

Global Student Teaching: It Takes a University to Raise an International Program

Pamela A. Solvie, Ph.D.
University of Minnesota, Morris

Global student teaching programs exist for the purposes of placing preservice teachers at international sites to complete student teaching requirements as identified by students' institutions of higher education and the boards of teaching in their home states. Requirements, including teaching in English, teaching in identified licensure areas, quality supervision, and completing required number of weeks of clinical practice, help frame global student teaching programs and selection of sites for student teaching placements. In addition to addressing requirements identified for student teaching placements, global student teaching programs offer and provide international study abroad experiences for students within rigorous majors and licensure programs. With heavy course loads, practicum placements, and dictation of course sequence within programs, it is often difficult to plan for and fit in study abroad experiences related to education students' majors, yet it is increasingly important for preservice teachers to understand education from a global perspective (Miller & Gonzalez, 2010; Heyl & McCarthy, 2005). Global Student Teaching (GST) (<http://www.morris.umn.edu/GST>) at the University of Minnesota, Morris meets student teaching program and state requirements as described here. UMM's GST program has been in place since 1989. However, recent review of GST at UMM has prompted increased collaboration across campus, emphasizing decision-making within several units and increased communication with partners at home and abroad to continue to build and sustain, while improving this international program.

Leveraging Expertise Across Campus

As international programs, including Global Student Teaching move through periods of transition, integrity is ensured through standards that guide the work of everyone involved, not in one University office, but in many. The expertise and support of professionals across the university campus creates a support system which includes knowledgeable personnel whose institutional memory of quality programs is complemented and strengthened by vision for change to meet ever evolving needs of current students and current times

Offices that support the work of the Global Student Teaching Office include Academic Affairs, Division of Education, Financial Aid, the Academic Center for Enrichment, the Business Office, Computing Services, Academic Advising, and Office of the Registrar. While the names of offices in this network may vary based on particular university campuses, the services provided through these offices cannot be delivered solely through the Global Student Teaching Office, nor can directors in any one office be expected to be experts at interpreting and sharing information specific to multiple domains. To create and deliver a holistic and realistic picture of global student teaching, collaboration among personnel in these multiple offices is necessary.

Guidelines and Ethical Principals

Professional guidelines and ethical principals provide direction for all involved in building, supporting, and sustaining a global student teaching program within individual offices and programs throughout the collaboration. These guidelines and principles ensure that quality service is provided to students and that best practice strategies inform service provided. For GST at UMM, NAFSA's Association of International Educators (<http://www.nafsa.org/>) Ethical Principles are reviewed and followed when providing services to GST participants and when working with educators at international sites. Principles such as NAFSA's including integrity (dealing honestly and fairly and abiding by commitments), respect for the law (following laws and regulations and advising students in these laws and regulations), quality (providing educationally valuable programs, reviewing programs regularly, and adopting exemplary practices), competence (completing work competently and professionally and acquiring ongoing training to do so), diversity (engaging respectfully to honor the dignity and worth of all people, being attentive and responsive to the beliefs of others), transparency (demonstrating respect and professionalism in sharing information when working with individuals and organizations), access (striving to ensure programs are open to qualified individuals and planning and developing programs that are accessible), and responsiveness (maintaining open and prompt communication and support for individuals and organizations work with GST), provide direction for program planning, interaction, decision-making, and program review for everyone involved with Global Student Teaching.

Collaboration in the Network

Guidelines alone however, are not enough. Collaboration to achieve goals based on guiding principles is central to running an effective international program such as GST. Decision-making shared by professionals with knowledge and expertise in multiple fields is important as decisions affect the processes and plans of several offices. As a result of clear communication, responses (involving day-to-day operations, as well as responses to problem situations that arise) are founded on sound principles. Effective communication leads to transparency in Global Student Teaching processes and protocol leading to clear and updated policies and procedures, efficiency in operations, effective reporting and data sharing, ability to plan future initiatives in a timely manner, and support for preservice teachers in the program.

Through a system of shared work efforts and shared data, directors in the offices that work with GST provide services necessary to develop and support the program plans of GST participants as well as long term plans for overall program improvement. Professionals with expertise in each office interpret data from perspectives that inform decisions made in the Global Student Teaching Office from identifying appropriate placements to risk management throughout students' experiences. Following institutional policy, professionals in multiple offices access data including fiscal records, legal and insurance documents, academic and demographic information, and billing and enrollment data to ensure accurate and informed decisions are made. Such decisions lead to placements that meet students' academic and other needs. Students are provided information on general education and major requirements, advised and encouraged to apply for scholarships, counseled in financial assistance, registered, provided information on accounts, instructed in use of technology to access information and communicate throughout the program, and are provided orientation on completing course requirements, health and safety information, and travel precautions.

Raising an International Program

Global Student Teaching at the University of Minnesota, Morris has moved from oversight by a few to oversight by many. Recent program changes leading to this have focused on recognition of responsibilities of the various roles each person serves, clarification of roles within the network, documentation of procedures according to defined protocol, and meetings to discuss use of data to inform change and improve performance. The University of Minnesota's Education Abroad online profile and application system has facilitated improved business processes for shared work efforts and sharing of data.

Increasing transparency in decision-making processes and increasing participation to include not one, but many offices, GST at UMM continues to grow. As a result of continuous improvement in data collection, reporting, and informed decision-making on the UMM campus, GST has set goals and collected data linked to goal attainment; planned discussions with clearly articulated objectives for weekly meetings to review program procedures, curriculum, and supervision, monthly discussions with program directors, and semester meetings with network personnel to identify deadlines and review goals; increased transparency of procedures, business processes, and program statistics through weekly oral reports and staff meetings, monthly status report newsletters, and continual updates of documents, brochures, and other publications for the GST network, participants, and prospective students; and increased communication with university and overseas partners. These actions have strengthened the international program known as GST at UMM.

International programs are strengthened through increased collaboration between units on campus. Recognition that expertise resides in multiple units has resulted in intentional efforts to strengthen and improve GST at UMM. These efforts included building a strong network of professionals and processes for program issues, scheduling time to build collaborative relationships between campus units and incorporating this into business processes, planning for coordinated approaches for troubleshooting issues that may arise, focusing on the student experience and reducing barriers that prohibit or limit participation, and increasing support necessary to ensure successful experiences before, during, and after students' Global Student Teaching experiences. A strong network leads to a strong global student teaching program for it takes a University to raise an international program.

References:

Heyl, John D.; McCarthy, JoAnn. International education and teacher preparation in the U.S: The looming crisis. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 2005, Vol. 8, p97-122.

Miller, Kari Knutson; Gonzalez, Amber M. Domestic and international service learning experiences: A comparative study of pre-service teacher outcomes. *Issues in Educational Research*, 20(1). 2010. *Special edition on service learning*. p29-38.

NAFSA: Association of International Educators. *Ethical Principles*. Retrieved 3/15/10 from www.nafsa.org.