

Instructionally Related Activities Report

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Department: Sociology

Activity Title: UNIV392: Globalization and South Korea

Dates of Activity: June 2, 2013 – June 16, 2013

1. A description of the activity:

Fifteen CI students traveled to South Korea to learn and experience about how globalization has affected South Korean society and culture. We stayed at a partner school, Konkuk University. We visited different parts of South Korea, including a Hyundai Automobile factory, the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), the Institute of Globalization and Multicultural Studies at Hanyang University, a NGO working with foreign guest workers, temples, palaces and a national museum to name a few. Through these trips and interacting with Koreans, CI students observed how South Korean society and culture have been influenced by globalization and how Koreans view globalization. Students had a chance to participate in an international service learning project of teaching English to Korean middle school students. This experience allowed students to see how globalization has increased the importance of English in South Korea. Students spent a weekend with their Korean buddy's family, which gave them a more personal look into Korean family life.

2. How did the activity related to a course and learning objectives?

Through traveling in South Korea, listening to experts in various fields, and interacting with Koreans (including their Korean buddies), students were able to accomplish most of the course learning objectives as outlined on the syllabus. Students were able to:

- 1) Gain a deeper understanding of Korean culture and society
- 2) Connect what they have learned in the course on globalization with what they observed in Korea. Students observed how globalization was a rather uneven process, in the sense that it has affected some areas and aspects while other areas or aspects of Korean society are not affected as much.
- 3) Understand Korean social problem related to globalization, specifically, how Korean educational system is globalizing and the global English becomes an important part of Korean educational system.
- 4) Compare and contrast issues of Korean society with those in the US, such as immigration and multiculturalism.

- 5) Reflect their self-identity as a member of a racial/ethnic group, an American, and a global-citizen.

3. What do you see as the strengths of the activity?

This activity went very smoothly and successfully. I attribute this success to the following factors. First, this activity involved a partner university in Korea which provided valuable institutional support. We were able to stay at Konkuk's international house free of charge. Staying on campus, (rather than at a hotel) allowed students to interact more readily with Korean students.

Second, the buddy system was an effective way of experiencing Korea for CI students. They spent free time with their buddies and spent a weekend with the buddy's family. Many students commented how enjoyable the visit to the buddy's home was.

Third, the international service learning project was the highlight of this trip. CI students went to a local middle school to teach an English class. The following excerpts from students' reflection essays reflect the impact of this project on students.

"Teaching the classes was such a fun experience. Both times our lesson plan went over pretty well and the students were so excited to be using the English that they have studied so hard to learn. I was so impressed with all of their skills but also a little sad when I realized how much they must study in order to speak English, a language most of them will never use, so fluently. So many students expressed frustration over school pressures with us, and I began to appreciate the American education system a little more."

"Today was one of the most motivating and enjoyable events that I have experienced during this trip and so far in my college career. Today my classmates and I just finished completing our service learning projects. From the looks of it, it seems like most of my classmates are very pleased with their experiences.and I are far more than just content with the overall experience and our performance, but very proud of each other and grateful for the opportunity."

Lastly, reflection activities are vital to enable students to process what they experience, feel, and observe, particularly in an international context. Students were often overwhelmed by the volume and newness of the experience. Without an adequate opportunity and ways of reflecting, students are not able to learn from their experience. I spent significant amount of time to engage students in reflection activities and questions as a group while in Korea. They had to keep daily personal journal as well. These reflection activities enabled the students to learn and transform in the process.

4. What would you say are the activity's weaknesses?

The only weakness of the trip was the timing of the trip. While we were there, Konkuk students were busy with preparing for their final examination, which prevented them from spending more time with CI students. Despite the schedule conflict and test

anxiety, the students from two universities managed to find time to get together. Some of them are still in communication with each other.

5. How would you improve this activity for next time?

I will develop and include at least one more international service learning project of working with multicultural families in Korea.

6. What did you learn from the process?

I learned how important this type of international travel is for CI students, particularly for first generation college students. For them, this was their first foreign trip. Through this trip students saw new possibilities for their future. Many of them commented how this trip has changed the outlook of life.

I learned that service learning is a high impact practice in an international context as well. International service learning is a powerful way of engaging students and it allows them to foster a sense of global citizenship.

Lastly, I am all the more convinced that reflection activities are crucial for students' learning and transformation.