

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



Teacher Summer Institute Belize

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University of Florida Center for Latin American Studies

06/13/

16 October 2014

FFLA Conference



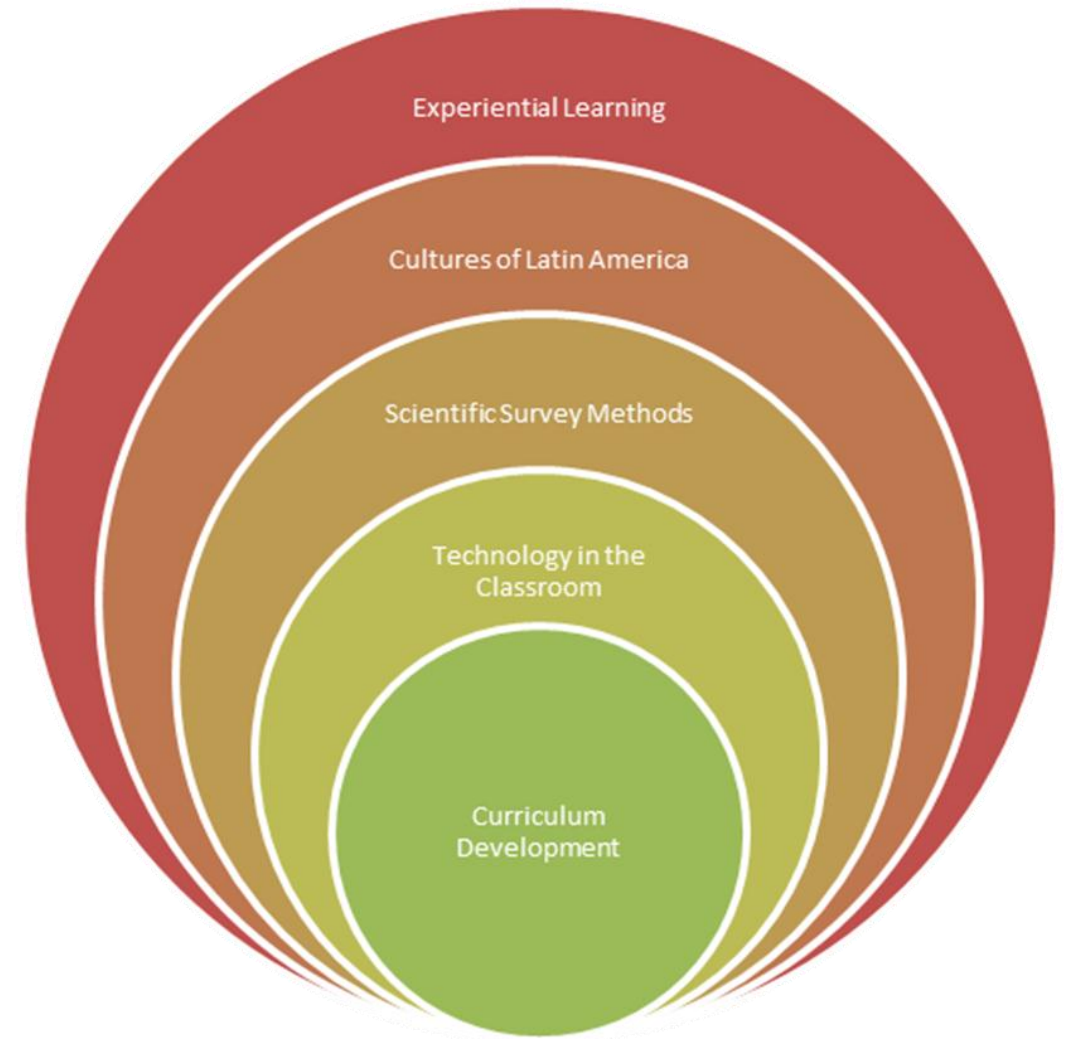
# Overview

- 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?



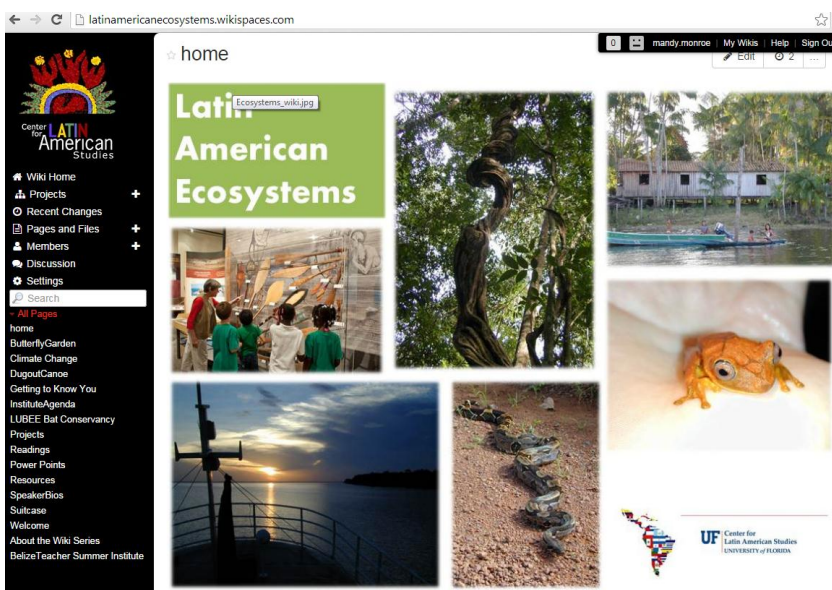
# Latin America and the Sciences

- 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





# 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.**

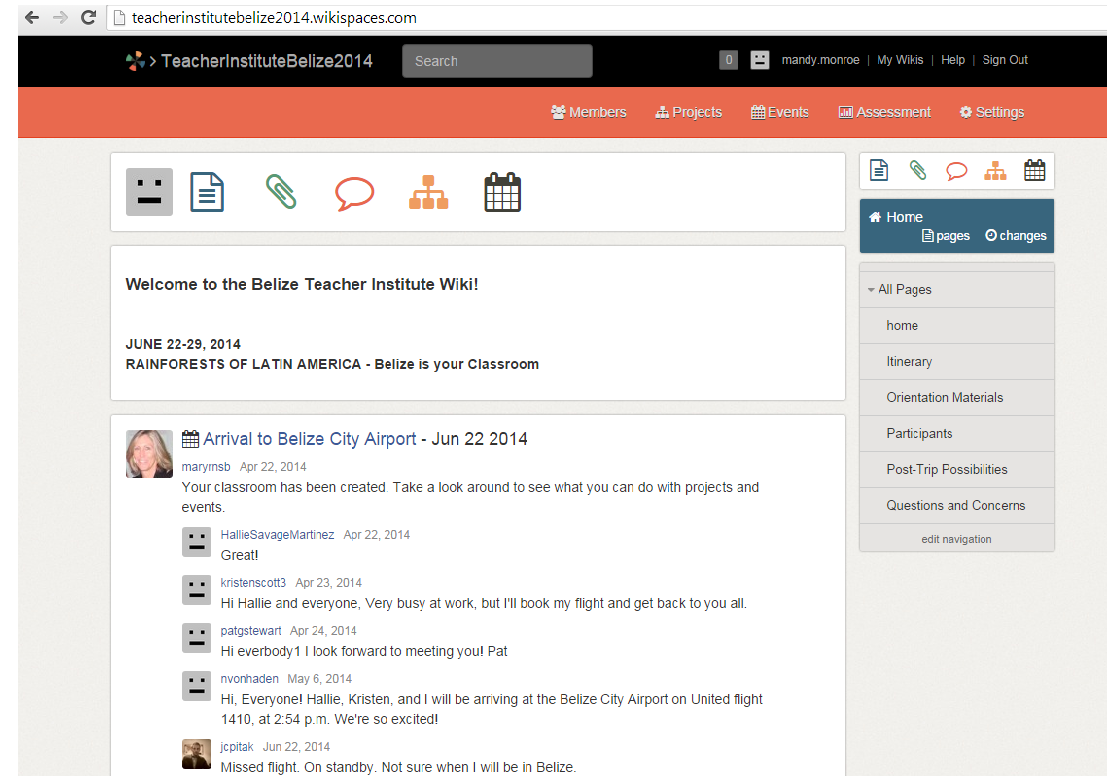
Answered: 6 Skipped: 1

#	Responses	Date
1	<u>environmental issues</u> <u>another culture</u> <u>foods</u>	6/20/2014 9:19 AM
2	1. I would like to learn some advanced <u>research techniques</u> . 2. I would like to make <u>connections</u> with other teachers to compare ideas. 3. I would like to come back with stories that will make my <u>class more exciting</u> .	6/18/2014 8:32 PM
3	<u>Belize culture</u> , rain forests and ecosystems, and <u>traditions native to Belize</u> .	6/16/2014 9:51 PM
4	1. <u>rainforest biodiversity</u> 2. culture 3. the diverse life in <u>coral reefs</u>	6/15/2014 9:27 PM
5	The effects of extractive activities on Flora and fauna <u>Indigenous people</u> (along with info on <u>Mayan history, architecture, culture</u> ) And the <u>environment (air and water quality)</u>	6/13/2014 8:46 PM
6	<u>Ecosystems, sustainability issues and strategies</u> , <u>diversity of Mayan culture</u>	6/13/2014 3:18 PM

# Websites, wikispaces, virtual connects and other online technology interfaces help to prepare teachers for their summer institute experience.



The screenshot shows the website for the Teacher Summer Institute Belize. The header includes the University of Florida logo and navigation menus for Students, Faculty & Staff, Alumni & Friends, Parents, Visitors & Fans, Learning, and UF. The main navigation bar includes Home, People, Academics, Outreach, Research & Training, News & Events, and Alumni. The page title is "Teacher Summer Institute Belize" with the dates "JUNE 22-29, 2014". The main heading is "RAINFORESTS OF LATIN AMERICA – Belize is your Classroom". A sub-heading reads "Shake up your professional development experience with the ultimate HANDS-ON learning experience in the field! Teacher Summer Institute 2014 content will address the rainforests of Latin America by making connections between the broad themes of Belizean ecosystems and specific topics such as plant, animal and human interaction within the systems. The Institute is designed for and open to educators of all disciplines and grade levels, as well as pre-service teachers." A photograph shows a woman in a green shirt smiling in a lush green environment. Below the photo, a list of interdisciplinary activities includes: Tour the Belize Zoo, Tropical Education Center with conservationist Sharon Matola; Interact with the Maya Center Women's Cooperative; Learn about Medicinal Plants; Try traditional Mayan Lunch; Hike through diverse Ecosystems in the Bladen Reserve at BFREE; Identify and Net Birds; Learn about the BFREE Harpy Eagle Project; Explore the nightlife on Walks, netting Bats, and catching Wildlife on Camera; Study River Health at BFREE; Tour a Cacao & Coffee Agroforestry Farm; Stay Overnight with a Maya Family in Golden Stream Community; Snorkel in the Belize Barrier Reef; Discover Coastal Ecosystems with Southern Environmental Association; Enjoy Garifuna Drumming and Dance Performance.



The screenshot shows the Wikispaces page for TeacherInstituteBelize2014. The header includes the site name, a search bar, and user information for mandy.monroe. The main navigation bar includes Members, Projects, Events, Assessment, and Settings. The page title is "Welcome to the Belize Teacher Institute Wiki!". Below the title, the dates "JUNE 22-29, 2014" and the heading "RAINFORESTS OF LATIN AMERICA - Belize is your Classroom" are displayed. A recent activity titled "Arrival to Belize City Airport - Jun 22 2014" is shown, with a list of comments from users: marynsb (Apr 22, 2014) says "Your classroom has been created. Take a look around to see what you can do with projects and events."; HallieSavageMartinez (Apr 22, 2014) says "Great!"; kristenscott3 (Apr 23, 2014) says "Hi Hallie and everyone, Very busy at work, but I'll book my flight and get back to you all."; patgstewart (Apr 24, 2014) says "Hi everybody! I look forward to meeting you! Pat"; nvonhaden (May 6, 2014) says "Hi, Everyone! Hallie, Kristen, and I will be arriving at the Belize City Airport on United flight 1410, at 2:54 p.m. We're so excited!"; and jcpitak (Jun 22, 2014) says "Missed flight. On standby. Not sure when I will be in Belize."



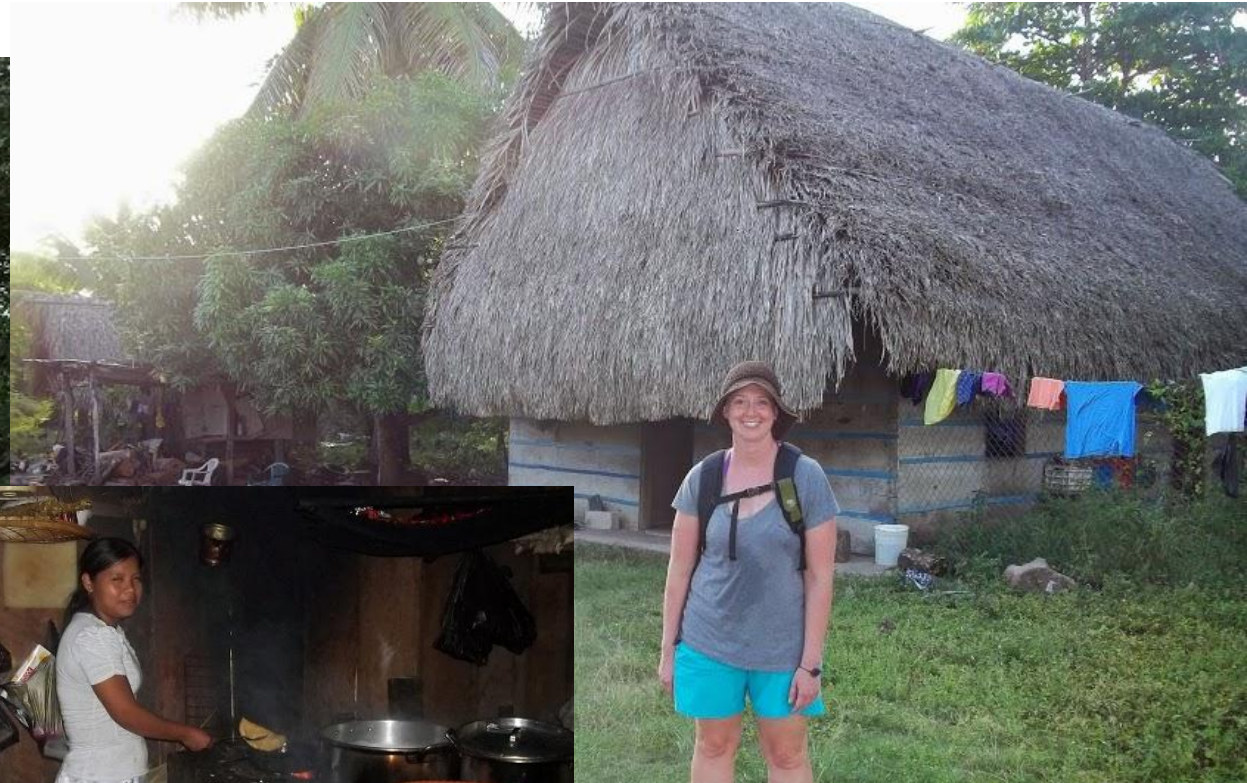
Activities ranging from a lecture at an artisan cooperative, snorkeling at a national park, cacao agroforestry tours, wildlife viewing, tour and lecture at the Belize Zoo and birding...



...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.

What three moments/experiences had the most impact on you during this summer institute?

1. BFREE - all of the tours & facilities
2. home visit
3. being engrossed into different cultures all within Belize.

How will you use what you learned in this summer institute to improve teaching in your classroom?

I took a lot of photographs, so I'm going to share w/ students, faculty, and staff and discuss what I learned and experienced in Belize and hope to spark future visits and partnerships between US & Belize such as sharing of materials on the country, environment, culture, etc.

Did the summer institute reinforce content or apply to standards you teach in the classroom? If so, explain. If not, explain why not.

Yes. I can use the things I have learned for science & environmental lessons, and understanding cultures different from our

What three moments/experiences had the most impact on you during this summer institute?

1. Snorkeling
2. Mayan village visit
3. Belize Zoo

Did the summer institute reinforce content or apply to standards you teach in the classroom? If so, explain. If not, explain why not.

Yes the summer institute reinforced content, especially science/social studies, but can also be used in Reading and Math classes. Some suggestions by the other teachers and from Mandy were very helpful.

What three moments/experiences had the most impact on you during this summer institute?

1. BNR hike
2. Belize zoo/Shavens talk
3. Maya home stay (both good + bad)

How will you use what you learned in this summer institute to improve teaching in your classroom?

I will be able to approach both research & environmental education with additional approaches/experiences. I will make sure to incorporate the cultural + economic impacts to environmental preservation.

Did this experience change your views about your own culture?

Definitely! I've read and viewed a lot about other cultures; however, I think that traveling to a country in person really opens your eyes as to how people live. Although poverty is rampant in many areas, I felt that most people were happy. In addition, I was surprised to hear how

many adults viewed education, which was great to hear!

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



# Post-Trip Outputs

# MY SUMMER VACATION



Belize



Dear Students,  
I had an amazing experience doing a trip to the country of Belize. It was so cool to see the jungle, Belize is in the north of Central America and it was so nice to see the real rainforest there. Belize has some of the most beautiful and peaceful that we see in the world.



The library at the Museum, without it, Belize is empty.



A plantation with banana trees



Having coffee at the beach in Placencia



The students posing in front of the ruins at Xunucob



Swimming with crocodiles at the San Pedro Waterfalls



The park ranger talking to the students



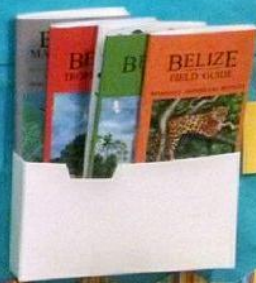
The park ranger, talking to the students about the park



Walking in a marshland before reaching the waterfalls



The wetlands at the beach in Placencia



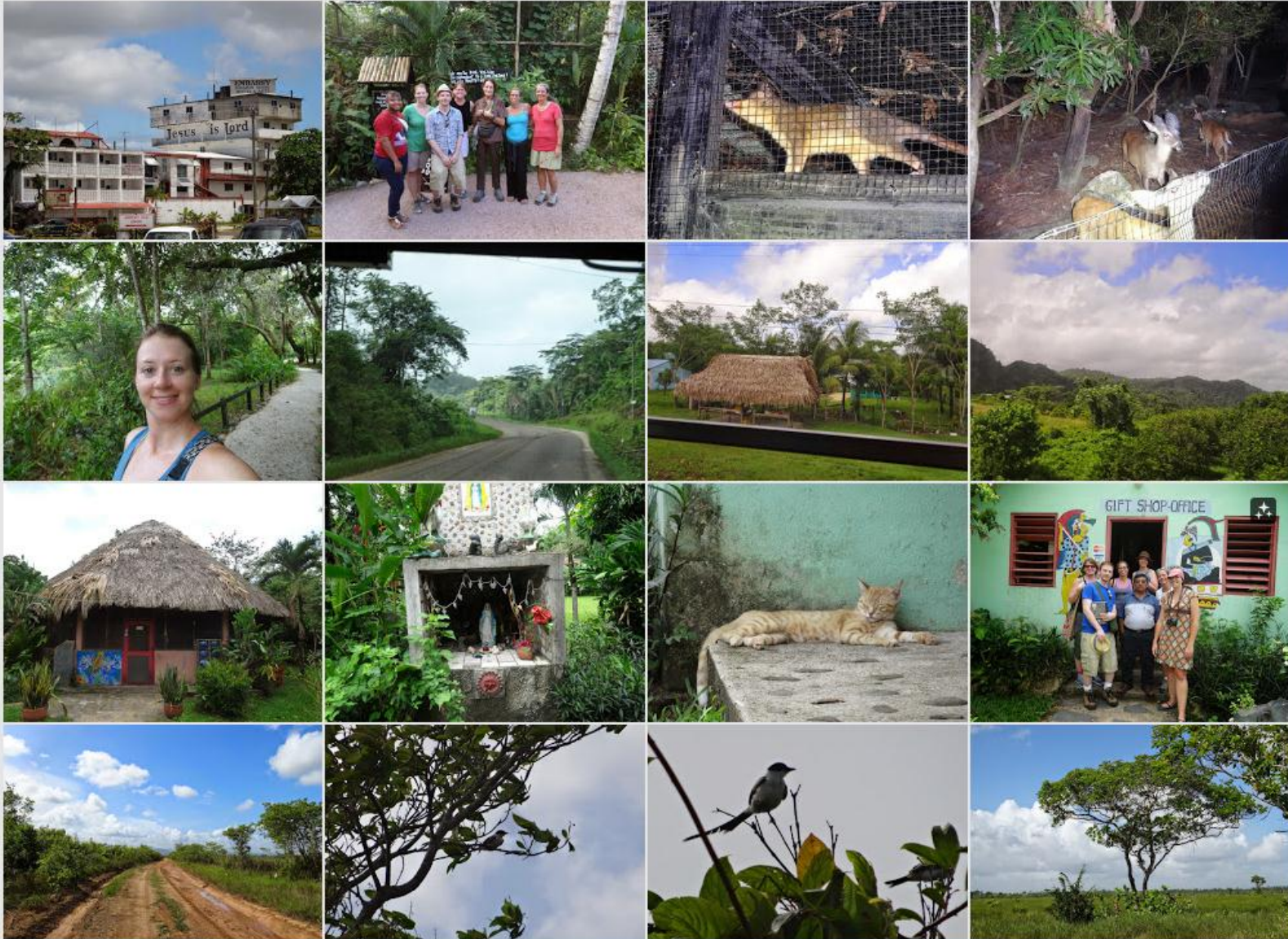
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195 photos · Jun 22-24, 2014

Tag people Share



Post-Trip Outputs





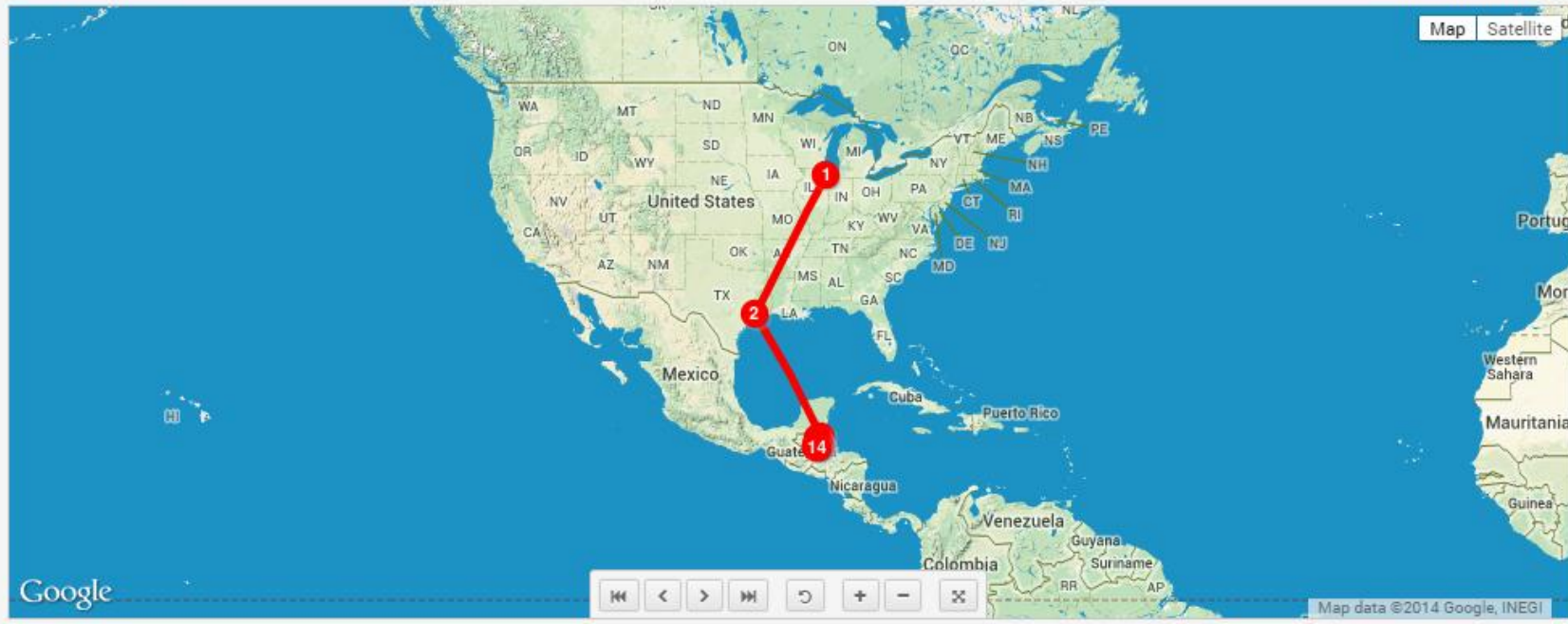
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# 2014 Summer Teacher Institute Program: Ecosystems of Belize

an adventure by Jason Pitak



BETA  
June 22-July3

15 places | 2,097 miles (3,375 km) | visibility: public | created 2 months ago | 97 views | 0 followers | 0 copies  
google earth: [export kml](#) or [view inline](#) | [print view](#)

g+1 0 Tweet 0 Like Share 0 EMBED COMMENT

- Sunday, June 22, 2014
- 1 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

Post-Trip Outputs



# Where do we go from here?



People

Academics

Outreach

Research & Training

News & Events

Alumni

Outreach Services

## Services

Web Resources

Traveling Suitcases

Teacher Grants

Language Advocacy

Teacher Summer Institute Belize

Contact

## Outreach Program—Services

### Outreach Lending Library

The Outreach Program maintained a collection of more than 500 resources on Latin American and Caribbean topics in our Lending Library. As of summer 2014, the program merged our collection of videos with that of Tulane University. We believe this merge to be a contribution to the larger Latin American Studies community: 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 webpage 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

- Gleeson, M., & Tait, C. (2012). Teachers as sojourners: Transitory communities in short study-abroad programmes. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28(8), 1144-1151. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2012.07.005
- Wernicke, M. (2010). Study abroad as professional development for FSL teachers. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics/Revue Canadienne De Linguistique Appliquee*, 13(1), 4-18.
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Thank you!