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FEEDBACK FROM PAST STUDENT TEACHING PARTICIPANTS

In October, 2005 an E-mail questionnaire was sent to 889 participants from summer 1989 through summer 2005 for which an E-mail address was recorded in the program database. The primary question in this survey was: ‘Would you recommend international student teaching to others?’

Of the 234 respondents, 227 (97%) reported they would recommend this option to others. 7 (3%) reported they would not. [Note: of the 1100 participants during this period E-mail addresses were available for 889. 655 past participants either did not receive the message because the E-mail address was no longer valid or they chose not to respond to the survey.]

Respondents were then asked, among other follow-up questions, ‘**What is your primary reason for recommending international student teaching to others?**’ The responses are organized into five categories reflecting themes found in the responses: 1) **Value for teachers** – how the program has helped participants become better educators, 2) **Personal Growth** – how participating in the program fostered personal development, 3) **Employment Opportunities** – examples of direct benefit in terms of employment, 4) **General** – statements reflecting general value of participation, 5) **Program Quality** – comments directly relating to services provided.

A sample of responses is presented here. The complete survey and results are available at www.educatorsabroad.org.

VALUE FOR TEACHERS

- Anyone who has the opportunity to teach abroad is going to **expand their outlook on the education field**, especially once they come back to the United States. Personally, I gained a **fresh perspective** and a new outlook on my particular area of teaching that helped me to bring **innovative ideas to my first school** that hired me. 2004, Australia
- It provided a great opportunity for me to do my student teaching in a way so different from everyone else while allowing me to travel overseas for the first time. **It has enriched me as a professional and broadened my view of the world.** My experiences have made me a better teacher and citizen as I'm more in-tune with global affairs. I recommend it to others **because my commitment to the program ranks as one of the top three life-changing decisions I've ever made.** 1996, New Zealand
- Having teaching experience abroad gave me new insight into the social, economic and political issues of education system and of teaching and learning in the US. It also **gave me a very different perspective on myself as a teacher. What better way to prepare for becoming an educator?** 2003, Chile
- **Diversify your knowledge of educational pedagogy.** 2000, Czech Republic
- Get out of your comfort zone...**makes you really think about your teaching style and how culturally responsive your teaching is.** Also, if you are in a country where you don't speak the language you **can get a feel for your future students for whom English is not a first language.** 2005, Peru

- International student teaching offers an **experience of a lifetime**. It is a chance to **see how education is done or not done in another country**. 2005, Belize
- It gives students a **different perspective on teaching**, seeing it in another culture and allows them to further analyze and develop their own ideas for teaching and decide on things they like and dislike from their own culture as well as from other cultures. 2005, Australia
- It was an excellent opportunity to **learn about other countries education systems**. I think that it also gave the opportunity to experience living in a different culture than my own, and **in American schools you have many students from other cultures. Teaching globally gives you the opportunity to have something in common with these students**. 2004, New Zealand
- It was an extremely beneficial experience. It **showed me that the "American way" isn't the only way! The skills I learned while teaching abroad helped me reorganize my teaching philosophy and provided me with more in-front of class experience than any of my undergraduate classmates**. 2004, Ireland
- It was unlike any teaching experience I could have ever had near my college. I had the **opportunity to learn about different curriculum, standards, and teaching styles while absorbing a brand new culture**. 2004, England
- The experience. I think **I learned more about the U.S. educational system by experiencing an entirely different system** than I would have by student teaching in the States. **Being able to compare and contrast two different systems allows you to really think critically about the best ways to enhance learning for your students**. 2003, New Zealand
- It was a wonderful experience. I made great friends. I learned about another culture, another way to live. **I learned about myself as a teacher and I learned to be very strong**. 2003, Cameroon

PERSONAL GROWTH

- For the cultural experience, it's one of the **most beneficial moments in life**. The farther away the memory gets the more amazing the experience really was. **I miss those children so much**, they still email me everyday. 2005, Panama
- I had such an **incredible experience**. I would love for every teacher to be given an opportunity to teach in another country. It **opened doors for me, I grew in ways I didn't know possible, and I met some of the most incredible people**. 2003, New Zealand
- I recommend studying abroad to anyone who has the opportunity. **You will learn things about yourself and about whom you want to be that you cannot learn without leaving your comfort zone**. It will allow you to stretch and grow. If you have a desire to travel this is the richest longest and cheapest way to learn more and experience other cultures. 2003, Peru
- I think that no matter where you go in the world, this is a **once in a lifetime experience and an unforgettable one as well**. I also think that being able to get a cultural experience and **work with children from other parts of the world is priceless**. 2005, Costa Rica
- I would recommend the program because it was **one of the most rewarding of my life**. I am still in contact with many friends and my host family, and I have already been back to visit the school I taught at. 2002, Australia
- Increasing your awareness of the world helps to **erase the mind-set that the USA has everything right** and is the best place in the world. 2004, Australia
- The program gives an **experience that no other student teaching experience can. I grew so much in my independence** (living and getting along on my own in a foreign country) **and in my exploration of other cultures**. The school where I student taught was in the Czech Republic, but

had children from all over the world. I could have never experienced such a rich, multicultural environment elsewhere. 2001, Czech Republic

- Unmatched experience and a **springboard to future success**. 2004, England
- You really **grow as a person every time you step outside of your comfort zone**. Going to another country to live and teach in a different culture is really exciting, difficult, and very fun! 2004, Ireland
- After completing my student teaching, I feel as if I can **rise to any challenge** and complete any task before me. In the difficult year that is my first year teaching I have found myself saying at least once, "if I can survive in another country, I can certainly survive this." It has really helped to show me what I'm capable of and the before unknown parts of my character that rose to the surface. 2005, Russia

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- I had a wonderful experience and was **offered a job almost immediately upon my return**; this offer was based largely on my experiences abroad. 2004, Ecuador
- It was a fantastic experience. I feel that **my experience helped me obtain my job**. 2005, New Zealand

GENERAL COMMENTS

- Because I **had a great time** while I was in Norway but **you also have to take the opportunities given to you and strive to get to know people and become involved**. 2004, Norway
- It is a **tremendous opportunity** for learning, exploration and growth. 2003, South Africa
- It is an eye opening experience. A study abroad program does not allow to be immersed in the culture the way international student teaching does. **You really walk away with an understanding of the people, the culture, and the country**. 2004, Ireland

PROGRAM QUALITY

- I **felt taken care of**, had a great placement, **worked with great people** who are worldly and appreciated me going abroad. 2005, Australia
- It was a **very organized and convenient process** by which I was able to complete my practicum in another country. 2004, Ecuador
- **Very well organized program that helps you prepare for host country, then the experience is all yours for the taking**. 2003, Cameroon