

2009

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### Recommended Citation

Jarchow, Elaine (2009) "The Global Teacher Educator: A Peripatetic with Purpose," *Mid-Western Educational Researcher*. Vol. 22: Iss. 1, Article 4.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/mwer/vol22/iss1/4>

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*Keynote Address*

*The Global Teacher Educator:  
A Peripatetic with Purpose*

Elaine Jarchow  
Northern Kentucky University

A peripatetic is one who journeys hither and thither. Many of us can claim that title, I am sure, by just describing a domestic day. In the context of our MWERA conference theme, the globalization of the teacher education experience, I mean that a peripatetic is one who journeys hither and thither internationally and, by adding “with purpose,” I mean a teacher educator whose international journeys have distinct, education related objectives.

Since my first international journey 43 years ago, I have been privileged to visit 54 countries in some capacity—as a tourist, as a consultant, as an employed permanent resident, and as a conference presenter. Today I would like to share some of my purposeful journeys and then offer you three global paths you might consider—for your students, for your teaching, and for yourself.

When I am asked why I took the international path, I am reminded of Tennessee Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie* (1945). In the play, Amanda, the mother, is not very likable. She explains her husband’s long absence to her friends by saying that he worked for the telephone company and fell in love with long distance. Many of my international colleagues share that love of long distance and can’t always pinpoint why they have it; they just know they can’t resist the allure of far away places.

When I was 14, I responded to an advertisement where I could send in quarters and I would receive one international pen pal per quarter. I could designate the age and gender of my new friend. Of course, I asked for 16 year old males. I must say that the correspondence with the Moroccan stone cutter and the sailor from Marseilles went no where. What I did not know was that my name was in a database and could be sent to others. One day I received a letter from Germany—from Aggy Linkhorst. Her letter contained a photo of a beatnik and the opening line, “I think all American girls are naïve and stupid.” She had hoped for a pen pal from England and got me and did not want to waste her German mark. Our correspondence flourished; we both became English teachers; we both married; and we continue to be friends to this day.

It should not surprise you that my first international journey at age 21, armed with my Ohio University teaching degree, was to Germany to spend the summer with Aggy before beginning my high school English teaching career. I thought as young women in our early 20s that we would journey to Rome, Paris, and London. Was I mistaken! Aggy informed me that Americans love to travel to many cities, take

a bunch of photos, and say that they know Europe. She told me that we would learn more about the part of Germany that lies within 50 miles of her home. She was so right! I came to know the history of that region well and was able to assist on an archeological dig at a former Roman encampment, harvest vegetables from her garden, and become friends with a number of Germans.

I had my share of tourist opportunities and more visits with Aggy. I earned both my master’s and Ph.D. at Kent State University and had numerous opportunities to interact with international students and scholars. My first university position at Iowa State University, however, gave me my first insights into purposeful meanderings. I joined various grant writing teams and learned that, if successful, one could travel to other countries, do meaningful work, and receive funds to bring international participants to one’s home campus for a variety of purposes. These grants of which I speak provided me with the opportunities to:

- bring 30 Honduran educators to the U.S.;
- bring 30 Bolivian educators to the U.S.;
- bring 30 Guatemalan educators to the U.S.;
- bring 30 South African educators to the U.S.;
- consult on education matters in numerous countries; and
- place over 100 U.S. student teachers in various countries.

I moved from Iowa State University to New Mexico State University in 1986 and enjoyed a whole new world of living in a tri cultural state (Caucasian, Latino, Native American) just 60 miles from the Mexican border. I developed a faculty exchange agreement with Hamilton Teachers College (now the University of Waikato) in Hamilton, New Zealand, as well as a site for international student teacher exchanges. After celebrating the success of the exchange with returning faculty and students, I decided that I should exchange myself. My family—my husband and then 9 year old daughter—lived for a semester in Hamilton, New Zealand. After my experience, I wrote an article published in *The Phi Delta Kappan* (1992) describing 10 ideas worth stealing from New Zealand. I think you will find these of interest.

1. *Morning tea*. Everything stops for 15 to 30 minutes at 10 a.m. in the primary, intermediate, secondary, and tertiary schools. Teachers, principals, and professors sit in circles, drink tea or coffee, eat biscuits (cookies), and converse.

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Period. No one dashes off to make copies or phone calls. Children play and eat snacks. Relaxation and conversation play an important role in school life.

2. *The lie-flat manifold duplicate book.* University supervisors carry orange books when they observe a lesson. They write their comments about the lesson on a sheet of paper, which is backed by carbon copy. Immediately after the lesson, the teacher being observed receives the *original* set of notes during a post-lesson conference. The supervisor retains the carbon copy to help with the writing of narrative reports. This process strengthens the trust between teachers and supervisors because the latter are not seen as hiding information.

3. *School uniforms.* Children in public intermediate and secondary schools and in private primary schools wear uniforms to school. These uniforms lend a sense of seriousness to the enterprise of schooling. Rich and poor children look alike and express strong feelings of school spirit. Adults openly discuss those behaviors that would “disgrace the school uniform.”

4. *Collegial planning and grading of college assignments.* Preservice teachers write three to four “serious” assignments about education for each class in which they are enrolled. These assignments are formulated and graded by groups of instructors who carefully outline the criteria for success. For example, one must respond to the statement, “Identify several philosophical ideas that will underpin the facilitation of learning in your classroom,” by analyzing a minimum of three philosophical ideas.

Although a normal grade distribution is not the rule, instructors have agreed that A’s are reserved for truly *excellent* work, and D’s and F’s are appropriate descriptions of performance of some would-be teachers. Many papers are read by more than one grader. Sometimes, outside graders (public school teachers) are hired to help with grading.

5. *Apologies, please.* Those who cannot attend meetings always send apologies in writing or by phone. Meetings begin with a reading of these apologies. A meeting is seen as an important event, and the apologies contain the serious reasons why individuals would choose to miss such a vital event in educational planning.

6. *Setting objectives and educating the whole child.* Teachers in New Zealand write sensible objectives in a form such as this: “The purpose of these lessons is to help pupils move toward understanding such-and-such ideas and attaining such-and-such skills.” Establishing a level of performance is not seen as an end in itself.

Children in primary grades spend lots of time learning to swim, getting their teeth cleaned, playing flutes, running in cross-country meets, engaging in art work, *and* concentrating on math, reading, writing, and spelling. Teachers and parents work together to plan the school curriculum. A few concerns that are lacking—but scarcely missed—are those dealing with

keeping up with Japan or meeting some artificial standards in basic skills or discussing whether time devoted to art, music, and physical education could be better spent.

7. *“Portable” primary architecture.* Most primary schools are composed of a main building and a number of complementary portable buildings. As enrollments shift, so do the buildings—simply and efficiently. Children enjoy the sense of access to the outdoors that portables allow, and teachers can more easily use the school grounds to involve the children in lessons. Nervous, easily intimidated parents need only walk through one door to find their child’s teacher.

8. *The marae interview.* The Maoris, the indigenous people of New Zealand, make up about 12% of the population. To interview applicants *individually* for admission to teacher education or for a teaching position would be foreign to their culture. Instead, a *marae* interview is offered to all persons who wish to have one. Candidates come to the *marae* (sacred meeting place) with many members of their families who will speak on their behalf. The same questions and criteria that apply to individual interviews are applied to *marae* interviews. Minority candidates for teacher education could find this procedure particularly valuable.

9. *Single-sex schools.* Public secondary students may choose to attend a single-sex school. Most young women believe that a single-sex school is academically best for them. Those who choose coeducational schools believe that the social life is better in a mixed setting. Knowing that a choice is available to all provides for a dynamic and flexible system.

10. *Bungee jumping, jet boating, and black-water rafting.* Thrill seekers in New Zealand can find several exciting diversions. A person can attach a bungee cord to his or her ankles, jump off a 200-foot bridge, and stop just short of plunging headfirst into a river. Daredevils can ride a 12-passenger speedboat down a narrow river canyon at 75 miles an hour. Finally one can sit in an inner tube and drift down underground rivers to exciting jumps over six-foot waterfalls. Perhaps we need to add some risk taking to our own curriculum planning and value sharing and support of new instructional ideas over teaching to the test.

Another New Mexico experience involved the journey (with three of my NMSU colleagues) of a group of teacher educators from several universities to study Japanese culture. The U.S. Japan Foundation funded this experience. The purpose of the study was to infuse global learnings into teacher education, using Japan as a case study. I must say that the three weeks that our group spent in Japan were truly life changing. We experienced two home stays, took classes in flower arranging, tea service, and calligraphy, attended a sumo wrestling match and a baseball game, spent a night at a Buddhist monastery, slogged around the fish market, and met with some marvelous people. By the way, I still follow sumo wrestling.

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I moved from New Mexico to the bright lights of Las Vegas in 1991. Three experiences stand out. We were able to join a project with the United Kingdom and Poland. This European Foundation funded project allowed us to implement a successful discovery learning project in Poland. A Fulbright Hays Group Projects Abroad grant enabled us to take ten University of Nevada Las Vegas faculty to Singapore with the purpose of infusing multicultural education principles into our curriculum using Singapore as a case study. Finally, a 1993 month long consulting opportunity for the U.S. Agency for International Development helped me to develop a plan to improve elementary education in Ghana.

In 1994, I left Las Vegas for the deanship at Texas Tech University. I was fortunate to become involved with the Texas International Education Consortium. TIEC had just finished building a university in Morocco and was asked to build a college in Saudi Arabia. I was asked to do some consulting in Saudi Arabia. This event led to my serving for two years as academic dean of Dar Al Hekma in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and then for four years as Dean of the College of Education at Zayed University in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates.

My six years in the Arab World taught me many things about Arabs, Islam, and myself. I well remember on 9/11 when many of my Arab colleagues came to ask me whether my family was okay, and I remember on the morning when the U.S. bombed Baghdad seeking out my Iraqi colleagues to ask about their families. Similar to my ten ideas worth stealing from New Zealand, I listed ten items worth stealing from the Arab World and some questions for us to answer, and I would like to share these with you.

1. *Memorization.* Asking American students to memorize for the sake of memorizing is out, but in the Arab World memorizing the *Koran* is a highly prized activity where annual competitions include sought after prestigious awards. Because students have a flair for memorizing, they are able to learn the English vocabulary necessary to become strong second language learners. What place does memorization have in today's curriculum?

2. *The Desire to Improve.* Our Zayed University Center for Professional Development of U.A.E. Educators flourished because practicing educators have a strong willingness to improve their pedagogy. They attend late afternoon and evening sessions even though these may require meeting a bus in the dusty desert and riding several hours to the training site. They often use their own money to buy school supplies and to decorate their classrooms. Recent teacher education graduates really do believe that they can change their country's schools for the better. How invested in their practice are our teachers?

3. *Focus on Community.* Robert Putnam's book *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of the American Community* (2000) describes America's declining social capital. It could never have been written about Arab society. Family and tribal ties are very strong. For many the work day stops at 2:30 p.m. to allow for a family gathering over a meal. Students

move from class to class and from class to cafeteria in small "families" of friends or relatives. Rarely does a female student come to meet a professor alone; she is usually accompanied by others. Women in particular have strong support communities. How might our curriculum help students to return to a sense of community?

4. *Welcoming the Dignitary.* Arab hospitality is well known, and it manifests itself in schools when visitors arrive. Even the humblest of schools literally rolls out the red carpet, welcomes the special guest with songs, food, and gifts, and stages well rehearsed performances. How do our schools in this era of school violence manifest a welcoming environment?

5. *Student Self Confidence.* Female students happily seem to accept the notion that they will be asked to speak at large assemblies, graduation, and presentations. They often serve as the Mistress of Ceremonies for complex events and never express a fear of public speaking; they enjoy the opportunity to stand before sheikhs and distinguished guests and to sincerely express themselves about various events. What learning outcomes help our students to become self confident?

6. *Can Do Attitude.* No education project is so large that it cannot be conceptualized over the weekend and implemented a short time later. One week before the Zayed University Capstone Festival, where senior students showcase their projects, a five minute professional film was requested as an event-opener. No one even asked if it could be done. One weekend before a meeting with an Emirati Crown Prince, a concept paper on the education of talented and gifted youth was requested and, of course, completed. Perhaps this can-do attitude in the U.A.E. is pervasive because the country became a modern, cosmopolitan center in just 30 years. Does our curriculum inspire students to plan for far reaching goals?

7. *Put Your Best Foot Forward.* When one visits a school, the classes often appear to be rehearsed. The importance of showcasing the best, of being on one's best behavior is truly important. Virtually all developing-country expatriate workers in the Arab World can't wait to provide good service. Perhaps this is because their families at home rely on their income. After 9/11 a group of university drivers, most of whom came from India, were asked if they were fearful of driving Americans. "We will defend them with our lives, if necessary," they replied. Will service learning play a role in transforming our schools?

8. *Acceptable Behavior.* There are Arab standards of culturally acceptable behavior (e.g. dress, separation of the sexes) which may not appeal to Westerners, but these standards exist and guide child-rearing practices. For example, in the U.A.E., it's rude to tell someone to turn off his cell phone, and it is acceptable to help someone write a paper. If a parent needs a child to provide comfort at home, the child must sometimes forego opportunities, such as study abroad. What place do shared values have in our curriculum?

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9. *The Majilis*. Sheikhs greet people in a meeting room called a majilis and they can be approached by those with less status. Everyone has a voice and this sense of equality prevails in the mosque where rich and poor stand side by side in prayer. Are there safe places in our classrooms where students can come at any point to talk to a peer or a teacher?

10. *It's Just Our Way!* In the Arab World (as is true in many places) there are, of course, daily frustrations for Westerners. When we share our cultural frustrations (e.g. a perceived lack of punctuality) with our Arab colleagues, the simple explanation, "It's just our way" often follows. Does our curriculum help our students to develop a global perspective?

Since coming to Northern Kentucky University from the United Arab Emirates, I've been able to begin another international student project and send over 30 student teachers overseas. I've received a U.S. Department of State Middle East Initiative Partnership to teach English through service learning in the U.A.E. and Oman. Fortunately, I've been able to send many of our faculty on international assignments.

My international experiences have been rewarding, exciting, and challenging, and I would wish the same for you as you extend your global education expertise. I mentioned that I would suggest three paths for you—for your students, for your teaching, and for yourself. For your students, I would recommend that you advocate for an international student teaching program on your campus and that you urge students to take advantage of full or half semester opportunities. Students always return saying this was the best experience of their lives. You should also encourage students to undertake short and long term education abroad experiences. Spring break Mexico service learning experiences, for example, offer your students an opportunity to adopt a rural school, to do some teaching, and to add resources to local libraries. You could also use the internet to link your students to overseas classrooms.

In your teaching, be sure to invite international students to your classrooms to share insights on education in their countries. You could be committed to infusing global competencies into your course. Here are some examples of such competencies:

1. *Knowledge*.

- Knowledge of world geography, conditions, issues, and events.
- Awareness of the complexity and inter-dependency of world issues and events.
- Understanding of historical forces that have shaped the current world system.
- Knowledge of one's own culture and history.
- Knowledge of effective communication, including knowledge of a foreign language, intercultural communication concepts, and international professional etiquette.

- Understanding of the diversity of values, beliefs, ideas, and world views.

2. *Attitudes (or Affective Characteristics)*.

- Openness to learning and a positive orientation to new opportunities, ideas, and ways of thinking.
- Acknowledgement of ambiguity and unfamiliarity.
- Sensitivity and respect for personal and cultural differences.
- Empathy or the ability to see multiple perspectives.
- Self-awareness and self-esteem about one's own identity and culture.

3. *Skills*.

- Technical skills to enhance students' ability to learn about the world (for example, research skills).
- Critical and comparative thinking skills, including the ability to think creatively and integrate knowledge, rather than accepting knowledge in a noncritical way.
- Intercultural communication skills to interact with people from other cultures.
- Coping and resiliency skills in unfamiliar and challenging situations (Green, M. F. & Olsen, C., 2003).

As you ask students to do literature surveys and to read articles and to undertake research projects, be sure to include cross national studies. You might also consider doing cross national studies as you meet international colleagues.

For yourself, I would recommend that you write grants which will allow you and your colleagues to undertake projects in other countries and to invite international scholars and students to your campus. You could volunteer to teach an education abroad course. In addition to the full semester course, you could teach during an intersession, a break, or summer. For example, you could take students to London and Dublin to explore schools in the U.K. You could also present at international conferences.

I am currently serving as Interim Dean of International Education as our university seeks a permanent dean to head the unit. I plan to step down from deaning this June, but not to stop my peripatetic life. This January, I will direct a U.S. Department of State International Research and Exchanges Board grant. Sixteen outstanding secondary teachers from developing countries will come to NKU for the entire semester to develop expertise in their subject areas, enhance their teaching skills and increase their knowledge about the United States. Their academic program will provide coursework and intensive training in teaching methodologies, curriculum writing, teaching strategies for their home environment, educational leadership, as well as the use of computers for Internet and word processing as tools for teaching.

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I will spend part of February in Oman, finishing the Middle East Partnership Initiative by helping our Omani colleagues to write grants and publish articles. I have applied to Semester at Sea for fall 2009 for my sabbatical and hope to serve as a faculty member on one of the round the world voyages. When I return from my sabbatical, I will teach the freshman seminar as a global perspectives course.

Beyond that, who knows? In 1869 in *Innocents Abroad*, Mark Twain wrote, "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one's little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."

As I conclude these musings, I am reminded of the play *Sunset Boulevard* with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber (1996). In one of his songs, the great director Cecil B. DeMille and the aging movie star Norma Desmond sing a song about the movies and their role in the movies. The line, "We gave the world new ways to dream," is, of course, about the movies. I think we can borrow it this afternoon, and say that peripatetic purposeful global teacher educators can give international colleagues, domestic students, and themselves new ways to dream.

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