

Global Service-Learning: Lessons Learned from Teacher Candidates

Authors : Miranda Lin

Abstract : This project examined the impact of a globally focused service-learning project implemented in a multicultural education course in a Midwestern university. This project facilitated critical self-reflection and build cross-cultural competence while nurturing a partnership with two schools that serve students with disabilities in Vietnam. Through a service-learning project, pre-service teachers connected via Skype with the principals/teachers at schools in Vietnam to identify and subsequently develop needed instructional materials for students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities. Qualitative data sources include students' intercultural competence self-reflection survey (pre-test and post-test), reflections, discussions, service project, and lesson plans. Literature Review- Global service-learning is a teaching strategy that encompasses service experiences both in the local community and abroad. Drawing on elements of global learning and international service-learning, global service-learning experiences are guided by a framework that is designed to support global learning outcomes and involve direct engagement with difference. By engaging in real-world challenges, global service-learning experiences can support the achievement of learning outcomes such as civic. Knowledge and intercultural knowledge and competence. Intercultural competence development is considered essential for cooperative and reciprocal engagement with community partners. Method- Participants (n=27*) were mostly elementary and early childhood pre-service teachers who were enrolled in a multicultural education course. All but one was female. Among the pre-service teachers, one Asian American, two Latinas, and the rest were White. Two pre-service teachers identified themselves as from the low socioeconomic families and the rest were from the middle to upper middle class. The global service-learning project was implemented in the spring of 2018. Two Vietnamese schools that served students with disabilities agreed to be the global service-learning sites. Both schools were located in an urban city. Systematic collection of data coincided with the course schedule as follows: an initial intercultural competence self-reflection survey completed in week one, guided reflections submitted in week 1, 9, and 16, written lesson plans and supporting materials for the service project submitted in week 16, and a final intercultural competence self-reflection survey completed in week 16. Significance- This global service-learning project has helped participants meet Merryfield's goals in various degrees. They 1) learned knowledge and skills in the basics of instructional planning, 2) used a variety of instructional methods that encourage active learning, meet the different learning styles of students, and are congruent with content and educational goals, 3) gained the awareness and support of their students as individuals and as learners, 4) developed questioning techniques that build higher-level thinking skills, and 5) made progress in critically reflecting on and improving their own teaching and learning as a professional educator as a result of this project.

Keywords : global service-learning, teacher education, intercultural competence, diversity

Conference Title : ICERI 2019 : International Conference on Education, Research and Innovation

Conference Location : Prague, Czechia

Conference Dates : March 21-22, 2019