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Cross-Cultural Experiential Learning for Teachers

> Nine months in this delicious country (Italy) have done more for me than all the sage lessons which books, or men formed by books, could have taught me.—James Boswell, 1765.
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> I've often wondered how history might have been different if President Johnson had just studied overseas for a year or two on a Fulbright fellowship.—former Senator William Fulbright, 1979.
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> The sense of reality I feel about the sameness of people's needs and the interesting cultural differences in meeting these needs comes from living among a culturally different group of people (in Liberia, West Africa). That reality is more effectively conveyed to my second and third graders because I have experienced it.—Joanie Craig, 1981

If we are concerned about a future for the world, global education must be a priority in schools. If we are serious about global education happening in schools, cross-cultural experiential learning should be a component of every teacher education program.

The idea of cross-cultural experience as an integral and important part of teacher education is not new. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education 1976 report, *Educating a Profession,* recommended that all teacher education students study and experience in some depth at least one of the local, regional, or national subcultures (Howsam, 1976). Earlier, Harold Taylor wrote in *The World as Teacher* (1969, p. IX):

> Whatever they teach, teachers should be educated in a way calculated to raise the level of their awareness of what is happening to mankind in the world's contemporary circumstance. This means that those who are becoming teachers should have a chance to cross over, through their studies and their personal experience, to a culture different from the one in which they have been born and raised. Through entering other lives they begin to enter the world, and to provide themselves with something to compare themselves with, and by comparison to learn to look at mankind from a broader perspective.

The practice of cross-cultural experience is today, however, not as widespread as either the AACTE or Taylor had hoped for. *The World as Teacher* urged that 25,000 to 50,000 students each year be placed in teacher community-service posts abroad and at home. Also, a multi-faceted rationale for cross-cultural experience, or more precisely cross-cultural experiential learning, as a critical part of teacher education has never been developed. There has been an intuitive acceptance of the worth of cross-cultural experience to individuals, but few connections have been made between the teacher's cross-cultural experience and his or her experience as a teacher in the classroom. This article begins by defining cross-cultural experiential learning. Second, a four-part rationale for incorporating cross-

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cultural experiential learning into teacher education is offered. Third, ways of incorporating that learning into teacher education programs are briefly suggested. The examples included in the article come from literature in the field, but also from personal experience (I taught in West Africa for four years and in Fiji for two years, and have traveled in Europe, Asia, and Latin America) and from evaluations by 13 teachers of a six-week experience in Nigeria in summer 1980 which I directed.

Definition of Terms

Cross-cultural experiential learning is being used in this article instead of simply cross-cultural experiences because the former clearly implies that the experience is "reflected upon." A summer trip to Europe does not necessarily a global perspective make. Persons are more likely to "learn from experience" when they are prepared for the experience, engage in educational activities during the experience, and evaluate the experience. That is not to say that the learning can be easily explained or always planned. There are times when the meaning of an experience, as the meaning of a piece of art or music, cannot be explained; the experience simply *is*. I, the traveler, begin a tale about landing on a tiny South Pacific atoll in a seaplane and end with "Now *that* was an experience!" There are also times when the experience is serendipitous. I, an American teacher, and Alyiu, a Nigerian teacher, meet in Zaria and move on from talking formally about social studies to sharing informally about our families. Still, experiences become experiential learning upon reflection—mulling over, wondering about, and confirming or changing one's previously held ideas.

Cross-cultural experiential learning has characteristics in common with experiential education in general, as authors in The Experiment for International Living's book, *Beyond Experience,* explain. Wallace (1977) states that experiential education "will achieve its educational goals to the extent it is characterized by these four objectives: planned, affective, individual, and thoughtfully evaluated." (p. 27). Those adjectives ought to characterize all education, but the experience —the doing— more often affects the heart as well as the mind and elicits a personal response. Thus, I learned intellectually from a book that Fijians do not consider private property an important value as Americans do; I learned experientially when a Fijian friend to whom I had given a special piece of cloth gave it in turn to another friend who admired it.

Gochenour (1977), also in *Beyond Experience,* suggests that experiential education is really very different from classroom education. His definition focuses on the holistic and affective nature of experience, and he would not include field experience which only deals with the "conceptual, linear, verbal, numerical mode of traditional learning" (p. 34). Murray (1977), again in *Beyond Experience*, agrees with Gochenour that experiential learning encompasses both right brain and left brain functions. He adds to experiential learning the characteristic of "involving interpersonal relationships" and would encourage spontaneous feelings. To illustrate, he uses the following example from his experience in Nepal.

> I am sitting in Prakash's house eating halwa, chutney, and ginger tea. I have only one cigarette, so I light it Nepali style, not touching my lips, in order to share it with Prakash. He laughs and says to go ahead and smoke it my accustomed way—I am a foreigner and foreigners are expected to be different. So I draw straight on the cigarette, feeling gratitude for his simple invitation to be different, coming no doubt from his years as a foreign student in the United States. I feel freed by the notion that discontinuity and difference are acceptable. He takes the half-smoked cigarette and finishes it. (p. 37).

A further important point should be made about experiential learning that is cross-cultural. Said (1981) writes in his recent book, *Covering Islam*, that a necessary condition for knowing another culture is uncoercive contact with the alien culture through real exchange. That means that if one is engaged in a job, teaching, for example, one must also see oneself as learner. Such a condition raises questions about whether military or missionary cross-cultural experiences can be experiential learning.

Cross-cultural is the last portion of the term to be defined. That adjective is chosen because it seems to best describe an experience in which a person from one culture is immersed in another culture. The second culture could be within the United States or in another country. Cross-cultural, then, can include both the multicultural (which in recent years has usually meant inside the U.S.) and the international. A student teacher, for example, could have a cross-cultural experience in a bi-national school in Cali, Colombia, or in a Spanish-speaking community in southwestern United States.

Rationale

There is no disagreement about the importance of what is generally referred to as field experience in teacher education programs, although some of that field experience would not fit Gochenour's definition of experiential education. In fact, the trend has been toward earlier field experience in schools and more field experience in connection with methods classes to relate theory to practice. Proposals for five-year preparation programs which would include a year-long internship are also being offered (Howsam, 1976). The Report of the National Task Force on Citizenship Education recommended that teachers do an internship in government, municipal affairs, health service, or the criminal justice system (Brown, 1977).

So questions arise. Why, with all the other actual and proposed professional experiences, should a teacher have specifically cross-cultural experiential learning opportunities? What benefits do such opportunities offer the teacher and through the teacher, the students? Does cross-cultural experience prepare teachers to teach from a global perspective? There are, I believe, at least four ways in which cross-cultural experiential learning can be justified for teachers:

1. Teaching itself is a cross-cultural encounter.
2. Cross-cultural experience aids self-development.
3. Cross-culturally effective persons have characteristics desirable for effective teachers.
4. Cross-cultural experience leads to global perspectives necessary for global education to happen in schools.

Teaching as a Cross-Cultural Encounter

A multifaceted rationale for cross-cultural experiential learning begins with the classroom into which a teacher walks. The fact is that the teaching process is often a cross-cultural encounter; it is always one if children and teenagers are considered to have their own cultures. Various authors and projects make the point that, if teachers are to work successfully with students from cultures different from their own, they must have experience in those cultures (Southwestern Cooperative Lab, 1969; Hilliard, 1974; Harty, 1975; Mohr, 1975; Mahan, 1977; Arvizu and Gibson, 1978, 1979).

The domestic multicultural imperative is behind the variety of attempts to increase teacher cross-cultural sensitivity and knowledge about our culturally pluralistic society. The Experiment in Multicultural Living at Indiana University, for instance, gave elementary education students an optional off-campus intensive experience in settings such as Indian reservation schools and migrant worker camps (Harty, 1975). About 8 percent of Indiana University education students chose to student teach in a culture not their own through the Indian Reservation, Latin, Rural, and Urban Projects (Mahan, 1977). A positively evaluated quarter-long, Carnegie-funded program for white pre-professionals, including teachers, at predominantly black Florida A&M is a second example (Mohr, 1975).

Arvizu and Gibson (1978, '79) describe a particularly interesting and generalizable program developed by the Bilingual Education Center at California State. Designed for teachers *and* parents, it uses anthropological field methods such as participation, interviewing, event analysis, and life history to help persons understand learning and motivational styles across cultures. Anthropological concepts (including ideal and real culture, implicit culture, insider and outsider perspectives) undergird the exercises, and the examples of cultural differences in the monograph come from all over the United States and world. The program assumes both that culture is an important part of classroom dynamics and that cultures socialize children differently. After experiential learning, the program would expect a teacher to understand that Chicano parent admonitions to older children to watch younger siblings may conflict with the school rule that big children don't bother small children on the playground. Arvizu and Gibson conclude that a culturally well-adjusted teacher will know him or herself culturally, will know the students culturally, will know how to formulate experiences which respect self and others culturally, and will deal openly with cultural contradictions. Their definition coincides with Mayes's (1978) description of the "culturally aware teacher."

The "teaching as a cross-cultural encounter" rationale, important step that it is, is not strong enough by itself to sanction cross-cultural experiential learning for all teachers. For one thing, it is often directed at helping the white middle-class teacher learn how to teach poor, minority children and is thus a one-way street; a black student teacher from Lexington may need to have an Appalachian experience, too. Further, it does not always include (though the culturally adjusted teacher definition does) self-knowing and development. Finally, it is often culture-specific and United States-bound.

Self-Development

Cross-cultural experiential learning has long been seen as important for self-development. As Lemke states in introducing Hull's study of American undergraduates overseas and in off-campus programs:

> From classical Greece to modern America a study sejour away from the home area has been considered a component not only of an ideal, formal education but also of complete, personal development. Through a 'natural' process of acculturation, the student living and studying outside of his home location theoretically supplements his intellect, expands his cultural awareness, and complements his emotional maturation. Such an experience is deemed to offer intellectual and social rewards and to precipitate positive changes both cognitive and affective (Hull, 1974, Introduction).

However, it has been difficult to measure that self-development. In fact, there has been relatively little research on the impact of cross-cultural experience although there is a fairly large body of research on cross-cultural interaction, especially dealing with Peace Corps volunteers and foreign nationals in the U.S. (Brislin, 1977). In his literature review, Hull cited six studies whose results ranged from no significant difference in "world-mindedness" between an overseas experimental group and a stay-at-home control group to a general conclusion that study abroad made a difference in the subsequent lives of alumni of one college. Leonard's 1959 study of 14 undergraduates, also cited, showed increases in cultural attitudes leading to international understanding and in self-perception as well as a reduction in political-economic conservatism. Hull's own Individual Opinion Inventory, given to 378 students at 62 locations (52 students were education majors) used student perceptions to discover attitude change. The greatest benefits were discovered to be affective, including growth of tolerance and development of the individual person (Hull, 1974).

Of other relevant research located by this author, one much smaller study focused on 24 Australian teacher education students who visited Israel for 10 weeks. In the attitudes toward travel category, 75 percent of the tour participants felt that travel broadens one's outlook and is important for personal development. Adopting some Israeli behavior (new food and words), developing new opinions about own society, and a more favorable attitude toward Israel were other changes reported in the touring students (Steinkalk and Taft, 1979).

Two recent high school studies are interesting as well. A study of the effects of a U.S. home-stay on Turkish students, using a pretest-posttest control group design, found a greater degree of world-mindedness and a decrease in authoritarianism and religious ideology to be the most significant outcomes of cross-cultural contacts (Kagiticibasi, 1978). An impact study being carried out by AFS International to learn about effects of their exchange home-stay program has tentatively reported major personal changes in American high school youth, such as a feeling of identity with the total world community and a desire for diversity in personal relationships (Grove, 1980).

Results of an evaluation of the Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching are also pertinent to a discussion of self-development as a part of a rationale for cross-cultural experience. Questionnaires returned by 162 persons who student taught in bi-national schools in Latin America showed growth in acceptance of self and others, general maturity, acceptance of responsibility, and especially, independence. However, an instrument on acceptance of self and others, administered both to overseas student teachers and stateside student teachers, showed no significant difference between groups — both grew (McKiernan, 1980).

Still, self-development is clearly perceived by travelers themselves as an important outgrowth of cross-cultural experiential learning, as the following quotations from teacher evaluations of the summer 1980 Nigerian experience illustrate.

> I am a different person. I will never be the same. It has made me decide what things are important in my life and what I can do with my interests.

> I have grown in so many different ways. I have been a firm believer in the value of cross-cultural experiences since I took my first trip abroad to Nepal. I've always thought there was nothing better to promote understanding of others. But the trip to Nigeria has given me the opportunity to reflect about myself and my own beliefs.

> My own personal growth as a result of the trip is immeasurable. I've discovered strengths and weaknesses of me as a person. In addition, I realize a need for more experiences — all kinds for more growth.

While personal growth is obviously desirable for teacher education students and for teachers, it cannot provide a rationale by itself. As the teaching as a cross-cultural encounter rationale is usually limited to the classroom, the self-development rationale usually looks at the teacher apart from the classroom. Something needs to bring the two together.

Cross-Cultural Effectiveness and Teaching Effectiveness

The third facet of a rationale for cross-cultural experiential learning comes out of the research on intercultural effectiveness. In a review of the literature on characteristics of intercultural effectiveness and behavior of interculturally effective persons, Hammer et al. (1978) cited nine sources. Drawing on those sources, they then developed a list of personal abilities suggested as being important and asked 53 American students, each of whom had lived at least three months in another culture, to rate the abilities. Factor analysis determined three important dimensions of intercultural effectiveness: ability to deal with psychological stress, ability to communicate, and ability to establish interpersonal relationships.

Hawes and Kealey's study (1979) of technical advisors for the Canadian International Development Agency found that two factors, interpersonal skills and self-assertion, were among the best predictive measures of intercultural effectiveness. Hopkins' study (1981) of high school exchange students used an adapted methodology of that CIDA study and got similar results. An additional and interesting finding, as a result of using the Loevinger Sentence Completion Test, was that level of ego development predicted the student's perception of his/her intercultural effectiveness.

Two other sources list what are called cross-cultural skills. The Experiment in International Living uses Duley's cross-cultural skill areas as learning categories. They are: information source development, cultural understanding, interpersonal communication, commitment to persons and relationships, decision making, self-understanding, and self reliance (Batchelder and Warner, 1977). Kohls's guide for Americans planning to live and work abroad, *Survival Kit for Overseas Living* (1979), includes a list of skills that are helpful in the overseas adjustment process. Kohls puts sense of humor and ability to fail at the top, as he notes American Field Service does when choosing participants for international exchange. Other skills are low goal/task orientation, tolerance for ambiguity, open-mindedness, non-judgmentalness, empathy, communicativeness, flexibility, curiosity, warmth in human relationships, motivation, self-reliance, strong sense of self, tolerance for differences, and perceptiveness.

The interesting point about the foregoing lists of abilities and skills is that many also seem important for teachers. Teachers clearly need to deal with psychological stress (witness teacher burnout), and they are obviously communicators. Interpersonal skills, listed as important for intercultural effectiveness by Hammer et al., (1978), Hawes and Kealey (1979), and Hopkins (1981), also seem likely to relate to teacher effectiveness, though not perhaps to some of the effectiveness research (Medley, 1979). In the first skills list, the teaching as a cross-cultural encounter and self-development rationales seem to come together. The teacher needs the skills of cultural understanding, interpersonal communication, and commitment to persons and relationships in order to be an effective teacher. The teacher must also develop self-understanding and self-reliance and be able to gather information and make decisions. As for the second list, a sense of humor and the ability to fail belong in the teacher's survival kit, too, and a case could be made for the other abilities as well.

Perhaps teacher education could investigate selection procedures for programs such as student exchange and Peace Corps and compare them with procedures used to select teacher education students and to hire teachers. It may also be that some of the abilities and skills named are developed during cross-cultural experiential learning. That is certainly the objective of the Experiment for International Living, for example.

Thus, the rationale becomes more complete. But there is still no real clue about what is taught differently about the world in the classroom because of cross-cultural experiential learning. The teachers may be better teachers and persons, but are they teaching from a global perspective?

Teaching from a Global Perspective

The final facet of the rationale takes the teacher back into the classroom. It is this teacher/author's contention that as a result of cross-cultural experiential learning a teacher can begin to gain what Hanvey (1974) calls an "attainable global perspective." In other words, he or she will have a "point of view that takes in facts and interrelationships from all around the world" (AFS, 1979).

To briefly illustrate from personal experience, a teacher will have:

Dimension:	Example:
Perspective consciousness	Recognition that African and American time are different.
State of the planet awareness	Realization that *our* consumption of resources is as problematic as *their* population growth.
Cross-cultural awareness	Through participation in other cultures, ability to "feel with others."
Knowledge of global dynamics	Understanding of the ramifications of the infant formula controversy.
Awareness of human choices	Awareness of various choices in solving refugee / migration / immigration issues.

Support for my contention comes from a previously mentioned study. More than two-thirds of those students doing student teaching in Latin America reported, after their experience, greater concern for inequities among individuals and groups and nations, greater respect for the views of others about the USA, and greater identification with mankind in general (McKiernan, 1980). Also, a paper reporting on 19 teachers who spent six weeks in India stated that 72 percent of the group scored a positive directional shift in attitudes toward India (Gerber, 1975).

So the teacher gains a global perspective, but how to pass it on? Teaching from a global perspective is certainly more than showing one's slides. At the very least, purposeful imagination, a mania for collecting, and an interest in and commitment to people (Wilson, 1980) are necessary. It is important to note that math, science, and physical education teachers as well as those teaching social studies and humanities can teach from a global perspective. Global education is interdisciplinary and is everybody's business. The following comments by teachers who spent six weeks in Nigeria suggest some practical applications.

Teacher A:

I can see myself translating my Nigerian experience into the classroom in several ways:

a. With the knowledge I have gained, I can become more selective in the use of materials designed to teach about various African societies.
b. I can help students recognize the Tarzan syndrome in the books they read about Africa and perhaps get them to see the dangers involved in stereotyping people of differing cultures.
c. Through a comparative study of Nigeria and other countries throughout the world I can lead children to discover that all people have the same basic needs and that environment, customs, and beliefs dictate the means by which those needs are fulfilled.
d. By studying other cultures I would hope that my students can find a way to bring about peace and harmony between the many ethnic groups in America.

Teacher B:

I have lots of ideas for my classroom:

a. I will use "Up Nigeria" (a junior high kit developed by this teacher while in Nigeria with pictures and autobiographies of Nigerian teenagers and music and books chosen by them).
b. I would like to develop a simulation game dealing with the geography of Nigeria.
c. When I teach the court system, I would like to compare the Oba's court and the Supreme Court.
d. I will develop learning centers comparing Lexington and Zaria.

Teacher C:

I really feel America is going to have to stop its wastefulness in all areas. Maybe this is the one major theme I will try to convey to my students. Americans are going to have to face up to this problem and make dramatic changes in lifestyle. Hopefully, I can encourage a shift in student attitudes and beliefs. After this experience, global education has taken on an even greater importance to me. Our students must be made aware of interdependence and its significance.

In summary, a multi-faceted rationale for cross-cultural experiential learning includes the following points: teaching is a cross-cultural encounter, cross-cultural experience aids self-development, cross-culturally effective persons have characteristics desirable for effective teachers, and finally cross-cultural experience leads to global perspectives necessary for global education to happen in schools.

Into Teacher Education Programs

If the rationale is convincing, all that remains is to suggest how cross-cultural experiential learning can be incorporated into teacher education, realizing that the doing, rather than the suggesting, is the really daunting task.

A model that builds from introductory to developmental to intensive experience makes most sense (Harty, 1975). At the University of Kentucky, for example, the junior high and the social studies programs use a hierarchy of intercultural experiences to direct students. The student is expected to move from the level of dabbler (trying Chinese food for the first time) to student (taking a history course on Arab-Israel conflict) to observer (attending the Minority Student Affairs film series) to friend (knowing an international student) to participant (immersion in another culture, such as student teaching in Latin America). The program is individualized, sometimes drawing on a student's previous experiences and sometimes encouraging new ones, and trying to tie in appropriate courses as well (Wilson, 1979).

The most exciting and rewarding experiential learning comes, of course, from the intensive, immersion experience. These are generally of two types: the study tour (applicable to both undergraduate and graduate teacher education students) and student teaching. Study tours are many and of many kinds. There are some advantages to having study tours especially for undergraduate and graduate students in education as Ohio State has done, for instance (Gilliom, 1971). Teachers have gone overseas with the Fulbright Group Projects Abroad program, as well. In both cases, requirements relating to one's classroom are usually included. However, a summer with Operation Crossroads Africa or a foreign language trip to France will also serve as cross-cultural experiential learning for teacher education students if they are helped to see the relevance of the experience for their profession.

Student teaching in a culture not one's own is the second immersion possibility. There are various programs which focus on ethnic groups within the United States. In fact, one survey of 387 institutions found 77 percent of student teachers were working with culturally different students (Baker, 1978). A survey sent out by the National Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching found that there were over 100 institutions which, in 1979, had over 1000 student teachers in some 50 countries. Of the 515 other replies to that survey, 415 institutions indicated no current programs but a desire to be involved, while only 100 indicated no interest. Among the institutions with student teachers abroad, the programs on their list range in location from Australia to West Germany and include major efforts such as the Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching, mentioned earlier, as well as Bowie State's placement of five student teachers a year in Sierra Leone (West, 1980). In all immersion programs, the quality of preparation and the amount of reflection required are terribly important. The AFS Student Study Guide is one good model.

"Study abroad, student teaching overseas, or involvement in a domestic, multi-cultural setting is perceived by administration, faculty, and students as the most effective and lasting experiential education both cognitively and attitudinally," noted Klassen at a 1974 seminar on teacher education and world awareness. "Yet," he continued, "the fact that institutional resources, manpower, and money are devoted to language, area, and comparative education studies on campus, often without an experiential component, suggests perceptions and allocation of resources are not congruent" (Anderson, 1975).

Mahan (1977), concluding a report on Indiana University's previously mentioned domestic multicultural program, stated that cross-cultural experiences should be required if more sensitive teachers for a more culturally pluralistic society is a priority goal. Landers (1973) urged that cross-cultural travel be a universally required inservice activity.

The perceptions, problems, and possible goals are thus laid out. Again, the "doing" is the difficult task. Although the number of institutions involved in student teaching overseas rose from 70 in 1972 to 100 in 1979 (Anderson, 1981, West, 1980), the Council on Learning's new report on exemplary international programs lists only one teacher-related program, at Lock Haven State College (Black, 1981). A real challenge for teacher educators, in these times, is just persuading students to take advantage of existing cross-cultural learning opportunities. Looking at two essentially postgraduate opportunities, the Peace Corps in 1980 received 18,000 applications and placed 3,500; in 1967, the comparable figures were 50,000 and 12,000. On the other hand, VISTA, whose numbers have increased in recent years to 5,000 (70 percent women), will probably be phased out by 1983 (Leishman, 1981).

Lee Anderson has likened the spread of global education to the spread of a religion (1981). It seems to me then that teachers will have to be converted.

There is no better way to encourage conversion than by requiring cross-cultural experiential learning, inside and/or outside the United States, for all teachers, for experience not only enlarges the mind but also tugs at the heart. Ask anyone, from James Boswell to Joanie Craig — and also Earnest Embry, a teacher reflecting on his Nigeria experience a year later.

> No one should make the claim of being educated until he or she has learned to live in harmony with people who are different.

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