Reflections from an International Immerson Trip:
New possibilities to Institutionalize Curriculum

By Encarna Rodriguez

One of the main challenges confronted by higher education as we enter the 21st century is to internationalize its programs and to make students more globally competent (Childress, 2009; Gacel-Ávila, 2005; Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006). This challenge is not new, but it has become increasingly complex. Gutek (1993) explains how the efforts to internationalize the university in the United States became particularly important in the second part of the 20th century. Set against the background of the cold war and the desire of promoting capitalism, this effort was initially articulated as the implementation of university partnerships and collaborative programs with institutions abroad for the purpose of providing economic and educational assistance to other countries. Consistent with this ideological goal, Gutek illustrates how "[m]any American universities engaged in overseas developmental projects that were designed to create new economic, political, and educational infrastructure, in host countries" (p. 11). As Gutek also explains, groups that sought to prioritize social and cultural aspects such as peace and global education have challenged this perspective in recent decades.

Encarna Rodriguez is an associate professor of education and interim director of Graduate Education at Saint Joseph's University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The current state of international education seems to be defined by these competing purposes and directions, to which we need to add the demand of the business community to prepare students to work in the "global marketplace" (Bonfiglio, 1999). Added to this geography of multiple and often opposing goals, international education has been tested by the need of addressing the negative consequences of globalization and promoting global citizenry (Lewin, 2009). While not an easy challenge, some authors have seen important possibilities in this space and invite us to reconsider the role of higher education. Gacel-Ávila (2005), for example, states that

> [i]n this new global environment, one of the basic and fundamental functions of a university should then be the fostering of a global consciousness among students, to make them understand the relation of interdependence between peoples and societies, to develop in students an understanding of their own and other cultures and respect for pluralism. All these aspects are the foundations of solidarity and peaceful coexistence among nations and of true global citizenship. (p. 123)

As have other disciplines, teacher education has responded to this call for global awareness by trying to internationalize its programs. Pickert (2001), for example, explains how the findings of three different surveys that the American Association Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) conducted on teacher education programs since 1971 noted an increasing commitment to international education. According to these surveys, initiatives such as the expansion of study abroad programs, faculty conference attendance abroad, visiting scholars on campus, increasing numbers of foreign students, more foreign language requirements, are now well-established in most programs. Recently, some of these programs even offer the possibility of student teaching abroad (Ling, Burman, Cooper & Ling, 2006; Roberts, 2007) or of taking some of the regular certification courses in an out-of-the country location (Cushner, 2009). These initiatives have been very positive and have increased preservice teachers' understanding of and sensitivities to global and international issues. But, as Schneider (2003) notes in her report on the undergraduate training of secondary school teachers, there is still much to be done. To name just a few of the recommendations provided in this report, colleges and departments of education should do more to, for example, increase foreign language competencies, give students more options for field experiences in bilingual schools, add formal international components to student advisory, or integrate study and internships abroad into the training of teachers.

These recommendations seem to imply a need to further internationalize the teacher education curriculum. Strongly supporting this claim, however, Bonfiglio (1999) identifies the internationalization of the undergraduate curriculum in American universities as the main challenge in the preparation of students to understand the complexities of the global realities in which we live. According to this author, "[c]ollege and universities have taken a piecemeal, programmatic approach to the task of internationalizing curriculum" (p. 6). Consequently, they have erected

structures and programs that have made important contributions to higher education but that have not substantially altered the curriculum in the majority university programs. This claim seems to be supported by Talburt's (2009) argument on the lack of scrutiny of the nature of the study abroad curriculum. In the opinion of this author, teacher education programs assume the implicit relevance of this experience in teaching students about others without interrogating the place of colonial legacies in this encounter. She contends, however, that we should make these experiences a central focus of our curriculum in teacher education programs by exploring their possibilities of providing our students with a more inclusive understanding of themselves and those whom they will teach in the future.

The purpose of this article is to further support the need to internationalize the undergraduate curriculum in teacher education programs by explaining some of the curricular issues identified in an education course with a study tour component to Bolivia. As many other courses involving an immersion experience, this class was developed as an effort to bring an international perspective to our program by providing our preservice teachers with more opportunities to experience realities outside their own. Organized mainly around visits to schools in Bolivia, students' evaluations and comments indicated that this course has contributed, in very significant ways, to their understanding of the world, of themselves, and of teaching. Based on these experiences and reflections, this article identifies some of the issues that could help us to rethink the curriculum in our teacher education programs to aid our students in the development of a stronger sensitivity and knowledge toward global and local realities. Aware that only a very limited number of students have access to immersion trips abroad (Schneider, 2003), this article argues that courses that include these experiential international components offer us a unique perspective from which to rethink our curriculum and its value in preparing globally competent teachers (Marryfield, 2000).

Description of the Course

The context of the Course: A partnership in Bolivia

This course was taught in Spring 2007 and was a part of a larger collaboration between Saint Joseph's University, a North American Jesuit university in northeastern United States, and a counterpart Jesuit organization in Bolivia called *Fe y Alegria* (henceforth FyA). Founded in Venezuela in the mid-1950s and now present in all Latin American countries, the mission of this organization is to provide education to those who otherwise would not be able to attend school. This mission is embedded in its motto, "FyA it starts where the roads end," capturing the organization's efforts to bring schools closer to those communities for which education is frequently a journey of more than two hours on foot. FyA Bolivia is the largest Jesuit organization in Latin America. The hefty number of students attending its schools, about 250,000 (approximately 9% of the nation's total stu-

dent population), also makes this organization the largest Jesuit institution both in Bolivia and in Latin America.

Organizationally, FyA is a private institution. The Ministry of Education, however, pays the teachers in this program. This arrangement responds to an agreement between these two institutions according to which FyA is required to follow all the regulations required by the Ministry of Education for all public schools while the Ministry of Education offers teachers in FyA the same benefits that it extends to teachers in public schools. In the spirit of this agreement, FyA has implemented all curricular changes and regulations demanded of public schools while it has also been able to add additional features to the curriculum. The best example is the component called "faith and life" that articulates the Jesuit mission of the organization in the schools' every day practices.

It is important to mention here that FyA is nationally (and internationally) recognized for the seriousness and dedication to a rigorous and inclusive curriculum and, consequently, it has implemented some curriculum changes even before the government mandated them. This is the case of the bilingual education in the Education Reform of 1994. This program was grounded upon the principle of interculturalism and the recognition, for the first time in the history of the country, that public education should acknowledge the rich cultural legacy of the almost 60% of indigenous population and the more than two dozen of the indigenous languages spoken in the country (Morales, 2004). FyA endorsed this reform long before it came into law by developing a bilingual program of its own (Progama Intercultural Bilingue-PIB).

This collaboration with FyA, in which I participated from the beginning, started in 2002 at the request of this organization. Since then, it has evolved into several initiatives such as an annual ten-day immersion trip to Bolivia by Saint Joseph's faculty and staff; immersion trips for members of FyA to Saint Joseph's University; and master's degree scholarship provided to a member of FyA to pursue an MBA at Saint Joseph's University, to name just a few. The richness of this exchange naturally led to the creation of a course that would provide our students with the possibility of learning about and experiencing education in Bolivia. This idea materialized with the course that I designed and taught for the first time in Spring 2006 entitled *Education and the Jesuit Mission in Latin America*. This class included a ten-day study tour component to Bolivia over spring break. The course was taught for a second time in Spring 2007. Because the course was open to only undergraduate students this second time (it was cross-listed with a graduate course in Spring 2006), this article refers mostly to the experiences and reflections of students during this semester.

Conceptualizing the Course

The ultimate purpose of the course, as expressed in the syllabus, was helping students understand the role of education in a Non-Western context. This goal was particularly important considering the demographics of preservice teachers and their

lack of exposure to non-Western traditions and to the experiences of marginalization of poor people in the United States. Mostly Caucasian females raised in racially homogeneous middle and upper class communities, our students represent the average preservice teacher across the country (Cushner, 2009). These prospective teachers, however, will teach students very different from themselves. About 40% will be students of color and they will be increasingly poor (Cushner, 2009). Because of the economic neoliberal policies that have displaced people in many countries and have forced them to emigrate to the U.S., it is easy to imagine that many of our prospective teachers will teach students from these non-Western traditions and with experiences of poverty very removed from their own. A course designed for prospective teachers to travel to Bolivia and to explore the role of education in shaping the lives of poor students in this country seemed, in this context, a very interesting project to pursue. This class was eventually structured in three distinctive parts: (1) preparing students for the immersion experience, (2) visiting schools and rural communities in Bolivia during the trip, and (3) revisiting, reading, and discussing issues experienced in Bolivia to better understand the context of education in FyA Bolivia and the new perception of the country developed during the trip.

The second part of the course, the trip to Bolivia, was easy to conceptualize. Having been in the country several times myself, I wanted students to be immersed in schools by spending time observing classes, meeting with teachers, and talking to parents. To further strengthen the understanding of the issues that shape the lives of ordinary Bolivians, I also scheduled other activities during the trip such as visiting two different rural communities and meeting with some Bolivian university students. Additionally, I arranged for the director of the Andean Information Network, a non-governmental organization with a strong commitment to the issues of democracy and human rights and whose goal is to influence U.S. foreign policy toward Bolivia on these matters, to give a presentation to the group.

The first part of the class, preparing students for the trip to the country, however, proved to be a more challenging task. Aware that this was the first time that most of these students would be traveling to a developing country, I intended to ground this journey on notions of justice and equality. Thus, I designed the course embracing the question raised by Crabtree (2007) when reflecting on the impact of international service learning: "Do our relationships with institutions, communities, and people in a global education and service-learning partnership *reproduce* or *disrupt* historical and inequitable power relationships between rich/poor, 1st world/3rd world, urban/rural, educated/not formally educated, etc.?" (p. 42, emphasis in the original). My goal for the course was to "disrupt" these historical relations of power. The literature on immersion experiences in other countries, however, provided me with very little guidance on how to accomplish this goal. Most of these experiences are study abroad programs that take place in Europe or English-speaking countries (Pickert, 2001), places where U.S. undergraduate students still experience a comfortable degree of cultural and economic familiarity.

As Talburt (2009) argues, immersion experiences in this context largely reproduce imperial legacies by leaving the gaze of the privileged intact and by not questioning the modernist paradigm that separates the knower from the object of knowledge. In this paradigm, at the basis of most study abroad programs according to this author, the "other" is fabricated by this privileged gaze and learning is largely understood as a process of individual benefit by which the learner gains skills and knowledge to become more competitive in the global market. Searching for an alternative to this model, Talbut suggests that "[a] contrapuntal curriculum of study abroad would cultivate understandings of identity and difference not as natural divides of nations, cultures, or humans, but as dynamic processes constituted relationally" (p. 115). Roman (2003) helps us to articulate the construction of this alternative curriculum by reminding us that we need a more inclusive notion of global citizenship to create this alternative. This author critiques the traditional discourses at the basis of international immersion programs that perpetuates relations of inequality by defining the learner as an intellectual tourist, a democratic nation-builder, or as a consumer of multiculturalism. Instead, Roman invites us to embrace a "relational genealogist" approach that would not leave the learner untouched on the encounter with the other but that, rather, would redefine his/her subjectivity. Paraphrasing Mohanty (as cited in Roman, 2003), Roman argues that this learner would be able to see the "common differences" among people and communities. In Roman's words, "[t]he purpose here is not to over-valorize differences or read universal sameness in the process of making interconnections….Instead, it is to determine the bases and practice of solidarity" (p. 284).

Building Solidarity: Course Assignments and Readings

Searching for these bases for solidarity, I planned the first part of the course as an exploration of the historical, social, and cultural factors, including education, that have shaped the lives of the Bolivians whom students would meet during the trip. I knew that, once in the country, students would have the opportunity to hear about the current struggles and hopes of teachers, parents, and students in Bolivian schools, but I wanted to provide them with a larger context prior to these conversations. This segment intended to draw connections between their lives and the lives of those whom they would meet in Bolivia; these connections would be more fully developed in my undergraduates' final paper to be submitted at the end of the semester. In this final assignment, students in this course would be required to: (1) examine the main historical, cultural, and social issues that they thought shaped the reality of the Bolivians they met, (2) compare these issues with the issues that they thought shaped their own realities, and (3) explain how the understanding of these issues could help them to frame their future relationship to Bolivia.

The texts for this exploration were historical accounts of the recent changes in the country and several articles about processes, such as neoliberalization, that have had a profound impact both in Bolivians' lives and in their hopes for the future.

As shared with the students in this class, neoliberalism in Bolivia materialized as a form of political economy that made the individual, over the social, the center of economic policies (Saad-Filho & Johnson, 2005). Imposed by international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, neoliberalism forced the country to embrace what proved to be devastating economic measures for the working poor, most notably the lowering of corporate taxes and the deregulation of the market to attract foreign investment and the privatization of major state-owned companies (Lampe, 1999). An important criterion to select these texts was the narration of the stories from the perspective of those who experienced them.

The historical moment of the country gave us a unique opportunity in this regard. Only a year before our trip to the Bolivia, the country had invested its first indigenous president. This made Evo Morales, the new president of the country, the first indigenous president in the history of Bolivia as well as Latin America. Consequently, issues germane to indigenous communities, whose voices have been traditionally marginalized, were now present everywhere in the media and worked as a counternarrative to the political assumptions of previous political regimes. By reading and discussing current issues, students learned, for example, that, contrary to their perception of countries producing cocaine as deserving political and economic punishment, the production of coca in Bolivia was crucial for the cultural identity and the economic stability of the country. They also learned that the massive production of this crop had more to do with the lack of a coherent economic alternative for Bolivian *campesinos* than with the farmers' desires for the production of coca beyond the traditional uses of this plant. One of the students reflected the sense of solidarity raised by this new understanding when stating: "it was interesting to read the hostility Bolivians had toward U.S. imperialism and the US-sponsored coca eradication program. It expressed the economic plight of 50 thousand families who have lost their livelihoods because of eradication. If I was a Bolivian, I would be just like they are, mad and annoyed with Americans"

Of particular importance to understand the realities of many of the Bolivians and to develop a sense of solidarity with them was reading about the so-called "water war" that took place in Cochabamba, our main destination, between 1999 and 2000. Known worldwide as one of the major victories of ordinary people against multinational corporations, *Cochabamba: Water War in Bolivia* narrates the popular revolt of the people of this city against "Aguas del Tunari" and the process of privatization of the City of Cochabamba's water system by this company. This story is told by Oscar Olivera (2004), the union leader who was the face of the struggle and who courageously mobilized different social groups. Far from the individual hero narrative students are accustomed to, this book depicts this struggle as a collective search for social rights, as a battle to define water as a human right that no one should be deprived from because of the outrageous prices imposed by private companies.

Issues of Curriculum

Roman (2003) explains how the notion of "relational genealogist" entails "teaching educators and students how to pay historical attention to the uneven, contradictory, and often conflicting interests of power in the social relations that define the stakes in and boundaries of belonging to particular communities" (p. 283). In the words of this author, "relational genealogists develop a global intelligence to read how communities are constituted, particularly in relation to other larger structural interests of national-state government, private multi-or transnational corporations and larger geo-political dynamics" (p. 283). Developing this understanding of the communities they would visit while in Bolivia was precisely the goal of the historical readings and the presentations on current events required of students in the first part of the course. When reading these texts, however, it was evident that students did not possess the historical analytical tools to accomplish this task. Indeed, they expressed a strong sense of overwhelm by the amount and depth of the historical facts presented to them. I realized that they lacked the understanding of larger historical notions such as colonialism and neoliberalism that would have helped them to organize recent events in Bolivia in a meaningful way.

Without an awareness of the legacy of colonialism in a country where more than half of its population speaks an indigenous language and where traditional ways of knowing are deeply rooted in pre-Columbian societies, for example, students were puzzled by the lack of political and social power of these communities. Not surprisingly, when reflecting on what new questions some of these readings posed for them, students wondered: "why is Bolivia vulnerable to foreign countries? How is it possible that a place can be so poor with so many natural resources? Is it still largely true that political and economic policies only benefit small populations? Why don't people use the land they own?" Likewise, without an understanding of the dynamics of neoliberalization that Bolivia was forced to implement since the early 1980s and the way in which these policies further marginalized poor communities, students couldn't comprehend the challenges that some current issues, such as privatization, posed to ordinary people in the country. Their questions in this regard were: "Why would neoliberal policy keep producing more and more poor if it was intended to bring wealth to the country? Why would the government ever want to suppress water-a free resource-that the people need in order to survive?"

I would like to argue that this lack of understanding of larger historical analytical categories in our students should be considered a curriculum issue in our programs since it is the absence of these categories that shapes students' perceptions of Bolivians. The difficulty for students to capture the social contexts in which social conflicts are generated, channeled, or suppressed, rendered the policies of the country "illogical" to them. It also caused them a sense of "discomfort" and "overwhelm" when learning about the many conflicts that plagued the lives of Bolivians in recent years. By not understanding the genealogical roots of these conflicts, they perceived Bolivians as "naturally inclined" to bring their demands

into the street, but with little political expertise on how to "solve" the problems that had generated those demands. Students reflected this view when asking: "Why does Bolivia/Bolivian history seem to have *so many* revolutionary/radical groups? (emphasis in the student's writing) Why does it seem like Bolivia can't establish a solid [political] system? Why are there always problems with presidential elections? Why is protesting the only way to get their voices heard?"

The main curriculum question that the absence of larger historical categories in our students raises to our teacher education programs is, in my opinion: How can historical knowledge help us to develop an empathic view of those we have never met grounded in notions of social justice? It is evident that the students who took this class have not had the benefit of this type of knowledge, not even about their own country. They were surprised, for example, when I drew parallels between the efforts of the current government in Bolivia to include all indigenous languages in schools with the struggle for bilingual education in the U.S. Exposed only to Western and U.S. history, their historical understanding of communities both in the U.S. and abroad, was grounded on the assumption of the European tradition as the main actor of history. Preparing preservice teachers to understand communities different from their own, whether these communities are physically close or thousand of miles apart, however, calls for a much more "relational" notion of history.

It would be very beneficial for students, for example, to take courses on social phenomena emerging out of the interaction of different groups, such as courses on immigration in the United States, on social traditions such as peace and resistance, or on larger humanitarian issues such as human rights. Courses like these would provide students with an account of the journeys that many communities, particularly the ones socially most vulnerable, have been forced to undertake. Equally importantly, these courses could provide students with a different view of themselves as historical subjects, with an understanding of how we consistently define the "other" in relation to our own positions and that, therefore, "one people's gain is frequently another' loss" (Bonfligio, 1999, p. 14). An interdisciplinary appeal to departments such as sociology, history, economics, etc. is paramount to develop this notion of history as relational in our students. Teacher education programs, however, should also work with this perspective within its own disciplinary boundaries.

History of education, literacy, special education, issues of language, and issues of pedagogy, for example, could be framed in relation to the larger dynamics of power that explain whose knowledge is produced, reproduced, or transformed in schools, and why. Taking the process of inclusion-marginalization as an historical analytical category, for example, we can conceptualize these courses as narratives of struggle and encounters among communities, people, and traditions over the purpose of education and the pedagogies to achieve equity and democracy. The writings of Apple (2001), Delpit (1995), Perry (2003) and Silva (2001), for example, are useful in this project.

The second issue addressed in this class with direct implications for teacher

education programs is the need to provide preservice teachers with multiple opportunities to meet people different from them in a context of dialogue rather than institutional privilege. We know that international immersion programs provide students with opportunities for intercultural experiences and for the interrogation of their own cultural identity (Dolby, 2004). Indeed, Merryfield (2000) argues that the experiences that prepare teachers to teach for diversity, equity, and global interconnectedness are "encounters with people different from themselves, experiences with discrimination, injustice or outsider status, and [the] felt contradiction in dealing with multiple realities" (p. 429). The reflections of students in this course suggest that meeting people different from us is a very rich educational space that should be considered a central object of our pedagogy and should allow for the voices of the "other," in whatever way we define this concept, to be heard.

It was not until students had read Oscar Olivera's book and talked to teachers and parents in Bolivia that they finally understood the necessity for the social struggles which they previously could not comprehend. The narrative of the water war in particular, as students mentioned in their reflections, "spoke" to them. Although students were not always able to grasp the nuances of this voice, I would argue that in this text students were called to join the struggle of Bolivians. Students roles as such were not necessarily to fight against the privatization of water, but, rather, to comprehend the other's struggle for human rights, in this case access to water. It was this call, along with the conversations with teachers and parents during the trip that, I believe, interrupted the comfortable position of privilege that students held before the trip. When trying to reflect on the meaning of this class at the end of the semester and asking students how they saw themselves "relating" to Bolivia in the future, some students revealed a state of confusion. As they explained, before the trip they had assumed that Bolivians needed help, mostly material help. Although they didn't know exactly what to do now, they realized that this was not what the people they met in the country expected of them. This impasse created a great opportunity to redefine our responsibilities to the students and communities whom we visited, including, as I helped them to recognize, the hopes expressed by many people in Bolivia for us to become more aware of the impacts of policies of the U.S. toward this country and to inform such policies with more solidarity.

One of the main goals of international immersion experiences is to invite students into a journey of personal and cultural discovery (Willard-Holt, 2001). Taking into consideration that less than 3% of students in teacher education programs benefit form these experiences (Schneider, 2003) and that not always do these experiences achieve this goal (Talburt, 2009), one of the important curricular questions raised in this course is: how can we provide opportunities to our preservice teachers to meet people and communities different from them in a way that that the voice of the "other" is heard? In other words, how can we engage with "others" in a conversation initiated and defined in their terms rather than ours? In teacher education programs like ours, these types of encounters are usually restricted to students visiting ur-

ban schools for their field placements or bringing in guest speakers. This course suggests, however, that we need a new curriculum frame for these conversations. Particularly compelling in this regard is the need to disrupt the pervasive assumption that parents in poor communities do not care about education.

Preservice teachers "travel" to the schools where they reinforce this belief protected by the institutional channels that make them the experts of education and parents the receivers of this expertise (McIntyre, 2000; Rogers, 2006). Very seldom, however, can they engage in meaningful conversations with those who bear the burden of this assumption. Creating these new opportunities for conversation would necessarily mean, for us and for our students, to leave the university as our comfort zone and to "visit" other dwellings. Sometimes these initiatives would require further funding. Philadelphia, for example, has a nationally known mural arts program that brings the work of many artists to communities by depicting their hopes and concerns in public murals. When a grant allowed us to organize a tour through the community bordering our university, our students became much more aware of the struggles of this community with violence and poverty. On other occasions, however, all that is required is creativity regarding borders and assumptions that teacher education can challenge by way of richer curricula that give voice to the communities we claim to serve. Requirements such as attending a religious service in different communities, identifying community resources for the parents and students of the school where students do their field experiences, researching patterns of employment in these communities, or volunteering to serve in local organizations, could be, for example, wonderful opportunities for dialogue with "others."

The third issue that appeared as particularly important for the curriculum of teacher education programs in the context of this course was the need to conceptualize education as a community effort. Judging by students' reflections, the most enduring impression from the trip to Bolivia was the tremendous commitment to education that they witnessed in parents and communities. They were astonished, for example, by how people in a small village we visited had built a school on their own with their very scarce resources, or how extremely poor parents in another school had contributed their own money to hire a part-time computer teacher. These actions demonstrated to them that education was a clear priority in these communities. Particularly important for some students was the conversation they had with three, female, high school students in a very rural community. When asked about their plans for the future, one of the girls stated that she would like to become lawyer and the other two expressed their desire to become doctors. What impressed my students the most were the reasons that the three high school students gave to pursue these careers: they wanted to go back to their communities, to defend the legal rights of indigenous people, and to provide the adequate medical care that was not available now. Accustomed to education as a narrative of individual success, students in the class were deeply moved by the testimony of these young girls and referred to them repeatedly in our conversations after the trip.

The realization that poor communities are heavily invested in education was a powerful learning experience for the students in this class. The fact that they made this "discovery" in Bolivia, however, reveals a clear weakness in our teacher education programs. Curriculum in these programs are mostly geared toward identifying individual differences, such as explaining cognitive development in educational psychology, learning about individual differences in courses on students with disabilities, or learning differentiated instruction in courses on methods of teaching. There is usually little room, however, to explore the relationship between school and specific communities. The students taking my class on Bolivia knew very little, for example, about the historical struggles of groups such as African American or Latinos in US. They had never been exposed to the idea that African Americans constructed a very specific philosophy of education over the years of slavery and segregation that were articulated in their communities as "freedom for literacy and literacy for freedom, racial uplifting, citizenship, and leadership" (Perry, 2003, p. 6). Furthermore, students were unaware of the gigantic efforts that Latino and other immigrant families have undertaken in this country to educate their kids, even when the experience of immigration and schooling is germane to the history of their ancestors. For most of these students, education seems to have been a "given" for quite a long time.

Because of the demographics of our teacher education programs and their removal from the struggles of poor communities, it is imperative to provide preservice teachers with opportunities to see the role of schools in advancing the hopes of different social groups in this country. Indeed, it is necessary to help them understanding what schools *are not doing* for some of these groups. When public schools in urban areas such as Philadelphia, for example, do not graduate almost half of their African-American and Latino students, we need to help our preservice teachers to raise the questions of why this is happening even when these groups have historically placed their hopes for a better future in this institution. We need to help these prospective teachers to understand that what my students witnessed in Bolivia is not an isolated phenomena but an intrinsic part of the hope that poor communities place in formal schooling.

Giving a central role to the issues mentioned above in the curriculum of teacher education programs is, undoubtedly, a challenging task. Indeed, as suggested by Bonfiglio (1999), it is a task that calls for "a discussion of the theoretical assumptions that underlie and shape curriculum" (p. 10). The current need to prepare teachers, in the words of Merryfield (2000), to teach for diversity, equity, and global interconnectedness, however, offers us a strong rationale for undertaking this task. This article would like to conclude by arguing that, when taking this journey, international immersion trips could become very rich pedagogical practice from which to rethink our curriculum. Internationalizing teacher education programs essentially requires preservice teachers to step outside of the national borders that define their social and political identities. This border-crossing experience,

however, does not necessarily have to happen outside of the physical limits of the country. I believe that trips like the ones my students took in this class are unique opportunities that we ought to foster in our programs as much as possible. Since only a small number of students take these courses, however, I also believe that the most powerful message they bring to us is to raise our awareness of the need to articulate the local, the national, and the international in our curriculum. Of the need to experience "otherness" within our own "comfort zone," and to be able to engage in acts of solidarity with those who may be very close physically but very far in our social imagination. In this sense, internationalizing the curriculum is not only relevant in telling us about others but, more importantly, in telling us who we are in relation to others (Coulby, 2006; Wells, 2008).

References

Apple, M. W. (2001). *Educating the "right" way. Market, standards, god, and inequality.* New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Bonfiglio, O. (1999). The difficulties of internationalizing the American undergraduate curriculum. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 3*(2), 5-18. doi:10.1177/102831539900300202

Childress, L. K. (2009). Internationalization plans for higher education institutions. *Journal of Studies in International Education 13*(3), 289-309. doi:10.1177/1028315308329804

Crabtree, R. D. (2007). Asking hard questions about the impact of international service learning: What will we feel? Pity? Sympathy? Guilt? *Conversations, 31*, 39-42.

Coulby, D. (2006). Intercultural education: Theory and practice. *Intercultural Education, 17*(3), 247-257. doi: 10.1080/14675980600840274

Cushner, K. (2009). The role of study abroad in preparing globally competent teachers. In R. Lewin (Ed.), *The handbook of practice and research in study abroad* (pp. 151-169). New York: Taylor & Francis.

Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children. Cultural conflict in the classroom.* New York: New York Press.

Dolby, N. (2004). Encountering an American self: Study abroad and national identity. *Comparative Education, 48*(2), 150-173. doi: 10.1177/1028315306291944

Gacel-Ávila, J. (2005). The internationalization of higher education: A paradigm for global citizenry. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 9*(2), 121-136. doi:10.1177/1028315304263795

Gutek, G. L. (1993). *American Education in a global society. Internationalizing teacher education*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Hunter, B., White, G. P., & Godbey, G. C. (2006). What does it mean to be globally competent? . *Journal of Studies in International Education, 10*(3), 267-285. doi:10.1177/1028315306286930

Lampe, A. (1999). The globalization of poverty. *Exchange, 28*(4), 332-340.

Lewin, R. (2009). Introduction. The quest for global citizenship through study abroad. In R. Lewin (Ed.), *The handbook of practice and research in study abroad* (pp. xiii-xxii). New York: Taylor & Francis.

Ling, L; Burman, E; Cooper, M., & Ling, P. (2006). (A)broad teacher education. *Theory into Practice, 45*(2), 143-149.

McIntyre, A. (2000). Antiracist pedagogy in the university: the ethical challenge of making whiteness public. In M. M. Brabeck, *Practicing feminist ethics in psychology.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Merryfield, M. M. (2000). Why aren't teachers being prepared to teach for diversity, equity, and global interconnectedness? A study of lived experiences in the making of multicultural and global educators. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 16,* 429-443.

Morales, W. Q. (2004). *A brief history of Bolivia*. New York: Facts on File.

Olivera, O. in collaboration with Lewis, T. (2004). *Cochabamba. Water war in Bolivia.* Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Perry, T. (2003). Freedom for literacy and literacy for freedom: The African-American Philosophy of education. In T. Perry, C. Steele, & A. Hilliard III, *Young, gifted, and black: Promoting high achievement among African-American students* (pp. 11-51). Boston: Beacon Press.

Rogers, J. (2006). Forces of accountability? The power of poor parents in NCLB. *Harvard Educational Review, 76* (4), 611-727.

Roman, L. G. (2003). Education and the contested meaning of 'global citizenship.' *Journal of Educational Change, 4,* 269-293.

Pickert, S. (2001). *Changing views about international activities in American teacher education programs.* ED460092

Roberts, A. (2007). Global dimensions of schooling: Implications for internationalizing teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 34*(1), 9-26.

Saad-Filho, A. & Johnson, D. (2005). Introduction. In A. Saad-Filho & D. Johnson (eds.), *Neoliberalism. A critical reader* (pp. 1-6). London & Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press.

Schneider, A. I. (2003). *Internationalizing teacher education. What can be done? A Research Report on the Undergraduate Training of Secondary School Teachers*. US Department of Education. Washington DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement. ED 480869

Silva, T. T. da (2001). *Espacios de identidad: Nuevas visiones sobre el curriculum*. Barcelona, Spain: Octaedro.

Talburt, S. (2009). International travel and implication. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 25*(3), 104-118.

Wells, R. (2008). Global and the Multicultural: Opportunities, Challenges, and Suggestions for Teacher Education. *Multicultural Perspectives, 10*(3), 142-149.

Willard-Holt, C. (2001). The impact of a short-term international experience for preservice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17,* 505-517.