

**Obtaining a “Global Lens” through International Service Learning:
A Framework for Family Science Courses**

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ABSTRACT. To strengthen academic and personal development among future professionals, scholars across academia are encouraging participation in study abroad and service learning courses. Faculty in some disciplines have combined these two pedagogical approaches as International Service Learning (ISL). The ISL approach may be particularly beneficial for Family Science students preparing to become globally oriented Certified Family Life Educator scholars (CFLEs). Based on calls from CFLEs for increased student real-world experience serving diverse, cross-cultural populations, this manuscript provides a Family Science ISL framework. Using examples from this framework, the paper discusses applicable CFLE core competencies and makes recommendations for future course replication.

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Appreciation for and acceptance of values, traditions, beliefs, and peoples of other nations are essential skills for students entering Family Life Education (FLE). With this in mind, family scholars focus on the impact of globalization and the role of international educational experiences to prepare new professionals to serve global families (National Council on Family Relations [NCFR], 2016, Fall). In general, higher education has expanded global learning experiences to increase diversity and cross-cultural awareness. Programs have also employed student service learning opportunities to increase knowledge of “real world” family issues. Some disciplines have taken additional steps to combine these pedagogical approaches to create International Service Learning (ISL) experiences. As a family science field, scholars are calling for documentation of new practices such as ISL when preparing future FLE to serve diverse, global family needs (NCFR, 2016, Fall).

This manuscript provides a Family Science ISL course framework and contextual example. This is the first step in documenting an ISL Family Science course, setting the stage for future study. The authors hope to motivate faculty to consider implementing diverse, cross-cultural experiences within their curricula by providing tangible recommendations for course construction.

Literature Review

For more than two decades, university faculty in the United States have been encouraged to increase their students’ international academic experiences (Casteneda, 2011; Donahue, 2011). Estimates suggest that about 10 percent of all US undergraduates will study abroad at some points during their college educations (Institute of International Education, 2014). This trend has grown to the point that more than 300,000 U.S. students participated in such programs in 2015 (Redden, 2016). The data depict a national academic movement toward creating more international experiences to enrich student learning.

The strong positive impact of these experiences on students is one reason for academia’s interest in increasing them. Literature on studying abroad indicates that placing students in foreign settings presents them with perspectives, people, languages, issues of poverty privilege, and unique traditions (Motley & Sturgill, 2013). Some major outcomes of study abroad courses include transformational personal experiences (Chang, Lucy, Yu-Fu, & Yi-His, 2012), increased awareness of culture, relational growth, gratitude, and higher empathy levels (Dwyer, 2004; Dwyer & Peters, n.d.).

Service learning is a pedagogy that complements study abroad and is emphasized in higher education (Berin & Tubin, 2011). Service learning courses involve students meeting real needs within communities and reflecting on their service (Le, Raven, & Chen, 2013). These activities often include experiences in which students work directly with community organizations and members, perform volunteer services, and incorporate course content into community action. Paired with reflection, service activities that met real community needs increased students’ understanding of themselves and the world (Quan, 2013). Positive outcomes

of service learning courses include (a) increased community service, (b) civic engagement, (c) collaborative development, (d) integrated learning, (e) increased sense of community, and (f) responsibility (Donahue, 2011).

Based on the unique results that study abroad and service learning programs provide, some faculty have combined the two pedagogies to create International Service Learning (ISL) courses. When combined, ISL courses incorporate three main characteristics or suggested practices: (1) student engagement in service activities that meet community needs, (2) cross-cultural interactions coupled with pragmatic experiences, and (3) reflection to gain understanding and appreciation of the country and academic study. The aim of all three characteristics is to promote global citizenship (Global Vision International, n.d.). Development of ISL curricula have emerged in disciplines such as business, nursing, and communication (Hunt & Swiggum, 2007; Pless, Maak, & Stahl, 2011). Given the recent emergence of these practices, empirical understanding of the outcomes arising from ISL courses is just beginning to be addressed.

Though documentation of the results of ISL pedagogies is limited, one outcome includes the transformative nature of these experiences. Studies describe this transformation as an awakening to self and the world; development of more complex, personal understandings of other cultures and peoples; cross-cultural adjustment; and, sensitivity to poverty and social justice (Crabtree, 2008; Kiely, 2004). For example, one study examined an ISL experience by looking at a business course offered in Southeast Asia. The study sought to determine whether the field of business was appropriate for ISL and its potential for integration into existing curricula (Quan, Raven, & Chen, 2013). Results demonstrated that ISL business courses increased student understanding of the extent to which business decisions affected poverty and society. Similarly, nursing programs have published descriptions of ISL coursework that suggest instructors design courses to increase global learning, social consciousness, and development of cultural competence (Curtin, Martins, Schwartz-Barcott, Dimaria, & Ogando, 2013).

ISL in Family Science

Though there are models of ISL courses in other disciplines, Family Science literature has no published examples. However, the most recent National Council on Family Relations Network newsletter suggested that Family Science students must understand structures and show knowledge of other cultures and values (Anderson-Burdine, 2016). Furthermore, newsletter articles encouraged globalization of curricula and emphasized the value of international experiences that highlight various aspects of FLE.

Student preparation for Certified Family Life Education

Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) certification is offered through the National Council on Family Relations and aims to provide an international standard for identifying professionals with core competencies to implement FLE. To earn certification, individuals must demonstrate knowledge and document their experience in ten family life content areas (NCFR, n.d.). Examples of these content areas include (a) families and individuals in societal contexts, (b) human sexuality, (c) interpersonal relationships, (d) family resource management, and (e) professional ethics and practice. CFLE-approved university Family Science programs allow

graduating students to apply for provisional status. Provisional status means that students have finished the necessary coursework, but have not completed the 3200 hours that are mandatory for full certification.

Although provisional status provides a unique opportunity for students to earn certification upon graduation, CFLE scholars caution that these novice professionals lack real world experience working with diverse groups. This inexperience often leads to a “learn-as-you-go” approach, undermining educators’ confidence and cultural competence (Ballard & Taylor, 2012). The challenge lies in the development of pedagogies, curricula, and assessment strategies that incorporate content knowledge and application of desired competencies (Schvaneveldt, Payne, Hubler, & Merrill, 2013). Based on the gap between student knowledge and practical experiences, CFLE scholars recommend that universities incorporate service learning and other experiential opportunities for working with diverse audiences. These activities are vehicles for increasing real world experiences and cultural understanding (Ballard & Taylor, 2012). Other scholars suggest that FLEs strive to increase personal awareness of their own and other cultural beliefs. One way to achieve such awareness is through reflexivity, the process of becoming more aware of oneself and one’s relationship to others (Allen & Blaisure, 2009). Globally oriented FLEs may also provide increased understanding of issues affecting the populations they serve (Darling, 2007).

Statement of purpose

As a discipline, Family Science has focused on the need for globalization and international educational coursework that prepares new professionals for competence in serving global families. One means for accomplishing this task is cross-cultural service learning opportunities. This paper’s purpose is to provide a general framework for an ISL course and an example describing the international context in which it was implemented. The paper addresses how an ISL course helps students gain more experience with diverse populations through cross-cultural opportunities, which will enhance their CFLE certification. This example also demonstrates the complexity of course development and provides the lessons learned for duplicating similar courses in the Family Science field.

Family Science ISL Course Framework

For more than a decade, Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) faculty from a Midwestern US university developed and taught an ISL course in Oaxaca, Mexico. Over time, the course content and delivery evolved to expand student understanding of service in a cross-cultural context. In its most recent iteration, the course included four primary components: (1) direct service activities working with the children, (2) service projects designed to meet specific physical maintenance needs at each site, (3) readings and seminars relevant to the experience, and (4) events aimed at increasing student understanding of culture and diversity. The following section presents major components of the course, which can serve as a framework for faculty who wish to develop similar study abroad service learning courses. While this section makes some references to Oaxaca, Mexico, it is important to note that these references provide examples of course components. A later section, entitled *Implementing the ISL Course in*

Oaxaca, Mexico: An Example, describes specific details related to the authors' implementation of this course.

ISL course components

The ISL course was initially developed as a three-week experience offered each summer beginning early in May. The three-credit class was scheduled for this time so students could complete the course before the beginning of June, allowing them to be available for other summer responsibilities. Preparation and recruitment began approximately seven months before the course started. Recruitment efforts included a series of university-wide informational meetings completed in cooperation with the Office of International Education. Interested students submitted online applications to HDFS faculty detailing their academic histories, rationales for wanting to participate in the class, previous study abroad and/or service experiences, Spanish-speaking abilities, and reference letters from university faculty. Two faculty members oversaw course implementation. Over time, an average number of 15 to 18 students was deemed the logistically manageable enrollment for the course.

One practical consideration that arose when developing an ISL course is the need to anticipate its costs to students. In this course, students were responsible for paying tuition along with a program fee covering cultural events, lodging, in-country transportation, and some of their meals. Students paid for their own airfares, passports, food, and other personal expenses. Some students used financial aid, on-campus student grants, or personal fundraising to offset course costs.

To prepare for the ISL course, students took part in several three-hour mandatory meetings during the spring semester. Four days before departure, students spent six hours finalizing preparation and packing materials used in the class. These meetings focused on (a) outlining the course; (b) reviewing its syllabus, required readings and assignments; (c) logistics for lodging and travel; and (d) preparing for service learning activities. Faculty also prepared students for cultural transitions that included potential safety issues, basic language skills, and culture shock. In addition, these meetings served as a time for purchasing and coordinating supplies for service activities. It is important to note that these preparatory meetings proved essential in creating an educational environment for development of trust, clear expectations, and collegiality.

Student profiles

Students enrolled in the course attended a mid-sized public university in the upper Midwestern US. Some students came from Family Science; however, many Honors Program students also participated. At this university, the Honors Program strongly encouraged study abroad experiences; its program director had been a Family Science faculty member. These Honors students came from a wide range of majors across the university, with many first-generation undergraduates among them. Although students from any academic major were eligible for participation, most were HDFS majors/minors or Honors students from various disciplines. A majority of the participants were Caucasian and female. Students ranged in age from 18 to 23 years; there were no prerequisites for enrollment. Course registration took place

after students attended informational meetings advertised at a university-wide study abroad fair or after receiving information about the ISL course in their other classes.

Course objectives

Course objectives represented knowledge and skills students would learn by the time the experience ended. In the latest iteration of the course, these were the objectives students were expected to achieve upon completion:

1. Describe how ethnocentric attitudes and beliefs shape perceptions of different cultures.
2. Analyze how features of Oaxacan culture and society shape experiences of local individuals and families.
3. Describe how culture shapes the ways that services are provided to individuals, families, and communities.
4. Describe the needs for and uses of practical knowledge and skills required for service in a foreign culture.
5. Articulate how an international immersion service experience can have an impact on students personally, professionally, and academically.
6. Compare and contrast cultural differences between Oaxaca, Mexico and the United States.
7. Develop three personal objectives and evaluate their progress in achieving those objectives. The objectives were knowledge and skills that students developed for themselves.

Co-facilitation model

Supervising a course in a foreign culture with language barriers and multiple students is an intensive “24/7” endeavor. Therefore, faculty adopted a co-instructor model and oversaw all aspects of the course. During several years, other interested faculty were invited to Oaxaca for one week to introduce them to the course and work with co-instructors and students. This allowed faculty members opportunities to gain experience before potentially becoming lead instructors. Co-instructors provided several benefits to students and faculty: (a) shared workload responsibilities, (b) supervision of students, (c) simultaneous coordination of service learning at multiple sites, (d) flexibility for transportation in and out of the country, (e) facilitation of seminars and culturally relevant events, and (f) reduction of faculty burn-out. The most important benefit was the availability of multiple faculty members to manage unexpected events (such as student illness) while abroad.

Use of a liaison

The success of an ISL course depends partly on establishing relationships within the host country. A liaison can be helpful with exploring and vetting potential service sites and events for meeting course objectives. For this course, a faculty member from a regional private university served as the liaison. This individual helped establish connections at service sites, maintained communications with course faculty throughout the year, and arranged transportation, housing contracts, and relationships with local tourism vendors for course cultural events. The liaison

provided crucial food, drink, and personal safety recommendations. The initial course setup required significant work by the liaison, who was paid on a per-student basis. Over time, the liaison's day-to-day responsibilities decreased because faculty became more accustomed to the language and local practices.

Although working with the liaison associated with higher education was not mandatory, the connection proved beneficial because she connected our students with her students, thus facilitating a deeper student immersion experience. One primary way of creating this student-to-student interaction was through structured conversation time. During these interactions, students compared familial and romantic relationships, local laws, family expectations, educational opportunities, and nightlife cultures in their respective countries. These conversations often developed into friendships and created opportunities to experience the culture firsthand, such as visits to students' homes.

Service activities

As described above, service learning focuses on meeting real needs of a community and reflecting on that experience (Le et al., 2013). Consequently, service learning components of this course included working at two orphanages. Throughout the year, faculty communicated with service learning sites and the liaison to identify and plan for these activities. The preparation allowed students and faculty to obtain supplies necessary for completing onsite activities and projects. Examples of service activities included tutoring children in math and English, along with physical maintenance such as painting or light carpentry work. Typically, student involvement in service activities took up six to eight hours each day.

Cultural events

A unique facet of any international experience is the chance to gain deeper understanding of a region's cultural nuances. Therefore, faculty have a critical responsibility to create student opportunities for student participation in cultural events. During this course, faculty worked with the liaison to plan five major cultural events. These events went beyond service work and typically focused on customs, practices, or events that defined the region and demonstrated how the culture evolved, how families functioned, and how families acquired and utilized resources. Examples of past cultural events included guided tours through a city's local indigenous markets, visits to the homes of artisanal families, and tours of ancient ruins. Faculty members strategically coordinated cultural events that highlighted diverse experiences and directed attention to the economic livelihoods of local families.

Seminars

Seminars took place three to four times per week during the three-week course. In these seminars, students focused on their reactions to the weekly readings with an emphasis on how the texts related to their service and cultural experiences. Discussions also addressed challenging circumstances that students encountered, such as culture shock. As the class progressed, participants spent considerable time discussing how the experiences would have an impact on students' actions beyond the three-week class.

Course readings

Developing engaging yet provocative readings that encouraged personal reflection was an integral part of maximizing student impact. Readings focused on four major themes: (1) student responses and adjustment to learning and service in an impoverished foreign culture, (2) understanding service learning as a means of impacting students and those they served, (3) recognizing how global issues affect individuals and families in the United States, and (4) the degree to which student service made sustainable differences in the lives of people they served.

After several years of teaching the course, the faculty began to recognize some of the cognitive and emotional changes students often experienced during their three weeks. Consequently, faculty chose readings to mirror those developmental changes and to provide manageable reading requirements. Readings were given to students two weeks before they left for Mexico. These readings were intended to familiarize them with Qaxacan culture through attention to local ethnic groups and family roles and traditions, along with the region's political, educational, economic and social dimensions. These introductory readings also helped students become familiar with the culture without imposing US beliefs and standards on the people of Oaxaca. For example, one required text was "Mountains Beyond Mountains" by Tracy Kidder (2004), which provided a powerful account of service in a foreign culture. Students were asked to read the first half of Kidder's text before leaving the US and to finish it during their first week abroad. In the course's first week, several readings challenged ethnocentric values and behaviors of wealthy US students and evoked questions about how they might make a difference.

In week two of the course, readings focused on service learning and the real world impact of such experiences. Students were introduced to potential unintended consequences of service learning. Some readings criticized service learning as an opportunity for "relatively well-off people in this world to travel long distances to experience other people's misery for a life-enriching experience" (Guo, 1989, p. 108). Readings provided critical analysis of the service learning experience, often leading students to wrestle cognitively with the dissonance between their humanitarian intentions and the realities of whether the people they served would experience long-term benefits.

By the third week, the emphasis of the readings transitioned to ways the ISL experience could inform students' future actions. For example, one reading discussed experiences of migrant farming families living in the students' home state (Parra-Cardona, Bullock, Imig, Villaruel, & Gold, 2006). The text described the living, working, educational, health, and immigration issues that families making less than minimum wages faced while their labor supported a significant portion of the state's agricultural economy. This reading raised several ethical, legal, and social challenges related to migrant families along with the need for US immigration reform. Ultimately, when paired with seminar discussions, the assigned readings evoked questions that made students feel uneasy and compelled them to consider how and whether they could make sustainable differences in Oaxaca and in the US.

Course Assignments

In addition to service work and course readings, students were responsible to complete reflective journals, develop and complete personal objectives, and submit a final paper after returning to the U.S. An important distinction between volunteerism and service learning is intentional guided reflection helping students process their experiences and make connections with academic concepts reinforced through assigned readings (Taylor, 2009). Prior to the course, faculty prepared short booklets with predetermined prompts to facilitate students' journal reflections. Students completed five to six entries each week describing events and their reflections on those events. Faculty collected the journals weekly and provided constructive comments for each student. In addition, faculty would meet one-on-one with students to discuss their entries, help them work toward meeting the course objectives, and discuss any other challenges they experienced. Every opportunity was taken to process their reactions and thoughts to encourage student growth.

Three weeks after returning to the U.S., students were given the final paper instructions. This delayed assignment encouraged students to re-enter their lives in the U.S. and with some distance from the experience, reflect on the intensity of the experience. For the paper, students were asked to compare and contrast family structure, collectivist versus individualistic cultures, questions related to immigration laws in the U.S., and how these concepts impacted non-U.S. families. Students were asked to describe how culture shapes human experiences, compare and contrast the two service learning sites, and provide examples of how the children responded to students' care and nurturing. Last, they were asked to reflect on how the course encouraged them to think about themselves, their abilities, and their own culture.

Post course follow-up

The final reflective component of the ISL course was to meet with students approximately five months after returning to the U.S. This informal gathering typically included a meal at one of the faculty's homes. The meeting focused on students' perspectives about how this experience impacted and continued to influence their development. Over time, faculty found this follow-up activity to be vital. It gave students an opportunity to express their thoughts, feelings and actions that emerged during and after the course. This was also a time to invite university administrators to hear about student experiences and garner economic and other support for future course offerings.

Implementing the ISL Course in Oaxaca, Mexico: An Example

While the above framework is important, providing a more detailed example of how this framework was used in a real-world international context can further benefit faculty who wish to develop an ISL course. Therefore, this section describes the ISL framework as implemented in Oaxaca, Mexico, in the capital, Oaxaca City

Regional description

Understanding the geographic, demographic and cultural characteristics of a region are important when creating an ISL course. The state of Oaxaca is located in Southwestern Mexico with a considerable coastline along the Pacific Ocean. The city of Oaxaca is located in an arid part of the central valleys, at the foothills of the Sierra Madre Mountains. It is located at an elevation of 5200 feet, with summer temperatures consistently exceeding 95 degrees Fahrenheit. These geographic and climactic characteristics were important as these influenced students' health including dehydration and exhaustion.

Oaxaca has 16 registered indigenous communities. Even by Mexican standards, the city is an ethnically diverse population of more than 250,000 people. Oaxaca is also the poorest state in the country, depending largely on tourism as the predominant mainstay of the economy. Given the stark level of poverty in the State, families viewed education as an essential means for improving their standard of living. Consequently, some indigenous families sent their children to the City of Oaxaca to live in orphanages. There, children were assured an opportunity to receive an education that increased their opportunities for success in the future.

While participating in the course, students lived in a small family run hotel in downtown Oaxaca, near the city center. The city center, or "Zocalo," is surrounded by local businesses, hotels, restaurants, and numerous musicians and street vendors who come to sell their wares. Some of the local vendors included impoverished individuals and families, selling mostly artesian goods, seemingly eking out a living. It was commonplace to see children selling bookmarks, Chicklets, woven bracelets, and families begging at the curb for pesos or food. These obvious indications of widespread poverty greatly impacted students, and often resulted in a sense of guilt regarding a newly acquired awareness of their own wealth.

Service learning at the orphanages

The settings for the service learning component of the course were two different orphanage sites. The first orphanage was a non-profit entity that housed children with significant physical, mental, emotional and social needs. It was located in a poorer neighborhood, on the outskirts of Oaxaca. The home was run by a group of evangelical Christians and housed children ranging in age from 2 to 22 years, although most service work targeted children between the ages of 3 to 16 years. The orphanage accepted all children that came to them. Even by local standards, the orphanage was understaffed and disorganized. Many children came from a variety of different indigenous groups, from small mountain villages. Some children were fluent in their indigenous language (e.g. Zopatec) yet arrived at the orphanage with no knowledge of the Spanish language.

The second orphanage was a very different environment. This home was managed by a group of Catholic nuns. The home was started because a group of wealthy Mexican women in the area found children picking through garbage dumps, on the street alone, or without parental supervision. This site was well organized with a strict routine schedule, and academic work that prepared them for university education if they had the aptitude. This setting provided the children with a safe, structured environment. All children had assigned responsibilities that

included making meals, washing clothes, caring for younger children, and yard maintenance. The site had 50-60 children and admission to the home was limited.

The primary service learning activities at each orphanage involved interaction with the children. University students developed daily lesson plans for the children that incorporated small and large motor activities, math and English tutoring, tasks that assisted with hand-eye coordination, cognitive development, behavioral and social aptitude, and reading. Service at the first site was impacted by the special needs of the children and included assistance with speech problems, walking, feeding, or challenges with visual impairment.

In addition to time spent with the children, other service opportunities included refurbishing and painting playground structures, replacing broken screens in dormitory style housing, painting interior and exterior buildings, replacing playground pea-gravel to provide a safe surface for children, and basic landscape and grounds maintenance. Students participated in these activities to varying degrees based on their abilities and previous experiences. Of important note, some visiting organizations desired to complete selective service projects to the orphanages; however, the focus of this ISL course was to provide service in any capacity needed.

It became evident that maintaining strong local relationships with the orphanages was important, particularly with the directors. Each year the faculty took the directors to dinner, or in the case of the Catholic nuns who worked 365 days of the year, a meal was shared with them on location. These informal interactions resulted in greater levels of trust between the site staff and course faculty. These opportunities also helped students and faculty develop an understanding of the unique history of each orphanage, the goals, economic situations, needs, and some stories about individual children's relationships with their families of origin.

Cultural events in Oaxaca

Cultural events helped students better understand the context of the region. These opportunities allowed students to develop closer relationships with local people and broadened their perspective of diversity among the indigenous populations. This component of the course exposed students to a deeper level of the local economy, familial and relational practices, and regional traditions. One unique facet of Oaxaca is the small, artisan family operated businesses that are the cornerstone of the local economy. The handmade goods produced by these businesses are the products of extended and multigenerational families working together to sustain the entire family. One such cultural experience involved students visiting a family's home to observe the alebrijes production process; wooden carvings from the native copal tree. Students could see how the entire family worked together in this venture, gathering wood, carving, kiln drying, painting alebrijes, and marketing their crafts. Faculty also arranged for students to share a meal with the family, tacos with Oaxacan cheese and pumpkin flowers, prepared by the women of the family. This experience provided students with an opportunity to observe and discuss the unique division of labor, gender roles, family resources management, and compare and contrast those with practices in the U.S.

Other examples of past cultural events included: a guided city tour through local indigenous markets, visiting artisan families who made rugs or black pottery, visiting a Mescal

distillery, and other small industries that provided major economic support for the region. Additionally, students attended a local festival highlighting local traditions and indigenous dancing. Faculty also arranged tours of ancient ruins that provided an understanding of the origins of native populations in the area. These experiences allowed students to acquire a diverse perspective of the economic and familial realities of those living in the region.

Student challenges while in Oaxaca

While it is difficult to anticipate all the difficulties encountered in an ISL course, over time, faculty were able to predict some specific challenges students would experience. For example, due to Oaxaca's geography, dehydration and altitude sickness were common among students. In one instance, there were three students who were simultaneously being treated intravenously for altitude sickness and dehydration. This created stress among both faculty and students, and reinforced the need for the co-facilitation model with strong liaison support. Consequently, when physical ailments arose, it was not unusual for students to feel homesick, wanting to reach out to friends and family in the U.S.

Another challenge experienced in Oaxaca was culture shock. At times students had cognitive and emotional challenges. Seeing small children on the streets as young as three, earning their portion of the family income were daily observances. Even the trek to the Zocalo, though initially fascinating, could become overwhelming with a plethora of sights, sounds, and smells of stark poverty that contrasted to their own lives. For the first time, many students saw their own culture as one of wealth and excess.

One of the most significant challenges faculty and students faced was the sense of loss and sadness when leaving Oaxaca. Many students became emotionally attached to the children during the course. Leaving the sites the last day was always difficult, as children clung to the backs and legs of students and faculty. Students were often moved by feelings of guilt about the futures of these children.

To address these reactions, faculty brainstormed with students and explored different solutions to make their impact more lasting. These conversations resulted in various sustainable student actions. Most noteworthy of these activities was the development of a University Registered Student Organization, Para Los Ninos. This organization focused solely on raising money for the future needs of children in the orphanages. These efforts resulted in students fundraising thousands of dollars to purchase items for the orphanages such as washers and dryers, bicycles, shoes, and desks and chairs for classrooms. For many students, participation in Para Los Ninos has been a critical element in sustaining their commitment to these children.

Discussion

While the benefits of study abroad and service learning courses are understood, only recently have scholars begun to publish examples of service learning courses in a cross-cultural context. Within the most recent edition of the CFLE Network, several authors addressed the importance of and necessity for international experiences, because they are a powerful, profound and life-

altering educational experience (Roy, 2016). The current manuscript attempted to provide a framework and example of a specific ISL course taught in Oaxaca Mexico.

Gaining CFLE experience through ISL courses

While scholars note the need to expand pedagogical practices to meet the needs of future FLE practitioners (Schvaneveldt et al., 2013), few if any published works exist examining the relevance of an ISL pedagogy in meeting FLE certification. In considering the ten CFLE content areas this ISL course framework provides an example of how faculty can incorporate multiple CFLE content areas into a single course. In this case, four areas seemed particularly relevant.

The first was an understanding of *families and individuals in societal contexts*. This refers to the understanding of families and their relationships to institutions. This generally includes the cultural variations families experience, heritage, social class, ethnicity, race, and cross-cultural issues and minority groups around the world. In the ISL example, pre-course meetings and assigned readings first introduced students to the diverse societal contexts that paralleled their course experiences. Planned cultural events included walks through the Zocalo, tours of the city and ancient ruins, and participation in local festivities, helping students to gain a more holistic understanding of the cultural context in which Oaxacan families functioned. These cross-cultural opportunities provided students with the potential for transformation and reflexivity, encouraging them to gain new perspectives on themselves and the families they served (Allen & Blaisure, 2009; Tobias, 2013).

Other CFLE content areas focused on the *internal dynamics of families and family resource management*. Internal dynamics of families are described as the understanding of family strengths, weaknesses, and how members relate to one another. This area generally includes social processes, communication, conflict, family stressors, and crisis. *Family resource management* refers to the decisions made about developing and allocating resources such as money, time, assets, and space to meet a goal. This generally includes decision-making processes, social environmental influences, consumer issues, and decisions.

Students observed the internal dynamics and financial management of families through collective work roles. These were exhibited in the shared work of multi-generational artisan families, with each individual contributing to the overall financial viability of the family. Furthermore, students witnessed the decision-making processes that led to constructive family resource utilization. Individual insights into the internal strengths of families were often gained through shared meals and conversations. Building these personal moments into the course allowed students to understand and empathize with the internal dynamics of Oaxacan families.

A final relevant content area relates to *family law and public policy*. This refers to the understanding of legal issues, policies, and laws that influence family well-being including issues related to marriage, divorce, family planning, education, the economy, and other regulations. Throughout the course, students were encouraged to observe and reflect upon the larger macro-level factors that influenced Oaxacan families. By the end of the course, students were encouraged to consider policies that not only affected the Mexican population but also minority groups in the U.S. Policy-related readings and student discussions led to more critical

conversations about immigration reform and migrant worker issues; matters relevant in the students' home states. Consequently, faculty hoped these conversations would result in students examining themselves and their role from a more global family perspective. This approach is consistent with current CFLE trends and recommendations (Roy & Medora, 2016).

The CFLE certification provides a unique stepping stone to graduates entering the family life education field. The incorporation of ISL courses into existing and newly approved CFLE programs may provide the unique framework needed to give students the added cultural experiences required to work successfully with global, diverse audiences. The framework provided in this manuscript may provide important insight as programs develop or replicate similar ISL courses.

Lessons learned and recommendations

As is the case with any discipline, there are modifications to every iteration of a course. In this ISL example, the course adaptation process was magnified due to the number of years the course was offered and the multiple facets within each version of the course. In addition to the framework presented above, there were many invaluable lessons that inform the following recommendations (or suggested practices) for future Family Science ISL courses. While these recommendations are not exhaustive, the authors encourage faculty to consider using them to maximize the framework's effectiveness.

- *Balancing faculty workload.* The development and implementation of this course was at times overwhelming. The authors strongly recommend a team teaching, co-facilitation model, with a carefully thought out division of faculty workload. Each faculty member was paid for teaching a 3 credit course. However, one faculty member might take care of all the accounting issues in Mexico, while the other faculty member communicated with the sites and housing facilitates before the course began. Although the course was three weeks in length, the preparation and management of the course was almost a year-long process.
- *Liaison.* Establishing a liaison relationship in the host country was essential to the development and success of the course. The liaison was established in the second year of the course, after visiting a local university. The liaison was a faculty member at this university who taught English and was interested in developing cross cultural opportunities for her students. Connecting with local universities, tourism agencies, other study abroad organizations, or personal contacts were invaluable in developing the ISL course. In this example, the liaison managed many logistical needs, helped educate faculty about local practices, assisted with unforeseen events, helped develop relationships, and minimized common and oftentimes disingenuous practices used toward tourists.
- *Student connections.* One benefit of a liaison employed within higher education was the connections that resulted from interaction with native university students. Relationships with students in Oaxaca encouraged cross-cultural conversations between the two student groups. Though it may not always be feasible, creating opportunities for students

to interact with similar aged individuals helped them make cultural comparisons beyond what was possible in a classroom setting. In this case, building these relationships led to additional opportunities to meet with local families, build sustainable relationships, and gain a deeper understanding of the Oaxacan culture.

- *Daily planning meetings.* A pragmatic practice that proved vital to the success of a larger ISL course were daily faculty meetings. These meetings allowed for the discussion of the upcoming day's activities, logistics, and other idiosyncratic student issues. While in Oaxaca, there were oftentimes uncontrollable circumstances that required flexible planning by faculty. Given the physically and emotionally draining nature of ISL courses, daily facilitator meetings provided faculty with a dedicated time to plan, adapt, reflect, and support each other.
- *Balanced schedule.* ISL classes can be exhilarating and exhausting for students and faculty alike. In the example above, finding a balance with a demanding schedule that included service learning activities, academic requirements, cultural events, coupled with the regional geographic conditions were at times overwhelming. When the schedule was unbalanced, students' mental and physical challenges were exacerbated. Therefore, faculty are encouraged to build in structured time for recuperation and rejuvenation to reduce illness and exhaustion. Rest is critical to ensure full student participation in service, academics, and other components of the course.
- *Students' emotions and cognitions.* Culture shock among students was predictable. However, faculty in this course were unprepared for the variability and degree to which culture shock affected students' emotions. As noted, students often wrestled with their own thoughts about world poverty and the wealthy natures of their own lives. This concern often produced uncomfortable thoughts and feelings related to hopelessness and guilt. It is important for faculty in ISL courses to be aware of and comfortable dealing with these emotionally charged issues. While students may perceive these emotions and cognitions as insurmountable, the authors have come to view this "wrestling" process as important and conducive to growth.
- *Focus on sustainability.* While it is easy to get lost in logistical decisions of an ISL course, participants must maintain a focus on sustained outcomes. For this course, faculty focused on the impact of students on the Oaxacan children and the experience's long-term impact on university students' thoughts and actions. The concept of sustainability was integrated throughout the course in readings, reflections, and post-course follow-up. The authors recommend intentional integration of activities that encourage short- and long-term sustainable impacts. The true impact of an ISL course is measured by whether the course can be a catalyst for student transformation.

Conclusion

ISL pedagogies are fertile ground for the Family Science field. Although other disciplines have demonstrated the positive outcomes of such courses for student success, published examples of ISL experiences from Family Science are lacking. Despite the paucity of these

examples, Family Science scholars are continuing to emphasize the importance of globalization, the need for service learning opportunities, and the creation of international experiences (Roy & Medora, 2016; Schvaneveldt, et al., 2013; Smith, 2016). These efforts parallel the concerns associated with knowledge gaps among students entering the FLE discipline, who may lack the experience needed to serve diverse, cross-cultural audiences (Ballard & Taylor, 2012). Adoption of ISL courses into Family Science higher education programs can help fill these gaps. This manuscript provides an ISL course framework and recommendations that may help in the replication and expansion of similar global courses. In the future, the authors intend to explore student outcomes associated with this course, which include the analysis of students' reflective journals. This process will add to the body of literature related to scholarship on teaching and learning within the Family Science field (Maurer & Law, 2016). Given the lack of documented ISL examples and outcomes, future research must focus on publishing effective ISL models and assessing student experiences.

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