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## **Educating Global Citizens: Challenges and Roles of International Education in Today's Context**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The world today functions as an interconnected net of exchange and globalized information. In order to properly perform their roles, educators around the world have attempted to form citizens under the idea of a single international community. This paper aims to discuss the needs, struggles, and important responsibility of foreign schools in the formation of global citizens today. This study looks at the past, present and future perspectives of the installation of international schools around the globe. Technology, instructional practices for a diverse group of learners, besides the provision of state-of-the-art facilities have been the challenges of many international schools. However, the main purpose of a foreign school should be the supply of an international atmosphere where learning about other cultures and countries becomes a daily reality in the classroom. This paper looks at the different angles involving the installation, improvement and spread of international schools globally and their role as creators of world-citizens.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The growing interest in school cultures and multicultural education can be expected to naturally generate an increasing interest in international schools and their roles in informing truly responsive multicultural/international education. Information about such schools is still limited, and there is so much to be done in the examination of the ethnographic, historical, and cross-cultural approaches. (Willis, D. B.). A trend in recent perception of international schools has been the shift from the concept of an American subculture in a foreign country to institutions with unique trans-cultural elements with a diverse community of foreign students and faculty.

By juxtaposing cognitive, emotional, and socio-communicative multiculturalism found in organizational research onto multiculturalism in international schools' curricula, one important question posed to all international schools administrators is how the schools can respond to the needs of a global community. Findings revealed that emotional, cognitive, and socio-communicative multiculturalism are viewed as important traits for good performance in transnational corporations, for instance, and that methods used to teach kids at international schools should also strongly encourages them (Resnik, 2009). The significance of multicultural skills in our interconnect world of today is understood by most educators currently working abroad. However, how to promote these skills in the school community is still a great challenge for the international schools around the globe.

### **BASICS OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS**

People around the world have never travelled or moved to a new country so often and so quickly as in the last few decades. Obviously, improvements in transportation, easier access to job markets abroad and globalization have contributed to the movement of expatriates from one place to another. Our communities have never been so mobile as today's. It is quite challenging to determine general characteristics of international schools, but there are common grounds that one can call international school as such.

First of all, the curriculum is usually developed from a more global view of academics. Therefore, subjects should be taught through a broader perspective, and national curriculum (including local languages and cultural elements) become a reversed portion of the learning content. In Social Studies, for instance, Geography and History. In other words, national language and culture are taught through elective classes, especially for those who are coming from abroad. In order to be accepted and recognized overseas, the curriculum has also to be submitted to international educational boards, which may approve or disapprove the unit plans created for each grade, giving the school a seal for "quality control," which is used for increasing enrollment and transfer of credits.

A second important component of any international school is the mixed student body. In most countries, there are strict laws regarding admissions into these institutions. Many immigration laws determine the criteria for accepting local students, and even in this case, there is a very limited permitted percentage, usually ranging from 15 to 30%. The prerequisites are usually: students holding a foreign passport, proof of 5 to 6 of schooling abroad, or either parent being an expatriate. Therefore, great majority of the students are non-nationals of the host country, although many affluent families have been able to persuade school administrations, trick immigration agencies, and even get to the extreme of presenting fake passports and defraud officials.

Another unique feature of international schools is the composition of the faculty and administrators. English is most likely to be the language used for instruction, and, consequently, English native speakers form the most probable teaching staff at the great majority of these schools. In fact, one may see very commonly, banners reinforcing a not-so-proven "English-only policy" throughout international schools outside the main countries where other languages than English is spoken. However, no matter what the language requirements are applied, teachers at international schools tend to be by relatively large numbers of foreign nationals, most likely English native speakers or native-like English language proficiency.

### **CONTEXT AND PROGRAMS**

International education has never been so popularized, and a new international school is being opened almost every day somewhere in the world, no matter how rich or poor the country may be. In recent decades, this sector of education has flourished as never before, and local schools seem to be incapable of providing an international curriculum as foreign schools do. One relevant – perhaps the most important – factor for a successful experience at an international school is the guarantee of a comprehensive effective global curriculum that encompasses local cultures and context.

Contextualizing learning is essential for an efficacious establishment of an international school. Simply importing standards and benchmarks from America or

from any other country does not prevent failures and can be perceived as an assurance of efficiency. Schools overseas must be able to adapt their mission and scope to the local environment and avoid the common attitude of supreme knowledge. New international schools frequently look outside of their borders for best practice and seek to import policies, practices and programs that appear to have succeeded in their purposes. In so doing they appear to contribute to the increasing globalization of education. This is a serious mistake curriculum and staff developers commonly make at the establishment of a new institution overseas.

UNESCO and other non-governmental institutions concerned about this issue have examined the importation of programs at various international schools. A wide range of case studies of the transference of foreign-developed programs by schools abroad have been conducted, such as teacher programs in the U.S. being transferred to international schools in South America or and American curriculum being implemented in the Middle East, predominantly within a Muslim student population. One main justification behind the forces driving program selection is for accreditation purposes by international agencies who are using increasingly standardized criteria and, in most part, headquartered in North America or in the U.K.

However, above all, the effect of culture on the interpretation of the underlying concepts and constructs that guided initial program development and design has to be taken into account. Such effects may lead to program modifications, intentional or otherwise, producing varying program outcomes in different cultural contexts. And, as we have seen, in most cases, there has been quite a distance between “inculturation” or adaptation of the curriculum into the local culture and learning styles. (Hayden and Thompson, 2008)

One solution for the issue would be the creation of a curricular program that would encompass the world’s most accepted methods and curricula. The International Baccalaureate was thought to fulfill this mission. Emerged in the 1960s after a significant demand arose for an internationally recognized secondary diploma among a subset of the international educators. In tension with the practical demands of producing and sustaining a mobile diploma were underlying liberal-humanist visions of a progressive model of schooling for "international understanding" in an era of embedded liberalism. However, there are some structuring tensions regarding specific guidelines, such as the ones dictated by the IBO, especially dealing with citizenship, curricular aims and operation. (Tarc, 2009) The question posed here is on how truly "*international*" this baccalaureate indeed is, or is it another American-based program adapted to school overseas?

## INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

If we take into consideration the amount of Nobel prize winners and the number of prestigious universities located in America does have an implication to the level of education U.S. seem to have. The educational system in the United States is perceived by many as the model for other countries in terms of secondary and tertiary institutions. In some regards it may be true. The world’s greatest research centers and headquarters of the biggest corporations are in American soil. However, when it comes to international education and global view of learning, the U.S. has still a long way to go.

It is necessary to develop a working model for international education in US public schools with consideration of the curricula and accreditation standards

utilized by the broad group of overseas institutions known as "international schools". In the last decade, there is a growing interest in global education from some public schools in many states, which is also a trend all over the world. Nurturing globally-minded students is not an easy task, and it requires proper training and qualification of teachers and staff dealing with the development of adequate curriculum and programs. (Carber, 2009)

A new "international education" movement, as Parker (2008) calls, is under way in schools across the United States. This movement consists of newly internationalized public schools along with state coalitions for international education, an annual International Education Week co-sponsored by the U.S. Departments of State and Education, an array of language initiatives, the Goldman Sachs Foundation's awards for exemplary "international" schools, and more. Phrases like "the global economy," "our increasingly interconnected world," and "global citizens" are more and more common. "International education" appears to be the new common sense. The question must be now on what it really means to be international, the preparation of teachers in America to deal with world issues, and what work they are doing in terms of a global curriculum.

There are many different ways to look at this new trend of an internationalization of education. Parker (2008) defends the idea that the reason behind the initiatives from the US government is for security purposes. He believes that national security is the justification for the new international education movement in America against the common opinion that this "movement" as he calls the trend was due to a world mindedness, global citizenship, intercultural understanding, etc. For him, today's wave is dominated by nationalism. International education as a national security initiative has two key dimensions for the state: economic and military. The economic way to secure the nation is to improve the nation's economic competitiveness with other nations--maintaining it or regaining it if it already has been lost. The military way is to strengthen the nation's armed forces, including its intelligence communities.

An interesting aspect of international schools in America focuses on the cultural composition of the school's student body. Some public "international" high schools serving high-need students in urban areas have created a form of international education built on the demographic tapestry of the student body. Immigrant students, many of them refugees, add a new kind of diversity to the schools' already diverse populations. School leaders creatively seize the opportunity and claim theirs are international schools because they have an international student body. Culture fairs showcase students' home cultures. In a way, schools as such have contributed to the advancement of global awareness and cultural exchange. Even though kids may never leave their cities, the world has come to them.

### **THE ISSUE OF IDENTITY**

As human beings, questions such as "Where Am I from?", "Where Do I Belong?" are quite typical among children who are enrolled at international schools around the world. They form a new group of people, often called the Third-Culture Kids. Born in one country, raised somewhere else, some of the students at foreign schools have lived in more than 3 or 4 countries only during their years of schooling. Values, traditions, even languages are lost in time and space. A new set of cultural elements are learned, and a psychological conflict emerges. In most cases, negotiating and maintaining identity is quite challenging.

Third Culture Children are neither raised entirely in their parents' home country nor as a member of the country where they now live. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) state that the children build relationships to all cultures, while not having full ownership of any country. These children may be confronted with cultural conflict, especially following a move to a new school, and/or entry to a school culture which is significantly different from what they previously experienced. Some are able to resolve the conflict, while others experience difficulties. Feelings of displacement, rejection and unease can be common when children are experiencing a transition of some impact (Ebbeck and Reus, 2005).

One strategy some educators use to help third-culture kids figuring out to where they feel more connected, and improve their sense of identity when the questions of nationality and belonging raise is to ask what it says in their passports. The nationality written in their passports help kids to reconnect to their place of origin, which is, according to many psychoanalysts, an important element to keep a sane sense of citizenship and a necessary feeling of identity.

While the benefits of a mobile expatriate lifestyle are widely reported, it must also be recognized that many students who attend or have attended international schools experience a confused sense of identity due to the fragmented nature of their personal histories. Schools, in many cases, offer psychological or social therapeutic assistance to the students, but they might not be enough if one considers how these globally mobile young people interact with the school community and the local society at large. Programs are necessary to be developed in order to tackle identity in international schools and other multicultural educational settings.

In fact, one must say that international schools immersed in host countries around the globe tend to serve all students as Americans since most curricula and pedagogical methodology are created and developed in the U.S. It is important for international schools to provide ethical considerations in the diffusion and implementation of their philosophies and approaches. International schools do not exist to provide education to Americans only, and, therefore, policies and practices have to be incorporated to the local environment, respecting each student's cultural inheritance in order to preserve their identities (Ramalho, 2007).

### **TEACHERS' ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**

It is quite relevant to investigate to which extent staff, faculty and administrators at international schools are trained and educated to work with culturally diverse communities. And most relevantly, teachers need to receive initial and subsequent training to deal with cultural diversity and differences. In fact, educators very rarely receive proper training to be responsible for learning within an international school environment. Schools are opened, positions are available, but time does not allow school administrators to offer quality teachers preparation programs. (Deveney, 2007)

Teachers must become more effective in culturally diverse classrooms and better understand the challenges of teaching a multicultural student body. This study investigated what changes occurred in the lives and minds of teachers who taught or are currently lecturing at international schools. The goal was to analyze how "internationally-minded" they are during and after having taught abroad. This included an analysis of their beliefs about teaching and learning successfully in international settings. Ninety respondents completed a simple 10-item survey, and the results were multifold; most notably demographics of this group tended to vary

while teaching beliefs and international mindedness remained relatively similar. This may suggest that many present and past international educators, while somewhat diverse, share many values and beliefs.

One important factor that would contribute to a more qualified group of educators in international schools today is their preparation while in college. Schools of education are striving to give their undergraduate and graduate students the international perspective they need to ensure they are well prepared to instruct the students in a global classroom. They are doing this through curriculum innovations, education abroad, new technologies, language immersion, and other valuable experiences. The efforts of various schools of education in this area have initiated a new transformation in the academia. Professors who are assigned to teach future educators must be themselves ready for such a task. Experience associated with a deep knowledge of issues concerning international education around the world is necessary to a successful life as teacher overseas.

### **ENROLLING CHILDREN IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS: PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE**

International schools, independently of their affiliations and which philosophy or programs they might use, do attract parents who are trying to offer their children a world-level of education and, as in most cases, English-language learning environment. In some countries, parents would do anything possible – or the impossible - to get their kids admitted into an international school, even if the campus is located in another city or they might spend much more with tuition that they can actually afford. There are many factors influencing this thirst for international education from a parent point of view. Surveys have demonstrated that there are paramount reasons for parents enrolling their children in a private international school, such as English-language education, added benefit for their kids' future success in a global context – assuming that international schools do provide a better view of world issues today. Despite of all difficulties going through admissions in most international schools, parents would sacrifice their financial and professional stability to provide this type of learning environment to their children (Ezra, 2007).

Parents tend to believe that the curricula offered at international schools are stronger than the ones at local schools, besides teachers are viewed as more adequately qualified. However, above all, international schools tend to be seen as institutions that install a global perspective of learning content, through a diverse expatriate community of teachers, staff and classmates. And, in most cases, international schools do require a better - or more internationally standardized - administrative personnel, which tends to be more responsive to serious issues, such as violence, classroom discipline and an unwillingness of teachers in local public schools to attend to students' individual needs.

The so-called modern global-nomads or the internationally mobile families experience various challenges, especially in the adaptation period. The search for education to the kids is definitely a crucial decision-making point for a family that needs to be relocated. Obviously, if it is in a country that speaks a different language, international schools are the only options. It is indeed a reason for families to even live separately if such institutions are simply not available. In a global society immersed in an interconnected and interdependent world, it is quite interesting to observe the survival strategies of the internationally mobile families in transition. Indeed, parents who have children attending private international

schools tend to be more active in the learning process, helping their children to better manage mobility and changes implied (McLachlan, 2007).

### **WORLD-VIEW AND GLOBAL LEARNING**

One important to be raised when dealing with international schools is the one pertinent to the role of host culture as a resource for developing intercultural understanding. One may argue that this is the function of teachers, curriculum and program offered at international schools. However, there might be given also importance to the host cultural group in the development of global mindedness in the students at an international school. Community groups, local parents and students must be cooperating to conduct a successful program of cultural exchange and help creating intercultural-aware kids. Lessons and in-class activities will not alone provide this interaction. (Jackson, 2005)

Language learners' own intelligence, ability to concentrate, perseverance, cultural identity, high expectations, and organizational skills all play an important role in determining the ease with which students learn. To accomplish the amazing task of acquiring a new language and culture, these learners need the support of culturally sensitive teachers, counselors, and administrators. It is quite challenging for a school to avoid creating "melting pots," and instead create a space for intercultural and global learning. Each student's participation must remain unique and strong in itself as it becomes part of the environment, adding beauty to the interconnected whole. There is an incredible amount of contributions students provide insight into what learners need from and bring to any international school. Strategies for meeting the needs of these learners are so essential and yet not so easy to implement. Elements such as direct support for second-language acquisition; students adaptation to the new environment, but, above all, the respect for cultural diversity and individual learning styles pose always as a tricky challenges for teachers and curriculum developers at any international school (Abrams & Ferguson, 2005).

There are many issues involved in clarifying the concept of "international education." What we know today is that simply attending an international school may not guarantee the experience of an international education. International education is a dynamic concept involving movement of people across political and cultural frontiers. Any school can choose to develop "worldmindedness" and become truly international, no matter the location or culturally diverse the faculty or student body may be.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

A troubling aspect of international schools is the perception many have that they lack in intellectual discourse. There are some characteristics of international schools that contribute to such a lack of academic prestige, such as the smallness of the sector or, and more importantly, the fact that such schools lie outside the mainstream of the local education system, serving mainly "expatriate children or a small number within a minority group in a country who cannot or do not wish to attend local mainstream schools" (Yamato, 2003, p. 22). There might be a better and broader discussion on the complexity of issues surrounding international schools, such as politics, economics, and social dimensions. It is recommended to link the literature on globalization with its implications for education and the role of international schools (Choi, 2004).

International Education must be practiced as international versus internationalist, in which global citizenship is taken as the most important outcome for students in these institutions (Roberts, 2003). Understanding how values operate, both in individual and cultural contexts, could help educators at international schools to determine what can and should be achieved with students and to build an appropriate program (Pearce, 2003).

There has to be a two-way immersion education to provide students with opportunities to understand and appreciate other countries and cultures. There are many features of two-way immersion education, such as bilingual language instruction, cross-cultural understanding, and international exchanges. Many schools have in their stated mission many values concerning the education of global citizens and world issues awareness, but it does not necessarily a successful implementation of this goal. It is necessary to make reality the schools' mission statements, which must include the infusion of diversity in the life of the school (Jackson, 2002). Cultural exploration and tolerance can be used effectively to ensure safety and through practical strategies, potential trouble areas can be avoided. In the context of international schools, if a policy is the mission statement, it should be systematically encouraged to take place on campus.

Another important area regarding international schools to be further improved is related to curriculum development. These are a handful of the alternatives curriculum planners teachers may find when they consider how to "internationalize" school programs. The multiple discourses at play under the name "international education," provide a golden opportunity for educators to decide, regardless where the schools are located, how best to prepare children for a changing world. They can spread out the alternatives, weigh them against one another, and determine which one or two, or some hybrid, shall stand as truly "international," applicable anywhere.

The world in which today's students will graduate is far different than the world in which teachers grew up. As never before, education must prepare students for a world where the opportunities for success require the ability to compete and cooperate on a global scale. The globalization of economies, the rise of countries, such as China, Brazil and India, advances in science and communications technology, acceleration of international migration, and especially the fact that virtually almost major health, environmental, and human security challenge we face can be solved only through international collaboration, this will require our high school graduates to be far more knowledgeable about world regions, cultures, and global issues.

The "third-culture kids" are a very mobile and highly educated minority, but there is still a lack on research on what happens after graduation. In which fields most graduates from international schools end up in their careers, if they tend to go back to their homelands, or what helps or makes difficult for them to keep in touch, these issues are quite unknown in the field of global education. International schools are not always in a position to know what has become of their graduates, though this kind of information is immensely useful.

Based on the surveys and interview conducted with teachers and students currently living abroad, there are a few recommendations to be added:

1. Create a global vision and culture by revising the mission statements and graduate profiles and creating a school culture that supports internationally focused teaching and learning;

2. Develop an internationally oriented faculty by recruiting teachers with international interests and encouraging teachers to take advantage of the many professional development and study/travel opportunities offered through universities and international organizations. In other words, it is necessary to increase the capacity of educators to teach the world. It is important to work through teacher certification mechanisms and with institutions of higher education to internationalize teacher preparation programs. Schools should reexamine professional development for teachers in light of the new global context and encourage international experiences for both prospective and practicing educators.
3. Integrate international content into all curriculum areas, bringing a global dimension to all subjects, including science and language arts, as well as social studies and world languages. International benchmarking of state standards are also necessary. International schools in one countries need to learn about education practices in other high-performing nations and use the best of what has been observed to help us continue to grow and improve. There must be conducted a review of assessments to ensure that they measure not just content knowledge, but also the analytical, higher-order thinking and cross-cultural communication skills that students will need to face the challenges of a changing world.
4. Emphasize the learning of world languages, including less commonly taught languages, such as Chinese and Arabic. It is suggested to make world languages a core part of the curriculum in grades 3-12. Schools need to create a long-term plan to expand their capacity in world languages and build on effective approaches to language learning, including starting early and creating longer sequences of study, using more immersion-like experiences, and harnessing technology (e.g., online language courses). High-quality alternative certification routes can speed up the production of language teachers from heritage communities and enable the development of programs in less commonly taught languages.
5. Harness technology to tap global information sources, create international collaborations, and offer international courses and languages online, especially to underserved communities. There is no question today the effectiveness of using technology to expand global opportunities. International schools must encourage the use of information sources from around the world, help teachers engage in classroom-to-classroom collaborations to connect students with international peers, expand opportunities for students to take internationally oriented courses and world languages online, and promote student-created international projects on the web.
6. Expand student experiences through internationally oriented service learning, internships, and partnerships and exchanges with schools in other countries. It is necessary to redefine high school graduation requirements to include global knowledge and skills. Every international school should include global competence in its overall recasting and modernizing of graduation requirements. Requirements should include world languages and assessment of international knowledge and skills across the curriculum. As they redesign middle and high schools to address issues of equity and global competence, administrators should consider creating internationally themed schools to act as models and professional development centers.

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### COMMENTS FROM THE SURVEYS (responded by teachers)

#### 1. Teachers at international schools provide a great service to the local community by bridging cultural barriers.

- i. Indeed there are exceptional teachers who understand and therefore perform bridging of cultural barriers. There are those who don't fit in the scene.
- ii. Teachers may or may not provide a service at all. Depends on the individual and cultural opportunities.
- iii. they cater to a specialized sub-group.
- iv. I find that we often live in a foreign bubble when working at an international school.
- v. Only if they participate in the local community.
- vi. I think it depends on the school and on the teacher, how much they actually get involved and whether the school treats them like a respected autonomous teacher.
- vii. ... culture is an area of humanity that is very simple to experience yet very difficult to understand. By being at the forefront (and in the classroom, too!), international teachers do indeed have a very important role in the community. Indeed, we act!
- viii. At times, international teachers can be secluded from the local community for a variety of reason (proximity of housing, the local community's feelings towards expats, friendliness of teachers and locals, etc)
- ix. Depends on the country and community.
- x. If they interact well with the community.

#### 2. Teaching abroad leads one to better understanding of cultures around the world.

- i. For teachers who are willing to blend and mingle, I would even completely agree. There'd be those that are too affected by being in a foreign land at first but adapt along the way/timeline.
- ii. Teaching abroad offers opportunities for a better understanding. Whether a teacher leaves the expat bubble to truly engage in those opportunities is up to the individual but certainly not inherent to the job.
- iii. It is very valuable to enter an educational experience in another culture, it is a 2 way process which can sometimes be conflicting and challenging. In the best outcome it would lead to better understanding but can also lead to bitter understandings.
- iv. ... understanding - the beginning of global peace?
- v. This better understanding is also often shared with friends and family members in the teacher's home country, therefore widening other's perspectives as well.
- vi. It depends on the teacher--you can interact with your community at varying degrees based on your comfort level--some teachers just did around the apartments and drink beer. Not much understanding gained there. At times I feel like I live at a frat house!
- vii. But only if we choose to get out and really see things.
- viii. It absolutely can if the teacher is open to that and wants that to happen.

- ix. For the teachers, yes; I think the students are usually already coming from another country, or have lived abroad, so it's just maintaining exposure to the culture they are familiar with.
- x. I knew very little about Korea and Asia and now people in America tell me I have learned a lot when I tell them about my life in Korea.

**3. Teachers at international schools act like ambassadors of their countries, spreading their own cultures and messages across the world.**

- i. The statement above should be true. However, sometimes teachers spread unwanted qualities as well.
- ii. We tend to do this amongst other international teachers much more so than with the local population.
- iii. As much as it may be unfair to place that responsibility on an individual to speak for his or her own culture, it is inevitable that people be viewed for their nationality when they have crossed a new border, and society will categorize that person and their culture according their own behavior as well as preconceived notions.
- iv. ... ambassadors of goodwill! Remember to share - not implement!
- v. This is a big responsibility that many teachers do not take seriously enough.
- vi. Lots of teachers are BAD ambassadors--they display the worst traits of their home nation--judgmental, racist, intolerant, impatient, etc.
- vii. For good or for bad...!
- viii. This only happens infrequently and ideally would happen routinely.
- ix. I think that their presence, when on the street is obvious- I don't know about direct "messages"
- x. Hopefully "spreading their own cultures" in a positive way, not in an "our country is better than yours" way!

**4. The inconveniences or challenges of living in a foreign country are minor compared to the sense of accomplishment one feels.**

- i. This could be affected by how well or easily one adapts.
- ii. Benefits outweigh costs.
- iii. ... very minor. One has to be prepared to embrace ambiguity when moving to another country. One thing to remember - it is YOU who will have to bend. You are moving into their country. They will not easily bend for you. "Bamboo does not break because it bends in the storm."
- iv. I don't feel a sense of accomplishment, but I feel grateful for the opportunity I have to travel and learn--that makes it worth it to me!
- v. To a certain degree.
- vi. As a teacher, I think it's quite a protected environment and exposure to the foreign culture is in degrees of individual choice. I think this is based on time in the country.
- vii. NOT minor but...
- viii. The purpose of teaching overseas is to be enriched as well as enrich others.
- ix. Depends on the foreign country's inconveniences & challenges!
- x. It is definitely challenging working at a school away from a large city. In the small area I am immersed in language and food that is very different from what I am used to. But teaching the students in English helps them become better educated and able to seek higher education in the west.

**5. Teaching overseas gives us, teachers, the opportunity to shape our thinking about foreign countries, it heightens our awareness of different points of view, and increases tolerance and respect for the views and rights other than my own.**

- i. One would hope!
- ii. ... and also provides us with first-hand opportunities to genuinely other cultures and hopefully be more accepting of things different from what we are comfortable with.
- iii. I cannot agree more! But again, the teacher must be willing to interact with the local community, without being judgmental or feeling "like isn't the way we do it at home."
- iv. Yes, I think anyone who lives abroad is changed for it--hopefully for the best.
- v. This is very true for me but often is not true for other teachers I have known.
- vi. Sometimes I think I become less tolerant, but certainly more aware- it's always a battlefield of consciousness- raising.
- vii. Agree: shape thinking, heighten awareness; disagree: increase tolerance and respect.
- viii. BUT WE NEED TO HAVE REALLY NEW THINKING.
- ix. I have definitely learned a lot about Korea and am often asked how things are different from America.

**6. Teaching abroad gave me a global perspective on many important issues. I am more aware of social, political and economical problems around the world after a professional experience overseas.**

- i. Since the question is in "I" form, I can speak for my experiences freely.
- ii. ... not only have I been made more aware of such facets of humanity, I have also been witness to a few historical events and "earth-shaking", world-changing events.
- iii. We see firsthand what others only see on the news.
- iv. But this is partly due to conscious efforts to get out to lectures, trips, etc.
- v. I've become more concentrated on my immediate environment, so less aware. When I go outside the country, especially returning to my home country, then I become more aware.
- vi. After 1 year in Korea I feel like being in America we are totally US-centric and really have very little idea of what education is like elsewhere in the world.

**7. Teaching abroad provides the opportunity to travel. Weekends and academic breaks allow you to venture out and explore your surroundings - both your immediate and more distant neighboring countries. Since you may be on a completely different continent, you are much closer to places you might otherwise not have had the opportunity to visit.**

- i. ... travel ALWAYS affords one a multitude of learning opportunities. We have to be open to learning.
- ii. At the beginning yes, after several years, not as much, as other aspects of life tie one down.
- iii. I would never have visited Asia if I weren't there for teaching.

**8. Teaching abroad helps you to develop skills and gives you experiences a typical classroom setting in your home country may never provide. It's an opportunity to discover new strengths and abilities, conquer new challenges, and solve new problems. You may encounter situations that are wholly unfamiliar to you and will learn to adapt and respond in effective ways.**

- i. Yes, however it is much easier to manage behaviors in an international school environment.
- ii. ... and gives us an opportunity to be more open and realize that we are not always "right" in our thinking.
- iii. Some areas of my teaching, like classroom management, are not being used so much in Korea, but others are.
- iv. In my particular case any skills learned were strictly on a "trial by fire" basis, which is not ideal to say the least.
- v. I am challenged more by students who do not just accept teaching of facts and want detailed explanations.

**9. Teaching abroad affords you the opportunity to make friends around the world. While abroad, you will meet not only natives to the culture in which you are working, but also international students, other faculty and staff members who are as far from home as yourself.**

- i. ... and makes you a better global citizen with various viewpoints from friends in different corners of the world.
- ii. I've befriended very few Koreans, but lots of Canadians and people from around the US.
- iii. I don't meet international students, but the native students.
- iv. At first it was difficult, I think Koreans were afraid of me but as the year progressed they became friendlier towards me.

**10. Teaching abroad enhances employment opportunities. By having worked overseas, a teacher is perceived as self-motivated, independent, willing to embrace challenges, and able to cope with diverse problems and situations. Your experience living and working in a foreign country, and even perhaps acquiring another language will all set you apart from the majority of other job applicants.**

- i. I agree that this should be the case, however I have heard from several educators back in North America that this is not always their perception that administrators at home have.
- ii. ... and makes you a more "well-rounded" individual. Indeed, we act!
- iii. Lots of teachers have trouble getting work back home. Lots of school districts think that int. teachers will be high-maintenance, self-righteous, etc. I think it is a tough transition back home--from what i have heard. It also looks bad on one's resume to have moved around from job to job unless your potential future employers understand how transient teaching abroad can be. I think that if you return and do not teach in education, than the chances of your international experience being valued is more likely.
- iv. But some public school administrators are nervous about hiring int'l teachers due to perceived unreasonable expectations those teachers will have of public school, etc.
- v. I think some administrators at home see overseas teaching as a negative.

- vi. Quite the opposite is the case. Back home, I am suspected of and looked at as being odd and a misfit. Overseas, you work for only a few years in one place and move on. As a result, you are looked at by mainstream, national teachers and administrators as undependable and unstable.
- vii. I think it's a disadvantage as one gets out of the workforce back home. Coming from a multicultural country, I don't think that this experience is transferable to enhancing employment- other people are already bilingual, etc. and have second or third generation history, so are more familiar with cross-cultural issues than I was: coming from an Anglo-Saxon background, it has helped me grow personally; employment-wise, I don't see any advantage, even a disadvantage, being out of my country's workforce so long.
- viii. It depends on how much the teacher depends on maids, and students to help them face problems. Some overseas teachers need to learn how to be independent.
- ix. Depends on job at home; I think foreign experience may often be underrated by employers back at home.
- x. I have found many opportunities to teach in many countries, which is something I never would have considered before coming to Korea.