**Cross-Cultural Experience**

**Hanover College Education Department**

Each teacher candidate will be required to complete one cross-cultural experience. The cross-cultural experience is a planned and evaluated learning experience that places the student in an environment where learning is accomplished through active interaction with a different culture, either within the U.S. or abroad. Through this experience students will cross ethnic, racial, social class, and/or religious cultural borders.

The cross-cultural experience should help the student form a clearer understanding and appreciation of the characteristics of another culture and its complexity and diversity. While developing a sense of cross-cultural acceptance, students will also gain an appreciation of the sources and values of their own culture. The primary means of fulfilling the cross-cultural experience requirement will be through an internship, field experience, student teaching, job, or study abroad program that has been designated as cross-cultural. Students determine how they would like to fulfill this assignment, with the assistance of their education department advisor to ensure that the experience fulfills this requirement. All the full-time student teaching placements in an urban setting fulfill this requirement. Other cross-cultural experiences include mission trips, the EUC 230 travel course, and volunteer opportunities such as Boys and Girls Club, Casa Amiga, Wayside Homeless Mission, and Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

Preparation for the cross-cultural experience should include the opportunity to investigate the concept of culture and its impact on habits, behavior, beliefs, and values. Each student should have an opportunity to develop skills and acquire the knowledge necessary for making informed observations and reflections. This preparation may be done through Hanover courses, workshops, and program orientations.

Students must demonstrate an increased ability to understand cultural differences and be able to conceptually relate their own culture to another. This should include an understanding and respect for the customs and social norms of the host culture regarding gender, class, and ethnicity. Students should exhibit knowledge of the physical environment, historical heritage, and social institutions of the host societies or communities.

**CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE PAPER GUIDELINES**

**Hanover College Education Department**

The cross-cultural experience is a planned and evaluated learning experience which places the learner in an environment where learning is accomplished through active interaction with the people, language, history, and institutions of other cultures.

The cross-cultural experience should help the student to form a clearer understanding and appreciation of both common characteristics of another culture's people and social institutions as well as their complexity and diversity. It should allow the student to experience the power of culture as a determinant of human actions, beliefs, and interactions with the environment. Through fulfilling this requirement a student should develop a sense of cultural humility and an appreciation of the sources and values of one's own culture.

Learning through the cross-cultural experience results from many varied components. Students should demonstrate growth in their ability to understand and acknowledge cultural differences and to conceptually relate one's own culture to another. Of course, each student will have a great deal to share about her/his cross-cultural experience, but please plan for your paper to be around 6 pages in length. Areas that should be incorporated in the documentation of this experience include the following topics.

**1. Educational goals**: What were your educational objectives? How did your expectations change during this experience?

**2. Learning from the experience**: What were your hopes for the experience? Do you feel you successfully completed the requirements that were presented to you in this experience? Why? How? Do you feel your performance best represents you? What were the benefits of this experience for you? What knowledge, insights and skills did you develop? What was difficult about the experience?

**3. Institutional structure of the host societies or communities**: What did you learn about the culture? What values, traditions, and social behaviors did you notice? What socio-economic class structure is operative? What are the gender issues? What ethnic groups are present in the culture? How do they interact? How did you interact with them? What religions were practiced? How were they practiced?

**4. Self-reflection**: Please reflect upon some aspects of your identity including: nationality, race, ethnic origin, gender, age, education, sexuality, and class. What did you learn about your own cultural perspectives, values and biases?

**5. Historical heritage**: Indicate ways in which you have developed an understanding and respect for the customs, practices, and beliefs of the host community. What differences among members of the community did you notice? How does this affect your understanding about your own position in the world?

**6. Environment**: Describe the variations in ecology and "built" environments (architecture, layout of towns, public transportation, and existence of integration or segregation).

**7. Language**: If you had the opportunity to speak another language, what were the challenges you faced? How did your language skills change?

**8. Reciprocity**: What were your contributions to the community in which you lived?

**9. Conclusion**: Summarize the topics raised in your paper. Include general observations regarding your experience as a whole. What did it all mean to you? Why? What decisions or conclusions have you made as a result of this experience? What questions did this experience raise for you?

**Steps in Completing the Cross-Cultural Requirement**

1. Student sets goals with his/her advisor before entering the cross-cultural experience.
2. Student has the cross-cultural experience.
3. Student completes a reflective paper or project on his/her learning gained from the experience.
4. Student has an exit conference with advisor to revisit goals established for the experience.
5. Student presents paper/project to peers and/or the larger community. Some forums appropriate for this presentation include: EDU 221; EDU 101; ISEA meeting; faculty forum; newsletter; advisory board; and ISRA meeting (if project is related to literacy).