INTRODUCTION

Study abroad offers students opportunities to study in other parts of the world. In most cases short term study abroad programs led by faculty and which range from one to six weeks in duration are merely translocations of the class room to a foreign location where students although in another country have very little or sometimes no meaningful interaction or engagement at professional levels with local communities.

These “passive”, almost ‘tourist’ like, experiences can be more engaging and more educational if they involve ‘active’ professional, educational and community interactions. These active interactions can be accomplished by collaborations with universities or educational organizations abroad.

Active global engagement as a learning experience requires active interaction with the “other” and can be accomplished through carefully designed activities such as workshops and class room group activities between US students and local students, faculty, or communities, abroad.

International academic collaborations with universities and educational organizations abroad facilitate these types of interactions which and are effective in overcoming the span of boundaries such as language, cultural differences, culture shock, etc. While abroad, students can be offered more engaging learning experiences through activities such as team work, joint projects, classroom dialogues, social interaction, hospitality exchanges, etc. Collaborations are faculty initiated and involve faculty, students or communities in host institutions in foreign counties. In doing so, even a short term study abroad program can become an effective global learning experience.

Students who participate in study abroad programs involving international collaborations learn a lot more and at faster pace about their subject of study, while they also gain exposure to interpersonal communication skills, cooperation, development, tolerance, acceptance and respect for differences. These are skills that will equip them to work more effectively, comfortably and confidently in today’s increasingly global workplace.

These are international collaborations offered such as the Fulbright Grantee in India, and the sharing of knowledge and expertise offered to faculty by participation in international collaborations offered such as the US Fulbright Scholar Program. It outlines the author’s global engagement as Fulbright Grantee in Africa (Zimbabwe and Ethiopia) and South Asia (India).

This presentation describes three faculty led study abroad opportunities designed and directed by the author for architecture students at Texas Tech University. They are all based upon International Collaboration and span the space of three continents – North America (Mexico) / Europe (Spain) and South Asia (India). The last part of this presentation is about the benefits and opportunities of global engagement through research, teaching, and the sharing of knowledge and expertise offered to faculty by participation in international collaborations offered such as the US Fulbright Scholar Program. It outlines the author’s global engagement as Fulbright Grantee in Africa (Zimbabwe and Ethiopia) and South Asia (India).
STUDENT & FACULTY TEACHING COLLABORATIONS

SPAIN WORKSHOP
Collaboration between Texas Tech University (TTU), Universidad de las Americas Puebla, Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura (UDLAP) – Mexico and Universidad de Sevilla, Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura (ETSA) – Spain 2003 – 08

Program highlights
- TTU architecture students join 5 de 5 students in a joint two to five week design workshops of Universidad de las Americas Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura (ETSA), Seville, Spain
- Instruction of the workshop involves faculty from the College of Architecture, TTU as well as ETSA
- Program also provides opportunities for 5 de 5 Faculty to teach for up to one semester of TTU thereby gaining valuable teaching experience and opportunities to pursue research interests in the USA.

Engagement Outcomes
- Students work in groups on a given architectural design project
- Students have opportunities to engage in discussions about differences, similarities and concerns on topics ranging from academics and professional topics to social and cultural issues.
- Students from TTU are exposed to some of the challenges as well as opportunities of working in a foreign country, in a culture that is different from their own and with peers who are knowledgeable in the subject, but not always fluent in English and students get experience in confidence building and communication skills required for cross cultural professional collaboration, they also get to improve & practice language skills.
- Students get to participate in social activities leading to mutual understanding, respect and increased knowledge of each other’s culture and customs.
- TTU Students who do not participate in the study abroad program also benefit from the collaboration because of the opportunity to take a class at TTU with visiting Spanish professors who participated in the program.
- Opportunities for faculty to develop professional networks, improve pedagogy and pursue research interests.

MEXICO STUDIO
Collaboration between Texas Tech University (TTU), Universidad de las Americas Puebla, Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura (UDLAP) – Mexico 2003 – present

Program highlights
- At the beginning of the semester TTU students travel with a TTU professor to Mexico for a ten day ‘field trip’ during which they work in teams with Mexican students from UDLAP in Puebla to get to know an urban architectural design opportunity in Mexico.
- Team work helps both groups to quickly get to know and understand each other and work together.
- After the Mexico ‘field trip’ TTU and UDLAP students work separately on the same architectural urban design problem at their own home campuses in the USA and Mexico. The first time TTU and UDLAP students, who now know one another, exchange ideas and information and review each other’s progress via the internet.
- At the end of the semester UDLAP students travel from Mexico to Lubbock with their design studio professor. They bring along their design projects for a joint presentation, exhibition and review of final design solutions from each university.

Engagement & Learning Benefits
- Each group has the opportunity to learn from each other’s approach to the problem and have the opportunity to debate strategies used in the proposed solutions.
- Discussions revolve around how students playing the role of ‘foreign consultant’ (TTU) with limited exposure to Mexico are and the local experts (UDLAP) who are familiar with their environment have addressed the problem and vice versa.
- The review and final exhibit of work from TTU and UDLAP students is also beneficial to TTU architecture students who do not take this class also benefit because they are able to participate in the discussions and review the exhibition of the joint design studio work during the end of semester review in Lubbock.
- The collaboration provides opportunities for students to practice language skills, interact socially, converse as professionals, engage in discussions about cross cultural issues and form friendships.
- The collaboration allows faculty from both institutions to work together as colleagues and to learn from one another as well as to pursue research interests.
- The review of the end of the semester gives the visiting UDLAP faculty opportunities to participate in end of semester design reviews of other design classes at TTU while they are on the TTU campus.
One common misconception of Americans is that our way is the only way. Although it was not said to the praising of New Delhi and the merchant filled bazaar in New Delhi and the merchant filled bazaar, it did not make “our” way right or wrong. It was different, and that is something great in itself and something that can be learned from.

“Africa is not the only continent to have an ancient culture or to have been colonized by European powers. The Indian subcontinent is a place of incredible diversity, where all extremes from ancient to high tech all live together.” Bradon

“After visiting multiple cities in the North I thought I had a good grasp on what Indian culture was like. Sadly I was mistaken. Traveling to South India I felt like I had walked into a different country altogether. The people looked different; they wore different types of clothing, spoke a different language, had different customs, and built different architecture. I am envious that such a large diverse country can be held together by a single government.” Preston

“I am extremely thankful for having an opportunity to visit a country like India. I feel like this experience has also opened my mind to hopefully be a more conscious to approach design in a sustainable manner that is both socially and culturally beneficial to the community.” Ian

To experience India, you have to be willing to obliterate the notion of understanding a place through the eyes of others and instead "step into". The extremely saturated culture is one of many that exist, to either welcome or reject, you find yourself in a completely different world. Everything you know and understand from the latest Western technology is challenged. Four place in society, identity, the range of people you would expect to see, human interactions, everything you thought you knew about the structure of life is questioned. India may not be the country to rush to jump in to, but it is a country that will certainly make you question what you know.

The experience of traveling in India for two weeks helps students to be more accepting and appreciative of the ‘other’ while also getting to an introduction to the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and culturally diverse country that is India.

Students visit of some of the world’s most amazing buildings and also gain personal exposure to life in the second most populous country and the largest democracy on earth

"I feel the Indian culture incorporates any new cultural tradition…...While India is also moving forward, it seems to me that the Indian culture incorporates any new cultural tradition and construct buildings in the traditional ways. I feel the century the Indian people still practice their ancient faiths and customs, and build different architecture. I am envious that such a large diverse country can be held together by a single government.” Preston

My experience was frightful, disturbing, difficult, and unpleasant but yet it was exciting, interesting, enthralling, and amazingly detailed. India is the land of unbelievable ride that I am pleased Texas Tech got to offer us.” Valeria

"I had walked into a different country altogether. The people looked different; they wore different types of clothing, spoke a different language, had different customs, and built different architecture. I am envious that such a large diverse country can be held together by a single government.” Preston

Overall, my experience was not like what I expected at all… While it is true that the Indian culture is not what you expected, it must be accepted as a different culture, different from the one you are used to. It is a different world, and perhaps a different life. It is a world that is not going to see firsthand but it is possible to get a taste of. This was my goal. To get a taste of what life is like in a place that is not going to see firsthand now but that is going to see firsthand through articles and this seminar. This was the only way I could say yes to the unbelievable ride that I am pleased Texas Tech got to offer us.” Valeria

The other striking feature of the Indian subcontinent is that it is called the Sub Continent. In India, the Rai Foundation, an educational & philanthropic organization in New Delhi, India, 2010, 11, 12

"India from an Architectural Point of View"

A global engagement & learning experience through a seminar & study tour in collaboration with the Rai Foundation, an educational & philanthropic organization in New Delhi, India, 2010, 11, 12

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NUCACREDIT

Statement of Lines

From the building of ancient temples and palaces in the 5th century, to the magnificent Mughal mosques, to the Rajput fortresses of the 18th century, and the magnificent Mughal gardens of the 17th century, Indian architecture has been a driving force in the development of the country’s architectural landscape. The architectural heritage of India is a reflection of the country’s rich cultural diversity, with its roots in the ancient Vedic culture.

One of the most striking features of Indian architecture is its diversity. From the traditional mud huts of the rural areas to the grand palaces of the Mughal emperors, Indian architecture has evolved over the centuries, influenced by various cultural, religious, and social factors. The traditional Indian architecture is characterized by its use of local materials, such as mud, stone, and wood, and its use of natural materials, such as bamboo and thatch.

The Indian subcontinent is a place of incredible diversity, where all extremes from ancient to high tech all live together. Bradon

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Global Engagement & Learning through participation in Fulbright Teaching & Research Grants (Zimbabwe/ Ethiopia/ India)

I have had the privilege of being awarded three separate Fulbright Grants which have been excellent occasions to work and do research across continents and international boundaries.

2000  
Fulbright grant to teach and research traditional architecture at National University of Science and Technology (NUST) Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

2008  
Fulbright grant to teach, research & document traditional dwellings and settlements at Mekele University, Mekele, Ethiopia.

2011  
Fulbright Specialist grant to lecture and conduct a six week long architectural design workshop “Rural studio” at Karpagam University, Coimbatore, India.

Global engagement experiences

- Sharing and exchanging of knowledge and expertise with students, faculty, communities and professionals in other parts of world through teaching, invited public lectures, discussions and professional meetings.

- Sharing and dissemination of knowledge gained from these teaching experiences and field research studies via photography exhibits (USA, Thailand, India, Lebanon) lectures (USA, Spain, South Africa, India, Vietnam, Laos, Mexico, Malaysia, etc) and papers in the USA, Egypt, UAE, Tunisia, UK, Hong Kong, Canada and many other countries.

25 MAY 2012 | 19:00h

“The Relevance of Tradition in non-Western Architecture”