

**MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF
INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP
WITH
ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELD SCHOOLS**

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My Background

- PhD, Cultural and Applied Anthropology. Indiana University, 1975
- MA, Latin American Studies, IU, 1969
- BS, Latin American Studies, St. Joseph's University (Pa), 1967
- North Carolina State University, retired in 2019, as Assoc. Prof. Emeritus. First employed July 1974

My Experience

- Twenty-five years (since 1994)
- Four countries: Hungary, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Colombia
- About 425+ participants over 25 years
- Undergraduates (75%) & Grad students (25%)
- Workshops on field schools
- Publications on how and why to do it
- Helped start a Social Work Field School with Maya families (225 participants over 13 years)

The Program

- Ethnographic focus
- Two months fieldwork
- Home stays & logistics for support structure
- Independent learning
- Challenging them
- Getting out of the way
- Mentorship not dictatorship
- Expecting responsible behavior
- Final report, powerpoints, professional conferences

Key Student Elements

- The student is the end product of the program not the final test or paper.
- The process is more important than tests or final project.
- Focus on student emotional and personal growth.
- Mentoring more; teach less.
- Nurturing independence.
- Pushing ethical behavior.

Key Elements, cont.

- Building confidence and skills gradually with increasingly difficult tasks.
- Nurturing during failures; but gently being firm to achieve next levels of accomplishment.
- Facilitating learning time management skills.
- Empowering students to learn independently.
- Employing “disappearing structure.”

Practical Outcomes for Students

- Enhanced skill set
- Successful Graduate school applicants
- Better prepared for course work
- Ahead of other students at same level
- Want to return to research site, maintain contact
- Able to find jobs with international NGOs and other organizations
- Data and structure for thesis

Intangible Outcomes

- Understanding “the Other”
- Confidence in one’s abilities, skill set, ingenuity
- Commitment to international activities
- Project design skills
- Project management skills
- Collaboration with local people beyond “helping”
- “Real” life experiences
- Prepared for culture shock
- Understanding the alternating periods of the intensity/slowness of international work

Community Benefits

- Homestays – over 25 years:
 - Anthropology students – 425 total
 - Social Work students – 225 total
- Research required for each anthro student
 - 25 years worth of research project reports available
- Internship for social work students required
 - Internships with local NGOs

Community Benefits, cont.

- Connections
 - Students often create long-term relationships with host families
 - Revisits, gifts, opening their US homes to host family members, long-distance attempts to provide financial relief during stressful times, return for months-long or years long work with local NGOs.
- Financial
 - Between \$1.5M-4M worth (in contemporary dollars) of student fees wind up spent in the local communities over a 25-year span.

Community Benefits, cont.

- Two-way communication of cultural experiences and societal norms
- Development of microentrepreneurial skills among homestay providers
 - Managing homestays
 - Developing homestays planning
 - Understanding the hosts' cultural and physical needs
 - Developing personal coping skills managing homestays
 - Making physical improvements in the home to attract and encourage homestays

Colombia Program 2015-2019

- Industrial design students – Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano, Bogotá.
 - 3 years of students participating in faculty- student-local community collaboration using design anthropology techniques to develop projects to assist in improving the heritage and financial conditions for native islanders of the San Andrés Archipelago, Colombia
 - A 4th year doing the same in Santa Marta, Colombia
 - Students live and work for 10 days – two weeks on site to work with local artisans and microentrepreneurs designing projects that can be implemented to improve local heritage and economic conditions for local natives.