Prepared ECSE candidates to meet the needs of diverse children and families through domestic and international experiences

Dr. Stephanie N. DeSpain, Dr. Robin Miller Young, Raven Stepter

Presented at the 2019 DEC Annual International Conference
Dallas, TX, October 3, 2019

Agenda

• Introduction and background to experiential learning in domestic and international sites
• Framework for creating partnerships and preparing candidates and faculty to participate in experiences
• Voices from faculty and students
• Q & A

Guiding Questions

• What does research say about preparing EC/ECSE teacher candidates to meet the needs of diverse populations through experiential learning?
  • What is the nature of the experiential learning activities conducted at domestic and international sites? How do these experiences enhance candidate preparedness?
• What is a process/framework for preparing programs and candidates for these experiences?
• What do faculty and student participants say about their experiences?
  • How do the outcomes of their experiences connect to the research?
• Which theoretical learning principles undergird "experiential learning"?
• What types of early clinical experiences have been arranged and conducted to enhance the preparation of EC teacher candidates?
• How were empirical designs and data collection methods used to gather evidence of the participants’ experiences (candidates, faculty members, and supervisors)?
• How did the studies’ conclusions inform our current work?

Examining Existing Literature
Located studies that described domestic and/or international "experiential learning" for EC/ECSE pre-service teaching candidates.
• "Experiential learning is supported by constructivist theoretical principles, recommending that students have an active role in learning where authentic tasks are introduced" (Miller & Gonzalez, 2010, p. 1).
• Generally, experiential learning has been called "field experience," "early clinical" (takes place before student teaching), "study abroad," "practicum" or "internship."
• If candidates are teaching English to non-native speakers, the experiences may be described a "community-based learning" or "service-learning."

Common Purposes
To enhance candidates:
• awareness of regional and global cultural diversity
• competencies to meet children's and families’ diverse learning needs
• understanding of contextual factors that impact the early care and education of young children
• personal and professional competencies in co-teaching, as well as design, delivery, and evaluation of high quality curricular, instructional and assessment practices.
• preparedness for employment opportunities.
Participants: Students

Students:

• Upper-division, undergraduate-level pre-service teacher education candidates.
• High percentage of women (+95%), reported ethnic/cultural backgrounds seem to match regional location of academic institution.

Participants: Location Supervisors

Location supervision:

• Cooperating teacher/administrator of host institution, or
• Faculty/supervisor from academic institution.

Participants: Instructional Faculty

Institutional faculty:

• Faculty member teaches a seminar, and then travels with students to supervise;
• Faculty member who only supervises;
• Non-teaching faculty member of academic institution who had teacher-preparation program responsibilities.
Experiential Settings Characteristics: Domestic

- Domestic: May be in close or far proximity to academic institution.
  - Example: Within state (Belwood, IL) or external (Houston, North Dakota).
  - Provides opportunities to experience different language(s), urban versus rural school district, socio-economic variables and community contexts.
  - Usually one week in length (inter-session, summer timeframe); "camp" for young children; "exposure" for candidates – limited teaching responsibilities.

Experiential Settings Characteristics: International

- International: Outside US geographic boundaries.
  - Example: China, Taiwan, Finland, Honduras
  - Opportunities for immersion in culture, "deeper dive" into lesson development and differentiation for DLLs, stronger bonds with host families, faculty and children.
  - Usually 2 – 6 week duration; may be children's camp; teaching expectations are higher than that of the domestic experience.

Selected Empirical Methodologies and Data Collection Techniques

- Miller & Gonzalez, 2010, 2011:
  - Mixed methods; quantitative and qualitative:
    - a) pre-post experience surveys with Likert-type items to assess academic, civic, career, and culturally related perspectives analyzed by ANOVA;
    - b) a series of structured reflections by candidates analyzed through comparative content analysis.
**Selected Empirical Methodologies and Data Collection Techniques**

Miller & Gonzalez, 2016: (Revised 2010 & 2011 studies to triangulate data)

- Study 1:
  - a) “short papers” before departure discussing dimension of the candidates’ expected interactions with the young, native-Chinese speakers;
  - b) a series of structured reflections completed during and at conclusion of experience; supervisor field notes of observations conducted during experience and submitted at end of experience;
  - c) on-site focus group interviews during experience with supervisors. Data analyzed by comparative content analysis.

---

**Selected Empirical Methodologies and Data Collection Techniques**

Miller & Gonzalez, 2016: (Revised 2010 & 2011 studies to triangulate data)

- Study 2:
  - a) Candidates completed reflection prompts that were modified in order to “more systematically align with course and program-level expectations” (p. 230).

---

**Selected Empirical Methodologies and Data Collection Techniques**

Phillion & Malevski, 2011: Cross-cultural, multicultural narrative inquiry

- “Candidates delve into cultural diversity in authentic, natural and holistic ways and begin to develop cultural competency through reflection on their experiences” (p. 648).

Data include:

- a) literature reviews on study abroad and cultural competence in teachers,
- b) in-depth interviews conducted once pre-trip and twice post-trip,
- c) focus group interviews conducted twice on-site,
- d) document analysis of candidates’ journals, assignments, e-portfolios, and photos
- e) researchers’ participant observations in and out of classrooms, and
- f) researchers’ participant observations in and out of classrooms, and

Researchers also interviewed principals, teachers, parents and community members of the host site.
• Candidates reported participating to enhance (a) personal development; (b) general pedagogical skills; (c) strategies to meet needs of diverse students and families; and (d) awareness of global issues and definitions of community.

• Initial site-based experiences were difficult and exciting, with actual teaching experiences more challenging than expected; skills and confidence evolved.

• At conclusion, candidates reported improved ability to apply course content in field settings, enhanced professional skills, improved confidence and problem-solving skills, and clarification of professional goals.

Results and Conclusions

• Supervision and support were critical to ensure the candidates’ success.

• Competencies in pedagogical strategies, and especially those to meet the needs of ELs, were judged to have increased more as a result of the international experience than the domestic experience.

• Candidates reported importance of preparedness for experience and having a positive attitude for working with cohort members, children and hosts, and faculty supervisor as variables that affect impact of experience on candidates.

A Framework for creating and implementing experiential partnerships

What is your current process for establishing collaborative partnerships?

Key: In order to promote sustainability, there must be mutual "buy in" and benefit from and for all stakeholders

Collaboration Framework
University Perspective on Partnership Goals

**Educate US and Global programs offered selected students opportunities to participate in engaged learning experiences, which supported the COE strategic action plan (Innovative Practice).**

**Educate US**

1. Broaden COE students' perspectives and encourage open-mindedness to urban and rural education, diverse communities, and alternative approaches to classroom environment; and
2. Learn about methods of instruction and professional development.

**Educate GLOBAL**

1. Expand COE students' perspectives and encourage open-mindedness and growth per teaching and learning in diverse settings;
2. Learn about and apply alternative approaches to classroom environments;
3. Amass skills in varied methods of instruction and
4. Enhance professional development education.

Recruitment & Participant Selection

- Spreading the word
  - Recruitment within classes (e.g., university faculty, program partners)
  - Fliers and Media Announcements
  - Recruitment videos showcasing past trips (examples to follow)
- Creating application process and establishing due dates
- Creating process for selecting participants
  - Reference checks
  - Interviews
  - Scoring application materials
- Notifying all applicants of decision

Recruitment Videos

Educate US

Educate Global

Preparing Candidates for Diverse Experiences

Educate US: Texas, North Dakota
- Two orientations
  - Travel
  - Home Stay
  - Cultural Expectations
  - Clinical Experience Expectations

Educate Global: China, Taiwan, Finland
- Six orientations
  - Travel
  - Dorm life
  - Cultural difference and expectations
  - Planning for instruction
  - Co-teaching
  - Differentiation Instruction
  - Planning for “other” camp activities
## Orientation Overview: Example from China Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Intros</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Team Building</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Team Building</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Team Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General overview of program</td>
<td></td>
<td>Housekeeping: pictures</td>
<td></td>
<td>Political diversity:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China facts/Cultural Awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td>Portal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Info to Duolingo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overview of WIDA matrix</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chosen Course Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign Culture Right</td>
<td></td>
<td>Talent Show planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Announcement</td>
<td></td>
<td>Homework: 1 complete</td>
<td></td>
<td>Homework: 6 complete</td>
<td></td>
<td>Blood test results due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Duolingo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Duolingo</td>
<td></td>
<td>( Hep B &amp; liver function)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Preparing Faculty to Support Candidates during Diverse Experiences

**Educate US (TX, ND)**
- Understanding logistics of travel and home stays
- Understanding expectations for candidate support
- Understanding dynamics of school district

**Educate Global (China, Taiwan, Finland)**
- Understanding logistics of travel and housing
- Understanding expectations for candidate support
- Understanding political and cultural climate
- Using the above to guide:
  - Preparation of candidates for co-teaching, lesson planning & differentiating instruction, travel, and cultural immersion

## Engaging Successfully in Classroom and Non-Classroom Cultural Experiences

**Educate US**
- Previewing local community and school district prior to experience
- Taking advantage of home stay opportunities to explore and learn about community
- Putting oneself ‘out there’ to promote engagement in classroom routine

**Educate Global**
- Previewing local community and school/school district prior to experience
  - Planning for cultural activities and travel logistics
- Becoming THE teacher
  - Receiving constructive criticisms and adjusting lessons/activities based on faculty mentor/co-teacher feedback
Troubleshooting the Unexpected

• What do we do when candidates experience the unexpected?
  – Engage candidate in problem-solving process
  – Provide mentoring and guidance to implement and monitor solution
  – Facilitate or mediate communication between candidate and “other”

We want to empower candidates to troubleshoot the unexpected, but with guidance.

Post Trip Reflection & Analysis

• How do we assist candidates to process the experience?
  – Gatherings or get-togethers after the experience
  – Opportunities for group reflection
  – Follow up interviews or surveys
• Aim for a variety of formal and informal opportunities across time to process

Voices from Participants

Analysis of post-experience data from participants of Educate US and Educate Global
Overview of the Project

Student Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>05.18</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>MSLR</td>
<td>10.18</td>
<td>Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>01.17</td>
<td>Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>02.17</td>
<td>Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>MSLR</td>
<td>05.18</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>10.18</td>
<td>Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>03.18</td>
<td>Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>03.18</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>05.17</td>
<td>Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>MSLR</td>
<td>09.17</td>
<td>Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>09.18</td>
<td>Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>10.18</td>
<td>Houston</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Themes

Themes were driven by research in the field, along with prior data analysis around Educate US and Global experiences.

Student Themes

- Aptitude and confidence to teach all students
- Aptitude and confidence to work in diverse co-teaching and team-based settings
- Development of a diversity-based world view
- Enhanced perceptions of the realities of teaching and increased desire to become a professional teacher

Faculty Advisor Themes

- Facilitating achievement of program and candidate goals
- Assisting candidates with processing and reflecting on the experience
- Developing culturally responsive educators
- Enhanced perceptions of realities of teaching and how that applies to pre-service teacher preparation

Voices from Student Participants: Raven’s Story

Educate Global: Beijing, China in 2016.

Guiding Questions for my Discussion

- Why did I chose to participate in this experience?
- How did the pre-trip orientations help me prepare for this experience?
- How did living and teaching in China impact my teaching?
  - What did I learn about teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students?
- What strategies and approaches do I implement in my current clinical experiences that were shaped by my experience in China?
Voices from Student Participants

- “Just the way the teacher, Mrs. Soaring Eagle, talked to me about her students was amazing. She was so proud of them, and they were so proud of themselves. They were really eager to show me what they knew,” she adds. “I just hope to build those positive relationships when I teach. I want to make sure each student knows that I care about them as individuals.”
  — Student participant, Mandaree, North Dakota

Voices from Student Participants

- “I didn’t think that in those couple of days that I would be able to connect the way I did, but I got to experience a really positive learning environment and a great respect in the classroom for the teacher and the students.”
  — Student participant, Houston, TX

Voices from Student Participants

- “It just makes me more aware. It made me more comfortable for sure working with kids who don’t speak my language. It made me more patient. It made me more understanding. But I would say the most is just more aware.”
  — Student participant, Beijing, China (on how the experience impacted her teaching)
Voices from Student Participants

• “I don’t know. I think it has like—it’s enriched what I’m able to do in the classroom with my kids. You know, because I do have correspondence with people across the world. I mean, last year we would write letters back and forth type of thing, which is different for the kids in fun. I think recognizing how much I need to present different things. I feel like I’ve always been like a visual teacher. But like you really understand how visual you need to be when you’re teaching a new language. So that was something that was reminded to me again when I did that.”
  —Student participant, Miaoli County, Taiwan (on how the experience impacted her teaching)

Voices from Faculty Participants

• “And it just struck me how positive—positive it was for the candidates to be living with some of the teachers—and hearing what teaching is really like. I just thought that was such a positive experience for them. But, you know, seeing, you know, okay, I’m up here to coach at 6:30 and I teach all day and I’ve got another coaching session—I work until 4:30, I go home, I pick up McDonald’s on the way home or whatever. Just really seeing what the profession demands. But also the rewards of it.”
  —Faculty participant, Houston, TX

Voices from Faculty Participants

• “I think the most positive experience was when you would ask [the candidates] questions. And I don’t think those of us in teacher preparation asked enough questions of our candidates about what did you see today? What did you do? Tell me about an interaction you had with a parent or a child. Or what was your a-ha moment? To be there with them and to be able to ask questions was really a very delightful and rewarding aspect. Because then you could see what they were gaining or where they weren’t picking up on parts of their experience. And so to be able to embed important teacher preparation course objectives in what you were doing was a valuable experience.”
  —Faculty participant, Houston, TX
Limitations and Future Directions

**Limitations:**
- Small sample size
- Data only collected post hoc
- Stay with January Educate-Us, as May timeframe did not provide as many opportunities for EC candidates to teach
- Create more consistent experiences in the over night stays with host district staff members

**Future Directions:**
- Increase sample size
- Collect data prior to and during experience from students and faculty
- Add teaching work sample such a videotaped instruction to analyze and/or examine lesson plans, or other teacher/student artifacts (international student work samples, etc.)

Questions

Contact Information

**Stephanie N. DeSpain**
- Northern Illinois University
- Gabel Hall 162C
- DeKalb, IL 60115
- sdespain@niu.edu

**Robin Miller Young**
- Northern Illinois University
- Gabel Hall 162E
- DeKalb, IL 60115
- ryoung3@niu.edu

Please contact us if you would like a copy of today's presentation.