K-12 Professional Development Abroad: Building Bridges Across Disciplines and Cultures

Teacher Summer Institute Belize
Mandy Monroe
University of Florida Center for Latin American Studies
16 October 2014
FFLA Conference
Overview

• Latin America and the Sciences
• Institute History & Framework
• 2014 Case Study
  • Why Belize? Why BFREE?
  • Technology to Prepare
  • Activities in Country
  • Reflection & Plans for Classroom Integration
  • Post Trip Outputs
• Where do we go from here?
Latin America and the Sciences

- Environmental Science Content & Curricula Development
- Latin American Ecosystems & Culture Content
- Technology & Experiential Learning in the Field & Classroom
- Intercultural Competence in Professional & Personal Interactions
Gainesville based Institute in 2011 using an online wikispace, field trips and classroom lectures to connect Latin American studies and the sciences.

The institute integrated science and Latin American studies to develop appropriate technology and experiential learning lessons in the classroom.
2014: Why Belize? Why BFREE?

- Density of Biocultural Diversity!
  - Ecosystem richness
    - Subtropical Rainforests, Coastal Mangroves, Barrier Reef
    - Land Preservation
  - Cultural richness
    - Ethnic Diversity: Creole, Mestizo, Maya, Garifuna, Mennonite, European
    - Linguistic Diversity: English; Spanish; Creole; Garifuna; Mopan, Ke’kchi, and Yucatec Maya; German
  - Flora & Fauna richness
    - >500 bird species
    - >700 butterfly species
    - >180 species amphibians & reptiles
    - Healthy mammal populations

BFREE
Belize Foundation for Research & Environmental Education
Self-Identified Participant Goals

- Environmental Science Content & Curricula Development
- Latin American Ecosystems & Culture Content
- Technology & Experiential Learning in the Field & Classroom
- Intercultural Competence in Professional & Personal Interactions

2014 Teacher Summer Institute Belize Pre-Trip Survey

Q5 List three areas you hope to learn about to improve learning outcomes in your classroom.

Answered: 6    Skipped: 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>environmental issues, another culture foods</td>
<td>6/20/2014 9:19 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1. I would like to learn some advanced research techniques. 2. I would like to make connections with other teachers to compare ideas. 3. I would like to come back with stories that will make my class more exciting.</td>
<td>6/18/2014 8:32 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Belize culture, rain forests and ecosystems, and traditions native to Belize.</td>
<td>6/16/2014 9:51 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1. rainforest biodiversity 2. culture 3. the diverse life in coral reefs</td>
<td>6/15/2014 9:27 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The effects of extractive activities on Flora and fauna. Indigenous people (along with info on Mayan history, architecture, culture) And the environment (air and water quality)</td>
<td>6/13/2014 8:46 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ecosystems, sustainability issues and strategies, diversity of Mayan culture</td>
<td>6/13/2014 3:18 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Websites, wikispaces, virtual connects and other online technology interfaces help to prepare teachers for their summer institute experience.
Activities ranging from a lecture at an artisan cooperative, snorkeling at a national park, cacao agroforestry tours, wildlife viewing, tour and lecture at the Belize Zoo and birding... offered participants experiential learning opportunities.
An overnight homestay in a local Maya village left lasting impressions.

Several participants reflected on the homestay in Golden Stream Community as an eye-opening experience that they will carry with them in their personal and professional lives.
A luncheon with Belizean teachers allowed educators to express their unique challenges cross culturally and to build partnerships around their aspirations.

Institute participants are eager to send books, field guides, and digital resources for the Belizean teachers who expressed a desire for classroom enrichment materials.
“learning is regarded as **socially situated** in that individuals **form a community for a common purpose**... it forms as members come together for a particular purpose and when that purpose no longer exists, the members disperse.” Gleeson and Tait (2012)

“while students tend to focus on learning as a means of acquiring more knowledge, teachers are more often engaging in new knowledge with the view of later transforming this into learning opportunities for their own students.” Wenicke (2010)
Cultural exchange experience encouraged teachers to innovate in their classrooms.

All participants mention culture and science as highlights of their trip to bring to the USA.
MY SUMMER VACATION

Belize

Post-Trip Outputs
Post-Trip Outputs

BETA
June 22-July 3

15 places | 2,097 miles (3,377 km) | visibility: public | created 2 months ago | 97 views | 0 followers | 0 copies

google earth: [export to] or [view in Google Earth]

Sunday, June 22, 2014

Chicago, IL, USA (5:00 am)
A few pictures of my gear and backpack.

Travelers

Jason Pitak
Chicago, IL, USA

Main Location

Belize
Country | 2 followers
Where do we go from here?

Outreach Program—Services

Outreach Lending Library

The Outreach Program maintains a collection of more than 500 resources on Latin American and Caribbean topics in our Lending Library. As of summer 2014, the program merged its collection of videos with that of Tulane University. We believe this merge to be a contribution to the larger Latin American Studies community, as we are certain that our videos in their new home will gain exposure with a wider audience.

The majority of the titles previously available through our Outreach Lending Library are now available through the Roger Thayer Stone Center for Latin American Studies. We encourage educators to browse the Stone Center’s resource materials and lending procedures on their website linked above.

Traveling Suitcases

Traveling suitcases are artifact collections reflecting thematic areas of the diverse cultures, traditions and economies of Latin America. Educators may borrow these suitcases at no charge (though they are responsible for the cost of return shipping). These unique collections of books, toys, music, product packaging, currency, national symbols, and other items have been collected by UF faculty, students, and friends while traveling in Latin America. Many teachers use them as a learning center, letting students handle items and discuss their uses. Please see the Traveling Suitcases tab on the left for more information.

Webinars

Webinars provide an online classroom in which professionals can gain further knowledge on a variety of topics related to Latin America. To participate in our current webinar series, "Preparing Students for the Global Workplace," please visit the Network of Business Language Educators (NOBLE) website.

Workshops

Workshops are held in a variety of locations for teachers who want to incorporate Latin American Studies into their curriculum. The workshops typically feature presentations given by UF faculty or graduate students from disciplines such as anthropology, political science, history, music, sociology, wildlife science, botany, and others. Participants include K-12 teachers as well as community college instructors. The program also offers workshops for teachers in cooperation with school districts.

Speakers Bureau

University of Florida faculty and graduate students offer presentations on Latin America and the Caribbean to
References


• Photo Credits: from the Belize Teachers Google+ Photo share
Thank you!