



College of Agricultural &  
Environmental Sciences  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

# Education Abroad: An Approach to Addressing Educational Differences through a Participatory Study Abroad Program

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# Introduction

- Increased popularity of study abroad programs
  - Increased emphasis on experiential learning
  - New UGA requirement
- Three types of study abroad programs (Institute of International Education, 2009)
  - Long-term programs
  - Mid-length programs
  - Short-term programs
    - Increased development of short-term study abroad programs



# Short-Term Study Abroad

- Most popular form of study abroad (Institute of International Education, 2009)
  - Last eight weeks or less
  - Conducted during school breaks with a single course connection
  - Less expensive for students
- Benefits
  - Increased global mindedness
  - Immersion in new cultures
  - Exposure to content in a new context



# UGA Scotland Study Abroad

- Week-long service learning program
  - Focused in environmental and agricultural education
- Partnered with Troqueer Primary School and University of Glasgow – Dumfries Campus
  - Primary students (Kindergarten – 6<sup>th</sup> grade)
  - University students (3rd year education majors)



# UGA Scotland Study Abroad

- Environmental Education
  - Planted over 500 trees
  - Taught students about ecosystems (forests)
  - Partnered with UG students
- Became part of the educational community
  - Attended school-wide assemblies
  - Visited each classroom to observe instruction
  - Met with pupil voice groups



# Purpose

- Describe the students learning and engagement during a short term study abroad program to Dumfries, Scotland.



# Methods

- Reflective journals
  - 4 questions answered daily
- Group reflections
  - Lead by students
- Census of 10 student participants



# Methods

- Constant Comparative Method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)
- Trustworthiness and Rigor
  - Member Checking
  - Methodological Journals
  - Triangulation
  - Thick Descriptions



# Results

- Four Themes
  - Embracing others strengths and weaknesses
  - Commitment to success
  - Ability to reflect on their own thinking and actions
  - Confidence to present to others



# Embracing Others Strengths and Weaknesses

- “Today that teaching partner was Student-10. As he verbalized at the beginning of the week that **he didn’t really like children, I thought that might have to do the majority of interaction with the kids in our group.** Instead, I was surprised to find that we balanced each other really well. **Although our teaching styles were different, we were able to use that to our advantage in order to break up the kids in our group based on who responded to our teaching styles.”** ~ Student - 4



# Commitment to Success

- “The combination of the talk with Heather and Derick along with the political conversations we have been having, **have fortified my beliefs that the health and wellness of the world compromises the entity that is public health.** Agriculture is such an interesting and integral part of that and I chose this certificate program because I believe that eradicating human suffering and providing adequate medical, food, and care to the world is essential, to which agriculture plays a huge role. **Understanding agricultural leadership in the world and how to properly and sustainably feed the world is so essential and I’m very lucky to be here to learn about it.** ~ Student - 7



# Ability to Reflect on their Own Thinking and Actions

- **“I am very shy around children and sometimes I feel awkward around them because I don’t know what to say to them. I am glad that I was partnered with Student-1 today because watching her showed me what I should do for the rest of the week while working with the children.” ~ Student -2**
- **“I tend to over analyze situations and tend to focus on them too much trying to help make everyone feel better again, and it is unhealthy for me and others. I just need to learn to let go and continuously start fresh with others and my dealings with them.” ~ Student-5**



# Confidence to Present to Others

- **“ I really enjoyed teaching the students at Troqueer today. So much so, that I’m reconsidering developing myself as an educator. I believe that exploring this option will help me learn how to teach different groups as a medical anthropologist.” ~ Student-8**
- **“Teaching younger students has never been high on my list of things to do and I’ve always wanted to stick with high school kids. Today I really enjoyed my time with the P2 and P4 age groups. I think this age would be good for me to teach and I will definitely be able to consider elementary a possibility when I begin looking for jobs back home.” ~ Student - 10**



# Conclusions

- Deeper reflection can occur if guided
- Students wanted to succeed in teaching
- Students felt more comfortable teaching with practice
- Students supported one another's weaknesses
- Students applauded other's successes



# Recommendations

- Study Abroad programs should include reflection
  - Guided by others (formatively, while abroad)
    - Nightly or every other day
  - Written forms
- Encourage students to reach their potential and try new ideas



# Thank you!

Any Questions?!?



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