service projects, they hosted nursing home residents for lunch and presented them with holiday placemats they had made. They invited the handicapped high school students from the countywide special education school to a "school tour and luncheon" at Francis Scott Key. These students, once awkward and unsure about themselves, now graciously welcomed these senior citizens and handicapped teenagers with enthusiasm and compassion.

Reflection. After these events, a sense of teamwork was not enough for these students. Talking it over in classes, they found their sense of community had assumed a new perspective: they could meet the challenge of community service outside their school. Their cooperative learning teams had helped them prepare for, act on, and reflect about community service.

Schoolwide Effects
These socially responsible students made a place for themselves in their school and community. Within one year, they made a proclamation of dedication to community service at an all-school assembly that led Francis Scott Key High School into a new era of student involvement, inspiring their fellow classmates to active citizenship and community service. Who had altered the outlook of an entire school to achieve new heights of service? The answer is simple—these emerging leaders at Francis Scott Key High School.

References

The Maryland Department of Education established the Student Service Alliance in 1988 to help schools set up their community service programs. In addition to materials, the Alliance offers teacher training and technical assistance. For more information, write to Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Director, Maryland Student Service Alliance, Maryland State Department of Education, Baltimore, MD 21201.

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My Air, Your Rain Forest: An Experiment in Global Responsibility

U.S. and Latin American teachers met and learned about each others' cultures and environmental problems, then brought their insights back to their classrooms.

The high school cafeteria in Hot Springs, Arkansas, has turned into a tropical rain forest. Students in the ecology club and the foreign language club are making multidisciplinary, multisensory presentations of their rain forest research. They speak of the rain forest's dramatic impact on our climate and air. But when the program ends, the students cram their crepe paper rain forest into plastic bags to join the mountains of trash.
Even though few members of either group were bilingual, the teachers were able to form friendships.

In 1989, four new schools joined the project for a study of the environment of the Americas. This issue requires cooperation across a number of boundaries that have served to limit our knowledge in the past. In order to help us see the issue from both U.S. and Latin American perspectives, we decided to explore experiential and academic knowledge from a variety of disciplinary viewpoints. We hoped that by investigating the issue from these multiple perspectives we could learn how to provide students with the motivation and the skills to take global responsibility.

First we asked teachers to explore their own perspectives on the environment by writing or drawing their personal environmental histories. Awakening memories of their own experiences with environmental deterioration, as we had hoped, helped give them a sense of commitment to the issue.

Next the teachers explored the environment through three disciplines: art, literature, and sociology. The complexity of the issue became apparent as the art historian explored human attitudes toward the environment revealed in art, the literature professor described the role of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in the ecological movement, and the sociology professor discussed the relationship between social structures and environmental activities. To encourage an international perspective, we asked participants to create roles in a simulation using primary source readings from Guatemala that represented a wide range of Guatemalan opinions. These activities helped teachers see the human dimensions of an issue they had previously considered only from a scientific perspective.

At the end of the week in Arkansas, we took the new teachers for a two-week extended study in Mexico and Guatemala. At the Autonomous University of Guadalajara in Mexico, they again participated in an interdisciplinary seminar, this one with a Mexican perspective. A Mexican scientist taught them about the environmental problems of most immediate concern to Mexicans. Through lectures on history and a study of Augustin Yanez's novel *The Lean Lands,* they learned some of the reasons that Mexicans may be less likely to assume that change will automatically lead to progress or that progress is necessarily good.

In Guatemala, PLANAN organized a seminar with the Arkansas teachers and teachers from different parts of Guatemala. As the Guatemalan teachers described the environmental problems in their communities, the Arkansas teachers were struck by how their earlier role-playing of Guatemalan viewpoints had foretold the actual attitudes they would encounter. However, the role-playing exercise had not been able to convey the personalities, the caring, and the commitment of the Guatemalan teachers. Even though few members of either group were bilingual and the entire weekend had to be conducted in translation, the teachers were able to share feelings and frustrations and to form friendships.

At first, the North American teachers were surprised at how similar the Guatemalan teachers' understanding and attitudes toward the environment were to their own. Even though many of the Guatemalan teachers were from quite remote parts of the country, lived on salaries of less than $2,000 a year, and had little access to television and newspapers, they understood and cared about global environmental issues. Publications from the Guatemalan government and the Ministry of Education showed that Guatemalan children were learning the same concepts as their American counterparts.

By the second day, however, differences in perspective became obvious. A member of a Guatemalan government commission on environmental education had discussed the problems of poverty and...
corruption which they claimed made the program unworkable. After decades of military governments, they pointed out, the Guatemalan people were struggling to develop a democracy, but they were deficient in the skills needed for democratic decision-making. Democratic institutions and government accountability—necessary prerequisites for solving the problems of the environment—were still tentative concepts there. The North American teachers listened attentively to this new information, and they asked many questions to clarify their impressions.

After criticizing their own government, the Central American teachers began to discuss the role the United States government and North American companies had played in damaging the Guatemalan environment. This, too, was new information for most of the Americans, but their reaction was quite different. Some continued to ask questions, while others began to argue and to attack the Central Americans. Several began to lose interest in the discussion or make comments among themselves.

At the end of the seminar, teachers met with Israel Perez, coordinator of PLANAN, who told them that the Guatemalan teachers hoped to build an environmental education center on a piece of badly eroded land in the eastern part of the country. Children could come for a day of education and practical experience in reforestation and land reclamation techniques. Perez and the teachers brainstormed ways in which the center could also serve as an international center where U.S. teachers and students could come for seminars or work camps.

These dreams were clearly far in the future, however, so the teachers tried to think of more immediate ways to continue the U.S.-Guatemalan relationship. Once again differences in perspective became apparent. The American teachers suggested short-term projects and material goods that they could give to the Guatemalans. When Perez gently pointed out their focus on the short term and on things, the Americans sheepishly admitted they were looking for a quick fix. Perez told them that the Guatemalans knew that the issue required a very long struggle. While they would certainly appreciate material help, they were more interested in cooperative relationships and moral support for the long term.

**Back in the Schools**

On their return from the summer institute, the Arkansas teachers felt they had changed. They not only had seen the world from another perspective, they had physically crossed boundaries. They were a team. And they began enthusiastically to reform their school programs to promote global responsibility, but I must admit I found most of their initial efforts disappointing at first. We had conducted a model study of the ideas and values of other cultures; what I saw in the schools was a lot of food festivals, costumes (sometimes stereotypes) and flags. We had modeled international cooperation on the environment, what I found in the schools were typical Earth Day tree plantings and recycling campaigns. Most schools were doing a lot, but they did not seem to be doing anything they could not have done without the study tour abroad.

Gradually, however, I began to realize that I was still looking for a quick fix. From my perspective in Little Rock I was not seeing what the teachers in rural communities like Flippin and Eudora could see. They knew their students and their communities, and they knew where they had to start.

I understood their strategy better after I went to one school to observe the impact of the Guatemala role-playing exercise, which was an example of the more sophisticated concepts I had hoped teachers would use. When I asked the students what they had learned from the exercise, their answers at first seemed like noncommittal attempts to tell me what I wanted to hear. But finally, one boy spoke up. "I don't see why we have to study these people in another country. They're dumb, poor, and boring. The United States of America is all we need to know about!" The rest of the class cheered loudly. Students went on to say that what they had really learned from the simulation was that Guatemalan is a dirty, ugly, poor country, and they didn't want to hear any more about it.

What I, with my university perspective, had considered an intellectually stimulating experience had apparently completely backfired. The teachers had gained deep insights into Guatemalan culture from the readings, but the high school students had seen only poverty. Instead of developing a global concern, they had been confirmed in their prejudices.
We are a small part of our species' global effort to learn new ways of thinking and acting.

As I began to listen more to the teachers' perspectives, I learned that for our students in remote rural communities, global responsibility has to start with an understanding that cultural difference is not necessarily bad or threatening. The first step for students should be exposure to positive experiences with other cultures—and what better place to start than with food?

Teachers also emphasized the need for students to meet real people from other countries. So for the past year, we have taken international students and international guests (brought to Arkansas by the Arkansas Council on International Visitors) for overnight stays in rural homes and to discussion groups with students. In final evaluations, students usually list these visits among their most important learning experiences.

Now our teachers are attempting to develop ongoing projects with the teachers from Guatemala. They have initiated an art exchange, and the Central American teachers have invited us to participate in a writing project. Three schools contributed travel money so two Guatemalan teachers could visit our schools and attend an environmental education seminar in Arkansas. But these ongoing relationships with this third world country are not easy. There is, of course, the language problem, and the mail service is very slow. Teachers who came back from Guatemala with a number of ideas found that the overwhelming complexity of the details stopped or slowed many of their projects. But they found that failure can also be an opportunity for learning.

At the end of its second year, the ATLAS project is beginning to have many schools that the teams involve up to 8 or 12 members including biology, home economics, physics, mathematics, and ROTC teachers. We had designed a secondary school program, but 10 of the 12 high schools now in the project have incorporated at least one elementary or junior high program. Three of the elementary schools have undertaken major curriculum revisions, and two are restructuring one grade level with an international focus.

Furthermore, what was supposed to be a global education project has ended up creating links between schools and local communities. The Crossett County global studies team worked with the Adopt-A-School project that provided 200 business sponsors for the schools. The Pine Bluff team focused on a study of their own community. They asked for a mini-grant to publish their study but later apologized because so many businesses had offered to help that they didn't think they would need the money. Members of the Hot Springs team participated in a citywide clean-up and are landscaping the school grounds.

Learning a New Perspective
This commitment to global responsibility has led our staff, teachers, and students to personal growth and empowerment, to closer relationships with each other and with their own communities, and to a process of school reform. We no longer see ourselves as a three-year global education project in Arkansas schools. We are a small part of our species' global effort to learn new ways of thinking and acting. Our multiple perspective experience has given us the strength to deal with problems that do not have a short-term solution. Slowly but surely, we are learning to cope in a world in which we are not at the center and where we are not in control.

1Arkansas schools that participated in the project include Hot Springs High School, Russellville High School, Flippin High School, Little Rock McClellan High School, Little Rock Central High School, and Dardanelle High School. Also, the following Arkansas schools are participating in the ATLAS project but did not have teachers in the 1990 exchange: Eudora High School, Lee County High School, Pine Bluff High School, Perryville High School, Fouke High School, and Crossett High School.

In Guatemala, participants were individual members of PLANAN, a nonprofit education organization. PLANAN has begun an environmental education Park-School in Concepción Las Minas which students visit on field trips. It runs three programs of its own for street children in Guatemala City, San Pedro Sula, Honduras, and Esquipulas, Guatemala. It also provides training and support services for public school teachers. Public school participants in the seminar ranged from district supervisors to classroom teachers. Members of another private organization, "Ecoles Sans Frontieres," also attended. Participants represented the following cities: Guatemala City, Playa Grande, Mixto, Esquipulas, Zacapa, Concepción Las Minas, Santa Rosa, Antigua, San Antonio Aguas Calientes, Esquina, Aldea Mary del Carmen, Chiquimulilla, and Chi- quimila. In addition, teachers came from Tecígala, Guatemala, and San Pedro Sula, Honduras.


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