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Claire H. Hero  
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**Learning to Know, Do and Be: Curriculum for Self-Reflection and Intercultural  
Consciousness for the SENA Volunteacher Program**

Claire Hero

PIM 74

December 15th, 2016

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## ABSTRACT

Teach abroad programs have gained popularity across the world, as they are often an attractive option for people to live internationally while earning money. Many programs' practices contribute to local teachers' loss of employment, perpetuating stereotypes or ethnocentric views, or invite tourists into classrooms to "teach" English to communities they have no substantial interest in. As the industry grows, it is important to develop programs that promote responsible practices to encourage favorable impacts on the communities as well as visiting teachers. This proposed curriculum has been designed to enhance the experience for participants of the SENA Volunteacher Program for the growing Colombian nonprofit organization, Volunteers Colombia, which invites over 150 international English teachers to co-teach in government funded vocational schools across the country every year. It aims to provide opportunities to "volunteachers" and Colombian SENA center teachers to enhance intercultural consciousness and maturity, with focus on building cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. Main elements of the curriculum will include critical reflection, dialogue and collaborative cultural interaction.

The objective of this curriculum is to encourage interdependent relationships between the two groups, as well as to promote cultural awareness and critical thinking skills. Theories and methods which mix meaningful learning with intercultural development will be incorporated as the groundwork for this curriculum to support learning before, during and after participation in the Volunteacher Program. Application of theories will be available through group dialogue, reflective journal writing, thought provoking virtual resources and the creation of a collaborative project of choice shared between volunteachers and SENA teachers. These elements will ultimately further support the organization's mission of offering a transformational experience for under resourced communities through encouraging meaningful relationships between co-teachers who are the agents of growth in the classrooms.

## INTRODUCTION

Colombia's complicated past kept international tourism quiet compared to its neighbors in the region until recent years. In 2002, the country's elected president's priority was to reduce the threat of the biggest rebel group by clearing them from the main highways which connected major cities. These efforts, together with tourism initiatives put in place around the same time, liberated previously controlled routes that allowed for safe mobility around most of the country, making significant progress in repressing the conflict and bringing peace and safety to mainly urban regions and many rural areas. Since then, the number of international tourists visiting the country has increased from around 500,000 in 2002, to nearly 2,000,000 international visitors in 2014 (Procolombia, 2015). This progress has been accompanied by major economic, technological and social advances, which have supported the rapid globalization of the country and brought much positive international attention for a change.

Civic advancement efforts have also been an attraction from abroad, including a major initiative in the education sector. Colombia has been ranked one of the lowest performing Latin American countries in English proficiency, ranking 57 of 70 countries evaluated worldwide and number 12 of 14 Latin American countries for its level of English (Education First, 2015). This has been an issue for many years, and the Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN) has pledged to achieve bilingual status by 2019 by launching the "Bilingual Colombia" campaign in 2004 (Ministerio, 2004). Teaching English is believed to be one way of expanding the range of individuals' capabilities, especially in the current global context, where it has been shown that being able to speak English increases access to better educational and professional opportunities, as well as promotes economic development on a national level. Personal advantages of being exposed to different cultures and perspectives from around the world is also gaining recognition in the region.

As Colombia continues to illuminate the map, especially for adventure seekers and tourists, programs working towards the MEN's goal of national bilingualism by using native English speakers as a resource for progress and efficiency have potential to be ineffective and perhaps even harmful to



communities in some cases. It has increasingly become easier for native English speakers to swing in and out of countries, covering their costs of travel by finding short-term paid jobs as English teachers. In many cases these individuals do not have the vocation or training as teachers, and perhaps less interest in building meaningful relationships with their students as a means of influencing their learning and development. Although this is not always the case, it is important that programs importing foreigners to teach English in Colombia are taking steps to avoid contributing to this phenomenon by abstaining from inviting tourists into Colombian classrooms without any relevant objective or purpose in mind.

### ***CLC Focus***

The proposed focus of this project is to design and implement a curriculum which integrates critical reflection while strengthening intercultural competence into Volunteers Colombia's *Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje* (SENA) Volunteacher Program. The curriculum will provide opportunities to enhance intercultural consciousness and maturity, with focus on building cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills for both the visiting "volunteers" and Colombian SENA center co-teachers. Main elements of the curriculum will include critical reflection, dialogue and collaborative cultural interaction. Opportunities to apply theories and methods learned will be available through group dialogue, reflective journal writing, thought provoking virtual resources and the creation of a collaborative project of choice shared between volunteers and SENA teachers. The objective of this shared project is to encourage interdependent relationships between the two groups, as well as to promote cultural awareness and critical thinking skills. Practices developed to enhance these skills will be encouraged before, consistently throughout, and post program.

The principle focus of this curriculum is not to implement formal intercultural training, as the demographic of the Volunteers of this program is made up of diverse cultures and backgrounds, whose learning objectives vary greatly. The large nature of the groups would also produce major logistical challenges. Instead, the integrated practices will encourage guided self-reflection and provide basic foundational concepts of intercultural communication with an end goal of increasing self and cultural-awareness.

Learning to know about cultural others provides the first step in gaining intercultural competences, a step that can never be complete, for there are always still more others to meet. Learning to do serves as the active step of interacting with cultural others; through such interactions people both apply knowledge already gained, and acquire more, learning from interactions with others in the past, and designing future interactions. Learning to be relies upon the reflective step of thinking about one's social self as having a place in the global world. (UNESCO, 2013, p. 9)

### ***Volunteers Colombia and the SENA Volunteacher Program***

Established in 2009, Volunteers Colombia has been selecting and receiving individuals with a native or near-native language level of English to collaborate with Colombian teachers and teach English in Colombian educational institutions for under-resourced populations. Volunteers Colombia Corporation (VC) is a Colombian non-profit organization which seeks to expand the range of opportunities for Colombian youth and local English teachers, through acquisition of skills related to the command of English. VC's stated mission is "To contribute to the development of global citizens through English teaching and cultural exchange between our volunteers and students from vulnerable communities, in order to positively impact a sustainable change in Colombia" (Volunteers Colombia, n.d.).

Since 2013, VC has invited individuals from all over the world to work closely in the classroom with local English teachers of SENA, Colombia's largest public educative institution aimed at providing vocational training and employment opportunities for Colombia's youth from low-income families. VC seeks to provide effective and efficient tools to public and private institutions to achieve the goals set for the National Bilingual Program and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) training programs in over half of Colombia's regions.

The co-teaching model used in VC's programs was developed by partners of the Colombian Ministry of Education and is based on methodologies developed by teachers of an American university. SENA teachers and volunteachers work collaboratively in and outside of the classroom to plan, organize, implement and evaluate lessons. The model emphasizes rotating classroom teaching

models which vary from co-teacher support (one teacher plays an "assistant" role), parallel teaching (split class, two teachers), alternative teaching (one teacher works with a smaller group of students who need more focused support), team-teaching (Both teachers are responsible for planning, and they share the instruction of all students), and complementary co-teaching (one teacher enhances content instructed by their co-teachers through acting, drawing, etc.).

A major role of the volunteacher is to meet with their SENA co-teacher once per week outside of the classroom to exchange cultural, language and pedagogical support. Through developing a deepened relationship between the two, the volunteacher and SENA teacher may be impacted more meaningfully and could therefore increase the overall reach of impact to Colombian students. This is described as Volunteer Colombia's *Theory of Change*, striving to make the impact more sustainable. Unfortunately, this essential piece of the organization's methodology is rarely practiced thoroughly or thoughtfully, and there exists little to no follow-up to assess and evaluate this relationship building. Without these important relationships, the impact on all constituents risks being without depth and misleading for the community, as there is no room for meaningful cultural or personal exchange.

### ***Motivations for Personal Interest***

During my final job interview for the Recruitment Coordinator position for Volunteers Colombia, I asked which reflective and intercultural competence practices existed in the SENA program, for which the answer was "none, yet". This response opened space for my interviewer and I to enthusiastically swap ideas, theories and intentions of implementing critical reflection as a core part of the program. Shortly thereafter, I was hired for the position for an area that had not yet been formally structured. My role was to manage the relationships with third-party providers, develop strategies to strengthen VC's brand and thereby increase the number of direct applicants to the program, and ensure that the participants of the program were carefully vetted for quality and arrived well-prepared. I began as the only member of the Recruitment department and was enthusiastic about the autonomy I had to develop the area. I was full of ideas and immediately identified with my colleagues, who were also lone members of their areas. Since VC was a small start-up nonprofit, each

member of the team felt they were visionaries and their drive was encouraged by the organization's and SENA institution's openness to innovation and creativity.

VC eventually merged all operations with an organization called Heart for Change, a nonprofit whose mission, goals and objectives are almost identical to those of VC. Their major program was much larger than the SENA program and funded by the Colombian Ministry of Education. Within a month, my personal goals of enriching the admissions process to enhance participant quality was immensely challenged, as the goal for 2016 jumped from preparing 150 volunteachers to participate in the program, to strategizing for the search and preparation of 800 volunteachers for an arrival date eight weeks later. The merge with Heart for Change magnified and complicated one of our major challenges of bringing quality participants to the program, as well as our intentions of implementing reflective practices, as the Ministry of Education turned out to be rather inflexible and closed to innovation and outside feedback.

The rapid growth of the program has seen what I regard as negative results on many levels – especially in terms of remaining aligned with the ultimate mission of VC, the overall quality of the program, and its true impact on the communities and the volunteachers. These concerns of mine were reinforced after having reviewed the results of the end-of-year survey which was distributed to departing participants. Generally speaking, the responses to the survey proved that a sizable group of participants were leaving the program without having much faith in the impact they had on the communities, nor did I get the impression that they had learned much more than superficial Colombian culture and customs and a bit of Spanish. It also caught my attention that many comments had an underlying air of having joined the program on the basis of “go-doer” work, or charity, showing no sign of recognizing anything learned from the host community. Since the program had expanded to such a large scale so quickly, I had already become apprehensive about the effectiveness of the program in regards to English acquisition. These observations affected me further and made me seriously doubt how responsible and ethical the program’s operations and outcomes really were.

As much as I have been motivated to contribute to the strategic development of our largest and most demanding program, the MEN, focusing on SENA allows me to redirect my focus and

desire to be actively involved in developing elements of a growing program that support the organization's overall mission. For this reason, my response is to focus on the aspect of the organization's vision which I feel has become a more realistic impact and can be enriched; intercultural exchange.

## **THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

### ***Culture and Cultural Awareness***

How does your culture affect how you live your life? A complex question, which is likely to generate pause to reflect, and really, is pretty impossible to answer. When faced with this question, which culture does one default to? Perhaps ethnic culture, nationality, region, religious culture, generation or even the culture of your favorite hobby? The word *culture* means many different things to different people, depending on who you ask, and when. Its definition has been widely debated, as throughout time, the global social context continues to evolve greatly. Categorizing cultures as homogenous groups who share the same set of beliefs, attitudes and behaviors has been challenged, as it is seen to be a much too general assumption. With this in mind, Scollon (2012) attempts to more loosely define culture as "a way of dividing people up into groups according to some feature of these people which helps us to understand something about them and how they are different from or similar to other people" (p. 3). This definition makes a statement which invites the reader to allow for wiggle room when defining the word, while understanding that when dividing people into groups, there are no absolute boundaries. Members of UNESCO have defined culture as a "set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group, encompassing all the ways of being in that society; at a minimum, including art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs" (UNESCO, 2013). However, it should be considered that cultures are diverse within themselves, made up of individuals who are a part of smaller groups, and without these groups, cultures do not exist.

Within the intercultural field, in considering the definition of culture, the relationship between "objective culture" and "subjective culture" is examined, based on Berger and Luckmann's theories of

social construction of reality (1967). Objective culture is "the set of institutional, political and historical circumstances that have emerged from and are maintained by a group of interacting people" (Bennett, 2009, p. 2), also known as "Big-C" culture (Bennett, 1998). These cultural structures, defined by social institutions, are thought to be unconsciously followed by individuals within that group, through systems such as language, formal education, religion and rituals. Subjective culture, or "little-c" culture, is described as " the *worldview* of people who interact in a particular context...It is their unique perspective on how to discriminate phenomena in the world, how to organize and coordinate communication, and how to assign goodness and badness to ways of being" (2009, p. 3). Subjective culture is seen to be a product of our experiences within the institutions that have been created, and the values, assumptions we inherit from them. We internalize the objective culture through socialization within a society, which gives us the sense of belonging to a certain culture and we externalize the more implicit behaviors, or "role enactment", as our subjective culture (Bennett, 2011, February). It is, however, important to keep in mind that cultural worldview does not necessarily determine one's behavior, but creates one's perception and context from which they behave. This is again, a basis for which one should avoid considering culture as being bounded, individual units, as each individual reacts differently to their contexts makes their own contribution to the whole.

The concept of cultural self-awareness through exploration of one's own cultural identity is a focus of many interculturalists' work in the field of study, work and living abroad. This has been a shift from the traditional emphasis on aspects of the above mentioned objective culture, in cultural training programs. Compared to practices which largely stick to educating individuals about the historical, political and religious contexts of a culture, guidance towards understanding general cultural context is seen as necessary groundwork for intercultural development. Once one gains awareness and understanding of the complexities of world cultures (culture-general), it is then likely to analytically recognize cultural differences (Bennett, 2009, p. 4) and make cognitive choices for how react to them, going beyond simply learning what to do or what not to do in the host country (culture-specific).

Self-directed learning techniques are often used to guide people towards becoming culturally self-aware during experiences abroad. Mohring (1989) encourages some which may seem quite basic, though found to be a premise of recognizing the complexities of cultures. An example technique is, accompanied by self- and cultural-unawareness trainings and interventions, simply advising sojourners to ask members of the host culture questions about their values, beliefs and behaviors. When identifying traits observed within a culture, Mohring suggests asking oneself how they feel about this observation and what that tells them about their own cultural traits. These types of learning methods help to learn not only about the quirks and uniqueness of "the others' culture", but also about their own (p. 33).

A part of being culturally aware, in addition to understanding that culture in general is complex, is becoming familiar with one's own cultural identity. The definition of cultural identity, through the lens of social identity theories, is seen as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (as cited in Kim, 2007 p. 241). Cultural identity, like most forms of identity, is socially constructed, and like culture, each individual holds multiple identities which are constructed and re-constructed through intercultural interactions (UNESCO, 2013, p. 10). This idea of fluidity of culture and identity supports the belief that culture is flexible and through the development of intercultural competencies, one's culture is adaptable, evolving and able to transform. A concept called "intercultural culture" is an example of identity transformed by intercultural experiences and less characteristically bound to group categories (Kim, p. 244). Mohring (1989) shares a similar view that illustrates the malleability of culture by stating "just as people and human organizations create cultural constructs by which they think and live, if they want to, they are also capable of modifying their cultural constructs, of creating new ones, and even of holding dichotomous sets in their minds simultaneously" (p. 27).

### ***Cultural Dimensions by Value***

In the process of becoming aware of one's own cultural identity, it can also be helpful to have at least a basic understanding of certain conventional components of cultures in relation to one's place

of origin. Many scholars have dedicated their careers to organizing cultural behaviors into simplified frameworks in order to articulate certain predictions of group values and behaviors based on the region or nation people come from. Geert Hofstede's framework of cultural dimensions (1980) is a good example of this, as it is of the most widely referenced models and has been positively received worldwide, especially in professional and organizational contexts. His framework is used to train professionals in cross-cultural communication through identification and analysis of the original four value dimensions from which cultural behavior is influenced. The underlying assumption is that people from the same country or region share similar practices and values through learned exposure, which are generally expected from them in order to live a full sense of membership and belonging (Hofstede, 1980, p. 13). Values are categorized by Power Distance, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity vs. Femininity, with more recent adaptations including Long Term Orientation and Indulgence (Hofstede, 2001). As this curriculum intends to focus more on awareness of self and developing strategies for responding to cultural differences and less on cross-cultural comparisons, reference to this model will be brief, as to simply provide participants a culture-general point of reference. The training for this topic will highlight one of the more studied and well-understood frameworks used to introduce culture complexities-individualism and collectivism. The remaining five dimensions will be presented as more of an overview as described by Hofstede (1980; 2011). The six dimensions are briefly outlined as the following:

- Power Distance: Represents inequality gaps within a society, and is defined by the extent to which the "less powerful" members of society, organizations, or institutions (like family) expect and accept the fact.
- Uncertainty Avoidance: Not to be confused with risk avoidance. Indicates at what level people feel comfortable or uncomfortable with unstructured situations or ambiguity.
- Individualism vs. Collectivism: Related to one's position within a primary group. Individualist societies value independence and self-reliance, whereas collectivist societies prioritize the well-being of the group before their own.
- Masculinity vs. Femininity: Related to the division of emotional roles between men and women. Measuring where a society stands on the scale between assertive (masculine) and modest (feminine) determines how much men and women's role differ from one another.



- Long Term Orientation vs. Short Term Orientation: Refers to whether people's focus on the present and future is closely linked to the past (tradition, norms, family) or towards accommodating the future (modernization, adapting traditions).
- Indulgence vs. Resilience: Relates to people's perceptions of acquisition of happiness and of enjoying life as opposed of suppression of gratification.

Much research on the concept of individualism and collectivism as cultural values that shape human behavior is based on Hofstede's comparisons of national cultures (1980), and seen to be the most significant difference among cultures (Triandis, 2001). Distinctions between individualism and collectivism lie at values, relationship focus, self-concept content, and cognitive processes (Oyserman, 2015). This concept relates to how people are positioned within primary groups, whether people's self-image is defined as "I" or "we" (Hofstede, 2011). Cultures which are considered collectivist, tend to act interdependently within their close groups (families, tribes, etc.), setting goals in accordance to the group's needs, shaping their behavior more in line with group norms, and having great concern for nurturing relationships, even in conflict. In more individualistic cultures, members tend to centralize individual initiative in terms of goal making, and relationships are seen as freely chosen and voluntary (Triandis, 2001). Gaining familiarity for dimensional concepts such as this may help people immersed in new cultures deal with certain behaviors that confuse them or make them feel uncomfortable. Acknowledging that the way people think and behave is the norm and completely legitimate where they are from is a mind tool that can be valuable while building relationships with diverse individuals.

Learners should be aware that analyzing and responding to cultural differences as bound by the national origin of individuals has potential to be limiting. They will be reminded that within nations, there are innumerable grouping or sub-cultures which have their own set of traditions and values. As culture is, again, contextual and a living, evolving part of each individual.

### ***Intercultural Development***

When it comes to education, globalization has made interaction with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures highly accessible. *Intercultural competence* has become a buzz word used

for younger generations, especially as they look towards building knowledge or skills for their career. While it is vastly agreed that exposure to unfamiliar contexts and cultures through international programs is beneficial for one's cognitive and social development, simply transporting oneself for some time abroad will most likely not enable a person to check off boxes from the "intercultural skills" list. Acquiring intercultural competencies is viewed by many scholars as a process of gaining intercultural maturity, consciousness, or as a mindset through a constructive approach to learning (e.g. King & Baxter, 2005; Bennett, 1993). Although intercultural development and communication is not a new concept, today's intercultural climate has intensified greatly across the globe. Members of the global society have more opportunities to interact across cultures than ever before, largely due to the evolution of a cyber-society and greater accessibility to mobility. As access to intercultural interaction eases, global entities that are dedicated to promoting peace, democracy and development such as UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) continuously tighten their embrace of valuable concepts of intercultural competence. UNESCO reports have termed these competencies as "learning to live together", promoting the integration of these competencies in educative contexts of all sorts, with the aim of "freeing people from their own logic and cultural idioms in order to engage with others and listen to their ideas, which may involve belonging to one or more cultural systems, particularly if they are not valued or recognized in a given socio-political context" (UNESCO, 2013, p. 5).

Settling on just a few definitions of intercultural competence is a complex task, as professionals in the field have varying perspectives. A common view, however, is that an individual who is culturally aware and understanding ultimately seeks meaningful interaction with diverse others because they have a clear understanding of who they are, what their role is in society and how to see through the lens of multiple perspectives (King, 2005). As defined by Bennett (2009), intercultural learning is "acquiring increased awareness of subjective cultural context, including one's own, and developing greater ability to interact sensitively and competently across cultural contexts as both an immediate and long-term effect of exchange" (p. 2). The most basic characteristics of intercultural competence include conscious knowledge of one's culture/identity; understanding and acceptance of

other perspectives; and capacity to engage and collaborate with diverse others (e.g., Bennett, 1993; King, & Baxter, 2005).

Outcomes of individuals who have mature intercultural competencies are often skills that are believed to be essential for becoming successful professionals, as well as becoming competent global citizens. Examples of outcomes are: being prepared to understand, learn and collaborate with diverse others; creative problem-solving skills; knowledge of working as a team; ability to integrate differing perspectives; and strong self-awareness and what their role is in diverse social climates.

The modern term “intercultural competence” in the field of study and work abroad tends to lean heavily on skills and attitudes, which is appropriate in many cases. However, if the foundation of curricula encourages self-awareness and identity development, it may be a healthier way to achieve these educational goals of developing an intercultural mindset and skillset. A number of successful frameworks used to achieve this goal draw from constructivist and developmental theories which are grounded in how people make meaning of their experiences and how they interpret their experiences that occur in intercultural contexts (Baxter, 2005, p. 577). Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1993), which was initially created to outline the experience that individuals have during intercultural interaction, is a widely respected model. His model is based on the assumption that as one ripens their understanding of cultural difference through experience, their intercultural competence strengthens (2004, p. 152). This framework focuses on integrating behavior, thought and emotion for development to occur. Interculturalists using this model aim to build a mindset and skillset which entail “conscious knowledge of one’s own culture, frameworks for creating useful cultural contrasts, and a clear understanding of how to use cultural generalizations without stereotyping” (p. 149). Bennett’s observations resulted in six developmental stages that individuals pass through as they become increasingly culturally sensitive, graduating from seeing the world through an *ethnocentric* lens (not conscious of/avoiding cultural difference) to an *ethnorelative* lens (seeking cultural difference) (p. 152). This model posits that there are six stages divided progressively between the two lenses; denial, defense and minimization (within the ethnocentric lens), and acceptance, adaptation and integration (within the ethnorelative lens).

Those who are found to convey characteristics of the denial phase have often never considered their own cultural identity and show disinterest in or avoidance of cultural difference. In extreme cases, an individual in this phase may see different behavior or values as a deficiency of intelligence or personality (Bennett, 2011). Views identified by those within the defense phase may tend to esteem their culture as superior to others. One is often quick to create a boundary between their cultures and those of “the other” by stereotyping in simplistic manners. Within the defense phase, a common variation has been distinguished which is known as “reversal”. This view carries the same concept of evaluating one culture above another, though in this case one views their own culture as inferior (Bennett, 2011). Bennett (2004) characterizes the minimization phase by views that culture is universal (p. 152) “by way of recognition of the common humanity of all people, regardless of culture...therefore minimizing the need to recognize one’s own cultural patterns, understanding others and eventually making necessary adaptations” (2011, p. 5).

Once entering the acceptance phase, one is considered to have evolved to the first phase of acquiring an ethnorelative worldview, meaning that one’s own culture begins to be understood in relation to other cultures. Those within the acceptance stage have accepted the idea that behaviors, values and beliefs are experienced within their own context and become curious to explore new worldviews. One who is able to empathize with those of differing worldviews and consciously shift their perspective in order to adapt to a specific interaction or situation, exhibits characteristics of being in the adaptation phase. The final phase, integration, is ultimately the loosening of the boundaries of one’s own cultural identity, seeking to construct meaningful relationships and understanding of individuals of differing worldviews (Bennett, 2004; 2011).

The view of building upon integration of consciousness and self-awareness into intercultural competence practices is shared by Landerman, who expresses that too many models used to train people are often not holistic and follow a basis of training for merely knowledge or skills, excluding internal and external consciousness (2003). Landerman states that achieving intercultural “consciousness” is perhaps a more appropriate goal than “competence”, stating that “achieving consciousness implies an understanding of self and identity (intrapersonal), while interacting with

[diverse] others (interpersonal), leading to reflection (cognitive) that motivates action” (p. 572). King and Baxter Magolda also acknowledge that these types of superficial approaches to intercultural competence may be ineffective by overlooking one or more of the pillars from which many successful models are designed: cognitive, identity, and interpersonal domains (2005). Baxter Magolda adapted Kegan’s Human Development model to the intercultural context by borrowing theories from the field, producing the Three-Dimensional Developmental Trajectory of Intercultural Maturity (King, 2005). This model integrates Kegan’s dimensions of development (cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal) as a holistic method for identifying the phases one goes through during acquisition of intercultural maturity. For each dimension, one is believed to traverse three levels of maturity; initial, intermediate and mature. The initial level of development across the dimensions shares characteristics of the earlier examined, *ethnocentric lens*, in that an individual is generally unaware of their own culture and identity and therefore views knowledge and beliefs to be absolute, that is, right or wrong (King, p. 576). The intermediate level involves a shift towards acknowledging that one has a culture/identity; that other people have differing perspectives, and for legitimate reasons (p. 575). The mature level indicates the development of a strong sense of self and understanding that knowledge is constructed and grounded in context. At this phase, one is able to consciously shift perspectives and “engage in meaningful, interdependent relationships with diverse others” (p. 576).

These models attempt to show how focusing on integrating multiple domains provides a more comprehensive conceptual tool to support the development of intercultural competencies, while stressing that it is a life-long process. Approaches to developing multi-dimensional models for education are vastly interwoven and can be adapted to varying educational contexts. This project intends to offer reflective and intercultural competence practices that are not reserved just for the diverse groups of visiting participants, but includes participation and collaboration with the SENA teachers. Landerman (2003) interestingly dissects the term "intercultural" to highlight a missing element to many intercultural development programs, stating “‘inter’ encompasses both domestic and international context and implies *cultures interacting*” (as cited in King, 2005, p. 572). Offering reflective practices to groups that are comprised of visiting participants and local participants allows

for direct application of theories and themes learned through embedded activities in multi-cultural groups and collaboration in developing major projects.

### ***Self-reflection***

Being able to think [reflectively] is not just a discrete skill, it is an active demonstration of a mind that can stand enough apart from its own opinions, values, rules, and definitions to avoid being completely identified with them. It is able to keep from feeling that the whole self has been violated when its opinions, values, rules, or definition are challenged (Andrew Kegan, 1994, p. 231).

The ultimate goal of supporting intercultural consciousness and maturity will be achieved through practices that emphasize cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal growth. Reflective practices mix cognitive and intrapersonal areas of development and will be largely supported before, during and after the program. Reflection, especially in the field of education, often cites the work of John Dewey, who more than 100 years ago shared his reflections on schools of thought in his book *How We Think* (1910), in which he explored different channels of the way people think, including imagination, belief, thought and stream of consciousness. Of these channels, he tended to take a special interest in the channel of reflection, for which his theorizing on the concept has become the catalyst in educational foundations across the world, and continues to be today. Carol Rodgers (2002), professor and researcher of reflective practice and its roots, offered a dissection of Dewey's theory of reflection in practice which described his criteria for effective reflection. She identified characteristics of reflection as being "a meaning-making process which allows one to move from one experience to the next with a deeper understanding of its relationship with and connections to other experiences and ideas" (p. 845), as a disciplined, rigorous and systematic way of thinking in interaction with others, including the attitudes that value personal and intellectual growth of oneself and others (p. 845). Reflection has been described in shorter terms as "intentional consideration of an experience in light of particular learning objectives" (as cited in Bringle & Hatcher, 2004, p. 39), which has gained recognition as an effective means of achieving meaningful learning in educational institutions across

the world. Models used to guide practitioners to implement good practices of effective reflection identify shared characteristics which include a) applying experience with knowledge; b) being iterative in nature and practiced before, throughout and after an educational program; c) challenging students' perspectives by engaging them in opportunities to explore their personal values and identity; d) engagement with the facilitator during the process through offering coaching and feedback in order to continuously improve their reflective practices and critical analysis (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999; Eyler & Giles, 1999). Bringle and Hatcher's aspect unique to the above mentioned guidelines for good practices emphasizes setting clear expectations, criteria and goals for reflective learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999).

Based on Dewey's philosophy of education and those of other scholars of his time who viewed experience as a central role in human learning and development, David Kolb developed the Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) to create a holistic model of the experiential learning process (1984). He defined ELT learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (p. 41). Kolb built his theory from the roots of experiential learning which have been staples of the process, namely; learning is about process, not outcomes; relearning by refining old ideas and beliefs; learning as a holistic process; learning as a transaction between the learner and their environment; and learning as a process of creating knowledge (2005). This process of learning is modeled cyclically, portraying movement between *grasping* and *transforming* experience. Kolb's experiential learning cycle represents the four stages of one's internal cognitive process of living new experiences, while going through all phases of experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting. The modes are referred to as Concrete Experience (engaging directly in an authentic experience), Reflective Observation (reflecting on the experience and relating past experience and conceptual understandings), Abstract Conceptualization (making sense of the experience and drawing conclusions), and Active Experimentation (testing new ideas in a new experience). While it is believed that an individual can enter the learning cycle at any phase, concrete experiences are often the basis for observation and reflection. Reflections then allow new ideas or hypotheses to arise and

are assimilated to an abstract concept, before testing new concepts through real-life application (2005).

As with many forms of education, it is suggested that methods of reflection should be applied varyingly, to avoid limiting opportunities for learning from experiences. The ELT theory has, for example, become an adaptable model for learning and development in a countless range of educational contexts, from primary school, higher education, business settings, empowerment programs, and modern psychology. With a bit of creativity, forms of reflection are endless, ranging from group dialogue, journaling, written assignments (summative and formative), one-on-one dialogue, and more recently, electronic methods of sharing and collaborating. A study designed by Bringle and Hatcher which sought methods to evaluate reflective practices found that no matter what the technique, "reflection activities should clarify values [and] should help students not only process the course material, but also their personal values, civic attitudes, goals and intentions" (Bringle & Hatcher, 2004, p. 42).

### **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

A survey was conducted to gather data about the experience of current participants of the SENA Volunteacher Program (See survey questions in Appendix A and Appendix B). The assessment was developed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data to help determine whether participants felt there was adequate structured focus and support regarding intercultural issues; if they found value in including structured training and guidance regarding these issues; which elements of competencies they saw most important; and to gain some idea about where participants lie on Bennett's stages of development scale. Disappointingly, although the surveys were designed to include data from SENA teachers and mentors, permission was not given to include them in the study, and as such, the host participants were not surveyed. The survey was sent to volunteachers and Regional Coordinators (RC) via email and included a brief description of the study, the motivations for collecting data, and clarifications about the participants' rights in deciding to be part of the study. It was sent to 188 volunteachers (current and alumni) and 20 current and former RCs of the SENA Volunteacher



Program. Between the two separate surveys sent, 26 volunteachers (14 percent) and eight RCs (40 percent) participated. The results of the survey returned valuable qualitative and quantitative data which provided interesting insights regarding the information of interest.

### ***Volunteacher Results***

#### **Background**

The 26 volunteachers represented 16 nationalities; 32 percent were U.S. American, eight percent Australian, eight percent British, eight percent Ghanaian, and eight percent Indian. The other 48 percent were made up of diverse nationalities, including Irish, Senegalese, Cameroonian, Dutch, Jamaican, Romanian and Vietnamese. Seventy-three percent of the participants were between the ages of 27 and 40, 80 percent of those had been part of the program for less than one year. Eighty-four percent had experienced living or working abroad prior to coming to Colombia, though 60 percent claimed to have arrived to the country with “none” or a “beginner” level of Spanish.

#### **Program Experience and Perceptions of Intercultural Practices**

When asked how VC had provided encouragement to consider and discuss the meaning of the volunteachers’ experiences as part of the program, 52 percent indicated that they did not feel this encouragement at all. However, 28 percent stated that they felt encouragement in one way or another from informal, unstructured interaction with their peers and RCs. They were also asked to mention activities of the program they felt addressed intercultural growth, and again, of the 15 volunteachers who responded to this question, ten mentioned specific activities, though only on their own terms through collaboration with their co-teachers and Colombian peers. Only one volunteacher referred to any structured intercultural development activity experienced during orientation.

A total of 69 percent of volunteachers responded to the question “Would you like to see more activities implemented into the program to promote intercultural growth?” Fifty-six percent of participants marked “yes”, 21 percent said “no”, and two people stated that they did not understand the question. Three of the five who said that they did not see structured activities as necessary were not necessarily opposed to these practices, though believed that this type of reflection and growth should be the responsibility of the volunteacher to seek out on their own.

A pattern was observed which gave light to the presence of competition between SENA teachers and volunteachers. In multiple opportunities, volunteachers expressed that although they felt the relationship with their co-teachers was generally positive, they often experienced issues regarding their role in the classroom. Words and phrases such as “power struggle”, “I eventually resigned to assuming a lesser role”, or “we are friends but in class she’s the boss” revealed feelings of role inequalities in classroom. This could be due to the lack of clearly defined roles, goals and expectations, which may leave SENA teachers feeling threatened by the presence of the volunteacher in the classroom.

### Self and Cultural-Awareness Development

Two questions were posed which invited self-reflection in terms of culture and identity. The responses returned very interesting observations about the participants’ perspectives on the topic. The question “What have you learned most about your own culture from your experience living in Colombia?” returned 22 volunteacher responses.

Thirty percent of the of the results for the above question returned responses such as “it is different”; “We share lots of similarities”; “that weather is important”; “That I love grocery stores in the USA”; “Similarities in some of the cultural differences”. These comments may be perceived to show characteristics of the earlier mentioned *denial stage*; tending to be limited in content or irrelevant, which could suggest that many were perplexed by the question and did not know how to articulate cultural complexities. Another possibility is that they were not accustomed to considering how culture affects their lives and those of others’.

Another 23 percent of the participants offered the following perspectives in response to the question: “well in my culture people always try to welcome you and check on your welfare always”; “That people from the US know that they are very ignorant to the world and don’t particularly care.”; “We take things for granted, we don't enjoy each moment, we are extremely consumerist, we worry for nothing etc etc”; “Not very affectionate as country”. This group expressed awareness of cultural difference, though tended to describe simplistic stereotypes, to contextualize cultural characteristics within thick boundaries, or compared cultures in a hierarchical view, insinuating that one is superior

to another. These responses may show signs of defense against difference, including reversal, as described in Bennett's stages of development.

The above examples represent an overwhelming 65 percent as possibly exhibiting views characteristic of ethnocentric cultural perspectives. Though assumptions of one's intercultural consciousness cannot be made based on short responses to one survey question, this pattern was notable. It has also been considered that responses to this question may overlap and share characteristics of one or more ethnocentric stages. In addition to this group, one response referred to concepts common within the field of intercultural communication in terms of adapting and integrating different perspectives, and the other six fell somewhere in between.

A similar question to the above was rooted in the context of identity articulation. In response to "What have you learned most about your own identity from your experience living in Colombia?" 25 of the 26 people who answered the question replied by sharing their likes/dislikes, passions and personality traits. These responses are in no way incorrect or irrelevant, though the concept of identity is certainly more complex than personality and preferences.

### Volunteacher Recommendations

This section of the survey was developed to gain an understanding of how volunteachers would like to see reflective and intercultural development practices carried out, were it to be offered as part of the program experience. Fifty percent of volunteachers agreed that practices should be focused on increasing open-mindedness and respect for differences, while competencies such as intercultural awareness, ability to adapt and integrate in diverse contexts, increased self-awareness and language acquisition were pretty evenly valued in importance. Forty-nine percent expressed that involvement in reflective and intercultural practices would be most necessary on a monthly basis, while 19 percent preferred weekly.

Participants of the survey were asked which methods they believe should be integrated into the Volunteacher Program. 75 percent selected "multicultural immersion and collaboration", while group dialogue (reflection) was the second most selected at 45 percent. The other nine methods offered for selection were chosen sparingly. Survey participants expressed indirectly throughout the

survey that more integration with co-teachers and dialogue would be the most valuable resource to improve intercultural competencies and create space for contemplation about their experience during the program. Sixty-three percent agreed that extra technological resources would help diversify learning through film, videos, reading/reflection/dialogue, and social media.

### ***Regional Coordinator Results***

#### Background

Sixty-three percent of the RCs who participated in the survey were U.S. American, one was Australian (13 percent), one was British (13 percent) and one responded “Something from all of them”. Seventy-five percent of the RCs were between the ages of 21 and 26. Eighty-eight percent had been affiliated with the program for more than 12 months, and seven of the total eight had experienced living or working abroad prior to coming to Colombia. All RCs are required to speak Spanish fluently in order to be considered for the position, therefore their level of Spanish was not solicited.

#### Program Experience and Perceptions of Intercultural Practices

The question “How has VC provided encouragement to think about and discuss the meaning of your experience during this program?” returned four responses which explicitly stated that they did not see intentional or organized encouragement of this kind from the organization. Two mentioned specific opportunities as part of the program structure such as team retreats (for RCs and administration) and orientation, and the remaining two gave examples which were not necessarily encouraged by the organization, but through informal meetings with colleagues.

RCs were also asked to mention activities of the program they felt addressed intercultural growth. Seventy-five percent perceived that these topics had been formally addressed, mentioning orientation in particular, which each has aided in designing and leading up to four or five times. Although concepts of culture are explicitly addressed in a session during orientation, it seems to be barely recalled by volunteachers. One hundred percent of RCs responded that they would like to see more activities implemented into the program to promote intercultural growth.

### Self and Cultural-Awareness Development

Two questions were included in the survey which sought information about how RCs perceive and describe their identities. A sample of RC's responses to the first question, "What have you learned most about your own culture from your experience living in Colombia?" is as follows:

Some things I just didn't really realize were specific to my culture - I just took them for granted because it's all I really knew. Like, in the US we tend to be really direct. And I just took that as natural/normal. But here in Colombia, the culture is to sugarcoat so that even if you're being criticized, sometimes you don't even realize it. Or they might tell you "Yes" to something because it makes you happy in the moment, even if they plan on cancelling later. In the US we would call that being flaky, but here in general I believe they are just trying to be kind.

I've simply gained the capacity to mold my identity through critically analyzing the different cultures I come in contact with and picking and choosing which cultural characteristics and values make sense with my life and reason. I've learned through these interactions that I deeply value human relationships, contact, and emotional depth.

I've learned how different my priorities are in life and how it affects every action I make. For example, how I schedule my day, how I speak with others, things that make me angry or not angry, etc. I am seeing every day the different values our two cultures have, and how it affects everything we do either harmoniously or not.

The above examples support the observation that six of the seven RCs used concepts frequently used in the intercultural field, or expressed an understanding of culture as a reflection of personal values and beliefs based on perspectives and life experiences. Some acknowledged their own cultural biases and paradigms and expressed the obstacles of attempting to look past them. These responses could be representative of ethnorelative views, namely characteristics of consciously adapting and integrating to new cultures.

The RCs were also asked to share their views of their individual identities. Similar to the responses of the volunteachers for the question “What have you learned most about your own identity from your experience living in Colombia?” it returned seven of eight responses that referred purely to their passions, interests, personalities and personal preferences. Two RCs’ responses expressed connection to their values, biological make up or core descriptors such as “Even though culture has a large play in who you are, culture doesn't define who you are. I've learnt you can't judge someone by their culture or nationality”.

### RC Recommendations

Six of the eight RCs (75 percent) also felt that the principle intercultural competency that should be acquired for this type for program should be open-mindedness and respect for others. The remaining two believed that increased cultural awareness (understanding that there are differing worldviews and that they are all legitimate) is the most important. Fifty percent expressed that the appropriate frequency for reflective practice would be on a monthly basis.

Seven of eight RCs agreed that multicultural immersion and collaboration would be a valuable method of implementation, and six also included group dialogue as a necessary method. Offering resources to read about diversity issues and self-awareness, along with the option for homestay throughout program participation were equally selected as beneficial by five RCs. Six of the eight RCs stressed that they could act as a major resource to implement these practices if a curriculum and basic resources were already set in place.

### *Assessment Conclusions*

#### **Optional Participation**

Although eight people did not respond to whether they would like to see more activities implemented to enhance intercultural growth, only 47 percent of respondents gave an absolute positive response. Further, the principle objective for participation in the program was remarkably diverse. Accordingly, participation in practices will be optional and will attempt to be more heavily focused on self and cultural-reflection than culture specific training.

**Overall interest in/need for structured practices**

The data indicated that a notable amount of volunteachers started the program most likely without significant experience of immersion in a Hispanic or Latin culture, according to their level of Spanish upon arrival. Although a session about culture in context is currently provided during orientation, it appeared that many volunteachers do not absorb or retain much of the information, as orientation offers a packed session and training schedule during that week. The data also suggested the case-by-case nature of how volunteachers make meaning of their experiences and consider their intercultural development, which depends mostly on the individual, on the center and on their assigned co-teacher. This may indicate that there is room to provide participants with some foundational guidance and techniques for people to use to make sense of these experiences. Monthly dialogue and interactive virtual activities seem the best fit for this model, as it will be more structured, consistent and less intensive.

**Self and Cultural “un-awareness”**

Survey participants demonstrated confusion about and unfamiliarity with the complex and diverse concepts of culture and identity, though many responses showed interest in exploring these ideas. A session on identity will therefore be implemented during orientation.

The qualitative responses to questions about culture suggested that a number of volunteachers are interested in considering aspects of their own culture and its relation/effect on their environments. They however exhibited signs of using ethnocentric lenses when assessing their intercultural experience. It could be a valuable opportunity for all if they had some exposure to frameworks regarding culture-general concepts and techniques for effectively responding to cultural differences.

**Collaboration/Integration**

The presence of power distance in the classroom may be due to the fact that the 10-day orientation in SENA centers has always been exclusively for the volunteachers, which is heavily focused on SENA-specific history, policy and work climate. Each SENA center organizes the in-center orientation, though most lack a formal introduction session for the SENA teacher and volunteacher, or space to set shared goals before starting the semester. In response to this

observation, setting clear, personal and shared goals between the volunteachers and SENA teachers will be the first priority during the SENA center orientations. There will also be focus on integrating collaborative activities and projects, as well as offering more opportunities for the volunteachers to immerse into their communities. For further collaboration, the SENA teachers will be encouraged to participate in monthly group dialogues.

### **Regional Coordinators as Resources**

The results of the study revealed that the RCs have developed knowledge about these issues during trainings, team retreats and workshops offered to them. It indicated that they were well articulated and equipped to support and implement aspects of the curriculum. They will be given a basic curriculum with resources and will lead group dialogue in the regions.

### **Technology and Resources**

Respondents offered their ideas for useful resources and tools for implementation. The curriculum will weave in virtual resources such as videos, readings, articles, movies and blogs to provoke discussion and sharing of experiences and perspectives.

### **Frequency/intensity**

According to the preferences established, opportunities for cultural immersion, virtual informative material, will be made available on a monthly basis. Group dialogue encounters will be held three times per semester and one intercultural training workshop will remain as part of the curriculum during orientation, as that is as far as the organization can manage logistically and financially.

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The data from the needs assessment provided fruitful insights about potential gaps in the current program curriculum, as perceived by those who live the day-to-day experience on the ground; the participants of the program and the Regional Coordinators. Application of the findings can be examined in the following description of the program goals and curriculum.



### ***Program Goals***

The proposed curriculum offers volunteachers and SENA teachers the opportunity to create meaningful experiences for themselves in order to contribute to a stronger, positive impact to the community through the SENA Volunteacher program.

*Goal Statement:* VC's programs will adhere more closely to its mission of making a meaningful impact on its international and host participants by enhancing self-awareness and intercultural maturity of its participants through collaboration and critical reflection.

### ***Program Objectives***

- Guided reflective practices focused on self-awareness and intercultural maturity will be incorporated before, during and after the dates of the program.
- Elements of the curriculum will be emphasized as part of the program's brand, and will therefore enhance the quality of participants who join the program, through the process of self-selection.
- The curriculum will strengthen commitment to the overall vision of community impact.
- Preparation and implementation of curriculum content shared between the Program and Admissions Department will strengthen institutional collaboration, consistency, motivation and communication during this process.
- The curriculum will support the development of a more meaningful experience, which generates participant trust and loyalty to the organization and SENA peers, beyond their time spent in the program.

### ***Participant Goals***

#### Learning outcomes

The foundation of this curriculum will be the acquisition of self-awareness and intercultural maturity by strengthening the domains of cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies, as suggested by Scott (2015). Practices will include participants from both parties; visiting and host. Both parties will have the opportunity to grow cognitively, emotionally and professionally through critical reflection, self-exploration, dialogue and application of learnings through project-based collaboration. Intended learning outcomes are listed by domain, there is often overlap in desired outcomes:

*Goal Statement:* SENA teachers and volunteer teachers will strengthen competencies which support the achievement of personal and professional aspirations.

### ***Participant Objectives***

- Participants will clearly identify and articulate learning objectives from the outset to bridge experience and learning.
- Cognitive: Participants will reflect critically on learnings in one context and apply them to new situations.
- Cognitive: Participants will know how to shift perspectives in order to embrace opinions and behaviors held by diverse individuals.
- Cognitive: Participants will understand the complexities of culture and identity.
- Cognitive: Participants will have the basic understanding of how to creatively and collaboratively design personalized, participatory and productive lesson plans.
- Intrapersonal: Participants will understand their own values and cultural identity and will be open to challenging those learned beliefs.
- Interpersonal: Participants will engage in meaningful relationships with individuals who hold diverse values, beliefs and behaviors.
- Interpersonal: Participants will complete a project in collaboration with diverse individuals.

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

### ***Program Participants***

An average of 60 percent of volunteachers are generally from the United States and United Kingdom, mostly due to the fact that the organization's major recruiting agencies are based in those locations. However, no country of origin is exclusively preferred over others. VC welcomes teachers from all over the world, which after all does make the demographic profile of individuals who participate as volunteachers quite diverse. This has been an identified challenge in designing this curriculum in terms of taking care not to encourage a strictly U.S.-centric perspective in trainings and reflective practices. Groups tend to be roughly equal parts male and female, and the average age is 24 years old. Basic requirements to participate in the program include being within the age range of 21 to 55; having graduated with a minimum of an Associate's degree in any field; and having a near-native level of oral and written English as equivalent to C1, according to the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, n.d.).

Preferred qualities of a participant include experience living abroad, knowledge of basic Spanish, interest in social justice issues, flexibility, adaptability and open-mindedness. Although teaching experience is not a requirement for the program, VC does prioritize experience during its selection process, while offering encouragement and resources to applicants to seek a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) certificate. Principle motivations for joining the program tend

to be largely driven by interest in civic engagement, gaining intercultural competencies (e.g. Learn Spanish), and developing life plans (e.g. gap year, career change).

Through the author's professional involvement with the program, general observations of the host participants were deducted. All are Colombian and range from 26 to 55 years old. They come from between lower and middle socioeconomic environments and all have undergraduate degrees in Modern Languages or Language Education. The average level of English of SENA teachers is low-intermediate and they generally have moderate to high enthusiasm for the subject.

### ***Program Scope and Timeline***

The overall current structure of the SENA Volunteacher Program involves two groups of international participants who arrive to Bogotá, Colombia every year to begin the co-teaching program with a ten-day orientation (See Appendix C for orientation agenda), which includes English teaching training; Colombian cultural context sessions; logistical preparation for their stay; and co-teaching sessions. Volunteachers then travel to their respective regions, where they meet their co-teachers and have informal four-day SENA orientations in their centers before they begin teaching. Volunteachers have the choice to participate for one or two semesters (five or eleven months), dedicating 40 hours per week to their co-teaching position. These hours include co-lesson planning, class preparation, teaching hours and five hours dedicated to an independent project with the local community or members of their SENA center.

The curriculum will weave in guided opportunities for reflection as part of the pre-departure stage, during orientation, and regularly throughout the participants' experience in Colombia through virtual venues, though supported by RCs (See Appendix D for program calendar). Due to challenges concerning volume of participants, geographic distance, funding and the diverse nature of the group, this curriculum will focus largely on general concepts, using more guided reflective practices in order to encourage self-awareness and development of ethnorelative views. Cognitive and interpersonal concepts will be explored through trainings and workshops scheduled during the initial orientation in Bogotá. Throughout the semester, both volunteachers and SENA teachers will have the option of keeping a journal of choice (blog, physical journal, video, podcast, etc.) to log their experiences, and

to explore the meaning of those experiences and how they plan to apply their learnings from those experiences. Participation in reflective dialogue will also be encouraged via social media and during group dialogue encounters held three times each semester. During dialogue encounters, visiting and host participants will be encouraged to voluntarily share certain reflections developed in journals as discussion points, as well as in voluntary one-on-one interviews. All reflection activities and workshops will be used as the mechanisms through which participants will apply cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal learnings to their work in the classroom, as well as through the co-teacher collaborative project.

## **CURRICULUM**

The curriculum will challenge ethnocentric perspectives by encouraging participants to consider their own cultural identities, perceptions, prejudices and biases; understand the complexities of cultures; identify existing/transferable skills for dealing with difference; and consistently identify their goals and learning intentions. Throughout the duration of each person's program experience, the main focus will be on encouraging collaboration, dialogue and reflection about the self, and meaning of experiences had.

### ***Pre-departure Phase***

#### Interview

Guiding participants to clarify goals, intentions and expectations as participants of the program will begin as part of the selection and admissions process. Applications are accepted and reviewed year-round on a rolling basis. Each application will be reviewed by an advisor, and if the applicant meets the basic requirements to participate in the program, they will be scheduled to be interviewed via Skype or telephone. The twenty interviewers will be made up of carefully selected current volunteachers who have been participants for at least one semester, divided among the supervision of three advisors. The interviews will incorporate current volunteachers so that applicants have the opportunity to ask questions directly to those who are experiencing the program, and to clarify their expectations as accurately as possible. Another benefit to having current volunteachers

interview candidates is that as having lived the volunteacher experience themselves, their perceptions of the candidates are valuable during the selection process. The interview phase will also be used as an opportunity to begin encouraging potential participants to consider their main motives for applying, how the program's mission aligns with their values and goals, what they intend to get out of the experience and possible challenges they may encounter along the way. The proposed questions have been integrated into the existing interview questions used during the current process (See Appendix E for Interview Questions).

Admissions advisors' current role is to provide initial information about the program experience to applicants, make final candidate selection decisions, and act as emotional and informative guides to accepted candidates throughout the admissions process. The advisors' general roles and responsibilities will remain for the proposed curriculum, though their roles as supervisors to the interviewers will be enhanced. Each advisor will supervise a group of interviewers, and at the start of every semester, they will give the interviewers a short training presentation to review the organization's mission and vision, and go over the desired candidate profile, interview questions and rubric. The interview questions have been designed as a guide for interviewers to follow in order to evaluate each candidate qualitatively and quantitatively. Every question on the template is required to be asked, using a Google survey format to summarize the candidates' answers to each question. The interviewers will then rate each candidate on a scale of one to five based on their perceptions of resourcefulness and creativity; working with others in a cross-cultural environment; adaptability and flexibility; problem-solving skills; and attitude, according to what they gather from the responses to the interview questions. The interview results will be reviewed and analyzed by the advisors, who then make the final selection. Interviewers will also be invited to answer the interview questions themselves so that they are able to reflect on their own values, intentions, challenges, goals and community impact in relation to their experience in the program.

### Cultural Autobiography

During the month before arriving to orientation, the volunteachers will be provided virtual pre-departure material including a Logistics Manual, Colombian Context and Culture Packet, and a

pre-departure webinar to orient them about arrival logistics and to answer any lingering questions. Additionally, the volunteachers and the SENA teachers will be asked to prepare a Cultural Autobiography to submit a minimum of two weeks before the international participants arrive to Colombia. The purpose of the narrative is to encourage participants to consider their cultural identity and its possible foundations. They will be informed that before leaving the program, they will be asked to write this very narrative again to analyze how their perspectives have evolved after their new experience. Advisors will make clear that this is a space made for participants to think about the interpretations they have about their own life contexts and what meaning they make of them.

To help participants organize their narratives, they will be given a list of questions to reflect upon and asked to think about the stories that are behind the answers they give. They will be instructed to either choose one story that they see meaningful in terms of who they are today, or to combine them all into a narrative of how they describe their cultural identity as a whole. The questions are as follows (See Appendix F for activity worksheet):

1. How do you define culture and how has your own culture shaped how you live, think and behave?
2. Are there any “typical” cultural characteristics from your home place that you do not identify with? If so, how would you describe them?
3. What does it mean to you to “represent” your country? In what ways?
4. How has your cultural background affected the way you interact with people and build relationships?
5. How have informal or formal social organizations had their role in shaping who you are today (consider: Schools, sports, teams, clubs, church, etc)
6. What are some stereotypes that you know of that are used to describe your home culture? How do they affect you when you hear them?
7. Have you been shaped by multiple cultures? How?
8. Have you adopted any cultural values of once foreign cultures? Describe them.
9. In what ways has your culture been taught to you?
10. What values and attitudes do you think you have learned from your culture, as opposed to more individual influences?

### Articulating Goals and Learning Intentions

The importance of setting goals and learning intentions will also be stressed to incoming participants and they will be asked to articulate their own before arrival. The participants will consider what they hope to get out of this experience working in an intercultural setting as co-teachers, then to think about how to translate them into goals (minimum of two). Branching from defined goals, they

will be asked to identify a minimum of three learning intentions they plan to carry out as stepping stones towards reaching each goal. An example is provided for them in the worksheet (see Appendix G). These goals and intentions will be submitted to their advisor prior to arrival and returned to each volunteer during orientation to review individually. With the permission of the participant, the goals will be shared with the RCs so that they can go over them during their initial one-on-one meeting in their city placements. RCs will also be asked to define their goals and learning intentions, which they will share with each volunteer during the same initial one-on-one meeting.

### Suggested Resources to Explore before Arrival

Participants will be provided with some supplemental resources (reading, audio, and video) to familiarize themselves with issues that will be discussed during orientation such as cultural identity, Colombian context and culture, intercultural communication, and the possible impacts of stereotyping. Ideas and questions drawn from resources provided will circulate the SENA Volunteer Program Facebook group, which they will be invited to join during the webinar, for the participants to begin engaging in dialogue, exchanging ideas before they arrive to Colombia.

Examples of videos, articles and readings are as follows:

1. Podcast: "How the rest of the world sees America" *The Why Factor. BBC World Service*
2. Podcast: "Life, Liberty and the American Identity" *The Why Factor. BBC World Service*
3. Video: "Stereotypes: International Communication"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOQtoyStMe4>
4. Movie: "Embrace of the Serpent" Preservation, tradition of knowledge and wisdom of ancient tribes
5. Reading tool: Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters: European Council
6. Video: "Don't ask me where I'm from, ask me where I'm local". Taiye Selasi. TEDGlobal  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/taiye\\_selasi\\_don\\_t\\_ask\\_where\\_i\\_m\\_from\\_ask\\_where\\_i\\_m\\_a\\_loca1%3Flanguage%3Dfr](https://www.ted.com/talks/taiye_selasi_don_t_ask_where_i_m_from_ask_where_i_m_a_loca1%3Flanguage%3Dfr)
7. Articles about the Colombian internal conflict and recent peace deal (e.g.: Brodzinsky, 2016; Troolin, 2016; Renwick, 2016; Beittel, 2015)
8. Classic Literature (e.g. "Love in a time of Cholera" by Gabriel Garcia Marquez; "One Hundred Years of Solitude" by Gabriel Garcia Marquez)

### ***Arrival Orientation***

Each semester currently commences with a ten-day orientation in the capital city, Bogotá, which includes English teaching training; Colombian cultural context sessions; logistical preparation

for their stay; and co-teaching sessions. This curriculum proposes to infuse the first three days with five workshops and sessions related to self-awareness and intercultural concepts (See Appendix B for orientation agenda), alongside the existing elements of orientation. Descriptions of each activity are outlined in this section.

### **Day 1/Activity 1: Articulating Goals, Intentions and Expectations**

Time: 1.5 Hours

The objective of this session is to make space for volunteachers and program leaders to clarify the outcomes they anticipate from this experience, and what they plan to do to achieve them. The message behind this essential step in the process is to emphasize that by identifying the direction(s) in which one is going and setting specific intentions for how to get there, one creates a *purpose* from which experience becomes the knowledge that helps construct current and future realities.

The Program Director will give an overview of the history, mission and vision of Volunteers Colombia and how the program views the role of the volunteachers in achieving its social initiative. A video will be shown containing SENA teachers from all regions sharing what they have gained from past co-teaching experiences and what they hope to achieve as an agent of the overall initiative. The volunteachers will be invited to ask any questions, while their goals and intentions and cultural autobiographies which were submitted pre-arrival are handed back to them. The volunteachers will then be divided into their groups by region, each accompanied by their RC to share goals and learning intentions.

### **Day 1/Activity 2: Self-Awareness: Identity and Cultural Influences**

Time: 1.25 Hours

The purpose of this activity is to provide a starting point for participants to become aware of their identity and cultural influences, and how their values and attitudes influence one another. It will also be an opportunity for the participants to get to know one another on a more profound level and share their expectations of their peers.

The concept of identity will be introduced to the larger group with examples of the facilitator's own self descriptors related to identity. A worksheet is distributed (See Appendix H) and



the group will be invited to free write words that they feel represent them as their public self, private self, and psychological self, with some guiding categories provided to them.

The participants will then be asked to select the identity descriptors they feel are most important to them and given time to think about which aspects of themselves people should know to be able to understand certain ways they act. They will then mingle to share with two or three of their peers. Once the facilitator regroups the crowd, they will be invited to identify any patterns they may have noticed and common identities or categories noted.

### Day 1/Activity 3: Analyzing Unfamiliar Situations

Time: 1.75 Hours

This session will be a precursor to the culture general and culture-specific workshop. It will prepare participants to better navigate their reactions to differences they encounter by consciously taking steps to appropriately analyze a situation before making judgments.

As part of the admissions process, the participants will be asked to bring some photographs that they feel represent an aspect of their culture or an object that may be unfamiliar to people from other origins. The facilitator will prepare a slide show of photos of various people and practices from around the country which are most likely unfamiliar to many. Before dividing the participants into groups, the facilitator will present an unfamiliar object, such as a dried shell of a fruit used as a measuring device for cooking, and solicit responses to the intentionally open-ended question “What can you tell me about this object?” The facilitator will record responses on a flip chart or whiteboard in three categories (description, interpretation, evaluation) without writing the titles of the categories just yet. Once the participants have no more responses to offer, the facilitator will identify the categories by title and distinguish the meaning between them:

- **Description:** What I see
- **Interpretation:** What I think about what I see
- **Evaluation:** What I feel about what I saw

Presenting another unidentified object, the facilitator will solicit the same responses and immediately categorize them by description, interpretation and evaluation to make the distinctions

clear. The participants will then be divided into groups of five and each provided with a number of objects and photos to observe, with a worksheet to follow (See Appendix I). They will be instructed to do the same exercise in their small groups for as many objects and photos they can in 10 to 15 minutes before regrouping to debrief. The exercise will then be debriefed by clarifying the idea that the conscious act of describing before interpreting and evaluating is essential in intercultural communication. The facilitator will also remind participants that the process we use to make these observations is always analyzed through our own cultural lenses, which may limit our ability to understand aspects of other cultures.

#### **Day 2/Activity 4: Organizing Cultural Values**

Time: 2 Hours

After a brief introduction to the concept of cultural values and Hofstede's framework, the group will watch a short video describing the concept of Collectivism versus Individualism. The video will give a basic comparison of the two in cultural context with clear examples. Before debriefing the video, the facilitator will remind the group that exclusively individualistic or collectivistic cultures/nations do not exist, and that dimensions of culture explored are purely general assumptions on a societal level. The way the video describes the two concepts illustrates the most extreme poles of the spectrum to highlight how the two value structures compare. A worksheet (See Appendix J) will be distributed to the group which recaps typical characteristics of both domains, and lists a few dialogue questions to discuss as a group.

The facilitator will then give a presentation overview of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions (1980), after which the participants will break up into small groups, including the RCs who may provide valuable perspectives, all having a good grasp on Colombian culture. Each group will be assigned a dimension and discuss how they understand that cultural value, if they can apply it to any past experience they may have had, and with the help of the RC, come up with contextual examples of how they could encounter expressions of these values during their immersion experience. The participants will re-group to give mini-presentations that each sub-group has prepared regarding their assumptions. Questions to guide preparation of presentations will be as follows:

1. As a group, how do you describe this dimension? Can you give examples?
2. Do any past experiences come to mind that this dimension reminds you of? Who would like to share?
3. What type of behavior could you expect in your SENA center, or in Colombia in general, which may be an example of this cultural value?
4. What could be an effective response when encountering either extreme of this dimension?

The presentation will conclude with a slide providing participants with resources for varying frameworks on cultural value and context, and additional resources for Hofstede's framework. This encourages the participants to inform themselves further on the topic on their own time. Example resources will be about latent vs. dynamic cultures (Schwartz), tight vs. loose cultures (Gelfand), Dilemma Theory (Hampden-Turner & Fons Trompenaars), and further reading on individualism and collectivism (Triandis; Oysterman; Greenfield).

### **Day 3/Activity 5: Stages of Development: Navigating Reactions to Cultural Difference**

Time: 1.5 Hours

Having been introduced to cultural values and contexts, participants will examine effective and ineffective ways of reacting to cultural differences. The group will be given a brief overview of Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). The facilitator will give a short background of Milton Bennett, explaining that he has dedicated much of his research to studying how people react to cultural differences and identifying patterns in the way people confront these differences as they become more culturally competent. Based on this topic, Milton developed the DMIS model, which makes the assumption that as one's experiences of cultural difference becomes more profound and complex, they become more interculturally mature, therefore increasingly more competent communicators in intercultural relations.

The model's Stages of Development will be introduced to the group as displayed in Figure 1 with example phrases. The participants will then be handed a worksheet listing example quotes which may each represent one or more stages of development. The facilitator will solicit collaboration from six participants to write provided descriptions of each stage on large sheets of paper and paste them around the room. Using the descriptions as a reference, partners will identify which stage(s) the quotes may represent (See Appendix K).

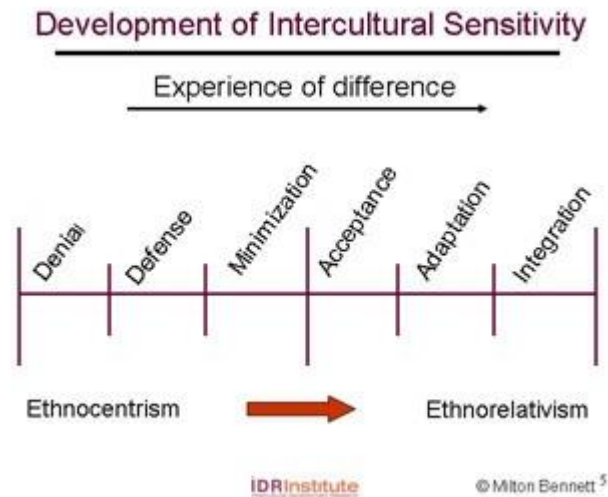


Figure 1: Bennett's Stages of Development. From "The Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity", M. J. Bennett, 2014, <http://www.idrinstitute.org/page.asp?menu1=15>

The facilitator will emphasize that the ideal ethnorelative attitude is thought to be the internalization of multiple cultural identities, explaining that individuals who “qualify” as ethnorelative intentionally make a significant, sustained effort to become fully competent in new cultures. Benefits of reaching mature intercultural sensitivity are having the ability to apply multicultural perspectives into daily activities; bringing multiple perspectives to every task; having numerous ways of solving problems; ability to offer lively participation in a variety of cultures; ability to easily shift perspectives to understand situations; becoming a highly empathetic individual; developing deepened relationships with diverse peoples which can open up your world.

### ***SENA Center Orientation***

#### Introductions and Culture

The day following the close of orientation in Bogotá, the RCs and members of VC administration will accompany the volunteachers to their placement cities. Each SENA center prepares trainings and introductions to SENA history, mission and vision, educative methodologies, co-teacher training, center-specific logistics and policies during the week before classes start. This

curriculum proposes to integrate one four-hour session dedicated to co-teacher goal setting, sharing expectations, identifying values in the workplace, and cultural context.

The SENA center trainings will be designed and carried out for the most part by SENA staff, and for this reason, the day and time dedicated to self-exploration and intercultural competence will vary depending on the schedule at each center. RCs will organize their schedules accordingly, so that they are able to visit all of the centers for which they are responsible. In cities where there is more than one SENA center, RCs will set their agenda so that those who live in the same city will attend the same session.

Each visit will be four hours long and will be as follows:

- 1) The RCs will give the same presentation that the Program Director gave during the Bogotá orientation as an overview of Volunteers Colombia to assure that the goals of the organization are made clear to all participants. The SENA teachers, volunteachers and RCs will then share their understood roles within the program, goals, intentions and expectations. The collaborative project will be stressed as a key agent for making this experience meaningful for everyone.
- 2) As mentioned during orientation in Bogota, the RCs will give an overview of Hofstede's cultural dimensions to provide a foundation for understanding how cultures can differ. Each volunteacher will have visited and explored the online tool to briefly explain how they understand their culture's characteristics according to Hofstede's concept. This will break the ice in terms of creating a safe space in which the two feel comfortable speaking about cultural differences, and are encouraged to be curious about one another, asking questions throughout the time they will be working together.
- 3) The co-teachers will then participate in an activity which allows them to identify and articulate their values in the workplace, as well as the opportunity to develop an understanding of how their backgrounds influence these values. They will be given a worksheet (see Appendix L)

which introduces a range of dimensions along which work-related values may vary. They will be asked to read the several statements in the worksheet about the way in which people may prefer to communicate and prefer to learn, think and apply knowledge. Once they complete the worksheet, they will be invited to share their responses and reflect on the following questions: “How might these differences become apparent in the working environment?”; “How might people from a different country or culture perceive your approach at work?”; “What challenge do these differences present?”; “In what ways might you adapt your behavior to manage and overcome these cultural differences?”

### ***Practices Offered During the Program***

#### **Reflective Journals**

All volunteachers and SENA teachers will be invited to keep an optional reflective journal to record their thoughts, concerns, realizations, questions, or feelings throughout their co-teaching experience and interactions during their life in Colombia (See Appendix M for Guide). Although they will be provided with a paperback journal during orientation to record reflections, volunteachers and SENA teachers will be encouraged to use any creative outlet with which they feel most comfortable or inspired to record their observations (e.g. blog, video, audio, animation, collage, photos, etc.). They will be offered writing prompts on a weekly basis to help guide their reflections and reminded to follow the *describe, interpret and evaluate* sequence when recounting experiences and observations (example prompts are below). Structured journal entries help to better articulate meanings of experiences, learnings acquired from them, and why one does the things they do. This type of thoughtful introspection is a self-analysis, through which the author is the teacher the learner, and the expert of the content.

No volunteacher or SENA teacher will be required to submit entries at any time, though sharing during dialogue or one-on-ones with RCs will be welcome to encourage expressions regarding ideas and emotions that many may share. Those who wish to post on the Facebook group to initiate exchange regarding the topic are also encouraged to do so.

Five example prompts are provided below. Participants are highly encouraged to use their talents and creativity to tell their stories and record their reflections.

1. *Stereotypes*: Think about words or phrases that come to mind when you think of Colombia or the country of origin of your volunteacher? What do you think influences these ideas? What does the list look like - it is largely positive, negative or neutral? What historical events or recent current events helped shape these ideas? How do you benefit from these stereotypes? How do they contrast with ideas about yourself, your nation or your culture? How could we collectively find out more about these topics and areas? What would be the most effective ways to interrogate and challenge our ideas while in the community?
2. *Immersion*: In what ways have you stepped outside of your comfort zone during your time in Colombia? Tell the story! How did it make you feel? Who did you share the experience with? What did you learn about yourself from this experience? What did you learn about others?
3. *Cultural observations*: Just about every day we encounter instances that are so different from your own culture. Pay attention to these moments as they occur and take a moment to jot them down. Once you have three or four examples, record anecdotes about them (and share with your peers in your next dialogue encounter if you would like!). Can you see any connection between this common behavior and the cultural dimensions we saw during orientation? Which ones? How do you explain this connection? Remember to think, interpret and evaluate.
4. *Relationship with co-teacher*: Think about your relationship with your co-teacher. How have your roles and responsibilities been divided? Do you feel that he/she understands your needs and expectations in the work you share? Do you understand their needs and expectations? Can you make any connections to theories learned during orientation to describe aspects of your relationship?
5. *Stage of development*: (Prompt intended for the last few weeks of the semester) Read through past journal entries and attempt to identify passages that may have characteristics of one or more stages of development on the ethnocentric – ethnorelative scale that we saw during orientation. What do you notice about these statements? Can you see how your awareness of intercultural sensitivity has impacted the way you interpret cultural differences?
6. *Observed Changes*: In what ways do you think people can change as a result of being immersed in an intercultural environment? What changes have you noticed in yourself as a consequence of your intercultural experience? What tips would you give to someone who is a member of a different culture who wants to adapt and integrate into your culture? Have you asked your co-teacher or other Colombian for these tips?
7. Each entry will conclude with a reflection on what they have learned from the experience and how they can make connections to their values and attitudes, or to the future.

### Group Dialogue

The RCs will be responsible for leading three group dialogue encounters per semester, made available to both volunteachers and SENA teachers. The initial encounter will take place after the first month of co-teaching, the second during the third month of the semester, and the final during the last few weeks of the semester. The RC, with the help of the SENA teachers, will select locations around the town or city to hold each dialogue encounter (markets, museums, plazas, nature walk, etc.), which give the SENA teachers opportunities to show volunteachers aspects of their city or life which they find special or interesting. To assure equal opportunity for volunteachers and SENA teachers to participate in dialogues, RCs will have a window of one week to schedule each dialogue encounter (see Appendix D for program calendar).

The space made for dialogue is meant to promote self-monitoring and analysis of one's intercultural development, guiding all teachers towards making meaning of the co-teaching and Colombian experience. The sessions are intended to be purely a space for participants to come together and discuss their experiences, perspectives and questions. The encounters will have an overall theme which applies to concepts seen during orientation to challenge perspectives and engage in opportunities to explore personal values, identity and strategies for effectively responding to complex situations. Each theme will be linked to a journal prompt already communicated to them (see journal prompt examples in the previous section), so that they each will have had time to reflect on the topic. The sessions will begin by identifying goals and objectives, and close by debriefing and giving feedback. The RCs will have a pool of themes and available to them and will gather the preferences and needs of the participants to direct resource and theme selection. The Assistant Program Manager will have monthly check-ins via Skype with the RCs to discuss any concerns or questions that have arisen with their volunteachers or co-teachers. This will also be an opportunity for the RCs to raise any topics from their own journal entries or informal reflections.



### Collaborative Projects

Each pair of co-teachers will decide on and design an event or project to carry out during a semester for the students or the community. The benefit of including students in planning and leading the project is stressed as essential so that the event is meaningful for everyone involved. Example topics for collaboration are English day; multicultural day; professions fair; history event; women's/men's/girl's/boy's club; conversation club; weaving in major learnings about reflection and intercultural competence in class lessons, etc. The collaborative project will be obligatory, as dedicating a minimum of two hours a week to its development and implementation is a requirement in the participant agreement signed by each volunteer.

### One-on-one Meetings

Three times per semester, each RC will meet with each volunteer in a face-to-face meeting. These meetings are used to provide feedback, answer any concerns/questions about their centers and touch on any issues that have been noted in their reflective journals/blogs/videos, etc. All initial one-on-one meetings will be dedicated to reviewing expectations and cultural autobiographies.

### Closing Activities

In the current structure of the program, RCs organize an end-of-semester gathering in their region, which are often informal and held in parks, restaurants, farms, etc. This curriculum proposes to follow the same procedure, only include a moment to reflect together on their learnings, changes they have perceived in themselves, and future plans.

In addition to the regional gatherings, participants will be asked to write their cultural biography, following the same guidelines as the initial narrative, to consider which goals have been achieved and identify any unexpected outcomes.

### Additional Activities to Share on Social Media

Throughout the semester, VC will further support learning through frequent postings related to identity, diversity, intercultural communication or social development to incite dialogue and reflection. Social media will also be one of the means of communicating upcoming activities, group

dialogue dates, reflective journal prompt reminders and example entries, etc. Examples of these resources are as follows:

- Short videos relating to identity, diversity, intercultural communication or social development posted on Facebook with dialogue prompts
- Memes/photos about target topics
- Readings and movie recommendations
- Animations representing cultural observations posted on Facebook and Instagram
- Dates and times of movie viewings hosted in volunteachers' or Regional Coordinator's homes
- Quick surveys to gather thoughts, opinions and concerns
- Cultural indicators checklist to deepen reflection on elements that influence culture, such as background, society, traditions and customs, daily life, etc.
- Article: "A Model for Personal Change" (Deane, 1991). References for each stage of development and strategies for evolving from stage to stage.
- Relevant TED talks with reflection questions or prompts for dialogue  
Example: "The Danger of a Single Story" (Adichie, 2009). Dialogue question prompts: What is this talk about in your opinion?; how can "incomplete single-stories" be harmful?; which elements of the past sessions can you relate to the content of this video?; how many of you can relate to this video? Would anyone like to share how?

### ***Post program***

Continuity and follow-up after the volunteachers leave the program is essential. Oftentimes, takeaways and perceptions from experiences continue to evolve well after one moves on, whether they go back to their home country, stay in the same country or experience a new place all together. Many experience confusion and distress upon returning home as they attempt to settle back into their usual routine. The longer one is away from daily personal, academic and professional interactions with those from their home culture, the more difficult it can become to navigate one's emotions and be aware of how their values, beliefs and attitudes may have evolved, even if minimally. Cognitive tips to help deal with mixed feelings will be discussed with the RCs at the end of the semester, and all departing volunteachers will be supported as part of the alumni network, through which a major channel of maintaining communication will be the Facebook Alumni Group. Alumni will be invited to participate in virtual conferences to offer them the opportunity to share their experience abroad, such as working in an international government-funded education program, teaching, cultural awareness, or Colombia in general. Virtual seminars will include alumni interviews, themed storytelling, and "where are they now" clips.

The benefit of linking one's experience with that of others is also important for alumni, incoming volunteachers and the sustainability of the program itself. In addition to maintaining part of the Volunteers Colombia community through the alumni group, the volunteachers will write a handover letter to be passed on to the volunteer who replaces them, keeping one copy for themselves. The letter will recount their experience working in their SENA center (as each center is unique), and the progress made in the classroom, detailing what was reviewed and which topics need further support. The letter will also include their learnings, using their cultural autobiography as a reference, and in what ways they think elements of the experience will be applicable to their future. Additionally, alumni will be invited to volunteer their contact information, making themselves available to speak to incoming volunteachers and participate in recorded alumni interviews.

### **STAFFING PLAN**

The Assistant Program Manager will be responsible for developing reflective and intercultural material, leading trainings and supporting the RCs during the semesters. The Assistant Program Manager's main responsibilities as support for RCs will be to provide resources for continued learning during the semester for group dialogue encounters and social media posts, and aid in responding to questions or concerns that arise regarding the intercultural experience. The Assistant Program Manager will work closely with the Program Manager to fulfill duties regarding the planning and logistics of events, general support to RCs, providing constructive feedback to RCs and evaluating learning outcomes and development.

The ideal profile for the Assistant Program Manager includes obtaining a Master's in International Education, Psychology, Sociology or related field; demonstrated academic or professional knowledge of theories and concepts in intercultural communication; demonstrated academic or professional knowledge of theories and concepts of experiential learning; experience living and working abroad; experience in assessment and evaluation; experience managing professional teams; highly empathetic; and socially driven. Preferred qualities and skills include high

proficiency of another language; knowledge communicating with and inspiring large groups of people via social media; and experience teaching (See Appendix N for position description).

## **PROGRAM MARKETING AND STUDENT RECRUITMENT**

The communications specialist will integrate intercultural development and reflective learning into the current marketing material used to promote the SENA Volunteacher Program via social media, the website, brochures, posters, etc. Promotion of the program is currently shared between the recruitment agencies and Volunteers Colombia. Recruitment agencies create their own promotional material, use social media as a primary means of marketing, post on TEFL job and volunteer abroad forums, and a few attend international education conferences such as NAFSA and TESOL International. VC recruitment strategies will be carried out by the social media coordinator and communications specialist.

### ***Social Media and Website***

Social media is a primary tool that is used to disperse information about VC's program and the program experience across the world through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. There are plenty of strategic processes that the coordinator can implement in order to assure information is far-reaching, and to a population who is targeted according to who has visited portals of social media. Volunteers Colombia has an upgraded version of Facebook and Instagram, which allows access to information about followers, such as their age, sex, nationality, similar pages they have visited and geographic location. This information will be used for the purpose of identifying what type of people tend to take interest in programs such as VC. The application form also contains useful information about primary reasons for applying that the social media coordinator can use to more accurately target potential applicants through promotional materials, using more fitting and relatable terms according to the interests of applicants. Testimonials and interviews from volunteachers and SENA teachers will be displayed on the website and social media to provide an authentic perspective of how the volunteacher experience impacts its participants and the community. The Social Media Coordinator will be encouraged to use their creativity to select resources and

activities on social media, with the support of the Assistant Program Manager. Posts related to diversity, intercultural communication or self-reflection will be expected to be made at least once a week and include questions and statements that inspire people to communicate in return.

Posts are varying in content, though reflection and intercultural development will be incorporated into promotional posts about the program itself, as well as be a principle theme in recounting success stories and testimonials of current and past volunteachers.

Participants will also be invited to submit their works produced as their outlet for reflection, such as their blogs, journal entries, songs, videos, photos, or art, to organizational writing and expression contests hosted by Volunteers Colombia. The selected works will be rotated on social media and posted indefinitely on the organization's website.

### ***Outreach***

Volunteers Colombia currently has an outreach coordinator, whose main responsibility is to make partnerships with universities and TEFL language centers around the world. This role is to create and maintain a database of potential partners and arrange a Skype call to introduce VC's programs and highlight the benefits of creating a relationship with the organization. Most partnerships are informal, operating on a cross-promotional basis; International partners promote VC's programs to their students and graduates through their career services and relevant academic departments, and in return, VC promotes the partners' programs to their participants as a post-program academic option. Some of these partnerships offer tuition discounts to VC members to increase incentive.

### ***Alumni***

As much of the program's promotional success is currently driven by word of mouth, great emphasis will be made on communicating these practices as being part of the foundational methodology of the program and as a staple to the organization's brand. To further take advantage of the past success of word-of-mouth recruitment, the development of a strong alumni network will be key to nurturing the worldwide Volunteers Colombia community. An Alumni Ambassador group will also be an extension of marketing and recruitment strategies, as alumni of the program will be

encouraged to make university visits, attend study abroad conferences and education fairs in their regions as representatives of Volunteers Colombia.

## **LOGISTICS**

Logistical processes to be taken into consideration for the integration of reflection and intercultural development practices to the SENA Volunteacher Program are minimal, as the vast majority of logistics are already structured. Considerations for this curriculum in particular will include operations during pre-departure, orientation and training, and group dialogue encounters, as each will require personnel for support, resources, agenda coordination and follow-up.

All of the pre-departure activity takes place during the admissions phase of participation and is currently overseen entirely by the Admissions Advisors. The Admissions Advisors will be responsible for training and orienting the interviewers about intercultural and reflective practices throughout the semester, as well as giving instructions for and soliciting the cultural autobiographies from the incoming participants. The Regional Coordinators, who generally have developed relationships with the SENA teachers, will distribute the instructions for the autobiographies and collect them during the SENA orientation in the centers.

Integration of the trainings and sessions during initial orientation in Bogotá will be organized by the Program Manager and RCs, who will each be assigned to lead or support at least one session. Research, preparation of materials and resources will be the responsibility of the Assistant Program Manager, as well as development of visual presentations, in collaboration with the RCs, depending on the session they will be assisting. A projector and laptop will be needed for sessions, and blank booklets and pens will be provided to the volunteachers for activities during sessions and as their reflective journal, if they choose.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN**

While health and safety precautions to prepare for physical and personal safety risks are necessary for the overall existing program, risks directly related to the reflection and intercultural

development curriculum will focus on mental health risks that may arise. Though any potential mental or emotional harm from introspection towards one's social and cultural identity provide minimal risk, appropriate considerations will be recognized.

Though the institution aims to facilitate the development of independence of its young participants, by promoting techniques for problem-solving and decision-making, the RCs will offer 24-hour support to the volunteachers. This means that they will make themselves available by phone for any emergencies or personal distress and schedule monthly one-on-one check-ins with their assigned volunteachers. Under any more serious circumstance, the RCs will have full support from the Assistant Program Manager.

## **BUDGET**

As this curriculum has been designed to be implemented into the structure of an existing program, budget considerations are minimal. The main focus of the program curriculum is aimed to enhance opportunities for dialogue and reflection, and are therefore low-cost. The SENA funds Volunteers Colombia to cover costs of the Volunteacher Program, which includes personnel, work-related travel, interviewers, supplies, logistics, and marketing material for the SENA Volunteacher program. The current working budget already includes costs of most personnel mentioned, their travel costs, participant domestic travel, orientation supplies, marketing materials and strategies. This curriculum proposes the additional cost of the Assistant Program Manager, which will be assumed by the SENA personnel budget. Participants cover the cost of international flight and international health insurance, and aside from the blank notebook, all materials used to support the curriculum will be virtual or unnecessary, as it consists of in-person dialogue.

A basic budget has been included to provide a visual of any materials or personnel which will be included as additions to the existing budget. The organization is Colombian and therefore all costs are in Colombian pesos, though USD conversion rates have been included. The conversion rate is based on the average rate of the second semester of the year 2016; 3,030 COP.

Reflection and Intercultural Development Curriculum											
Expenses		Fixed costs			Variable Costs			Encumbered	Total COP	Total USD	
Items		Cost COP	Cost USD	Unit	Cost COP	Cost USD	Unit	Quantity	SENA Personell		
Personnel	Assistant Program Manager	\$ 48,000,000.00	\$ 15,841.58	Annual					X	\$ 48,000,000.00	\$ 15,841.58
Supplies	Blank notebooks				\$ 8,000.00	\$ 2.64	Participant	190		\$ 1,520,000.00	\$ 501.65
Indirect Expenses	10 % of overall budget									\$ 4,952,000.00	\$ 1,634.32
									TOTAL	\$ 54,472,000.00	\$ 17,977.56
Conversion Rate of Second Semester of 2016		3,030									

## EVALUATION: PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION AND DEVELOPMENT

The proposed curriculum was designed to support a powerful and influential experience for all participants, aiming to enhance empathetic attitudes, self-awareness and critical thinking skills. Evaluating these learning outcomes, and claiming that any improvements were a result of the implemented contents of the curriculum is a major challenge, as it is difficult to prove causation.

At the end of each semester, participants will have developed portfolios of their reflections during pre-departure and throughout their experience in the program. They will have multiple opportunities to review entries from the beginning of the program with their RCs, including their perspectives on culture, self and stereotypes, which they will take into consideration while reanalyzing the same perspectives near the close of the semester. This will allow participants to consider and monitor their personal growth.

Means of comparing the outcomes of those who choose not to participate in activities for intercultural growth with those who did engage fully has also been considered for evaluation. Requiring everyone to submit a cultural autobiography before arrival, as well as refer back to it as a basis for their final reflections on their learnings at the end of the semester will allow for this comparative evaluation. Using Bennett's Stages of Development as a tool, participants' succession towards ethnorelative maturity can be assessed and evaluated at the onset and upon completion of the experience.

To evaluate the participants' satisfaction with relevant activities, questions regarding their learnings and perceptions will be included in an existing post-orientation Google survey as well as the end-of semester survey (See Appendix M for survey questions). The questions have been designed to evaluate quality, efficiency and meaningfulness of reflective and intercultural development activities



seen throughout the program. The survey will contribute to the continuity of the program, enhancement of participants' learning development and meaningful collaboration between the visiting and host participants.

## CONCLUSIONS

Teach abroad programs have gained popularity in destinations across the world, as they are often an attractive option for people to live an international experience while earning money. Many programs' practices contribute to local teachers' loss of employment, perpetuating stereotypes or ethnocentric views held by teachers and students, or inviting tourists into classrooms to "teach" English to communities they have no substantial interest in. As the industry grows, it is important to develop programs that promote responsible practices and make favorable impacts on the communities as well as the participants. Colombia's reputation has been going through a major makeover, becoming more enticing for international tourists, businesses and nonprofit organizations. Bringing international visitors to the country as prominent agents of social change can be a very delicate process and should be executed responsibly.

Through personal communication with program developers in administration, coupled with the perspectives of volunteachers and Regional Coordinators collected from the needs assessment, valuable insights were recognized. Many members of VC felt that the program's mission and vision sounded influential and hopeful on paper, though through experiencing it, whether it is really a meaningful or transformational experience for the constituents has been greatly questioned. Gaps in the program's operations were identified and used as the principle utensils for building this curriculum, whose major goal is to influence the development of self-awareness and intercultural maturity. Through practices adapted from the above mentioned theories and concepts related to critical reflection, experiential learning and intercultural communication, participants will be provided with the tools to construct their own meaningful experience, and perhaps become more empathetic individuals who are particularly in-tuned with themselves and their roles in society. The multifaceted complexities of culture, access limitations for gathering the needs of SENA teachers, diverse nature of

the visiting participants, and varying personal objectives of participants as a whole, generate challenges to the success, implementation and evaluation of the program. Therefore, the curriculum depends upon the commitment and interest of self-motivated participants.

Those who choose to participate in the proposed elements of this curriculum will support promotion of appropriate in-country behavior to the industry of teach abroad. Participants' cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal growth will be supported through practices that generate learning to *know* about other cultures, learning to *do*, through the development of interdependent relationships with co-teachers, and finally, through guided self-reflection and application to existing concepts, participants will learn to *be*.

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## **APPENDIX A: Needs Assessment Survey Questions (Volunteachers)**

You are invited to participate in a research study that is being developed by Claire Hero, MA Candidate in International Education at SIT Graduate Institute, and Assistant Director of Recruitment and Admissions for Volunteers Colombia. The purpose of this research is to gather information from volunteers, Regional Coordinators, SENA co-teachers, mentors and administrative personnel of Volunteers Colombia/Heart for Change on their perceptions of how VC/HFC and their experience with this program has encouraged intercultural growth for all those involved.

By responding to the following survey, you are agreeing to take part in this study and your answers to the survey will be kept completely anonymous. The results of this survey will be used as a basis for the design and development of a curriculum which guides participants, co-teachers, and mentors through intercultural growth based on self-reflection and making meanings of one's experience.

Let it be understood that participation in this survey does not include any sort of compensation. If you are interested in the results found from this research, please inform the researcher and the results will be provided to you.

There are little to no risks to participation in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary. In addition, you may choose not to answer any questions with which you are not comfortable, and you are also free to stop participating at any time.

If you have any questions about the study procedures, you may contact Claire Hero at [claire.hero@mail.sit.edu](mailto:claire.hero@mail.sit.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Internal Review Board at SIT Graduate Institute at (802) 258-3559.

Please answer the questions as honestly as possible. The main objective of this study is to make improvements to the program, so even if you feel you are criticizing, your true perceptions are encouraged!

### **Background**

1. What is your age?
2. How long have you been affiliated with Volunteers Colombia/Heart for Change?
3. Did you have previous experience living abroad before coming to Colombia? If so, where?
4. What was your level of Spanish before arriving to Colombia?
  - a. None
  - b. Beginner
  - c. Intermediate
  - d. Advanced
5. Which nationality do you most closely identify with?
6. What was your primary reason for applying for this program?

### **Program Experience**

1. In which city are you placed?
2. How has VC/HFC provided and encouragement to think about and discuss the meaning of your experience during the Volunteacher program?
3. What have you learned most about your own identity from your experience living in Colombia?
4. What have you learned most about your own culture from your experience living in Colombia?

5. Which intercultural competency have you developed most through experiencing this program? (Check all that apply)
  - a. Increased self-awareness (I have a clearer understanding of who I am and how to articulate my identity)
  - b. Increased cultural awareness (I understand that there are differing worldviews and they are all legitimate)
  - c. Open-mindedness
  - d. Language acquisition
  - e. Ability to adapt in diverse contexts (I can shift perspectives in order to behave in culturally appropriate ways)
  - f. Ability to integrate in diverse contexts (I truly enjoy participating in Colombian culture)
  - g. Increased self-confidence
  - h. I do not feel I have acquired any of these competencies
  - i. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
6. How would you describe your intercultural learnings/growth from this experience?
7. What activities of the SENA Volunteacher Program addressed intercultural growth in your experience?
8. How would you describe your relationship with your co-teacher/mentor?
9. Would you prefer/have preferred your relationship to be any different with your co-teacher/mentor? If so, in what way?
10. Would you like to see activities implemented into the program to promote intercultural growth?
11. If yes, how?
12. On a scale of 1-5, how do you identify with the following statement ( "5" indicating that you completely agree):  
 "I feel that VC/HFC encourages intercultural learning through its programs and materials."  
 Comments:
13. What do you believe is the most valuable benefit for the international and Colombian participants of this program?
14. Additional Comments:

### **Cultural competencies and reflective practices (Recommendations)**

1. How much time do you think should be dedicated to reflective/intercultural practices during one semester?
  - a. Weekly
  - b. Bi-weekly
  - c. Monthly
  - d. Bi-semester
  - e. One time per semester
  - f. I do not see necessary to do this at all
  - g. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which intercultural competency do you believe is most important in this type of program?
  - a. Increased self-awareness (having a clearer understanding of who one is and how to articulate one's identity)
  - b. Increased cultural awareness (understanding that there are differing worldviews and they are all legitimate)
  - c. Open-mindedness and respect for differences (embracing and inviting diverse behaviors, beliefs and attitudes in relationships)
  - d. Language acquisition



- e. Ability to adapt in diverse contexts (shifting perspectives in order to behave in culturally appropriate ways)
- f. Ability to integrate in diverse contexts
- g. Increased self-confidence
- h. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Which methods do you believe should be integrated into the Volunteacher Program to increase cultural competency during your experience? Check all that apply:

- a. Lecture
- b. One-on-one intercultural dialogue
- c. Group dialogue (reflection)
- d. Home stay option for international participants
- e. Inspirational/educational videos
- f. Multicultural Immersion activities
- g. Skype Interviews
- h. Collaborative project design and implementation
- i. Reflective Blog journals
- j. Recommended readings which touch on diversity issues
- k. Diversity/inclusion topics on the facebook group
- l. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What resources do you see useful to improve intercultural competencies and create space for reflection?

5. Additional Comments:

## APPENDIX B: Needs Assessment Survey Questions (Regional Coordinators)

### Background

1. What is your age?
2. How long have you been affiliated with Volunteers Colombia/Heart for Change?
3. Did you have previous experience living abroad before playing a role in this program? If so, where?
4. Which nationality do you most closely identify with?
5. What was your primary reason for applying for this program?

### Program Experience

1. How has VC/HFC provided and encouragement to think about and discuss the meaning of your experience interacting with diverse groups?
2. What have you learned most about your own identity from your experience collaborating with diverse others?
3. What have you learned most about your own culture from your experience collaborating with diverse others?
4. Which intercultural competency have you developed most through experiencing this experience? (Check all that apply)
  - a. Increased self-awareness (I have a clearer understanding of who I am and how to articulate my identity)
  - b. Increased cultural awareness (I understand that there are differing worldviews and they are all legitimate)
  - c. Open-mindedness
  - d. Language acquisition
  - e. Ability to adapt in diverse contexts (I can shift perspectives in order to behave in culturally appropriate ways)
  - f. Ability to integrate in diverse contexts (I truly enjoy participating in cultures different from what I know best)
  - g. Increased self-confidence
  - h. I do not feel I have acquired any of these competencies
  - i. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
5. How would you describe your intercultural learnings/growth from this experience?
6. What activities of the SENA Volunteacher Program addressed intercultural growth in your experience?
7. Would you like to see activities implemented into the program to promote intercultural growth?
8. If yes, how?
9. On a scale of 1-5, how do you identify with the following statement ( "5" indicating that you completely agree):

“I feel that VC/HFC encourages intercultural learning through its programs and materials.”

Comments:

10. What do you believe is the most valuable benefit of this program?
11. Additional Comments:

**Cultural competencies and reflective practices (Recommendations)**

1. How much time do you think should be dedicated to reflective/intercultural practices during one semester?
  - a. Weekly
  - b. Bi-weekly
  - c. Monthly
  - d. Bi-semester
  - e. One time per semester
  - f. I do not see necessary to do this at all
  - g. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Which intercultural competency do you believe is most important in this type of program?
  - a. Increased self-awareness (having a clearer understanding of who one is and how to articulate one's identity)
  - b. Increased cultural awareness (understanding that there are differing worldviews and they are all legitimate)
  - c. Open-mindedness and respect for differences (embracing and inviting diverse behaviors, beliefs and attitudes in relationships)
  - d. Language acquisition
  - e. Ability to adapt in diverse contexts (shifting perspectives in order to behave in culturally appropriate ways)
  - f. Ability to integrate in diverse contexts
  - g. Increased self-confidence
  - h. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Which methods do you believe should be integrated into the Volunteacher Program to increase cultural competency during one's experience? Check all that apply:
  - a. Lecture
  - b. One-on-one intercultural dialogue
  - c. Group dialogue (reflection)
  - d. Home stay option for international participants
  - e. Inspirational/educational videos
  - f. Multicultural Immersion activities
  - g. Skype Interviews
  - h. Collaborative project design and implementation
  - i. Reflective Blog journals
  - j. Recommended readings which touch on diversity issues
  - k. Diversity/inclusion topics on the facebook group
  - l. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What resources do you see useful to improve intercultural competencies and create space for reflection?
  
5. Additional Comments:

### APPENDIX C: Orientation Agenda

Time/Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7:00	Breakfast in Hotel									
7:15										
7:30										
7:45										
8:00										
8:15	Activity 1	Safety and Wellness	Activity 5	Visa and Identity Card at Migration Office	TEFL Training					
8:30										
8:45										
9:00	Health Insurance									
9:15										
9:30	Calendar/Contract/Discipline	Break	SENA Introduction							
9:45										
10:00	Activity 2	Activity 4		SENA Projects						
10:15										
10:30										
10:45	Colombia Overview (History, Regions, peace conflict, etc)	Activity 4	SENA Projects							
11:00										
11:15										
11:30	Colombia Overview (History, Regions, peace conflict, etc)	Activity 4	SENA Projects							
11:45										
12:00										

LUNCH

14:00	Activity 3	Logistical Fair (Bank account, cellphones, photo, housing, academic opportunities, etc)	Co-teaching Workshop	Colombia Education System	TEFL Training				
14:15									
14:30			Break	Colombia Culture-Specific (Existant)					
14:45									
15:00	Break		Tourism in Colombia						
15:15									
15:30	Break	Tourism in Colombia							
15:45									
16:00	Break	Logistical Fair (Bank account, cellphones, photo, housing, academic opportunities, etc)	Co-teaching Workshop	Tourism in Colombia					
16:15									
16:30	Culture Shock (existant)		Co-teaching Workshop	Tourism in Colombia					
16:45									
17:00									



### APPENDIX E: Interview Questions

Questions regarding goals, expectations and self-reflection will be integrated into the existing set of interview questions. Full list of questions are as listed below (Volunteers Colombia, 2016).

1. What outcomes do you hope to achieve by completing this program?
2. How would you describe your principle values and how do see them in relation to your role bringing true benefits to the population that you would be working with?
3. Some people experience a sense of disorientation when exposed to new culture for a significant amount of time, known as culture shock. How would you describe culture shock and what are your coping techniques for stress in difficult situations?
4. It is important to be flexible and empathetic as changes can happen unexpectedly. How would you react if a meeting you scheduled gets cancelled or if your class times are changed without consulting you?
5. Although Colombia has made many advances over the years, it still has developmental challenges, especially when it comes to transportation delays, internet connectivity, cellphone signal, and hot water availability. How do you feel you would handle that for an extended period of time?
6. Volunteers will make a modest 1,500,000 pesos per month (approx. 500 USD, depending on the exchange rate). This stipend is enough to cover basic costs such as transportation, food and housing. How do you feel about living on this budget?
7. Volunteers are provided few teaching materials. Sometimes they don't even have a whiteboard. Please provide an example of how you will use creativity and resourcefulness inside the classroom.
8. It is a common challenge for teachers that there are a number of students that are not motivated to learn English. What techniques would you use to motivate students who are not interested in learning or don't participate in class activities?
9. Have you ever experienced a time where you had to collaborate with and adapt to people within circumstances and environments outside of your comfort zone? If so, describe it and what you learned from it.
10. How would you ensure that you teach English to students with low or non-existent levels of English, without using Spanish? How would you handle students who always depend on using Spanish to better understand the concepts in English?
11. What major challenges do you foresee as a volunteacher? How do you see yourself approaching it?
12. Do you prefer to work with A: Young adults in a vocational high education program OR B: Secondary school students in a traditional English class setting?
13. Do you have previous teaching or volunteer experience? What skills do you have that you believe are key for success as an agent of change?
14. What would you do if you had problems/differences with your co-teacher/mentor?
15. Rubric evaluated on a scale of 1-5, based on the following criteria: 1)Adaptability and Flexibility; 2)Problem-solving; 3) Skills; 4) Attitude; 5)Creativity and Resourcefulness; 5)Working with Others in a Cross-Cultural Environment
16. If the candidate scored 1 or 2 for any of the questions in the rating scale, please explain

## APPENDIX F: Cultural Autobiography Instructions

This Cultural Autobiography exercise has been developed as a guide for you to begin mentally preparing for your cultural immersion experience in Colombia. The purpose of the narrative is to encourage you to consider and reflect on your cultural identity and to your heightened awareness of cultural differences. We are offering you a space to think about the interpretations that you have made about your own life contexts and the meaning that you have found from it. Remember, there is no right or wrong answer to your story, so be as honest with yourself as possible! You will have the opportunity to write this very narrative again during the last weeks of the semester and you may find some interesting changes.

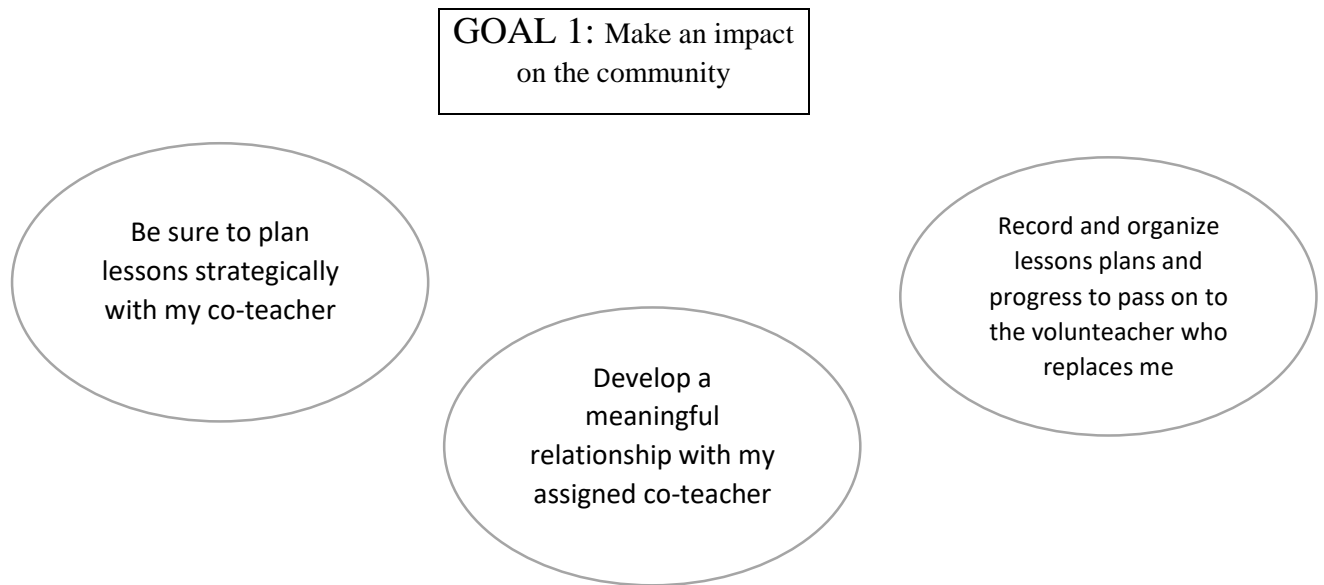
To help you organize the content you will include, we have provided you with a list of questions to reflect upon. After responding to the questions, think about the stories that are behind the answers you give. You have two options; you may either choose one story that you see as being meaningful in terms of who they are today, or combine them all into a narrative of how they describe their cultural identity:

1. How do you define culture and how has your own culture shaped how you live, think and behave?
2. Are there any “typical” cultural characteristics from your home place that you do not identify with?
3. What does it mean to you to “represent” your country? In what ways?
4. How has your cultural background affected the way you interact with people and build relationships?
5. How have informal or formal social organizations had their role in shaping who you are today (consider: Schools, sports, teams, clubs, church, etc)
6. What are some stereotypes that you know of that are used to describe your home culture?
7. Have you been shaped by multiple cultures? How?
8. Have you adopted any cultural values of once foreign cultures?
9. In what ways has your culture been taught to you?
10. What values and attitudes do you think you have learned from your culture, as opposed to more individual influences?

## APPENDIX G: Articulating Goals and Expectations

It is important for us that each participant get the most out of their immersion experience possible. What makes growth through experience most successful is when goals and learning objectives are clearly identified and articulated to bridge experience and learning. Consider what you hope to get out of this experience working in an intercultural setting and as a co-teacher, and set a minimum of two end goals. Then proceed to identify a minimum of 3 learning intentions that you plan to carry out in order to reach each goal. Here are some helpful action words for learning intentions— *develop, reflect, identify, consider, and understand*

Example:





**APPENDIX H: Who we are is as important as what we do**

*Activity adapted from Lambert, J., Myers, S., & Simons, G. (2000). Global competence: 50 training activities for succeeding in international business. Amherst, MA: HRD Press.*

Purpose and Learning intentions

- This activity will provide you with a starting point for participants to become aware of their identity and cultural influences
- You will learn how aspects of your identity are similar to your peers and understand what makes them unique in the group
- You will consider how your identity and values influence one another
- Expectations that you may have will be clarified and you will have an understanding Regional Coordinators’, Administration’s and your peers’ expectations.

Identity is how someone or a group perceives itself and it’s a foundation from which people are able to describe and try to understand others. It is constructed through socialization as well as heavily influenced by social institutions such as education systems, media and cultural traditions. Being aware of one’s own identity, and that of others, is important because it helps us understand how we are similar to our peers, as well as what makes us unique. Making it easier to develop social connections with them and work well together. Having a grasp of one’s identity can help shed light on how and why choices are made, reactions, attitudes and worldviews.

Everyone’s identity is incredibly complex, and impossible to define as a rigid concept, or through only one lens. Identity can also be malleable, depending on how one’s context changes throughout life, such as profession, religion, socio-economic status, etc, whereas more static identities such as race, ethnicity, sex and ability remain much more at the core of one’s descriptive self.

- A. Take five minutes to record all of the descriptive words you feel represent you. How do you categorize each noun used to describe your identity? Descriptive examples may include:

*Gender • Race • Culture • Ethnicity • Socioeconomic status • Physical (appearance and ability)  
Age • Profession • Place within a family • Nationality • Religion • Political views • Passions •  
Marital Status • Sexual Orientation • Education Level*

Keep in mind that there are different grounds for describing our identities:

- Public Self (What others can easily see)
- Private Self (What the public does not see/What I seldom reveal)
- Psychological Self (values, self-view, core personality, emotions)

IDENTITY	CATEGORY	IDENTITY	CATEGORY
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- B. Circle the identities that you feel describes you best or that are very important to you.
- C. Speak with 2 or more people in the room and share your top identities and why they are important to you.
- D. What is the most important aspect that others should know about you? Note which descriptor you share with others and which ones are more unique to you.
- E. Did you notice any patterns? What are the most common identities you discussed? Are there common categories?

## APPENDIX I: What I see, what I think, what I feel

*Activity adapted from Weber, B. (2008). Intercultural Communication Resource Pack. SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource Centre.*

*\*\*This sheet is to be used as a guide for facilitator of this exercise*

Purpose and Learning Intentions:

- Allows individuals to stop and describe and analyze behaviors observed before formulating an opinion about it or the person responsible the behavior
- Raise awareness of making quick judgments
- Offer a space for participants to share their own perspectives and interpretations of aspects of their cultures

A. Before dividing the participants into groups, the facilitator presents an unfamiliar object to the whole group and solicits responses to the intentionally open-ended question “what can you tell me about this object?” The facilitator writes the responses on a flip chart or whiteboard in three categories (description, interpretation, evaluation) without writing the titles of the categories just yet. Once the participants have no more responses to offer, the facilitator identifies the categories by title and distinguishes the meaning between them.

**Description:** What I see

**Interpretation:** What I think about what I see

**Evaluation:** What I feel about what I saw

With a second object, the facilitator then asks explicitly what the group “sees” to first solicit a description, clarifying which responses may be more interpretations/evaluations than descriptions, encouraging both negative and positive evaluations for each interpretation.

The owners of the objects are then invited to do the same exercise for the group so that their perspective of the object is shared.

B. The participants are divided into groups of five and each are provided with a number of objects and photos to observe and a blank piece of paper to record observations by description, interpretation, evaluation. They are asked to do the following:

1. Agree on a single description
2. Record two interpretations for the photo
3. Give one positive and one negative evaluation for each interpretation

C. Debrief

The whole group is brought back together to share their descriptions, thoughts and feelings about one photo or object. The facilitator can share how the exercise relates to a personal instance in their life. The essential practice of describing before interpreting and evaluating as a heightened conscious exercise is stressed here, while reminding all that the process we use to make these observations is always analyzed through our own cultural lenses, which may limit our ability to understand aspects of other cultures.

## APPENDIX J: Culture Values

Watch the short video named “Cultural Intelligence: What is Collectivism? Individualist Culture vs Collectivist Culture”, presented by Oliver Phillips (2016).

Debriefing questions:

1. Do you identify with any characteristics mentioned to compare individualism and collectivism?
2. Was your country mentioned? Do you agree with the values Oliver assigned it?

Let’s recap typical Individualist and Collectivist traits:

INDIVIDUALIST	COLLECTIVIST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identifies primarily with self</li> <li>○ Needs of the individual prioritized over those of the group</li> <li>○ Self-sufficiency = assured well-being of the group</li> <li>○ Self-reliance stressed and valued</li> <li>○ Value privacy</li> <li>○ Confront issues to resolve them quickly</li> <li>○ Value recognition and praise for successes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identified through functions and roles within a group</li> <li>○ Committed to what is best for the group, family or community</li> <li>○ Success of group = assured well-being of individual</li> <li>○ The decision over the group takes precedence over the individual</li> <li>○ Most concerned with maintaining harmony within relationships over focusing on issues</li> <li>○ Recognition and praise should consider the positive outcome on the group</li> </ul>

Teamwork: Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions

Each group has been assigned one cultural dimension. As a group, reflect on the following questions to develop certain expectations you may have once in your placement city:

1. Definition/Understanding of this dimension
2. Do any past instances come to mind that this dimension reminds you of?
3. What type of behavior could you expect in your SENA center which may be an example of this cultural value?
4. What could be an effective response to this possible occurrence?

## APPENDIX K: Stages of Development

*Exercise adapted from Bennett, M. J. (2011). A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. Retrieved from IDR Institute website <http://www.idrinstitute.org> (pdf).*

Facilitator: Solicit six participants to each write one stage of development on large sheets of paper to paste on the walls.

- I. **DENIAL OF DIFFERENCE** People with this predominant experience are “in denial” about cultural difference – they are unable to experience differences in other than extremely simple ways. They may be perplexed when asked about their own culture, because they have not considered how culture impacts their own or others’ lives. They might ask well-meant but naive questions about other cultures (“do they have television in Japan?”) and make superficial statements of tolerance (“live and let live”). In some cases, people with this orientation may dehumanize others, assuming that different behavior is a deficiency in intelligence or personality.
  
- II. **DEFENSE AGAINST DIFFERENCE** People with a predominant experience of Defense experience cultural difference in a polarized way –us and them. They feel “under siege” by people that they stereotype in simplistic and negative ways, protecting themselves with a hardened boundary between themselves and the “others.” Typically, one’s own culture is exalted, and other cultures are denigrated with negative stereotypes. This hierarchical view of culture may lead people to assume a kind of social Darwinism wherein they place their own culture at the acme of development and civilization. A common variation is a Reversal of the two poles, so that one’s own culture is denigrated and other cultures are uncritically lauded. While Reversal may superficially seem to be more culturally sensitive, it is nevertheless still dualistic and overly simplistic.
  
- III. **MINIMIZATION OF DIFFERENCE** The predominant experience of Minimization is that of having “arrived” at intercultural sensitivity. The polarized experience of Defense has given way to a recognition of the common humanity of all people regardless of culture (“We are the world”). The familiar cultural worldview is protected by believing that deep down we are all alike, either physically/psychologically or spiritually/philosophically. This assumption of similarity is then invoked to avoid recognizing one’s own cultural patterns, understanding others, and eventually making necessary adaptations. The assumed commonality with others is typically defined in ethnocentric terms: since everyone is essentially like us, it is sufficient in cross-cultural situations to “just be yourself.”
  
- IV. **ACCEPTANCE OF DIFFERENCE** When Acceptance is the predominant experience, people experience cultural difference in context. They accept that all behaviors and values, including their own, exist in distinctive cultural contexts and that patterns of behaviors and values can be discerned within each context. They see cultures as offering alternative viable solutions to the organization of human existence, and they are curious about what the alternatives to their own culture are. Acceptance does not mean agreement or preference for alternative values, but rather acceptance of the distinctive reality of each culture’s worldview.

- V. **ADAPTATION TO DIFFERENCE** The experience of Adaptation is one of consciously shifting perspective and intentionally altering behavior. Adaptation is the application of Acceptance, and it is likely to become the predominant experience when there is a need to actually interact effectively with people of another culture. With the acceptance of another culture's organization of reality, Adaptation can proceed by allowing one to reorganize experience in a way more like that of the other culture. This is intercultural empathy. The ability to empathize with another worldview in turn allows modified behavior to flow naturally from that experience. It is this natural flow of behavior that keeps code-shifting from being fake or inauthentic.
- VI. **INTEGRATION OF DIFFERENCE** The experience of Integration is of being a person who is not defined in terms of any one culture – typically a person who is bicultural or multicultural. The experience of Integration may occur when individuals intentionally make a significant, sustained effort to become fully competent in new cultures. It may become the predominant experience for nondominant group members who have adapted (not assimilated) to a dominant or colonial culture, or it may characterize persons who grew up or lived for extended periods in other cultures. A marginal cultural identity allows for lively participation in a variety of cultures, but also for an occasional sense of never really being “at home.” People with this orientation experience themselves as “in process,” and they generally have a wide repertoire of cultural perspectives and behavior to draw on.

## WORKSHEET

Can you identify each statement below with one or more stage of development? Please write the corresponding number for each stage before each statement. (I = Denial; II = Defense; etc)

- A. \_\_\_\_ “Live and let live, that’s what I say.”
- B. \_\_\_\_ “As long as we all speak the same language, there’s no problem.”
- C. \_\_\_\_ “The main concerns I have involve knowing how to get around and ordering in restaurants.”
- D. \_\_\_\_ “With my experience, I can be successful in any culture without any special effort – I never experience culture shock.”
- E. \_\_\_\_ “Boy, could we teach these people a lot of stuff.”
- F. \_\_\_\_ “What a sexist society!”
- G. \_\_\_\_ “I am embarrassed by my compatriots, so I spend all my time with the host country nationals.”
- H. \_\_\_\_ “The key to getting along in any culture is to just be yourself—authentic and honest!”
- I. \_\_\_\_ “Customs differ, of course, but when you really get to know them they’re pretty much like us.”
- J. \_\_\_\_ “No matter what their culture, people are pretty much motivated by the same things.”
- K. \_\_\_\_ “The more difference the better – it’s boring if everyone is the same”
- L. \_\_\_\_ “People in other cultures are different in ways I hadn’t thought of before”
- M. \_\_\_\_ “The more cultures you know about, the better comparisons you can make.”
- N. \_\_\_\_ “Sometimes it’s confusing, knowing that values are different in various cultures and wanting to be respectful, but still wanting to maintain my own core values.”
- O. \_\_\_\_ “When studying abroad, every student needs to be aware of relevant cultural differences.”

- P. \_\_\_\_ “My homestay family and I have had very different life experiences, and we’re learning from each other”
- Q. \_\_\_\_ “To solve this dispute, I’m going to have to change my approach.”
- R. \_\_\_\_ “I know they’re really trying hard to adapt to my style, so it’s fair that I try to meet them halfway.”
- S. \_\_\_\_ “I greet people from my culture and people from the host culture somewhat differently to account for cultural differences in the way respect is communicated.”
- T. \_\_\_\_ “I can maintain my values and also behave in culturally appropriate ways.”
- U. \_\_\_\_ “The more I understand this culture, the better I get at the language.”
- V. \_\_\_\_ “While sometimes I feel marginal in groups, I am able to move in and out of them with relative ease.”
- W. \_\_\_\_ “Whatever the situation, I can usually look at it from a variety of cultural points of view.”
- X. \_\_\_\_ “I truly enjoy participating fully in both of my cultures.”
- Y. \_\_\_\_ “My decision-making skills are enhanced by having multiple frames of reference.”

## APPENDIX L: Work Values

*Adapted from Culturewise Ltd. (n.d.) Intercultural Training Exercise Pack. Retrieved from <http://www.culturewise.net/intercultural-training-downloads/>*

Purpose and Learning Intentions:

- To guide you in considering your values and learning styles in the workplace or while completing a task as part of a team.
- Allow you share your personal findings with your co-teacher, as well as understand their work styles and expectations.

Everybody has their own individual values and preferences when it comes to the workplace, but have you thought about which may be a reflection of the culture you most identify with? This worksheet introduces a range of dimensions along which work-related values may vary and may help you become more aware of your own values, which may come in handy when you are expected to perform as a team.

1. Read each descriptions about the way in which people may prefer to communicate and prefer to learn, think and apply knowledge.
2. Decide which behavior is closest to your own. If you identify with both statements, choose the one you identify with more often, or in more situations.
3. Mark a score indicating how strongly you tend to exhibit this behavior

DIRECT					INDIRECT				
I prefer for people to be direct and to the point and not stall through unnecessary deliberation					I think it is important to avoid conflict, even if it means not directly addressing difficult issues				
5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5
THEORY					PRACTICE				
I prefer to learn through receiving and absorbing hard facts from an expert source					I prefer to learn through exploring, practicing and experimenting with new ideas				
5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5
TASK					RELATIONSHIP				
When I have a job to do, I prefer to get straight to the task, complete it and move on to the next					When I have a job to do, it is important to me to get to know people first. Having good relationships with the people I work with is so important for productivity				
5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5
PROMPT					FLEXIBLE				
I prefer people to stick to measurable and structured deadlines. Being on time is key to efficiency					I prefer people to be flexible when it comes to timekeeping. Being flexible about deadlines and meeting duration is key to efficiency				



5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5
<p><b>TEACHER</b></p> <p>I prefer to give out precise and structured instructions to people I work with. It important that people know exactly what is expected of them.</p>					<p><b>FACILITATOR</b></p> <p>I prefer to guide people towards making as many of their own decisions as possible. It is important that people take initiative at work.</p>				
5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5
<p><b>INFORMAL</b></p> <p>I prefer to communicate with people in an informal way at work (with all respect), no matter who they are or what position they hold.</p>					<p><b>FORMAL</b></p> <p>I believe that it is necessary to show a proper level of respect for position and status by using formal titles, surnames and polite forms of address.</p>				
5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5
<p><b>LOGIC</b></p> <p>I prefer solving problems at work using purely logic. Emotions can delay or deter effective decision-making.</p>					<p><b>FEELING</b></p> <p>I prefer to solve problems through social considerations. Listening to my heart and considering the feelings of others is key to making the right decision.</p>				
5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5

Debrief:

- Is there anything you would like to add to any of these so that your co-teacher may have a deeper understanding of your values?
- In which areas do you differ from one another? What can you do to meet halfway?

## APPENDIX M: Reflective Journal Guide

### Reflective Journal

What is a Reflective Journal?

The journal is either the booklet you have been provided, a virtual blog, video/audio entries, animation, music, or any artist expression that inspires you most, to record personal and thoughtful analyses of your experiences and how you relate or react to them during the program.

Why would I want to keep one?

Structured journal entries help you better articulate meanings of experiences, what you have learned from them, and why you do the things you do. This type of thoughtful introspection is a self-analysis, through which you are the teacher the learner, and the expert of the content. The journal entries are optional and will never be required to submit at any time. Only you decide which thoughts or information you share, if any. However, by sharing your inspiring thoughts, questions or realizations, you may be surprised by how many of your peers are thinking and feeling the similar things.

What constitutes a “thoughtful” journal entry?

The most important tip we offer is to make connections with ideas and concepts discussed during orientation as much as possible. Doing so will make your entries much easier to write and structured in a way that you will get the most meaning out of it. Also, when possible, try to relate entries to your values, attitudes and identity to help understand why they matter to you.

It is also helpful to keep in mind that by describing, interpreting then evaluating people and experiences, you are making a conscious set to avoid jumping to conclusions. Always end by stating what you have learned from the content. Make this the structure of each entry!

Content requests will be posted on Facebook on a weekly basis, some may include:

- Observations you make about Colombian culture and society
- Observations you make about your volunteacher’s culture
- Education system of Colombia
- Your relationship with your Co-teacher/volunteacher
- The functionality of the co-teacher model
- What you have learned about yourself after xx months
- How you think others view you
- Where you see yourself on Bennett’s Stages of Development scale (prompt questions provided)
- Stereotypes
- Reactions or thoughts to videos/articles posted on Facebook

## **APPENDIX N: Position Description – Assistant Program Manager**

The Assistant Program Manager for Volunteers Colombia will work closely with the Program Manager and Regional Coordinators of the SENA Volunteer Program. The position holder will work in a fast-paced, non-profit environment to design, implement and monitor reflective practices and intercultural development trainings and activities for the visiting and host participants.

### **Responsibilities include:**

- Designing and leading trainings and workshops during initial orientation that support development of participants' learning and critical thinking skills.
- Creating activities for the application of intercultural and reflective concepts during each semester.
- Facilitating understanding of relevant topics of 12 Regional Coordinators and supervising their performance as support systems for the participants.
- Providing up to date, formative and thought-provoking resources to Regional Coordinators and Social Media Coordinator to disseminate to the participants.
- Evaluating performance of Regional Coordinators and providing consistent feedback.
- Designing and implementing effective evaluation methods for understanding perceptions of the participants and their satisfaction with the activities implemented.
- Working closely with all departments of the organization to plan events and activities.
- Planning of promoting intercultural and reflective practices as a being a staple of the program.

### **Qualifications:**

- MA in International Education, Psychology, Sociology or related field
- Demonstrated academic or professional knowledge of theories and concepts in intercultural communication
- Excellent interpersonal, oral and written communication and presentation skills.
- Experience teaching or training.
- Knowledge of conducting research and ability to stay up to date on concepts and practices in the fields of Intercultural Communication and Experiential Learning.
- Experience being immersed into a new culture or environment abroad.
- Proven ability to design assessment and evaluation of programs and analyze results.
- Prior experience managing professional teams.
- Ability to establish priorities, meet deadlines and manage time wisely.

### **Preferred Qualities:**

- Self-driven
- Highly empathetic
- Highly motivated and passionate about intercultural and reflective learning concepts
- Knowledge of communicating with and inspiring large groups of people via social media
- Fluency in Spanish highly preferred

## APPENDIX O: Curriculum Evaluation Questions

Questions will be added to the existing surveys administered after orientation and at the end of each semester.

### Post Orientation

Survey questions will be included regarding perceptions of their learnings and evaluation of activities.

Please rank your satisfaction with the reflection and intercultural development activities:

1. Sufficient time was given to complete activities.  
*Strongly Disagree*    *Disagree*    *No Opinion*    *Agree*    *Strongly Agree*
2. Activities and lectures were generally thought-provoking, influential and enjoyable.  
*Strongly Disagree*    *Disagree*    *No Opinion*    *Agree*    *Strongly Agree*
3. I found that through the orientation activities, I have developed a deeper sense of who I am in relation to others.  
*Strongly Disagree*    *Disagree*    *No Opinion*    *Agree*    *Strongly Agree*
4. Theoretical content was presented clearly and relatively easy to understand.  
*Strongly Disagree*    *Disagree*    *No Opinion*    *Agree*    *Strongly Agree*
5. Participants were given space to reflect and offer their perspectives with respect  
*Strongly Disagree*    *Disagree*    *No Opinion*    *Agree*    *Strongly Agree*
6. Additional Comments:

### End-of Semester

Survey questions will be included regarding perceptions of their growth and evaluation of processes implemented.

Please rank your satisfaction with the reflection and intercultural development activities:

1. Theories and practices learning during orientation helped me conceptualize my experience as a co-teacher.  
*Strongly Disagree*    *Disagree*    *No Opinion*    *Agree*    *Strongly Agree*
2. Theories and practices learning during orientation were helpful for establishing a healthy and productive relationship with my co-teacher.  
*Strongly Disagree*    *Disagree*    *No Opinion*    *Agree*    *Strongly Agree*
3. I am more aware of how I communicate with others and how to benefit from the way I react to different ways of communicating.  
*Strongly Disagree*    *Disagree*    *No Opinion*    *Agree*    *Strongly Agree*

4. The reflective journals were helpful in processing my experiences.  
*Strongly Disagree    Disagree    No Opinion    Agree    Strongly Agree*
5. My regional coordinator was knowledgeable about reflective and intercultural concepts that were helpful in my learning process.  
*Strongly Disagree    Disagree    No Opinion    Agree    Strongly Agree*
6. My regional coordinator was empathetic and gave thoughtful feedback about my reflective journal topics and concerns.  
*Strongly Disagree    Disagree    No Opinion    Agree    Strongly Agree*
7. The group dialogue encounters were useful and enjoyable.  
*Strongly Disagree    Disagree    No Opinion    Agree    Strongly Agree*
8. Please complete the sentence:  
  
“My greatest learning outcome through my personal application of concepts learned during the initial program orientation is \_\_\_\_\_”
9. Additional comments: