

Chapter 5

Context, Curriculum, and Community Engagement in Social Justice–Focused Study Abroad Programs: A Critical Examination of Instructor Intentionality

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ABSTRACT

The authors present findings from their study of how preservice teachers (PSTs) experienced and conceptualized social justice during two study abroad (SA) programs to Honduras and Tanzania. This study examined instructor intentionality (II), the purposefulness on the part of instructors in designing the goals and objectives of study abroad through a selection of context, curriculum, and community engagement. Intentional programming that sought to unfossilize prejudices by providing non-Western-

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centric curricula was emphasized. In this case study, authors analyzed and interpreted data using a framework for social justice rooted in three components: redistribution, recognition, and representation. The themes discussed in this chapter address (1) the influence of partnerships with community members in the development of social justice curricula; (2) differences across SA programs indicative of multiple approaches to social justice; and (3) various contexts, experiences, and curricula in cultivating social justice-minded educators.

INTRODUCTION

Given the urgency of addressing the increasing diversity of student demographics, teacher education programs need to provide opportunities for pre-service teachers (PSTs) to connect with students from backgrounds different than their own. Extant research includes numerous examples of study abroad programs that are designed to develop students' intercultural competencies, critical consciousness, and empathy (e.g., Marx & Pray, 2011; Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012; Salisbury, An, & Pascarella, 2013) but only a handful of examples that explicitly connect study abroad with social justice (Gross, 2015; McClelland, 2015). Keeping these limited examples in mind, the authors previously explored the connection between study abroad programs and PSTs' conceptualizations of social justice using Cazden's (2012) education-focused adaptation of Fraser's (2005) framework for social justice (i.e., Newton et al., in press).

Cazden's (2012) framework has three interconnected components that address the economic, cultural, and political aspects of social justice in terms of *redistribution*, *recognition*, and *representation*. Within the context of education, *redistribution* refers to a more just distribution of resources, ensuring access in every classroom to an intellectually rich curriculum for all students. *Recognition* focuses on a world in which diversity of cultures, languages, knowledges, and histories are valued and taught in schools. And finally, *representation* addresses power dynamics within social relations, how decisions are informed and represented in the decision-making process at all levels of educational systems (Cazden, 2012). In the authors' ongoing research, Cazden's (2012) framework demonstrated promise for analyzing and understanding how PSTs conceptualized social justice with regard to educational equity, yet the authors wondered how the intentions of the instructor influenced these conceptualizations. Using their working definition of instructor intentionality, as outlined in this paper, the authors investigated how instructor intentionality related to PSTs' conceptualizations of social justice across study abroad programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researcher understandings were informed by literature in two areas: 1) social justice-oriented study abroad programs as well as their program intentions, foci, and outcomes and 2) interdisciplinary scholarship surrounding intentionality. In short, researchers examined how other study abroad programs addressed social justice-oriented pedagogies and understandings, as well as how instructor intentionality in these programs related to PSTs' understandings surrounding issues of social justice.

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