somehow changed and reorganized by the Soviet Union's regulations and adopted the features typical of all countries who were under the influence of the Soviet Union and its educational system. Today the system that we have is different from what it used to be. We have been an independent country since 1991 and, as a result, our Ministry of Education and Science has been trying to make reforms to make the system a very good one. We have joined the Bologna process and we are making changes to meet its demands.

In May 2000, a government decree approved national standards for general education, to standardize and control the education quality in Armenian schools. The "National Plan for Education Development 2001 – 2005" was approved by the parliament in June 2001; its main goal is to ensure progressive education development, for it is the decisive factor supporting statehood and the socio-economic development of the nation.

Presently, the "National Plan for Education Development 2011-2015" is in the parliament and is expected to be accepted by December, 2010. As a result of this preparation, many changes are planned in all spheres of the educational system, beginning with teaching methods (making them more student-centered), having special and regular training for teachers and principals of the schools, having a new system of assessment, and creating new regulations on the final exams and entrance exams, etc. In addition, a series of legal norms and policies have been adopted, which will regulate legal issues. Nevertheless, the adoption of laws during recent years has not ensured a smooth development of the education system. The inadequate enforcement of laws and regulations, the absence of a real operating mechanisms for justified protection for those involved in education, as well as financial, institutional and human resources, and content issues that are seeking resolution, hinder the natural development of the education network.

The Structure of the Education System

The education network includes:

- the complex of different level and orientation education programmers that ensure education continuity in compliance to the national standards,
- the network of different types of education institutions that implement the above programmers,
- the education management system including all the institutions and enterprises under the umbrella of the managing agency.

The fundamental components of the Armenian educational system consist of:

- preschool education for children three to six years,
- general secondary education comprising the primary school (grades one to three),
- middle or basic school (for grades three to nine)
- high school (grades 10-12);
- specialized, vocational and higher education; teacher training and retraining institutions.

The graduates of basic and high school have the right to continue their education in vocational or higher education institutions. In addition, there are also non-state sector education institutions: schools, colleges and universities, which not only ensure the existence of the market of education services in the education system, but also bring a substantial contribution into the development of the education system.

General Education

General education now experiences ongoing reforms, which involves all the aspects of the sphere: the structure, content, management, finance, etc. All available funds – both the budget and out of budget facilities (All Armenian Foundation “Hayastan”, Social Investment Fund of Armenia) and the projects of several international and national organizations are directed to these reforms.

Within the general reform implementation the World Bank Credit funded “Education Finance and Management Reform” project is highly prioritized. It was implemented all through 1997–2002 and had two main directions in strategy:

- Content – targeted to the improvement of the general education content development and compliance to the current needs of the society. It includes curriculum revision by disciplines, textbook publishing and distribution, textbook provision to all the students, etc,

- Structural – targeted to the decentralization issues of education management and increase in institution autonomy. This includes the introduction of new mechanisms in general education finance and management, the revision of the organizational and legal status of the institutions, the top management performance quality increase, etc.

Today, the World Bank finances several ongoing projects which are meant to make instructional technology usage in class more common and also try to bring innovation to the library systems, to the timetable formation programs. It also announces special tenders the winners of which create electronic learning materials for different subjects and then spreads these materials in all public schools of Armenia.

The Government (through the Ministry of Education and Science) organizes teacher training programs for instructional technology use in class; there are other professional development workshops, which are organized by the National Institute of Education. Many foreign specialists in different spheres are invited to Armenia every year to facilitate the process of going from the old system into a new smoother, more efficient one.

Activities Planned for General Education Development

In order to revise the structure and the content of general secondary education considering the length of education at each level, and ensure the transfer to 12 years, Armenian educators plan to:

- Revise and practice the new criteria for education and curriculum,
- Revise the subject syllabus from the aspect of developing logic, critical thinking, analytical thinking, efficient communication skills, logical and critical capacity, and the capability of learning individually in the students.

The revision of subject syllabus will include three main directions in strategy:

- the application of new teaching methodologies in the teaching process,
- the development and application of the teaching process and a new student knowledge assessment system,
- the application of communication technologies in the teaching process by and large as a contemporary means of organizing education,
- developing an independent public system for education quality assessment that does not depend on education management authorities,
- equip the education institutions by contemporary information and communication technologies,

- and conduct a complex training of the teaching staff that includes new teaching methodologies, utilization of information/communication technologies in teaching process.

The World Bank financed a second Loan project called “Education Quality and Compliance” which will target funds to achieve the above objectives.

Higher Education

Today one of the most important parts of the educational system is higher education and the institutions providing that education. There are several state and numerous private institutions which from now on have to pass a special accreditation process to have the right to give a diploma to the students.

Higher and postgraduate professional education is performed through three degrees: there are programs for a Bachelor degree, a certified specialist degree, and a master's degree in both state and non-state education institutions, delivered in face – to – face and distant education forms, for paid and non-paid students. At post graduate courses, there are masters and doctors' courses. The aim of higher education is to train and retrain highly qualified specialists, and to satisfy the individual's professional development demands.

The reforms in higher and postgraduate professional education include the education structure, content and management. The results of the reforms' three level programs were introduced in three universities in the Republic, with bachelor, masters and postgraduate programs.

New professions in the higher education are introduced; extension programs are added to the basic humanities (“rights,” “applied economy” and other alternative mandatory humanities are introduced); education is becoming more humanistic; universities are receiving more autonomy in management and finance. The Government has approved the standards for higher professional education. Private universities are regulated by the enforcement of licensing and accreditation procedures approved by the Government, which promotes competition in the sphere of higher education.

Activities Planned for Professional Education Development

The plan for the professional education area is to create a permanent monitoring system for specialists of diverse qualifications that will be based on international experience. It is also planned to create an efficient system of assistance for graduates' employment, including an aimed contracting system, developing the

capacity for alternative job selection, as well as the capacity for individual orientation toward starting a private job.

In the row of strategy directions in professional education development a special weight is given to the strengthening and renovating of infrastructure and capacity building. There is a need for ensuring primary and secondary professional progressive development, because in the current stage the demand for primary and middle range professional specialists in the industry is increasing in the economy. The education content in the training program for middle professional education should be radically renovated and the quality of the specialists should be improved; this specialist qualification should meet the international standards; the primary and middle professional education institutions should get decidedly reshaped and the needs of the local labor market should be considered. The professional education management system needs a serious reform. Quality changes should take place in all the levels of professional education process and development, in the area of transactions between the counties and the center.

For achieving new quality in professional education the following is envisaged:

- resolve the problems in professional education: ensure participation of employers and other social partners in resolving the basic issues in professional education which are: the development of education criteria in compliance with contemporary needs; designing the demand for training professionals; training specialists on a contractual basis and human resource policy implementation on the local level,
- fundamentally improve the professional institutions' technical capacity,
- increase the status/ reputation of the higher education institutions as the best producer of high quality professionals, as the decisive factor for development of public productive capacity and as the permanent renovating agency for professional education,
- provide public assistance to the leading scientific and creative schools, by defining the regulation and manners of providing such assistance,
- design conditions for the specialists' permanent professional development; ensure continuity between different levels of professional education; develop efficient system for the additional professional education that would ensure psychological assistance to the population during the changes in activity styles or in case of promotion in their careers,
- centralize the training for resigned or unemployed people on competitive basis in the primary and middle education institutions based on the employment center reports.

New management and economic mechanisms are needed for ensuring education management and finance, and the important elements of these mechanisms are:

- to ensure increase the financial operation efficiency of the education institutions, ensure the transparency of the education institutions financial activities and increase their financial responsibility,
- to create conditions that would make the attracting of additional funds for the education institutions possible,
- to ensure tax exemption for the network,
- increase the level of additional paid education services on the background of education institutions,
- Create cultural, education and production and health centers having the education institution as a background (especially in the rural areas).

Education System Management

The education system management is performed on three levels.

RA Ministry of Education and Science develops the education development plan and the state education standards and controls their implementation; ensures the development and publication of general education curriculum and subject syllabi, provides textbooks and handbooks; provides state license and accreditation to education institutions; develops model charters for the state education institutions; approves the accreditation procedures for the pedagogical and managing staff in the education institutions; develops the list of specialization in universities; develops the state order state paid places for general, middle professional and higher professional education; approves the entrance examination guidelines and controls their implementation in state and licensed private middle and higher educational institutions; approves the procedures of student knowledge assessment as they transition from one level of education to the others; approves the honorary degrees and titles granted by the scientific councils of the licensed higher education institutions; develops the models of state graduation documentation at all the graduation levels; defines the guidelines for defining adequacy and acknowledgement of the foreign education graduation documentation; ensures the creation of development plans for the state education institutions and their implementation and supervision; and gives its consent for the appointment and resignation of the Marz and community education department heads. The district and community administration of education is implemented by the local self-governing bodies in the face of the Marz education departments. The assignment and resignation of their managers is agreed with the Ministry. These authorities ensure the enforcement of state education policy in Marz or community; they keep registers for pre-school and school age children and ensure their enrollment in education institutions. Besides, the Marz education

departments are responsible for the construction of educational institution buildings and facilities, their utilization, and maintenance. The imperfection of the laws and regulations enforcement, some by complete absence, others by delays in laws and regulations implementation, as well as contradictions in the legal area hinder the complete implementation of education policy.

The absence of operational links between the central government, regional administration and local government is also an imperfect consequence in education legislation. The education institutions function under the umbrellas of different authorities, but there are still some unclear definitions of responsibilities. The absence of norms and regulations that would ensure management coordination creates serious difficulties for education administration agencies. Uncertainties arise when the different executive agencies adopt regulations contradicting to each other.

Adequate management skills are missing almost in all the levels of education management. The self-management mechanisms in education institutions are also very weak. The lack of competition between individual institutions creates obstacles in development of real autonomy. Because of the imperfection of an adequate supervising system, the real basis for autonomy cannot be established. Community involvement in education management and the democratization process of the education system is very slow.

Main Issues in the Basic Education

The Armenian people had achieved a high level of education during the Soviet period. The communist regime achieved a high level of access to and equity in education. Enrolment in basic education from age seven to fifteen was universal. There was broad equality between the genders in terms of access to different levels of education. The education was free and its financing was centralized. The quality of education, according to the international and national surveys, was high.

During the last 10 years, Armenia, with its 1500-year-old history of education, faced a problem of developing a national school system which will meet the needs of society. Having limited natural resources, Armenia can have considerable achievements only by developing the scientific sphere. With this aim in view, education acquires a special significance. The educational system of Armenia includes pre-school, general secondary, special secondary, vocational (professional-technical), higher and post-graduate education. Secondary education consists of 3 levels: Elementary school (first-third grades), basic school (fourth-ninth grades), and high school (tenth-twelfth grades). There are 1,418 secondary schools, about 50 private schools, serving 606,000 registered students. According to the Constitution of Armenia the secondary education is compulsory and free of charge.

Access, quality, equity and funding are the central issues for reform. The essential trends in Armenian educational reform, from the above mentioned perspectives are the following:

- The democratization of the educational system,
- The training of new educators and re-training of currently employed teachers,
- The preparation of textbooks with reformed content and an increase in their supply,
- Increasing parental and community participation in school government and financing,
- Encouraging the development of pre-school institutions,
- The repair and provision of schools in accordance with the international standards.

Conclusion

The approach and the role of the Armenian government in educational reform are its response to globalization. The country is trying to adjust its educational system to the New World economic conditions and allocate local resources effectively. From presented projects it is clear that these adjustments differ greatly from World Bank and UN recommendations. Since the government does not have enough funds to allocate in education without the help of supranational bodies there is the jeopardy to lose the system as a whole. So this reform is finance-driven reform, and it has emerged under external and internal pressures. The process of reformation is in the first phase of evolution. We are just adopting successful educational reforms and are trying to implement them from top to bottom. All the educational changes are directed to improve the efficiency without disturbing the basic organizational structure. The high level of unemployment, severe polarization of the society, and scarcity of funding for educational institutions all create lack of interest among the parents and community to educational problems. Thus, parent and community involvement in the reform is low. The teachers and administrators are not always supporting the educational change as the implementation of new programs is socially complex and requires special training. From force of habit in many levels there is still an attempt to implement new programs in the declarative form. So many projects are more formal than functional.

Hence Armenia is going through the ‘globalization reforms’ as many countries of Latin America and Africa did in 1980s and 1990s. To be successful, we have to analyze carefully the processes of reformation in these countries and apply its lessons to the social reality of Armenia.

System of Education and School Reality in El Salvador

Oscar Erick Fuentes Prudencio

Centro Cultural Salvadoreño Americano Secondary School
San Miguel, El Salvador
efuentes2983@hotmail.com

Abstract

The following article is about *The System of Education and School Reality* in El Salvador, including school policy, how the education is divided by cycles, and the type of high schools in the country. In addition, it will describe the rules established in the schools and how important the students' appearance is, talking about their uniforms, hair, piercings and even makeup on girls.

Key issues:

- Salvadoran schools have strict rules in the physical aspect of the student,
- Shirts must be tucked inside of the pants or skirts,
- All Salvadorans seniors have to be prepared to take a very difficult test called P.A.E.S,
- Nine years of Basic Education is divided in three cycles of three grades each.

Introduction

El Salvador - Preprimary Education

The educational system begins with preschool or "kindergarten," most of which are located in cities rather than rural areas. The children, ranging in age from five to six years old, receive instruction for two years, three hours per day, and five days per week. Most of these schools are under government supervision, although there are private preschools.

El Salvador - Secondary Education

Secondary education lasts for three years. Of children in this age group, only twenty-one percent were enrolled in secondary schools in 1996. The curriculum at the secondary level was developed by the government to be uniform throughout the country. The provision of the secondary level suffers from the same rural-urban dichotomy as the public school system.



Photo 1. Earth Day Celebration



Photo 2. Celebration of the Independence Day in the United States

El Salvador - Higher Education

There are three public and twelve private universities in the country. The most important universities are the University of El Salvador (UES) authorized in 1984, and the Central America University (UCA) in San Salvador. After the war, the participation of women became very significant. In 1993, some 77,369 students were enrolled at universities and other higher-level institutions, approximately 51 percent of eligible students.

In El Salvador, there are different types of school policies, schedules, and ways to educate students. They are different from the U.S. and even different within El Salvador itself. The classes start the second week of January or the beginning of February and finish between October and November. The most common schedule in the country is to begin school around 7:00 a.m. and end about 12:30 p.m. But

some schools have schedules like American schools, getting out between 2:30 and 3:00 p.m. Also, in El Salvador, all the grades are in the same school building. That means we do not need to be switching every four years of school.

Public schools in El Salvador are really poor and the majority of them are in the countryside. Students do not have to pay any tuition, but they have to acquire their own uniforms, supplies, and transportation. The public school buildings are small. The classrooms often do not have enough materials to support all the students who are attending and the classes are overpopulated. Many schools do not provide food for the students. But, starting this year, the government has included a new program to help public school students by giving them two uniforms and a pair of shoes, also in some schools children are given food.

There are many kinds of private schools from the cheapest ones to the most expensive. For example, the expensive ones are bilingual. They are located in the capital of El Salvador, and in other important cities of the country. There are schools that teach in French, German, or English beginning when the students are in kindergarten.

The ones that teach in German or French also teach English as a subject. As in public schools, English is taught beginning in kindergarten. The private schools have the same schedules as the U.S. They begin their school year in September and they finish in June. The most expensive schools cost approximately \$2,000 per year, with parents paying \$250 monthly. To sign up in the school at the beginning of the year costs approximately \$3,000. The medium priced schools cost around \$50 to \$90 monthly, with a cost of \$700 to get into the school. People who own these schools are usually rich people, whose business is running such schools. But they have to be approved by The Minister of Education. The cheapest schools are usually the religious ones. Those cost around \$20 to \$50 monthly.

Salvadoran schools have some strict rules in the physical aspect of the student. For example, boys cannot have long hair, wear body piercings, or have tattoos. Girls cannot wear mini-skirts or makeup. No hats are allowed and they can only wear black shoes. Couples can be suspended for holding hands or kissing. Their uniforms have to be perfectly clean with no wrinkles, and shirts must be tucked inside of the pants or skirts. Talking about classrooms rules, students cannot eat in the classrooms, they are not allowed to go to the restrooms more than twice during a class. They cannot write on their desks or on the classroom walls. If students are very late to the school, they have to go to the principal's office and show a letter signed by the parents, asking for permission or even given reasons why they are late.

Not all the schools are the same in the country; they vary in schedules, teaching styles, rules and the number of school subjects taught. All Salvadorans seniors have

to be prepared to take a very difficult test called P.A.E.S (Prueba de Aptitudes para Egresados de Educación Media). It is a national test, which covers what the students have learned since they begun to study, including science, social studies, math, and language. It's a very difficult test that lasts for four hours. The students do not have to pass it, but some universities require it. Before taking the test, the students receive preparation in the subjects and do reviews for what is coming in the test. The test is not easy for seniors, especially for students who are not really prepared. That's because some of the schools from which they are graduating, especially the public ones where the education is not really as advanced as the private ones, do not cover all the material that is supposed to be part of the test. But with that test, the students can see how well prepared they are to get out into a real life. For those students who get a high score in the test, scholarships are offered to study a complete career in a University.

Educational System

- One or two years of preschool (called kinder, short for kindergarten),
- Nine years of Basic Education divided in three cycles of three grades each:
 - 1st Cycle: from first to third grades,
 - 2nd Cycle: from fourth to sixth grades,
 - 3rd Cycle: from seventh to ninth grades, which is a transition time between primary and secondary education/high school.
- Two or an optional three year technical program of Middle Education: Two years of General Bachelor's Degree (High School Degree) or an optional Three year Technical Bachelor's Degree (Technical High School Degree) For example: Accountancy, Computer Science, Secretary Degree, etc.,
- Five years minimum of university.

However, the national educational system is not the only one available. Pre-university education is not free. The State provides public education, for which a fee is paid if the person paying can afford it and only one payment per family is made (siblings pay only one fee).

The University of El Salvador, the public university, is located in three cities in the whole country, one is in the capital, and the others are in Santa Ana and in San Miguel, which are the two most important cities in the country. There are twenty-three public and private universities in the whole country.

Even though it might seem that the system of education in El Salvador lacks of many resources to make learning easier to students, it has been improving over the years.

Conclusion

As in any other country, El Salvador has plenty of aspects to improve in matter of education. In spite of the lack of the resources, we need to fulfill the standards of global education, so that our students are outstanding professionals in their areas.

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A Few Words about TSU G.Chilashvili Gurjaani

Nana Tatiashvili

G.Chilashvili Author`s School, Georgia

nanatatiashvili@yahoo.com

I have been teaching English since 1991, at G. Chilashvili Public school No 4. TSU G.Chilashvili Gurjaani gymnasium was established by Dr. Otar Chilashvili (he was the lecturer of physics in Tbilisi State University) in 1990 on the base of this university. Many lecturers visited 4 times a week and gave lessons in many subjects with local teachers. Since then our school has become the most popular educational centre not only in our district but also in whole region and Georgia with high level of studying. It was quite different from other schools in many ways. Our school began teaching IT from the 5th grade which was not even in Tbilisi schools IT was taught only un some schools in Tbilisi and Kutaisi in 10th and 11th grade. Besides, grading system was different as well. Grading scale was 1-10. At the end of December (5 or 6) it depends on staff meeting decision. The students for school were selected according to the test results and teachers also had tests, so almost all students were motivated and aspirated to study hard. The popularity of our school also defined the learning of foreign languages. Gymnasium was the first school which began teaching English language. Besides, English, German, French and Russian languages are taught at our school. We have many successful students in every sphere and it's because of hard work and of Mr. Otar Chilashvili who has a great experience of work and life. He is always innovative and likes changes. He was at Oxford University in 1967 and worked on scientific work in physics. In 2001 was invited and visited the USA and American education and school.

Good management and environment in which one works might definitely help the school to achieve goals and be successful. That's why we respect and love our principal Dr. Otar Chilashvili who supported of establishing our school.

System of Education and School Reality in Peru

Efraín Dávila Salazar

San Jose Obrero School Marianists, Trujillo, Peru
El Cultural centro Peruano Americano, Trujillo, Peru
davilaefrainpe@hotmail.com

Abstract

After being invited by Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska to take part in the production of an article for the TEA book, lots of excitement and enthusiasm were experienced inside me. The objective of this article is to write about the main features of the system of education in Peru and mainly about San Jose Obrero, which is my school reality. The article presents the information in the following steps. To begin with, it offers a general introduction about education in Peru with the levels of education each student receives and presents the differences between public and private schools. Besides, it leads its attention to San Jose Obrero school reality by presenting the mission of the school, main features and what makes it different from other schools. In addition, it determines and describes the two buildings of the school: The Annexe and the main building. Furthermore, it displays a description of the different subjects with the activities that take place at San Jose Obrero School. Moreover, it focuses on the main activities that are developed in English classes at the School. Photos are used to depict the school reality and infrastructure. This will allow for more consideration of English teachers around the world and may direct future cooperation and interaction among the international instructors.

Introduction

According to the Constitution, education is compulsory and free in public schools for the initial, primary and secondary levels. The Peruvian system of public education provides three distinct levels of instruction: Initial - Three years (ages 3-5), Primary - Six years (ages 6 to 11) and secondary - Five years (ages 12 – 16). Many students who wish to continue their studies after high school must first attend an “academia” in order to prepare themselves for university studies. Education is also free in public universities for students who are unable to pay tuition and have an adequate academic performance. Education is imparted in Spanish. However, students learn English as a foreign language in the secondary level in public schools. The Ministry of Education of Peru which is based in Lima

looks after the education curricula. It decides on the content of the text books of the schools. Teachers are given great respect in Peru. A profession in teaching is looked at with much respect. College professors are more esteemed in Peru. Higher education is given much importance and people pursuing a post-graduate degree get better job opportunities in Peru.

In the Southern Hemisphere, the seasons are reversed. The academic year in Peru begins in March and ends in December. The summer months in Peru are January, February and March.

However, there are also private schools in Peru. They are financed in the following ways, depending on the promoting organization: fees are their principal source of funds. Therefore, the quality of schools varies according to the network it belongs to, so a private school provides a better quality of education. Despite being subject to national norms and common curricula, the private school enjoys a great deal of freedom. The best schools in the country are found in the private network, some of which administer an education linked to other countries such as the United States, Great Britain, Italy, Germany, China, etc. and others run by religious congregations. In addition, there are also many smaller education centers of a less clear quality. Some have focused on university preparation, that way becoming “academies” (institutions that prepare for university admission exams). Among the private schools the so called “alternative schools”, born with a zeal for renewal within a modern pedagogic perspective.

San Jose Obrero is a private Catholic school, which is run by the Marianist Congregation. “Mary, Mother and Teacher of the Church, accompanied her Son as he grew in wisdom and grace; from its earliest days, she has accompanied the Church in its mission of salvation.”

Besides, it is a Catholic School in the Marianist tradition, prepares young men, its emphasis on formation in faith, and its dedication to community service and justice. “Our mission is to form men in faith. In particular, we try to encourage and prepare apostles, and bring about communities of committed lay people. "In a diverse family environment, the school fosters development in faith, character, academics, athletics and the arts. This Marianist community is dedicated to developing responsible young men who are prepared to live as contributing and successful members of society who witness Jesus Christ to the world. The school has 1070 students and 63 teachers in the elementary and secondary level.

San Jose Obrero is a large, beautiful school which has two buildings. The first building is called “The Annexe” and students from 1st to 4th grade of the elementary school, who are aged between six to nine years old, attend this place. Pupils have nine subjects such as Maths, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Communication (Spanish), Religion, Computers, English, Physical Education and

Tutory. There are three classrooms for each grade and each classroom is composed by thirty-five students. The annexe has a computer lab, soccer and basketball fields, green areas and some recreational games for the children. First grade students are used to see different teachers since each subject is taught by a different teacher.



Photo 1. Students of San Jose Obrero singing the National Anthem. Every Monday students, teachers and authorities of the school get together at 7:30 am and honor our national symbols



Photo 2. Mr. Efraín Dávila with his secondary students of 1st grade of the intermediate level A

“There are several mutually related characteristics which are recognized in all Marianist schools around the world. They can be summarized as three traits: family spirit, respect for the personality of the child, and a prudent discernment open to the adaptations required by changing times and surroundings.” For example, at San Jose Obrero school students are surrounded by a friendly, familiar and religious environment because the school tries to promote not only the teaching of

knowledge, but also in forming values such as respect, solidarity, responsibility and honesty.

Regarding to the English classes, each class has thirty-five students and there is only one English teacher in charge of the whole class, making it difficult for teachers to work with this number of students. However, students at this age are taught nine hours of English a week and learn English as a Foreign Language. Teachers do their best to prepare learners to successfully pass the British Exams from the University of Cambridge such as Movers and Flyers, which are for children between the ages of 6 to 9. Most of the classrooms are equipped with a computer, multimedia projector and limited access to the internet. In addition, teachers use flashcards, posters and music to make learning more appealing. The area of English organizes an important activity called “English speech”, in which students during the first phase develop a composition with the supervision, guidance and help of the English teacher. Topics are chosen according to students’ ages and interests. Teachers provide learners with the different techniques, theory and tips in order to produce written texts. Then they develop a Power Point Presentation by using this technology with the aim of making their oral speeches in front of their classmates. This is a challenging activity for kids, but it is very rewarding to see them giving their speeches. Students at this age develop different skills and abilities in the target language. In addition, teachers of other subjects also develop different activities and contests in dancing, Mathematics, and speeches in Spanish. These subjects are taught in Spanish and students are motivated to be proud of Peru and develop typical cultural dances and arts. Pupils are motivated to develop their national identity and patriotism from a very early age.

Regarding to the main building, this place embraces students from 5th to 6th grades (aged between 10 to 11) of the elementary level and students from 1st to 5th grades (aged between 12 to 16) of the Secondary level. This school is much bigger than the first school because there are three classrooms per grade. Most classrooms are equipped with a computer, multimedia projector and limited access to the internet. In addition, there is a smart board at the library and two multimedia classrooms that can be used by teachers from different subjects.

Besides, the school has a beautiful and big coliseum, two large soccer fields, two basketball fields and green areas. The infrastructure of the school is quite modern.

Focusing on the students from 5th to 6th grades of the elementary level, students take 11 mandatory subjects such as Social Sciences, Communication (Spanish), Mathematics, Religion, Computers, Natural Sciences, Physical Education, Tutoring and Arts, which is the only subject that enables students to choose among the following workshops: Dancing, Music and Drama. In regard to the English classes, students are classified at the very beginning of the academic

year according to their proficiency in the target language. Students are classified in two levels: Intermediate and Advanced. British books are used to teach English as a foreign language according to the European Framework. Students receive 7 hours of English a week. Of the three classrooms for sixth grade, students are classified in four groups, in which there are 25 students in each group, and one English teacher is assigned to one group. On the other hand, for students of the Intermediate level, Kid Box books are used, which enable students to develop input and output skills. However, 6th grade students of the Advanced level are taught English with the book Objective KET, which prepares them to take the KET exam from the University of Cambridge. This book provides them with the tools and knowledge to succeed in passing the exam of the European Framework. I am personally in charge of this advanced class and have achieved successful results with my pupils' KET exams, for example, this year students of this level were exposed to a Mock-Up exam, which is a practice test that students do before the official one, provided by the testers of Cambridge. From 29 students of my sixth graders, 18 students achieved outstanding results. English teachers work with the Communicative approach and task Based Learning activities in order to provide a more effective and meaningful teaching, so pupils can internalize the target language and use it in order to apply what they have learnt. Students learn English as a Foreign Language.

In the secondary level, students receive training from 1st to 5th grade of high school. They have different subjects such as Social Sciences, Communication (Spanish), Mathematics, Religion, Computers, Natural Sciences, Tutoring, Physical Education and Arts, which is the only subject that enables students to choose among the following workshops: Dancing, Music and Drama.

Students from 1st grade to 4th grade of high school are taught using the Energy book, which is a British book; however, this book will be changed next year because of the need to find one which can make the students' learning more efficiently and meaningfully. Regarding the advanced level, students from 1st to 3rd grade of high school from the advanced level are taught using a British book called New Opportunities to prepare learners to achieve the training, to succeed on the PET exam.

Students from 4th grade from the advanced level are trained to take the PET exam. English teachers prepare them to succeed at this test. Pupils from 5th grade of the advanced level are trained to take the First Certificate Exam. It is important to mention that students from the two buildings receive the training and preparation to succeed on the Cambridge exams of the European Framework. They are given a Mock-up exam to determine the strongest candidates, who can take the exam on November 26th and 27th. Once the results have been examined

the strongest students are invited to take the Cambridge exam and parents are sent a letter informing them of the results of the exam, so parents have to decide if they want to pay the fee for the registration. It is not compulsory for these students to take the exam because that depends on their parents' capacity to afford the fee of the exam, but they were given the training and preparation to pass the Proficiency test at San Jose Obrero school.

“Learning does not take place in a vacuum. Knowledge and understanding matures through the interaction that takes place among students and between teachers and students.”

It is a fact that the social environment is crucial for learning and he admits that it is produced thanks to the interaction between other subjects and the teacher which are really important for social construction of knowledge. One important activity that takes place in the area of English for both intermediate and advanced students is the English Speech Contest. Students from both levels are motivated to become involved in this activity and it is part of the evaluation. In the first phase students are invited to develop an essay taking into consideration the following topics: Pollution, environment, discrimination, etc. Students have to produce the essay in class with the guidance and help of English teachers. Teachers have to monitor students in order to encourage them to develop their essay. Once the essay is complete and graded by the teacher, students are invited to prepare themselves for the second part of the contest, which involves the oral presentation of their essay by making a Power Point Presentation. All of them do their best and prepare themselves to present their speeches. It is really interesting and rewarding.

“Marianist education tends to develop the whole person, leading students to the acquisition of human knowledge, helping them develop critical thinking and encouraging their desire for truth both in theory and in action." Therefore, knowledge is the result of the interaction between an active subject and a topic of knowledge, considering learning as an active process of construction in which the learner and the object relate to each other.

To sum up, San Jose Obrero is a Catholic school which focuses on developing responsible young men who are prepared to live as contributing and successful members of society. It is a school which offers a good quality of education. This can be proved by the results throughout the years. Many former students have become professionals and play important roles in the community. Finally, the school has a modern and comfortable infrastructure equipped with technological tools which allows teachers to develop a more meaningful, active and cooperative learning with the Marianist charisma.

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School System of Education in India

Rita Banerjee

Carmel High School, Kolkata, India

rbredpanda@quepasa.com

Carmel High School at 41, Gariahat Road South, Kolkata, West Bengal, India, is an English girls school with classes V to XII. The secondary school is affiliated with the West Bengal Council of secondary education. Subjects taught are English, Hindi, Bengali, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Geography, Life skills education, and Environmental studies. The higher secondary section of classes XI and XII is recognized under the West Bengal Board with three streams: Science, Commerce and Arts.

Besides academics, the school runs several co-curricular activities clubs for the well rounded development of its wards. There is the Girl Guides Company, Caring Carmelites a nature club unit that works in collaboration with the WWF of India and Greenpeace Indian network. Carmel Spice club aims to spread peace, improve, and conserve the environment. The Carmel Blossoms section directs the youth toward social service and character development.



Photo 1. With Mother Teresa, back in 1993

Among the various cultural activities that the school pursues, there is Ambience, an annual youth interschool festival organized, developed, and implemented by the higher secondary girls of classes XI and XII. Besides fostering leadership qualities, it develops character and displays cultural talent. The other intra- and interschool activities include creative writing, debates, quiz, music dance and drama.

Finally, fostering excellence in its academic and cultural pursuits, the aim of Carmel High is to instill genuine concern among its youth in order to build a society of justice, love, and peace. Its special aim is the empowerment of women. It can be illustrated by the fact that after class hours, from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm, our students of classes IX and XI are engaged in Adult Literacy classes for fifty-two women of the nearby slum. The girls also tutor 120 children of the neighboring slum to make a change to the future world.

Reference

Sr. M. Nithika A.C, Headmistress, Carmel High School
41, Gariahat Road (South), Kolkata 700031

Polish System of Education and School Reality in Poland

Waldemar Śędkowski

Zespół Szkół Ponadgimnazjalnych No. 1 in Krotoszyn, Poland
waldek23@interia.pl

Abstract

The following article aims to provide the reader with a general view of the system of education in Poland and will summarize all three educational levels (elementary, secondary and tertiary). It will then outline the grading system, the English instruction provided to students in Polish schools and the language examinations. After that, the Complex of Secondary Schools No.1 in Krotoszyn will be described, and 'Agent' the English project implemented in the author's school will be mentioned in this article as an innovative education enterprise to promote successful English learning in that particular school.

Key words: Tertiary System, Compulsory Education, Grading System, Group-work Project.

Structure of educational system in Poland

The current education system was implemented in 1998/1999, although it has gone through many changes regarding administration, finance, supervision, teachers rights and duties, examination requirements, and structure. It is based on a three-tiered principle (elementary, secondary and higher education). Public school education is free, but non-public education institutions may assess tuition fees.

Compulsory education begins when children turn six years old and finishes at the age of 18. Although nursery schools are available for children aged three to five, all six year-olds are required to do one year of formal education, which is provided in kindergartens or preschool classes arranged in elementary schools. In preschools, children receive basic instruction in literacy and numeracy skills, as well as general development.

At the age of seven, all children start elementary education, which can be classified into two stages:

- the first stage (grades one through three) in which basic integrated learning is offered,
- the second stage (grades four through six) in which systematic subject teaching is provided.

In grades one through three, one teacher provides instruction to all classes, while in grades four through six, one teacher gives instruction in each subject. Since 2002, all students completing elementary school have to take final external tests, which are prepared by the examination commissions and graded by qualified examiners selected by these commissions.

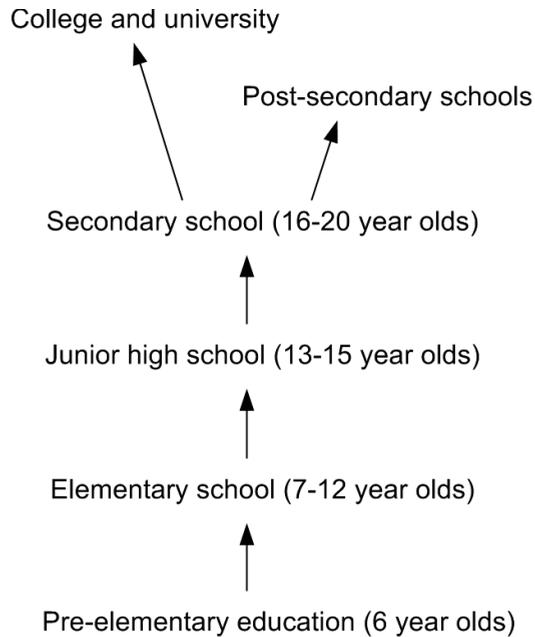


Figure 1. Organization of Polish education system

Pursuant to the Act of 8 January 1999, after finishing elementary education, students attend compulsory three-year junior high school. They must complete a program of general education courses including: Polish, foreign languages, math, physics, biology, chemistry, physical education, computer science, music and art. At the end of the school, students take compulsory examinations organized by the external examination board in the following subjects: the sciences, the humanities and one foreign language.

Based on the exam results, junior high school graduates may continue education in one of the following school types:

- vocational school with a two or three-year basic education program. After completing the course, students are obliged to take the practical examination in order to receive a certificate confirming basic vocational qualifications,
- high school: a three-year program of general education is offered. Having completed the school, students take external compulsory examinations (“Matura” examinations) in Polish, math and one foreign language. They can also choose additional subjects, necessary to satisfy the entrance requirements

listed by tertiary educational institutions. After passing the exams, students receive a diploma confirming secondary education,

- vocational secondary school: the 4 four-year school finishes with an examination confirming secondary vocational qualifications and offers the possibility to obtain secondary education diploma, after passing a series of examinations arranged by the external examination board.

Students who completed their education in the second or third year vocational school may receive a secondary education diploma, upon completion of the two-year supplementary high school or the three-year supplementary vocational school.

High school graduates can continue education in post-secondary schools, which offer occupational training and enable students to acquire a secondary vocational qualifications diploma. These courses usually last no longer than two and one half years and offer curriculum based on the specific occupation. No instruction in general subjects is provided in post-secondary schools.

All secondary education diploma holders can continue education at tertiary level educational institutions after passing external high school leaving exams, which were introduced in 2005 and have replaced the entrance university exams. However, colleges and universities accept students also on the base of the additional interview. The wide variety of tertiary education institutions offered include the following programs:

- college programs: these include programs for foreign language teachers and social workers offered by public and non-public colleges. After completing a three-year program, graduates hold a certificate confirming their education skills, but it is not recognized as a tertiary education diploma. They must pass examinations to receive a Bachelor's degree,
- degree programs: public and non-public institutions offer the following programs: three or four year courses, which finish with an examination, confirming the knowledge and skills required for the Bachelor's Degree diploma. After that, students may continue education for one and a half to two years in order to obtain a Master's Degree diploma depending on the educational institution. Some of the tertiary courses are offered as one long cycle of four and a half to six years, which depends on the university and the specialization course.

Weekly programs arranged by the public universities and colleges are usually free of charge. However, students must pay tuition if they take weekend programs at public tertiary institutions and all courses offered by the non-public educational institutions.

Grading system

The current grading system valid in Polish schools includes the following school marks: 6 - excellent, 5 - very good, 4 - good, 3 - satisfactory, 2 - acceptable, 1 - unsatisfactory. To obtain promotion to the next grade, students must receive at least acceptable grades in all subjects at the end of the school year.

Apart from schoolwork, teachers also assess the conduct of their students according to the following scale: excellent, very good, good, acceptable, unacceptable, and inadmissible. The behavior is assessed twice a year - at the end of each semester. The conduct grade influences the promotion to the next grade to some extent. If students receive inadmissible grade for two consecutive years, the pedagogical council may retain that student in the same grade. In addition, one of the requirements for students to receive the school certificate with distinction is that they must have obtained a minimum of a very good conduct grade.

English instruction in high school

The instruction of English or other foreign language may start in the kindergarten (5-6 year olds) as an additional activity arranged after receiving parent's consent. A fee is always fully paid by the parents; however, some communities pay for the classes especially in kindergarten in big cities, but this is not a very common practice.

In the first stage of elementary school (grades one through three), students may take supplementary foreign language classes, but at the second stage, they take a compulsory course in one modern foreign language, consisting of eight classes per week during the three year teaching period at the second level.

While in junior high school, students are obliged to participate in two modern foreign language courses, which cover 14 hours of instruction per week during the three year period of school. The most common languages are English and German courses, however, school authorities may offer another language course only if the qualified teacher is available in the school. From 2009, all those leaving junior high school take the compulsory examination in one foreign language, which assesses skills, knowledge and communication.

The next step is the secondary school, which also provides foreign language courses. Students must take two compulsory language programs of 15 classroom - hours per week over a three or four - year period. Basically, it's at the headmaster's discretion to decide which language will receive more hours of instruction. The language taught as the second one at high school has two hours of teaching, which is not enough to prepare students for the final language examination.

As long as they consist of more than 24 students, classes are usually divided into two language groups based on the proficiency level. This has a substantial impact on the quality of language learning, classroom communication in the target language, and students' proficiency. Also, the teachers can establish a better rapport with students.

As for the final school language exit examination, it is arranged by the central examination commission. The exam is compulsory in both written and oral parts, one or both of which may be taken at the basic or extended level. The majority of students in my school take the basic level, with the exception of those who are going to continue their study at university language departments or language teacher training colleges.

Whatever the level, to pass the matriculation exam students need to receive at least 30% of the score. As for the basic level, this does not seem to be a problem, as the standards are not really demanding, which results in diminishing student motivation to perform at their best in the classroom. To pass the basic level of the examination, students need to be communicative, but high level of accuracy is not required. Mistakes are acceptable as long as they do not impair communication.

Starting in 2012, all students will take the same oral language examination, no matter whether they take the basic or the extended one, the written part will be the same, though. The exam structure will combine some of the tasks from both levels and each will assess different communication skills. The examination standards for the oral part will be raised and the level of substantial accuracy will be required. As students prepare to leave school, they will have to pay more attention to not only if the message is communicated, but also if it is phrased correctly. Time will tell how that will really work.

Zespół Szkół Ponadgimnazjalnych No. 1 in Krotoszyn

The complex of secondary schools no. 1 in Krotoszyn is the largest public secondary school in the city and province, providing educational services to roughly 600 students in 21 classes. Some of the specialties include construction, chemistry, and environmental vocational secondary schools, high school (humanities, medical and language majors) and post-secondary pharmacy school.

The school premises are conveniently located nearby the train and bus stations so many of our students commute from neighboring cities and towns. The school complex comprises four large buildings, the library, three chemistry laboratories, spacious green area, the sports hall, a well-equipped gym, and a modern multipurpose sports field.

In addition, our students eagerly attend lessons of Information and Communication Technology in one of the four well-equipped computer labs where they can master information skills. The labs are also applied in foreign language teaching for multimedia language programs or the Internet, which, above all, results in advances in information technology access.

The school year always begins on the 1st of September, with a ceremonious school assembly, during which the students and teachers wear formal clothes and the school principal makes a welcome speech. The school assemblies are held to commemorate all the main national holidays, such as the breakout of World War II (September 1), National Education Day (October 14), Independence Day (November 11) and Constitution Day (May 3). Also, during the National Education Day assembly, all first-grade students are officially welcomed to the school community, after they have taken the pledge. However, a few days before the assembly, the freshmen are supposed to buy the favors of the school community. Thus, the School Council organizes a special event called “hazing” day when all first classes wear comical costumes, and take part in a set of funny competitions including a team dance, milk chugging and doing stand-up comedies. The last and the foremost task for them to do is sing a song in front of the hazing “royal couple.” A large audience gathered in the school sports hall always laughs their head off.

Our goal for our students is that we provide the best education and enable them to achieve at their highest possible level in academics, sports and culture so they become well equipped for college and beyond. The students in our school can realize their academic potential in many subject competitions like poetry, math, chemistry and first-aid, to name but a few. They can also fulfill their creative and personal potential and talents by joining the movie, conjuring, theater club, or participating in other extra-curricular activities. In addition, a friendly atmosphere and positive rapport with teachers makes our students eagerly involved in school life and participate actively in the School Council while organizing school celebrations to mark the national holidays and special occasions.

The teachers at ZSP No.1 are dedicated to doing everything possible to help every student achieve at their highest level. As for the language department, the foreign language teachers implement various enterprises to promote successful language learning. For example, we established a long-lasting collaboration with one German and one Dutch school. The learners from our school have an opportunity to travel abroad on a student exchange, where they use and master their language skills, learn new culture and traditions, and make friends around Europe. Our foreign friends also repay the visit to our school and are exposed to the rich and multifarious Polish culture.

Apart from that, the flagship example of projects implemented in ZSP No.1 is the language project work 'Agent', which is a group work activity based on tasks and questions prepared by the language teachers beforehand and then assigned to and answered by the groups of students in a particular city such as Wrocław or Poznań. The above-mentioned are the two large cities in our region of Poland, with cultural and historic richness, which also provides the participants with the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of architecture and history.



Photo 1. The sports field and the school buildings



Photo 2. Hazing day in ZSP No. 1 – the freshmen show

The students, in groups of four, receive a list of tasks to do, along with the instructions written in English. Limited numbers of group members assure that every person on the team will become actively engaged in the group work. It is worth mentioning that all the groups need to answer the same questions but they begin in different places, which aim is to prevent cheating and undesirable cooperation between competing groups. While solving tasks, students meet

English teachers in predetermined sites where they are asked to have brief everyday conversations. It is also where the groups submit the answers to the questions they have already done, and the teacher gives them sets of new ones. The winning team is the one which completes all the assignments and arrives at the finishing the first. Above all, the 'Agent' project requires a lot of cooperation and engagement, promotes effective communication and raises interest in language learning in an out-of-the-school setting.



Photo 3. "Agent" language project in Wrocław – students solving the tasks

Summary

This article provides a quick glimpse into the Polish system of education, which is a tertiary system that undergoes constant changes to provide high quality education services. Whatever educational level people have achieved, they can always take up education later if they decide to raise their qualifications and skills. As for the languages, the Polish Ministry of Education perceives the vital importance of foreign languages in the modern world. That is why the instruction begins as early as elementary school and is a continuum through all the stages of secondary education with the second language introduced at junior high school because one language is far too little to be competitive and competent in the modern world. The Polish education system provides students with a range of different educational institutions, and Zespół Szkół Ponadgimnazjalnych No.1 in Krotoszyn is a good example of public secondary school. It provides a safe, enriched, student-centered learning environment where every student can gain a strong set of academic, citizenship and interpersonal skills so they are well prepared for further academic level. Definitely, from the language classroom perspective, you often come across some difficulties like high levels of communication inhibitions in

students. Thus, the “Agent” project certainly caters to the needs of this specific school environment to give students more opportunities to be engaged in successful communication acts. This, however, can be adopted by any other school.

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Academic Interventions in Bidwell Junior High School, Chico, CA

Waldemar Sędkowski

Zespół Szkół Ponadgimnazjalnych No. 1 in Krotoszyn, Poland

waldek23@interia.pl

Abstract

The following article provides a general view of academic intervention system in an American middle school. It is based on the Bidwell Junior High School, which school I had an opportunity to visit for two weeks during my internships program.

Key words: BLAST, Read-Right, Zero Period, Learning Center, Power Hour

Academic intervention programs

Observing lessons, school life and participating in the teaching process in Bidwell Junior High School, I planned to focus on the school intervention programs. I was happy to notice the number of interventions that students who fall behind receive to help them make up their school work. The school environment in BJHS is friendly and supportive and the teachers aim to make the students achieve at their highest level in academics. As for demographics, the students come from a variety of backgrounds with a large number of students of Hispanic and Asian origin, as well as White, so this factor makes the teaching process quite challenging. Teachers need to cater to different needs resulting from this diversity and prepare them to be successful on the state exams.

I took cognizance of the Academic Intervention Pathway which is in place at BJHS. Basically, the first stage requires identifying struggling students by a panel consisting of: parents, the current classroom teacher, and the previous year's classroom teacher. It is based on the CST scores and site based assessments. Having been identified, the student is provided with adequate academic assistance, which is structured in three tiers. The first tier takes place in the regular classroom and concerns daily planning, teachers who are available before and after school, student study team, and a school based intervention team. If the backlog of schoolwork cannot be made up in regular classes, then the school provides structured help outside the classroom including: the learning center, Power Hour, Blast, Read Right English Language Development, 0 period math, 7th period math, science and Spanish, and speech therapy. The third tier refers to assistance

provided for students with moderate and substantial learning disabilities that influence their academic achievement. It includes an RSP class, which stands for resource specialist program and it is a form of special education available to students with mild learning problems in one or more classroom learning areas. The other is SDC (special day class) class, which is an intensive educational program structured for children with special needs such as diagnosed FAS, or ADHD. Also, learning disabilities may be a symptom of emotional problems and therefore they must be addressed as well in order to increase the academic achievement.

The following are these supportive programs structured for struggling students which I had an opportunity to explore during my two-week internship in BJHS:

– Power Hour

It is an intervention program held during the lunchtime break which aims at aiding students who miss schoolwork and therefore prevents them from falling behind. Actually, it is for students who have not completed their assignments or for those who need help with finishing assignments. However, Power Hour is a prevention program and therefore it is not eligible for those students who have a considerable backlog with class work. Basically, teachers provide the names of struggling students and they supply the assignments for students to work on. Then, the team of teachers, counselors and tutors supervise, support and organize the learning setting over the lunch break. Once students have completed the assignments and their grades have been pulled up, they are released from this program.

– Read Right

This national-wide program was constructed by Dr. Dee Tadlock for students with mild and severe reading and text comprehension problems (including dyslexia), and it has been implemented in BJHS for many years. It is based on the methodology that states that readers focus on understanding the text and producing the oral and silent reading that is always as comfortable and fluent as conversational speech. This method uses a number of effective strategies, including small group work, individualized feedback, reading materials that increase in text complexity (different levels from red to purple) and authentic literature texts.

The procedure I observed encompasses the following cycle: the teacher reads a text several times, and the students read the text silently or just follow it in the book simultaneously. Then, if the students decide that they have an "excellent" read and are willing and ready to read it aloud, they raise their hands. If the students are not ready yet then the teacher repeats the cycle again until they master the text and feel quite comfortable with it. The reading aloud is followed by comprehension questions to be answered by the students. The program also

provides training in critical thinking. It is said that the Read Right program definitely accelerates reading skills in a relatively short period of time.

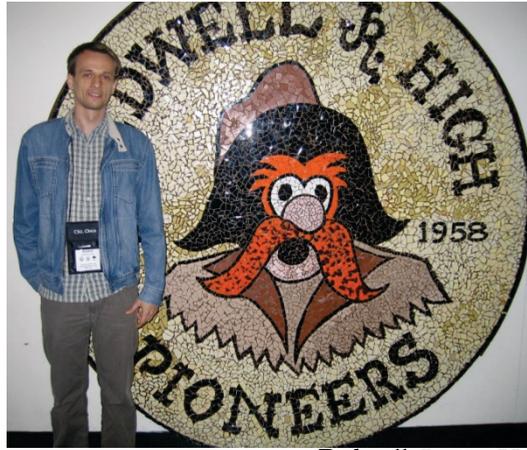


Photo 1. BJHS emblem in the main building in Bidwell Junior High School, Chico



Photo 2. Reading development program in Chico

– BLAST

Good study habits developed early support a child's success in school, maintain that success and increase self-confidence. The ability to do homework in a structured environment at school increases the chance that it will be completed. BLAST is an after school homework intervention program, which provides eligible students with care from 7:30 a.m. until classes begin, and again after school until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. It is designed to provide around 120 students with an extra hour after school to work on school assignments with qualified credentialed teachers. The staff includes four homework teachers, two math teachers, art and crafts and sport instructors.

They help students finish homework, write papers, work on difficult math problems, and provide a quiet work space. BLAST is also designed to work with Power Hour on a consistent basis to help students who are struggling in any academic area.

After homework hour is over, a number of enrichment and athletic activities are available for students. Trained staff provides a balanced selection of fun activities that integrate several developmental areas such as cognitive, linguistic, social-emotional, physical, and creative. Activities include literary magazine, cooking, drivers education, boxing for fitness, dance performance, community service, game room and nutritional snacks.

– English Language Development

American junior high students take a yearly examination in English and Math. Based on the test results, students who underscored are placed in an ELD group which meets during the Electives hour on a daily schedule. Students receive extra help in developing English language skills and to build their reading confidence. At BJHS students read set books and do follow-up activities to enrich their vocabulary range, text analysis and critical thinking skills. When students pull their grade up in the following exam they can choose an elective the next school year. This intervention program is available to students with low exam score in English. As this school takes in a large number of students with Asian and Hispanic background they often find the English curriculum challenging and require extra aid.

Summary

Bidwell Junior High School provides a number of supportive programs for students with learning disabilities which can become successful in academics. As the saying goes ‘an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure’. School staff find it important to diagnose early the learning problems before they develop and cause serious obstacles in achieving success at school. In the case when students suffer serious learning problems, BJHS offers a professional and well-structured support. BJHS provides a safe, enriched, student-centered learning environment where all students can realize their academic, creative and personal potential.

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My school as an Example of Secondary General School for Scientifically Gifted Students

Irina Barilenko

Physics-mathematics - School Specialized Scientific Study Center, Novosibirsk,
Russia
parus_iren@list.ru

Abstract

The article tells about the Physics and Mathematics School (Specialized Educational Scientific Centre (SESC)) for gifted students in Novosibirsk, Russia. The centre represents a Secondary (Complete) General School which prepares students for Higher Education. Some facts about School History, students' life and study at the boarding school are given in the text.

Key words: Secondary (Complete) General School, Specialized Educational Scientific Center, Gifted Students, Contests, Boarding School.

Introduction

Russia has a tradition in quality education for all citizens. Education is split into a compulsory Basic Education, and ongoing Higher Education. The school system structure is the following:

- Primary General School: Age level from 6 to 10,
- Basic General Secondary School: Age level from 10 to 15,
- Secondary (Complete) General School: Age level from 15 to 17.

We teach at one of Secondary (Complete) General Schools – the Specialized Educational Scientific Center.

School Foundation

The name of Physics and Mathematics School in Novosibirsk, Russia is synonymous with high-quality secondary education. The school was founded by the academician Mikhail A. Lavrentiev in 1963. He was an outstanding mathematician; an organizer and teacher who wanted to give senior school students an opportunity to study in the scientific center in Siberia and fulfill their dreams. In 1988 it became a Novosibirsk State University division with the name the

Specialized Educational Scientific Center or SESC. The center's goal is to identify gifted learners and provide an environment where teachers and students commit themselves to research and education. Indeed, many scientists and researchers working around the world started their careers there.

Applicants' Selecting Strategies

Talented children from the Asian part of Russia and neighboring counties are selected by means of contests (Olympiads) on different sciences and after studying at the Distant and Summer Schools.



Photo 1. Getting ready for an English test at the language laboratory



Photo 2. Young researchers are carrying out an experiment in Chemistry

The Distant (Correspondence) School as a division of the Specialized Educational Scientific Center helps students all over Russia and abroad to develop

independent thinking and teaches them to work with books and state their thoughts properly. Annually more than 1000 pupils from many regions study at the Distant School and the best of them are admitted to the Summer School.

Talented children from the Asian part of Russia and neighboring counties are selected by means of contests (Olympiads) on different sciences. Every year high school students (ages 15/17) who have succeeded in regional and territorial physics, mathematics, chemistry and biology competitions are invited to the Summer School. The Summer School is held every year in August. About 700 students from 35 regions come to study here. The pupils' abilities are determined, and at the same time the conclusion is drawn if they are ready and willing to work hard. By the end of the Summer School session teenagers take tests and have an interview which lets the commission accept the best applicants into the Specialized Educational Scientific Center.

Life and Study at the Boarding School

About 500 students are taught here. The Physics and Mathematics School is a boarding school which occupies four buildings: a study building, two dormitories and a canteen. Students become more independent from their parents, but on the other hand they need to be more responsible and take care of themselves. At the same time life and study here encourages good teamwork and communication. The class teachers are ready to help students if they have any difficulties, and they are always in touch with their parents.

Structure of the Curriculum

Students have lectures and seminars on physics, mathematics, chemistry, biology, computer science delivered by teachers of the SESC and scientists of research institutes. History, the Russian language and literature, social studies, foreign languages and physical education are an important part of the school curriculum. At lessons schoolchildren are taught in a non-standard way to improve their motivation and make study interesting.

The school year starts at the end of August and is divided into two semesters. Students have classes on compulsory subjects in the school curriculum from 8.30 to 2.10 every day except on Sundays. During a semester student's achievement is assessed with a mark every month. By the end of each half-year students take exams on the main subjects. To do well in exams students have to attend lectures and seminars, do their homework regularly, and be hardworking and persistent.

In the afternoon students go to optional courses. They are offered a variety of optional courses on sciences, humanities, economics, IT and foreign languages.

Students who passed the finals successfully have a good chance of entering one of the best Russia's universities – Novosibirsk State University.

Extra - Curricular Activities

After lessons students are involved in a diverse program of arts and sports activities: they go to the theatre, visit museums and exhibitions. Project work, science competitions, contests of quick-witted, concerts, and discos help teenagers relax and enjoy themselves. To keep fit and healthy they have a lot of physical activities; they play ball games, run and ski. Students take part in different competitions on arm wrestling, power lifting, kick boxing, karate, etc.

They enjoy socializing with their classmates, having celebrations of important events of the school life, reading and discussing books. The friends they make here are often the lifelong ones.

The school's goal is to give students profound knowledge in various academic subjects. With the help of SESC they get a good access to Higher Education. For many school leavers life and study at the Physics and Mathematics school is an unforgettable experience.

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Senegalese School System

Modou Mbaye

CEM Sikilo Ouest/Kolda, Senegal

doumoz@yahoo.ca

My School

My school's name is CEM Sikilo Ouest/ Kolda. I have been teaching there since October 2000. It is the largest middle school in Kolda in terms of number of students; I believe it is the largest in Senegal with more than two thousand students. There are on average 90 students in the classes. There are fifty seven teachers, among them ten English teachers. Most of the teachers in my school have not received any pre-service training. Fortunately, we have a very dynamic English cell which helps us meet sometimes and have interesting exchanges that are helpful to all of us. We organize class visits to observe other colleagues teaching and have feedback with them. Sometimes we plan lessons together or organize common tests for the students at the same level.



Photo 1. My students

Contrary to the United States, the students in my school do not eat at school. Here the students have class from 8 to 12 in the morning; then they go home, have lunch and come back to school at 3 p.m. for the afternoon sessions which end at 6 p.m.

Senegalese School System

School in Senegal is compulsory and free. In fact, the constitution adopted in January 2001 in its articles 21 and 22 guarantees access to education for all children. And the government reports that 40% of the national budget is allotted to education. However, in spite of these efforts, schools face various problems like the lack of appropriate classrooms and materials, the large number of students in the classrooms (90 to 100 students in all my classes) and many teachers with no pre-service training. These problems have made it very difficult to have a school year free from strikes, either by the students or by the teachers themselves to denounce their teaching or learning conditions. But efforts are now being made to overcome this school turmoil. In fact, giant leaps have been made over the past few years in terms of teacher training and improving the teachers' status. Hopefully, this will help make education better to benefit our students. The teachers in Senegal are very young and very dynamic. Most of them, in spite of their lack of pre-service training, are doing well in sometimes very remote places where they have no access to electricity, computers, the Internet, copy machines, or even an appropriate classrooms, which are necessary to achieve 'teaching excellence' in this globalized world. No matter how hard it is, they know they can rely on more seasoned teachers who are willing to visit them once in a while and share their experiences with them.



Photo 2. Talking to the students

To sum up

In Senegal, the school year is from October to July. Children start school at an early age. In fact, President Wade initiated what we call “la case des tout-petits”

where at the earliest age children are taught through storytelling, manual works about Senegalese culture and historical figures and also about socialization. At the age of seven, they go to primary school for six years and sit for their first exam. If they pass they go to secondary school. After four years in the first cycle of secondary school (known as middle school in Senegal), they sit for the BFEM exam to get to the second cycle for three more years; then students sit for the Baccalaureate to go to university or to join vocational schools. In Senegal we have six public universities, two private and countless vocational schools.

SUMMARY

As you read these moving and true stories from contributors to this book and dedicated TEA teachers, you could observe that the collaborative ideas they developed about the US during their stay at the host universities have spread to many places in the world. Without doubt, their experience of cultural and teaching diversity has led them to a better understanding of themselves, local communities, school environment, and global teaching trends.

As the book presents, each alumnus reflected in a particular way of thinking, carried a memory, a literary heritage; and is the legitimate basis of cultural identity. Indeed, respect for cultural diversity has become the very basis of the TEA Program. A TEA Family, which was built in the United States, constitutes a powerful antidote to any intolerance and conflicts, and brings a shared sense of belonging and welcomes the diversity.

As a result, many TEA teachers are involved in national and international initiatives, which connect them with the world thanks to the opportunity giving them a once in a life chance to take up professional teaching development in the United States and gain self-development.

After a short time various alumni initiatives were visible to the world. This book is also a proof that the TEA Program does not last just six weeks, but it gives an everlasting experience.

TEA alumni set an example to other educators in their countries and worldwide of good development and encourage creative foreign language and science teachers to make a change.

Finally, during the **T**eaching **E**xcellence and **A**chievement Program the cultures of the world crisscross at the host universities and as a result the TEA Program serves as a bridge to a modern world, other people and opens access to other countries and cultures, promoting mutual understanding and friendship.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES



Dr. Lawrence Joe McNulty
University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Lincoln, Nebraska, USA
lmcnulty2@unl.edu



Dr. Delwyn Harnisch
University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Lincoln, Nebraska, USA
harnisch@unl.edu



Dr. Terence Janicki
California State University.
Chico, California, USA
tjanicki@ctc.ca.gov



Shannon Cooley-Lovett
High School and College in Omaha
Omaha, Nebraska, USA
shannita@cox.net



Chuck Morgan
East High School in Lincoln
Nebraska, USA
cmorgan@lps.org



Allyson Daly
Eastern Wayne High School
Goldsboro, USA
allysondaly@wcps.org



Denise Ghiloni
Remington Middle School
Franklin, Massachusetts, USA
ghiloni30@yahoo.com



Jolanta Krzemińska
Zespół Szkół Ponadpodstawowych
im. Wincentego Witosa
Samostrzel, Poland
jola5696nta@wp.pl



Varduhi Grigoryan
"Quantum" college
Yerevan, Armenia
varduhigr@yahoo.com



Md. Mutahar Hussain
Anjuman Adarsha Govt. High School
Netrokona, Bangladesh
mutaharntk@yahoo.com



Guillermo López Ossa
Deogracias Cardona School
Pereira, Colombia
galoperiscol@gmail.com



Oscar Erick Fuentes Prudencio
Centro Cultural Salvadoreño Americano
Secondary School
San Miguel, El Salvador
efuentes2983@hotmail.com



Nana Tatiashvili

G.Chilashvili Author`s School
Gurjaani, Georgia
nanatatiashvili@yahoo.com



Rita Banerjee

Carmel High School
Kolkata, India
rbredpanda@quepasa.com



Efraín Dávila Salazar

San Jose Obrero School Marianists
El Cultural centro Peruano Americano
Trujillo, Peru
davilaefracinpe@hotmail.com



Oksana Petrova

Gymnasium 1
Biysk, Altai Krai, Russia
opetrova20@gmail.com



Irina Barilenko

Physics-mathematics - School Specialized
Scientific Study Center, Novosibirsk, Russia
parus_iren@list.ru



Modou Mbaye

CEM Sikilo Ouest
Kolda, Senegal
doumoz@yahoo.ca



Saliou Sarr

Valdiodio Ndiaye High School
Kaolack, Senegal
zalsar1@yahoo.fr



Waldemar Sędkowski

Zespół Szkół Ponadgimnazjalnych No. 1
Krotoszyn, Poland
waldek23@interia.pl



Hugh Bilton

European College
Kraków, Poland
hugh.tlc@gmail.com



Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska

European College
Kraków, Poland
ananah0901@gmail.com

Dr. Lawrence Joe McNulty

During the past 25 years Dr. McNulty has broad range of executive, Business, teaching, management and consulting experiences in the United States and abroad. Consulting activities have primarily focused on higher education in Australia, Slovakia, Russia, Jordan, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the United States. He is also an international programs coordinator in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Dr. McNulty is University of Nebraska great leader and host university representative.

Dr. Delwyn L. Harnisch

Dr. Delwyn L. Harnisch received his doctorate in Educational Psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1980. He is Professor of Educational Psychology and at the Department of Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education, College of Education and Human Sciences, University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL). With a wealth of background and expertise in measurement, assessment, and program evaluation, Dr. Harnisch is currently director of the UNL Assessment and Leadership for Learning professional development program that focuses to improve understandings of assessment and leadership to improve student achievement. He is the currently the external program evaluator on several NSF sponsored projects at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) that has received funding for the past decade. His forty years of teaching and research experience has focused on integration of technology into the teaching and learning process. He has authored over 150 research articles, 5 books, and secured over 20 million dollars in grants and contracts. Many of his students are serving as faculty in leading research programs across the US as well as in Asia and Europe. He has received numerous national and international honors for his research programs and writings, including the 2002 Excellence in Classroom Assessment Training Award in Teacher Education for Assessment Cohort Program at University of Nebraska Lincoln from the National Council of Measurement in Education (NCME) and the 2004 Best Paper award for Science Education at the SITE conference.

He graduated from Concordia University in 1971, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with his M. Ed. in 1977 and his Ph. D. in 1980. He has received numerous national and international honors for his research programs and writings. A few of these are noted below.

Awarded the 2004 Best Paper Award for Science Education at the Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE) AACE International Conference, Atlanta, GA, March 2004.

Awarded the Excellence in Classroom Assessment Training in Teacher Education highest honor for Assessment Cohort Program at University of Nebraska Lincoln. Sponsored by National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME). Organized by Richard Stiggins, Assessment Training Institute, April 2002.

In 1998 he was recognized by the Awarded professional status of “Distinguished Research Scholar” by Monbusho (Ministry of Education in Japan) at Hyogo University, Yashiro, Japan. Dr. Shibo Narita writes, “You have hit the best scholarship; this scholarship is given to a professor who is noted for a top-notch research background,” September-November, 1998.

Visiting research fellow awarded by Monbusho (Ministry of Education in Japan) at the National Institute of Multimedia Education, Tokyo, Japan, January-May, 1999.

Invited keynote presenter at the International Society of Science Education Conference, Kobe, Japan, August, 1999.

Invited chair and lecturer for International Symposium entitled, 'Roadblocks on the Information Highway: How can the Information Revolution Succeed in Japanese Higher Education? This symposium is part of the 1999 International Program for the National Institute of Multimedia Education, Makuhari, Japan, November 1999.

USA representative to the Ninth International Congress on Mathematical Education (ICME-9), Makuhari, Tokyo, Japan. Supported by National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). January, 2000.

Invited keynote address given for InSITE 2002 International Symposium on Information Technology and Education, Kochi Japan. Supported by the Ministry of Education in Japan, January, 2002.

Dr. Terence Janicki

Dr. Terence Janicki's educational background includes a BS in Physics and Mathematics and a Master in Science Education from the University of Illinois and a PhD in Educational Psychology from the University of Wisconsin. In his current assignment at the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (he rejoined the CTC September 2007 after a six year hiatus); he was staff in the Accreditation Unit where he provides assistance for schools as they are preparing for accreditation visits. In the past year he was promoted to an administrator where

he is engaged in examination unit management, the teaching performance assessment, and standards development.

For the previous five years he served as the Director of the Education Services Center (Director of Professional Education Programs) at CSU, Chico where his responsibilities included serving as the primary liaison with K-12 school agencies, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) and the California Department of Education. Other responsibilities included: liaison both within and external to the university, regulatory information coordination and dissemination, advice and assistance to the Dean's Office and the School of Education departments in matters relating to professional education preparation, and facilitation of paperwork, record keeping, and accreditation. He served with program coordinators as liaison with schools, committees, and credential candidates within the CSU, Chico service area and it was him responsible for timely, accurate communication both on and off campus.

Prior to that position he managed the Mathematics/Science Leadership Office at the California Department of Education. Responsibilities include providing leadership, managerial direction, and supervision of professional educators, analytical, and support staff for the educational programs assigned to the unit, which included Math and Science Standards Initiatives, Gifted and Talented program, and Environmental Education. Prior to these positions he spent 13 years as a consultant with the Commission where he worked on the California New Teacher Project, BTSA, and monitored examination related contractual work. In addition, he represented California at INTASC meetings from 1995-2000, and from 2009-2010.

Shannon Cooley-Lovett

Shannon Cooley-Lovett teaches English Language Learners (ELL) at the high school and college levels in Omaha, Nebraska, U.S.A. She presents faculty development sessions and workshops for her public school district and for local ELL conferences. She has also facilitated workshops for international teachers. She has a master's degree in secondary education from the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

Chuck Morgan

For the past 17 years he has taught Geography in the Lincoln Public School District. In his first year, he was part of a three-person team that wrote the standards and expectations for the new geography curriculum. He also helped

select the textbook used by the district. Since then he has continued to be involved in making an impact in his district and on his children's education in the area of geography. Nine years ago, he left the classroom for nine weeks as the sole writer for the new 9th grade geography curriculum and standards that were implemented district wide. Today, he is continuing to work with a panel of high school geography teachers that are focusing on the direction of today's discipline of Geography. He is proud to be making his students able to organize geography into a coherent body of knowledge, because the need for geographic knowledge is as old as humankind itself. He is one of two A.P. Human Geography teachers in LPS, (Brian Burback of North Star H.S. is the other,) certified by A.P. Central, The Geographic Educators of Nebraska, and the National Council of Geographic Education. In 2005, at the National Conference of Geographic Education, he was awarded the Distinguished Geography Teaching Award from the National Council of Geographic Educators, at the National Conference in Montgomery, AL. Chuck Morgan is a great mentor for TEA teachers.

Bachelors' degree - Geography and History from the University of Nebraska Lincoln 1995.

Masters Degree in Historical Studies from Nebraska Wesleyan University 2007.

Jolanta Krzemińska

Jolanta Krzemińska is an experienced Geography teacher at Zespół Szkół Ponadpodstawowych im. Wincentego Witosa in Samoziel. Holds M.A. in Russian Philology from Pomeranian University in Słupsk; completed post-graduate studies in Geography at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. She received many Teaching Awards in recognition for her outstanding service as a teacher and mentor to her students. Recently, Jolanta has been successfully involved in running the school projects. Her submitted grants received financial support from Polish-American Freedom Foundation and local governors.

Allyson Daly

Allyson Daly holds a Bachelor of Science in English Education and a Masters in English Literature, for which she earned the title Distinguished Graduate Student. She teaches Honors English IV, literature that focuses on the British tradition, and Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition, a course accredited by College Board for which students can earn college credit if they pass its international standardized test given by College Board. Class sizes vary from approximately 15-32 at her high school in Goldsboro, North Carolina. Since 2005,

she has served as one of the advisors for National Honor Society. From 2008-2009 Allyson was named Eastern Wayne High School's Teacher of the Year and she was nominated to North Carolina State University's Teacher Award. She has previously taught at East Carolina University and Mt. Olive College, as well has held the positions of Vice President, President, and Advisor at Wayne Montessori School. She has served on Parish Council at St. Mary Church for four years, from 2006-2010. Her most recent presentations include "The CASTLE Principles: Inspiring Students in the Classroom" and "Possibility Thinking: Showing Students the Way through the High School Graduation Project." In 2010, she spent a week studying with the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford, England. The Teaching in Excellence Program placed Allyson in Krakow, Poland in February 2011.

Allyson Daly has been teaching British Literature and AP Literature and Composition at Eastern Wayne High School for the last seven years. She endeavors to prepare seniors, students usually 17-18 years old, for their university experience. Class sizes vary from approximately 15-32. Allyson is a National Honor Society advisor. Previously, she has taught at Mt. Olive College and East Carolina University. Married and the mother of three sons, Allyson enjoys family time, reading, hiking, art, travel, and teaching. The TEA program provides her with an opportunity to see how other educators inspire students to desire education and to connect communities in peaceful, meaningful ways by sharing a common purpose.

Denise Ghiloni

Denise Ghiloni has been teaching middle school and high school English for the past twelve years, and has been a seventh grade ELA teacher at Remington Middle School in Franklin, Massachusetts, since September 2001. Remington utilizes a team concept of four academic teachers with one hundred and ten students. For the past four years, Denise has served on the Literacy Leadership Committee, a District initiative to promote reading and writing across the curriculum. She has also served as a mentor to new teachers and has been active in the development of the ELA curriculum. Denise graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from Salem State College in 1980, and after working for a number of years in human services, decided to go back to school and obtained a Master's Degree in English Education from Framingham State College in 1994. Denise is married with three children aged nineteen to twenty-five. Outside of teaching and her family, Denise enjoys traveling, reading, hiking, bike riding, being at the beach, volunteer work, and cheering for the Boston Red Sox and New England Patriots. When applying for the Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program, Denise's

goal was to work collaboratively with other teachers in order to gain insight to another country's school system and to grow professionally in the field of education. She feels that both of these goals were wonderfully achieved during her teacher exchange in Kraków, Poland, in February 2011.

Varduhi Grigoryan

Varduhi has been teaching English at Quantum College for two and a half years. She teaches students of varying English fluency through a wide range of ages. Varduhi creates ELMs (e-academy License Management System) for teaching English at secondary schools and organizes different trainings for her peers to develop new approaches to teaching. She received her Bachelor's in English from Gyumri Pedagogical Institute in 2005.

Md. Mutahar Hussain

Md. Mutahar Hussain has been teaching social studies in a public secondary school in Netrokona, Bangladesh, for the past 18 years. He is a convener of Students' Welfare Fund and member of the Tibbin and Milad Committee to encourage students' participation in extra-curricular activities. Md. Mutahar obtained a Master of Science from Chittagong University and Bachelor of Education from National University.

Guillermo Alonso Lopez Ossa

Guillermo Alonso Lopez Ossa has been working as an EFL teacher for 19 years. He teaches at Deogracias Cardona School and his students' ages range between 10 and 19 years old. Guillermo is a specialist in teaching English as Foreign language. He greatly enjoys using technology as a pedagogical resource for the EFL teaching-learning process. In addition to participation in academic and spiritual activities, Guillermo's hobby is basketball.

Oscar Erick Fuentes Prudencio

He has been working as an English teacher for seven years; in a private school named Centro Cultural Salvadoro Americano in San Miguel. He obtained his Bachelor's Degree in English in the year 2008. He participated in the Teaching Excellence Achievement Program (TEA) Spring 2010. Oscar has been part of a radio program designed to teach English through radio, and was member of the

thesis defense jury. He was one of the presenters of the National Conference for teachers of English in El Salvador and also had the opportunity to work with a group of students in a public school in the United States in the TEA program. During his free time he enjoys going out with his family, watching television, going to the movies, and meeting new people.

Nanuli Tatiashvili

Nanuli Tatiashvili has been teaching English language and literature at G.Chilashvili Author's School for the past 15 years. The age of her students ranges from 15 to 18 and on average there are 17 students in each of her classes. She is a member of the municipal board and help committee to improve the local educational and cultural department. She received a diploma in English and Italian languages from Tbilisi's Illya Chavchavadze Institute of Foreign Language in 1991.

Rita Banerjee

Rita Banerjee has been teaching for seventeen years. She currently teaches English literature, language, history, civics, environmental science, and life skills education. Her students range in age from 11 to 18 years old. In school, she participates in teacher training, curriculum development, and the induction of new teachers. She holds a Master's degree in English and a Bachelor's degree in education as well as diplomas in computer education. Her hobbies are reading, watching films, and bird watching.

Efraín Dávila Salazar

Efraín Dávila Salazar is Peruvian. He holds a Master's in Teaching English as a Foreign Language from FUNIBER and UDEP and a Licenciatura in Secondary Education with the Specialilty of Foreign languages, English and German, from the National University of Trujillo, Peru. He is an English teacher. He has been working at San Jose Obrero School Marianists for ten years. He loves teaching, and considers himself as an effective and successful teacher. Besides, he also works at El Cultural Centro Peruano Americano, where he teaches English as a Foreign Language. He loves teaching, traveling and learning foreign languages. His goal is to get his Doctoral Degree abroad in an English speaking country. He also likes meeting people from different countries and learning about their cultures.

Oksana Petrova

She has been teaching English as a Foreign Language at Biysk Gymnasium for 16 years. The age of students ranges from 10 to 17 years old. There are about 16 students in her class. She has worked as a methodologist at the Education Board and now she is a senior lecturer of the Altai Regional Institute of Qualification Improvement. She develops programs and seminars for ESL teachers on teaching methodology, organizes contests for students to develop their creativity. Her hobbies include swimming, downhill skiing and travelling.

Irina Barilenko

Irina Barilenko has been teaching English language at a school specializing in physics and math for the past 12 years. She is Head of the Department of Foreign Languages and provides trainings for her peers in teaching methodology. Irina received a diploma of teacher of English and German languages from Omsk State Pedagogical Institute in 1988 and a postgraduate study certificate from Novosibirsk Institute in Philology in 2008.

Modou Mbaye

Modou Mbaye has been teaching English in Kolda for the past 11 years. The age of his students range from 13 to 17 years, and on average he has about 85 students in his class. He received his bachelor of Arts degree from Cheikh Anta Diop University in 1999 and his certificate of teaching from the Senegalese National Teacher Training School in 2000.

Saliou Sarr

Saliou Sarr has taught English at Valdiodio Ndiaye High School in Kaolack for the past 5 years. The age of his students ranges from 18 to 21 years, and has an average of 71 students in his classes. Saliou has been supervising students in the English Club. Previously, he was a headmaster at an elementary school for 4 years. Saliou has a Master of Arts degree, Bachelor of Arts degree, and a certificate of specialization in American literature and civilization Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar Senegal.

Waldemar Sędkowski

Holds M.A. in English Studies, and graduated from University of A. Mickiewicz in Poznań, Poland. He is an English teacher and a socio-therapist in the SANZA Association, a renowned NGO. He has been teaching English at a public high school for seven years. He likes watching his students making some effort and becoming successful English learners. He is deeply involved in the volunteer activities of the local community. His hobbies are backpacking, travelling, cultures and sports.

Hugh Bilton

Born and educated in Melbourne, Australia. A diverse education and employment history has given Hugh a wealth of knowledge and insight into many and varied subjects. His employment includes: Newspapers, Small Business, Government, Tourism and Airlines. Corporate training includes: Train the Trainer, Customer Service Delivery, Presentation Skills, Motivation, Negotiations, Team Building, and Multilingual cultural appreciation and awareness. He has consulted with and developed facility and resource management strategies for several independent schools in Australia.

ESL Teacher/Lecturer – Curriculum Developer – TEFL Business and Tourism Consultant

TEFL Business Courses focusing on Tourism, Customer Service and Marketing to Companies and Individuals in Europe.

Hugh is a specialist English teacher who has been teaching English as a second language to students and adults for many years.

He has been convening, conducting and organizing English speaking camps and conferences for students and adults.

All facets of Teaching including: Methodology assessment, Curriculum course planning, development and review, lecturing and presentation, program coordination, grading and reporting.

Collaboration on several Innovative ESL programs in Poland.

Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska

Graduate of the University of Gdansk, holds a Diploma in teaching English; completed post-graduate studies in Geography at Faculty of Oceanography and Geography in Gdańsk. Anna teaches English and Geography (to International Baccalaureate students) at the European College (Polish high school) in Kraków. Works in summertime as youth counselor on cruise ships in the Caribbean, Mediterranean and Baltic Sea. Publishes her actions and activities associated with Bilingual Geography teaching and learning in teacher`s magazines: *Języki Obce w Szkole* and *Bilingual Geography*. Awarded *European Language Label* - a European quality label for innovative initiatives in language teaching and learning - for running a project in English language and Geography about the region: *[Region] is an Open Book. Those who have never Left Home, Read just One*. Anna is a travel zealot.



This book is the first of its kind, because it documents Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program experience from eyes of multiple TEA Fellows, while in the US and at home. The descriptions you will read herein are moving and from the heart of the writers, demonstrating the tremendous sharing and learning that occurred in these programs and thereafter.

Dr. Lawrence J. McNulty | University of Nebraska

When you are looking for DEDICATION, or ENTHUSIASM, or KNOWLEDGE or GUIDANCE, pick up this BOOK, flip open a page and read... and always remember teaching is a "Noble Profession".

Hugh Bilton | Australia

In addition to the valuable knowledge I acquired from the TEA Program, I also have the impression of having traveled all around the world with my only one U.S. visa.

Modou Mbaye | Senegal

Publishing "Images of International TEA Teachers and their Students" book was made possible by an award from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State, through a program administered by IREX (International Research & Exchanges Board). None of these organizations is responsible for the views expressed herein.



There is PDF version available on the following website:

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ISBN 978-83-62275-21-2