Developing a Short-Term International Study Abroad Field Trip

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Introduction

Short-term international field trips: less than 5 days in country
Theoretical Framework

Learner-centered teaching and assessment model from Huba and Freed (2000)
Learner-centered Teaching and Assessment Model

1. **Formulate statements of intended learning outcomes**
2. **Develop or select assessment measures**
3. **Create experiences leading to outcomes**
4. **Discuss and use assessment results to improve learning**

The cycle proceeds from the top circle (formulate statements) clockwise to the bottom circle (create experiences) and returns to the top circle.
Methodology

- Reflective journaling  
  N=13
- “What do you think of when you hear the phrase ‘food insecurity’”
- Deductive content analysis on pre and post-reflections
- Inductive analysis on post-reflections
- Themes were compared for inter-rater reliability
Results: Preflection

- Good Understanding: n=1
  - “lacking the stability or the chance to access the food necessary for life” (S4)
- Some Understanding: n=5
  - “makes me imagine people who are not sure if they are guaranteed a next meal” (S2)
  - “having access to food buy not every meal or every day” (S8)
- Little to No Understanding: n=4
  - “lack of resources a community needs” (S3)
  - “I have no idea” (S5)
INTRODUCTION

- Feed the Hungry SMA is 32 years old
- We serve an average of 75,000 meals per month during the school year
- We have over 100 volunteers, including food packing crews and food delivery drivers
- When we open a new kitchen school enrollment goes up 20%, scholastic achievement goes up and behavioral problems go down
- We are in the business of **Breaking the Cycle of Poverty** through good nutrition and nutrition education

New School Initial Test Results

- Obese: 7.89%
- Overweight: 10.11%
- Normal: 17.45%
- Light underweight: 13.55%
- Moderate underweight: 18.24%
- Severe underweight: 32.76%
Results: Postflection

- Good Understanding: n=10
  - “It’s more than just having food. It’s about a balanced and nutritious meals.” (S2)
  - “My view on food insecurity has changed. It’s not just about lack of food but also to the lack of knowledge about proper nutrition.” (S9)

- Some Understanding: n=3
  - “constantly no knowing where your next meal is from is a real problem in this region” (S5)

- Little to No Understanding: n=0
Results: Postflection

• Personal Connection
  • “a student told me it wasn’t his day to eat within his family, so this was his only meal of the day” (S3)
  • “I realized food insecurity happens in College Station too.” (S10)

• Nutrition
  • “It’s cheaper to buy Coke than water in the region. Chips are cheaper than produce, and those are not healthy options” (S4)

• First-hand experience
  • “I was able to see children who might only have one meal per day” (S7)
  • “We were able to see the lack of food/water at the school” (S11)
Conclusions

- The service-learning project focused on food security made a positive impact in students’ transformational learning of food security
- Food insecurity became less of an abstract concept and more of a lived experience for the students
- There was an increase in passion and personalization of the topic after the service-learning project
Recommendations & Implications

• It is recommended that study-abroad programs include a service-learning component to increase students global awareness of complex topics
• There is a need for improved base-knowledge of food security for U.S. students
• Include a service-learning project in international experiences to improve knowledge of and humanize the concept of food security