FROM THE COORDINATOR

There is no doubt that globalization has created many challenges for teachers. We frequently hear that teachers are responsible for helping students succeed in the global economy. “Cultivating global citizenship requires teachers to have a global perspective, model cultural sensitivity, and engage students in educational activities aimed at developing global citizens.” (Zhao 2010)

A globally competent teacher understands global health and economic issues, is knowledgeable about other cultures, and is aware of our international interdependence. In this issue, we feature two elementary student teachers that are well on their way to becoming globally competent educators. Leah Korf and Kayla Haines were immersed in a culture that was vastly different from their own and gained a global perspective that will impact their teaching and professional development for years to come. Congratulations to all the COST students who are poised to become globally competent teachers.

COST Coordinator
Teacher Education Department Chair

NOTES FROM ABROAD

Leah Korf in South Africa

When Leah Korf heard about the COST program, she was ecstatic. She wanted to go to South Africa. However, the last few days before she left she was “scared out of her mind.” She had never traveled by herself; had never been out of the country. Despite her fears, she gathered her courage, and headed to the airport.

After her first hectic stop in Atlanta, the long flight to Johannesburg was exhausting. Everyone there was friendly when she asked for help, which helped her relax. After customs a man talking quickly took her bags and carried them. Having reached her destination, she thanked him for his help and started to walk away. He asked, “Aren’t you going to give me a tip?” She found in South Africa people everywhere worked for tips; if you have a career in South Africa, you have a maid. A person who likes to do things herself, the lifestyle made her feel uncomfortable, it was a hard adjustment to make, and she never truly did adjust. Yet on the flight from Johannesburg to Port Elizabeth, she was astounded by the willingness of strangers to help her. When she finally arrived in Grahamstown her supervisor welcomed her with open arms and she knew she was going to like it there.

Kingswood College, the private boarding school where she student taught, was laid back. The day started at 7:30 with a 1:00 lunch break, followed by Sport at 2:00 and then Prep, (study hall). As students had morning break staff had coffee/tea, sandwiches, and visited with each other. While she found the culture refreshing, much more relaxed than in the U.S., in one week, Leah taught Math, Science, Social Studies, English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Design Tech, Information Tech, Food Tech, Music, Physical Education, Life Orientation, and Book Education. The number of subjects coupled with aiding multiple intelligences and different learning styles, was overwhelming, with schedule flexibility limited.

Students were wonderful, patient, interested in America and her accent, which made teaching fun, but there were
frustrations. She was surprised how even though English was their common language, students had trouble understanding her. She pronounced “water” so drastically different, it was hard for them to understand. She was also surprised by the many little fights among students until a college student (called a stooge), supervising the boarding students replied, “The end of the year is really hard because they get sick of each other. They wake up together, eat together, go to school together, sport together, prep together, after school activities together, live together, and they don’t choose who they live with.” Leah understood.

Placed in a well-off school, with financially stable people, Leah wanted to learn about poverty in South Africa. She volunteered at The Lebone Center, an after school program for students referred from the township. They always had smiles on their faces, lived to learn, and created high hopes and dreams for themselves despite their poor living conditions and their sad family background. Being with the students was the most rewarding experience she had ever had; her favorite South Africa experience.

On her last day one of the girls asked, “So you’re never coming back?” Leah states, “In that instant, my heart broke. I had grown so close to these students and vise versa and I did not want to leave. Saying goodbye to these kids was one of the hardest things I have ever done, but I would go back to that center and do it all over again if I had the chance.”

Her last two weeks in South Africa Leah traveled with two student teachers from Michigan to Cape Town driving the “Garden Route” surrounded by mountains, vast areas of land, and the beautiful ocean. In a Cape Town hostel they met people from all over the world: Germany, UK, Sweden, France, and even the United States.

I would go back to South Africa at the drop of a hat. I am so thankful for this opportunity. I learned about a new culture, education system, country, and most of all I have learned so much about myself.

— Leah Korf

Kayla Haines in Australia (Blog Excerpts)

There was a huge storm about an hour before the end of the school day.

A student needed to go to the office to meet her mum. She was scared to go alone, so I walked/ran with her. I got drenched. My umbrella didn’t fair too well either . . . What an afternoon!

Since I have arrived, I have learned a lot of new words for everyday things.
Usually I am able to pick up what people are talking about by context, but a few times I have had to ask for an explanation. Here are some of the words that I can think of, but there are lots more!

- bench: counter top
- car park: parking lot
- toilet: bathroom
- the post: post office
- serviette: napkin

(My first day Karen said to put something on the bench and I walked around the house looking for a bench . . . I didn’t find one.)

car park: parking lot
toilet: bathroom
the post: post office
serviette: napkin

dodgy: shady
mad: cool
heaps: a lot
beautiful: used to describe whole person, not just appearance
chatter boxes: fortune tellers
petrol: gas
bin: garbage can
rubbish: garbage
rubber: eraser
lollies: candy
jumper: sweater
biscuits: cookies
barbie: grill
dear: expensive
mate: friend
no worries: that is OK (I have picked this one up)
pissed: has many meanings drunk
I can’t be bothered: I don’t want to do that now

Also several words are pronounced very differently
garage, aluminum, and autism are just a few
HELP!

Q How and when do I get the FBI background check?

A Get your fingerprints taken and sent in about 5 months before you are to leave. Do not get it done too early, it must still be pertinent for the time you travel. You can pick up the COST background check form by stopping in WEB 257, or ask to have one sent to you. This is the only card accepted for COST background checks. You must take the card to a jail to have your fingerprint recorded and send it along with a check and a letter explaining why you need the background check. Get instructions and the address to which the form should be sent from the UW-RF COST office.

Q How do I get credit for my COST experience?

A We have two different evaluation forms:

1. UWRF Student Teaching Observation form
2. COST Participant Survey form

These forms will be given to you physically, as well as sent to you electronically as back up copies. You must take them with you to your COST placement site. The UWRF Teaching Observation form and COST Evaluation of Student Teaching Experience form are used to generate your grade for the semester. In order to receive credit for the overseas experience you must evaluate your COST experience using the COST Participant Survey.

Q Who do I contact in case of emergency?

A The Global Connections Office emergency number is: 715-425-4891, after hours: 715-425-3133

Money Tips for Safe Travel

As you plan your trip overseas review these financial safety travel tips to keep your money safe and secure.

- Limit the amount of plastic you take with you. No more than two credit cards or one credit card and one debit card (for cash withdrawals) are recommended.
- Notify your financial institution that issued your debit and credit card that you are traveling.
- Carry traveler’s checks. These are great for back up if your credit and debit cards are lost or stolen.
- Get foreign currency. If you are traveling abroad, get $100 in the currency of the country you are visiting. This will cover expenses such as taxi fares, etc. before you have the chance to change money.
- Safely carry your money. If you don’t have a hotel safe, keep your money, credit/debit cards, passport and airline tickets on you at all times. Don’t carry everything in a purse or backpack, use a money belt.
- Leave behind valuables. Keep your valuable jewelry, family keepsakes and Social Security Card at home. Also leave behind store membership cards that you won’t need.

Meetings

COST Meeting for Fall 2012: 3:00 p.m. 9, 22, 2011
COST Meeting for Spring 2012: 3:00 p.m. 2, 24, 2011
Lounge area on second floor WEB

Please be sure to let us know when you plan to leave for your destination, when you arrive overseas, and let us know when you return from overseas. Use the address from which you receive e-mails to contact us.

Stay in touch and be sure to send us digital photographs of you with your students (be sure to receive permission in writing for student photos to be used for newsletters. You may find yourself in a newsletter and could use it when you apply for a full time job.

Send us your stories & photographs for the next newsletter!

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