

Director's Note

Eyes on International Education

In November I participated in a celebration of International Education Week hosted by the provost's office. The event served as a happy reminder of the importance the University of Kentucky places on international education in fostering intercultural understanding.

In her remarks, Provost Riordan highlighted the recent increase in students from our university studying abroad as well as the increase in international students on our campus. Last year student enrollment in Education Abroad programs rose by 39% earning UK the number one spot in Kentucky for university students enrolled in study abroad programs, according to the Institute of International Education.

Also reinforced during the celebration was the need to foster intercultural understanding in P-12 schools. Isabel Taylor, who brought greetings from Mayor Gray's office, shared data indicating that local schools now serve more international students than ever before. Data collected by her office this fall show that, in the Fayette County Public School district, there were 4683 foreign language speakers enrolled in English Language Learner programs representing 91 different languages. This is an increase of 208% from 2005.

The College of Education has a longstanding commitment to international education, and this issue of Field Notes highlights several ongoing initiatives. Inside you will find reflections written by two student teachers who recently participated in our international teaching program which was begun more than four decades ago as a way to equip teacher candidates to promote understanding across cultures through sustained international experiences. Emily Strange shares perceptions of her time in Germany last spring, and Dustin Roberts reflects about his placement in South Africa this fall. You will also get a glimpse of the first international student teacher we hosted in Lexington as part of our newly established exchange program with Linköping University in Sweden. And finally, you will see a sample of international activities in which our faculty members are engaged.

I hope the articles we have included will remind you, as the provost's celebration reminded me, about the value of international engagement and the importance of stimulating intercultural understanding in our classrooms. We are very interested in learning what you are doing in this area as well as hearing your ideas about how we might work together in our partnership to enhance program offerings. As the year gets underway, please take a few moments to share your thoughts. You can reach us easily by email or phone: fieldx@uky.edu or 859-257-1857. -SB

A "Social Studies" Butterfly

By Emily Strange

Elementary Teacher, 5th Grade

Lone Oak Intermediate, McCracken County

I've always enjoyed Social Studies. Through my years in school, Social Studies drew me in. The people in the stories I read could have walked the same ground as I have walked; the places on the maps I studied could eventually be a destination. I could see the content with my own eyes and I knew from a young age that the globe would eventually be my playground.

During my junior year at the University of Kentucky, when I was perusing the internet for international teaching opportunities, I accessed the Office of Field Experiences website describing the overseas student teaching program. I read testimonials, and then I called my mother. In the two minute conversation I had with her, I told two lies and a truth. The truth was that I was looking into teaching overseas in the Spring of 2013. The lies were that it was just a distraction from studying and that I couldn't give any more details because I had to get back to my geology notes. I got off the phone, researched for two more hours, and scheduled an appointment with an advisor.

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Emily Strange completed her student teaching in Berlin, Germany. Look inside for more photos and accounts of overseas experiences!

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I will fast forward through the endless application process and time spent anxiously awaiting approval to tell you I received my first placement choice: Berlin, Germany. At first, Germany wasn't a blip on my radar. I knew I wanted to travel to Europe, but I was picturing the rolling green hills of Ireland or the sunflower-gilded fields of Tuscany. When my advisor told me about the amazing relationship UK had built with the John F. Kennedy School in Berlin, along with the incredible travel opportunities that would be available given Germany's geography, I was sold.

I arrived in Berlin at 4:00 in the afternoon, but given that it was already dark outside, and I had been awake for over 24 hours, I was almost convinced it was 4:00 in the morning. I immediately went to my host's home to rest before beginning at JFK School the following day. After being introduced to the other international student teachers, my principal, and the campus, I met the 24 brilliant second graders who would be my students for the next four months. Almost half of the class was German, and the others were American. I am so grateful for the time I spent with them; they taught me endless lessons, both about teaching and myself.

The learning didn't stop in the classroom, though. Remember that opportunistic view I held about Germany's geography? Well, I took full advantage of it. In addition to soaking in as much of Berlin's history as I could, I also traveled to eight other countries and 15 other cities aside from the one I was lucky enough to live in. For a Social Studies nerd like me, it was heaven. I tried my best to be wherever I was, whether it was learning how to say key phrases in the given language or trying the local cuisine—which may or may not have sounded appetizing at first. I tried to look at my 112 days abroad as 112 different opportunities. This mindset made my time in Europe extremely fulfilling.

Now that I have returned and have been teaching in my own classroom for almost a full semester, I can readily attest to how priceless this experience has been. It's amazing how easy it has been to engage fifth graders when I tell them I have stood where Hitler died or been to a city with streets made of water. By showing them different forms of money and pictures of foreign places, they latch onto the idea of experiencing something different than what they've known for the decade they've been alive. To say that my overseas student teaching experience has positively impacted my teaching career would be a vast understatement.

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Field Notes is published twice a year by the Office of Field Experiences and School Collaboration.

Where in the World Might You Find UK College of Education Faculty?

By Jeanette Groth

Lecturer

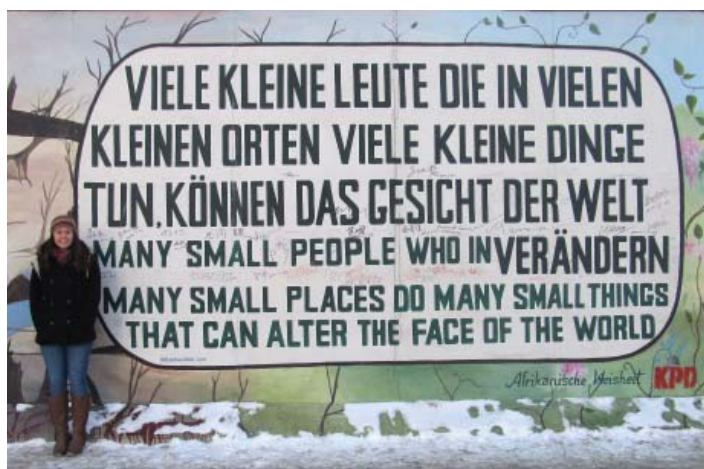
University of Kentucky, College of Education

"Globally diverse" and "culturally responsive" are buzz words in today's educational realm. But for College of Education faculty, these terms hold more meaning.

For example, Dr. Jane Jensen (Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation) is working on a faculty exchange program with the University of Cagliari's Visiting Professor Program. The collaboration focuses on student transitions to post-secondary education with regard to issues of educational access and equity in Sardinia and Appalachia. Did you know Dr. Jensen is also supervising the internship of a University of Cagliari undergraduate this winter? You may want to ask her about that or about any other of her initiatives.

Dr. Lars Bjork (Educational Leadership Studies) teaches an international graduate-level course that introduces students to prominent international scholars through participation in the International Symposium on Educational Reform (ISER). This year the ISER conference will be held in South Africa, which Dr. Bjork and UK students will attend.

There are many more examples of COE international engagement. Watch this space for more information about our "world class" faculty.



Emily Strange poses by an inspiring quote adorning Die Mauern--The Berlin Wall (East Side Gallery).

I cannot fully explain how perfect this program was for me as someone who loved learning about the world during my years as a P-12 student, and as a teacher who thrives on spreading that love. My semester abroad has fueled my fire for travel, enhanced my teaching, and inspired me to cover as much of the globe as I can in the years to come.

Nkosi sikele' iAfrika (Lord Bless Africa)

By *Dustin Roberts*
COST Student

Right now I'm sitting in my room in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, sweating with the fan blowing on me. I just checked the weather back in Lexington, and it's freezing with a forecast for snow. While I mull over the seasonal difference, the amount of time I've been here, and how much I've changed, home has never felt so far away.

At the end of July, as I prepared to leave Kentucky for South Africa, every imaginable emotion was going through me. I was excited, sad, nervous, frustrated, and I felt clueless and almost regretful. This was my first time leaving home for longer than two weeks.

The journey to South Africa took two days. Altogether, it took me 40 hours to get from Lexington to Port Elizabeth. Needless to say I was exhausted when I arrived. I was met by my host family at the airport and taken to their house in Summerstrand. It is a beautiful place, but when I first arrived I was a bit disappointed. It's located on the beachfront, the houses and apartments are enormous and well kept, and it's a big tourist attraction neighborhood. It feels like any beach town back in the States. I came this far from home to be challenged and forced to adapt to a new culture. My first thought was, "Where is the challenge?"

I spent a couple of days resting and adjusting to the time difference before I went to Victoria Park Grey Primary, the school I was assigned. It was only a 10 or 15 minute drive, but I realized that in this city that's all the time you need to travel to an entirely different world. In this city the life and sights are varied. The rich beach life of Summerstrand was quickly behind me. The mansions turned to falling down houses and apartment complexes, and abandoned buildings. Shiny cars turned to white vans packed with 15 or more people, cyclists, and pedestrians. We dodged goats and cattle in the roads and had to go around a cart loaded with scrap wood and metal being pulled by two donkeys.

When I arrived at Victoria Park Grey, the whole setting seemed surreal. The school was built more than 150 years ago, and the dusty, unfinished, and beaten wooden floors showed their age. I remember seeing the giant wooden doors with handles, locks, and keys that were reminiscent of the Victorian era, and the thought of Hogwarts entered my mind. I entered those doors and was introduced to my class. Students all instantly stood up and greeted me with a uniform, "Good Morning, Mr. Roberts!" They remained standing until I said good morning as well. They all then plopped down in their wobbling desks, which looked as though they were brought in more than 100 years ago and had remained unmoved since. This was also the first time I heard people speaking isiXhosa, which is one of the southern African languages that utilize clicking sounds and was the first language of 99% of the students in my class.

During my first few days at the school I knew it was going to be challenging--clearly the hardest transition I've ever made in my life. The routine was different, as were the organization, the behavior, and the teaching style. Behavior management was *extremely* different. I was surrounded by a language I had never before heard. It took me more than two weeks to learn the names of my students, because of the pronunciation, and even longer for those names that contained 'clicks'. My students would break out in laughter every time I tried to pronounce someone's name.



Dustin Roberts instructs his students at Victoria Park Grey Primary School in Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

As the months passed, I got a better sense of the life my students lived. I could share endless stories about the tales they've told me, the newspaper articles I've seen, and the stories I've read in their English writings. One incident gave me a glimpse into their culture and its variation from my own. I was teaching a lesson on health in Social Sciences one day, and the topic was HIV and tuberculosis. We were talking about the symptoms, getting tested, and medical treatments. Someone brought up the topic of sangomas. At this point I had heard of sangomas and knew what they were, but I didn't realize that my students bought into them.

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A sangoma is what we would call a witch doctor. They live mostly in the surrounding villages and townships, serving as doctors to the residents, but not “doctors” in the sense that most westerners envision. They chant, throw chicken bones, prescribe unheard of remedies, and use what many westerners would consider to be unorthodox methods. Just to paint a picture of what I mean: One of their methods for “curing” HIV is to bless the patient, who must then have unprotected sex with a virgin. Some of my students were adamant about their belief in sangoma healing. They couldn’t believe that I had no faith in sangomas in general, let alone that they could cure HIV or tuberculosis. Some of them actually became furious. I found myself at a crossroads.

In South Africa, HIV and tuberculosis are very prevalent. I felt a duty to protect them and convince them that a sangoma could not do such things, but at the same time I wanted to show respect for their culture. In the end I tried to meet them in the middle by saying, “Maybe there are some things a sangoma can cure, but why would you take a chance with something as serious as HIV or tuberculosis, when we know that a doctor can help?”

I believe that somewhere inside us all is an instinctive belief that we will overcome any challenges we face. I still can’t shake this emotional struggle, which gives me a sense of duty. It’s a deep sense of belonging and a feeling that I

can--and should--make a difference. I believe that home is wherever you feel you belong, and maybe that’s why this feels like home to me.

Being placed with a host family not only forced me to separate myself from other Americans, it gave me many more opportunities to make friends with the local people. I have relationships here that are as close as any I have back in the States. That has given me the chance not only to explore the city in more depth, but to become more culturally involved. I’ve been to nearly every corner of this city, though rarely as a tourist. I’ve traveled to farms, to the central markets, to a birthday party in the KwaZakhele Township, to villages in the Karoo, to the best secret fishing spot, and to countless out-of-the-way restaurants and bars. I fully opened myself and took every opportunity to discover the world around me, and it’s made all the difference.

As I’m writing this article, it’s been over four months since I arrived, and I only have three weeks left. It’s hard to explain how that feels. I’m leaving home all over again, and that sense of regret is creeping back. I’ve had challenges here, and they have been tough. I’ve had those moments that I’m sure every teacher has had, when we ask ourselves if we’ve made the right career choice. But what is the experience without struggles? I grew to love the challenges and realized that the feeling of success only increases with the challenge.



Emily Barnett was UK’s first student to participate in the UK College of Education/Linköping University exchange program in spring 2013 (left).



Jaid Ragg is all smiles (below) in New Zealand--with the children in her student teaching classroom and in the great outdoors (below).





Ida Lidebjer-Granberg participated in the exchange program partnership between UK and the University of Linköping last spring. Highlights of her stay included meeting former mayor Teresa Isaac and dressing up as Swedish children's book character Pippi Longstocking for her kindergarten student teaching classroom.

A Message to Future COST Students

***By Dustin Roberts
COST Student***

Before traveling to South Africa, I had received word that I would be living with a host family. Initially I was a bit worried, and I had some concerns as to what to expect. I'd be living in someone else's home with someone else's rules, and to a certain degree giving up some of my privacy. I was fearful that I might find myself isolated from the experience that a young adult traveling to a new city, not to mention a new country, would expect when trying to make it on his own. At the same time, I knew the other Americans would all be living in an apartment together. I was terrified of what my experience would turn out to be and imagined that I would be envious of the experience they would have.

In reality, the exact opposite has happened. The experience I'm having is completely different from that of the other Americans, but I couldn't be happier! Living separately from them has forced me to be more immersed in this culture than I had ever imagined. Being placed with a host family has given me far more opportunities to build relationships and friendships that are as close to my heart as any back home. I find myself reading the newspapers, watching the local news, and cheering for the local teams as passionately as I would back in Lexington. In doing so, I find myself discussing the South African politics and current events with friends and family here as emotionally as if I were a local, and it feels as though my opinion is always respected. The greatest feeling that comes at this point is that I find myself feeling less and less like "the American". At the same time, what I see with the other American students here in Port Elizabeth isn't that they are necessarily having a bad experience; it is just different.

Living together, they have all built close relationships with one another and do nearly everything together. However, in doing so they have not felt the pressure of needing to find socialization and therefore have relatively no friends who are locals. Meanwhile, I rarely find myself with other Americans.

This full immersion is great for me socially, and it has also become very important for the relationship I have with my students. Once we got past the wall that separates us culturally, they became my students. I understand them better, connect with them better, and when questions or problems arise, I can address them in a more sincere and thoughtful way. It does take time and commitment, though.

My message to future COST students is this: Fully immerse yourself. I know you've heard this phrase countless times by this point, but it's so important. You will be sad to leave home, but believe me, you will want to plan your trip to be as long as possible. Separate yourself from other Americans as much as you can, and limit your communication with those back home. Force yourself to meet locals, and take every possible opportunity to go out with them to all the local hangouts, hidden restaurants, and bars, and avoid all the tourist areas, as they do. You will become more than just "the American" and will begin to feel like a local. By that point it becomes *your* city, and you can't picture yourself leaving. The experience becomes greater than you could have expected. It's more than a place of study and an opportunity that you'll talk about for the rest of your life; it's your new home.

Collaborative Connection: Sharing Ideas

One way to sustain the collaborative connection between university and school-based partners is to share ideas about teaching and learning. In your experience, what works and doesn't work to promote quality teaching and foster student learning? What changes have you made; what challenges have you experienced that colleagues might find interesting or helpful?

Please send thoughts, suggestions, or concerns to mrhrab0@uky.edu. We welcome your contributions!

Cooperating and Resource Teacher Tuition Waiver Program

Senate Bill 77 stipulates that state universities will provide a tuition waiver for up to 6 credits to a cooperating teacher who supervises a student teacher for a full semester. Teachers supervising for only 8 weeks will be eligible for 3 credits. Resource teachers can also receive a tuition waiver for up to 6 credits for each KTIP intern supervision they complete.

To qualify you must:

- use your credits within one calendar year of completing the assignment,
- gain admission to the university and be a student in good standing,
- complete the tuition waiver form *before* you enroll each semester, AND
- submit the waiver form to the Associate Dean's office prior to the first day of classes for each semester of enrollment.

Visit <http://education.uky.edu/ADeanRI/students/sb77-tuition-waiver> for information and an application. If you have questions, please contact:

Michelle Traynor

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Upcoming Events

January 3	University-Based Supervisors' meeting - 9:00 a.m. in 122 TEB
January 6	Student Teacher Orientation Meetings - Taylor Ed. Auditorium
January 7	First day of student teaching*
January 20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (holiday)
February 20	Last day to apply for a May 2014 graduate degree (online in MyUK)
February 28	Last day to apply for an August 2014 undergraduate degree (online in MyUK)
March 3	Dual placement students begin 2nd half placements
March 25 3:30pm - 6:00pm	KY Teachers Network Career Fair UK Student Center ballrooms
March 31-April 4	P-12 Spring Break (in most counties)
May 9	End of Spring 2014 semester
June 20	Last day to apply for an August 2014 graduate degree (online in MyUK)

**For most programs. Check with program coordinator for your specific start date.*

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